

ACT Schools Off Site Activities Policy

Commitment

Act is committed to ensure that all individuals' accessing its training provision have the opportunity to participate in off-centre activities that are managed in a safe learning environment.

Purpose

To ensure that employees are aware of the process to be followed to ensure that off-centre learning is conducted in a safe and healthy environment.

Scope

The procedure applies to all ACT Schools programmes

Responsibilities

The Delivery Director and Head of 11-16 Education will hold overall responsibility for the management of the policy. The Enrichment Manager will be responsible for the day to day management of the policy and process within.

All school staff will be responsible for adhering to the terms outlined in this policy.

Storage

This Policy will be communicated at point of induction and through centre meetings.

It is stored on IrisHR under documents; schools' provision.

Overview

Under no circumstances should off centre activities be undertaken without following the guidance outlined within this policy.

1 Introduction

1.1 Off-site visits are activities which take place outside school grounds and are arranged by, or on behalf of, the School. The School Senior Management and staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the Schools by providing experiences, which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our pupil's learning experiences.

1.2 In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to acceptable levels, for the health and safety of pupils, staff and volunteers at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with protective characteristics.

1.3 All visits will comply with the requirements outlined in Welsh Government Guidance 'Educational Visits- A safety guide for learning outside the classroom'. Further advice will be sought from competent persons where necessary. Copies of these guidance documents are available on the national guidance web site or from the Enrichment Manager (EM). All staff leading or participating in a visit are required to have read this Policy and to have signed it to say this is the case.

1.4 The following links provide a wealth of information for conducting visits and are the source of information embedded into this policy

National guidance: <http://oeapng.info>

Dfe guidance and legal framework: <http://oeapng.info/category/legal-framework-2/>

Hse advice on duties and powers:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335111/DfE_Health_and_Safety_Advice_06_02_14.pdf

2 Aims

2.1 The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the ACT Schools site alone;
- promote the independence of our pupils as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

The visits are planned to enable our pupils to progress in skills and knowledge of the curriculum and of life skills.

3 Curriculum Links

3.1 For each subject in the curriculum there are opportunities for off-site visits. These are some examples of the types of visits carried out at by our School.

- English – theatre and museum visits; Visits to explore Welsh culture
- Science –visits to factories, recycling centres, nature reserves, ponds, science museums, coastal areas;
- Mathematics – use of shape and number in assessing sporting venue i.e basketball court area
- Art and Design – art gallery visits, use of the locality for drawing, sculpture and photography;
- PE – a range of sporting activities and visits to our outdoor recreational areas.
- PSHE and Citizenship – visits to work placements, local business for career exploration and health workshop initiatives.

4 How visits may be planned and approved

4.1 The Enrichment Manager (EM) has overall responsibility for the planning and management of off site visits. Each site within the School has a named Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), who is involved in supporting the EM in the planning and management of off-site visits. In most instances the EVC is the Centre Manager.

4.2 The EM and EVC should be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment. Commonly, but not exclusively, such competence will be identified in a person on the senior management of the establishment.

4.3 The EM EVC should attend initial EVC training as soon as possible after appointment. Subsequent update training or a repeat full course is particularly recommended for those who are involved in the role infrequently. Further guidance on the role of EVC is available at <https://oeapng.info/evc/>

4.4 The EM and EVC will:

- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips (being competent means that the Leader has demonstrated the ability to operate to recognised standards of good practice, and has sufficient relevant experience and knowledge of the group, the activity and the venue);
- Check that Visit Leaders are competent and ensure all details of necessary training and qualifications are logged on the CascadeGo HR system;
- ensure that risk assessments are completed and are supported by competent trained staff;
- check visit plans and sign-off risk assessments with support from the Facilities Manager;
- organise related staff training;
- liaise with the Purchasing Department to verify that all private car drivers/minibus companies, have had satisfactory DBS checks;
- ensure that regular volunteers and those assisting with overnight/residential stays have had satisfactory DBS checks carried out. Volunteers used for one off activities, who are not left alone at any time (out of sight/ear shot of a member

of staff) to supervise pupils, do not necessarily need DBS checks completing. The Head of 11-16 Education's discretion under these circumstances is used;

- make sure that all necessary consent and medical forms are obtained;
- support the Head of Education and Schools Advisory Board in their decisions on approval and pass all visits to the Head of School for formal approval electronically;
- ensure that all visits are recorded in off site activity folder;
- ensure that risk assessments for frequent/regular visits are routinely reviewed (for example a swimming facility) and update where necessary.

4.5 The EVC will appoint/approve a competent Visit Leader to be responsible for running the visit. This will normally be a teacher employed at the School, with an appropriate level of experience, training and qualifications.

4.6 Visit Leaders and staff arranging, or otherwise involved in, off-site activities must read thoroughly the guidelines published within this Policy. Visit Leaders will:

- ensure all off-site activities take place in accordance with School procedures;
- check to ensure sufficient staff and helpers of the right experience are DBS checked (as detailed above) and briefed throughout the visit;
- review risk assessments and ensure management to reduce risks including site specific, general and dynamic risk assessments are undertaken and recorded;
- ensure a named person, emergency procedures and systems for recording and sharing information on accidents and near misses are in place before briefing pupils and parents;
- Where appropriate and when considered necessary undertake exploratory visits or seek references from other schools if using new venues; and reassess from time to time;
- ensure any accidents / incidents are reported;
- Feedback any learning points from visits to the EM/VC/Head of 11-16 Education.

4.7 Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must first seek and obtain the initial approval of the Head of 11-16 Education before any commitment is made on behalf of the School. Staff should discuss the basic details with the EVC and when initial approval is granted, the necessary paperwork should then be completed and passed on to the relevant parties.

4.8 Schools Governance Board will be informed of all visits through the termly management committee meetings.

4.9 It is our policy that all pupils including those with medical conditions should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a protected characteristic is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with protective characteristics. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment. It is acknowledged that many of our learners have additional learning needs, in particular those with BESD, therefore additional adaptations will be made to ensure the risks are managed on visits.

5 Risk assessments

5.1 The EM r must carry out a comprehensive risk assessment, before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks that might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. All identified hazards must be reduced to an acceptable level (Medium or Low rating) before the Head of 11-16 Education will approve the visit. Advice may be sought from the EVC where required.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- Look for the hazards;
- Decide who might be harmed and how;
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done; Implement safety measures needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level;
- Include the SEN/medical needs of the specific pupils participating;
- Plan for emergencies and identify alternative arrangements or “Plan B” if the risks change and activities cannot be completed;
- Record findings;
- Review assessment and revise it if necessary.

5.2 Where necessary, and if possible, staff planning an off-site visit should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments should be considered to ascertain if they are of an appropriate standard and can be adopted. To reduce bureaucracy Visit Leaders are encouraged to take advantage of national schemes that have been established to eliminate the need for questionnaires and forms e.g. LOTc Quality Badge, AALA Licence, Adventuremark. Holding one of the above is a credible assurance of appropriate Health and Safety management systems, and no further verification should be necessary. The LOTc Quality Badge also covers learning quality.

5.3 It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the risk assessment must show the extent of any hazards involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate the risks.

5.4 Activity and Visit Leaders must ensure that young people are adequately supervised and take into account the following:

- The nature of the activity (including its duration);
- The location and environment in which the activity is to take place;
- The age and gender (including developmental age) of the young people to be supervised;
- The ability of the young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs);
- Medical conditions and Individual Healthcare Plans

- Staff competence.

5.5 This means that arrangements for supervision, including staff/pupil ratios, must take into account the nature of a group and the individuals in it. It is therefore important that, when planning a repeat visit or a series of activities, the previous plan (no matter how well it worked in the past) is reviewed to ensure it meets current group needs.

5.6 Ratios are a risk management issue, and should be determined through the process of risk assessment. It is not possible to set down definitive staff/pupil ratios for a particular age group or activity. However, some guidance documents do set out ratios (OEAPNG Guidance-<https://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/4-3b-ratios-and-effective-supervision/>), but these should be regarded as starting points for consideration rather than being definitive, as they may only be appropriate where the activity is relatively straightforward and the group has no special requirements. For example, the DfES publication Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (1998) suggested the following “starting points”:

- School years 4 - 6, 1:15 NON RESIDENTIAL 1 : 10 if residential
- School years 7 onwards, 1:15/20 NON RESIDENTIAL 1: 10 if residential

Even though the School operates only at Key stages 3 and 4, ratios for years 4-6 (Key stage 2) have been included in this policy based on the potential needs of our learners.

5.7 Normally at least two adults will accompany any off-site visit. The Visit Leader will usually be a teacher but this is not compulsory and the other may be a responsible and competent adult.

5.8 These ratios are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases. Higher levels of supervision may be required or determined by the risk assessment.

5.9 A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue and must include provision for:

- appropriate level of supervision;
- the required use of child restraints;
- DBS vetting of the driver;
- insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency procedures;
- breakdown procedures.

5.10 The Visit Leader will double-check with the Head of 11-16 Education through our safeguarding procedures that all regular volunteers and those assisting with overnight/residential stays on the trip have been subject to satisfactory DBS checks. Those volunteers used for one-off activities, who are not left alone at any time (out of sight/ear shot of a member of staff) to supervise pupils, do not necessarily need DBS checks completing. The Head of 11-16 Education’s discretion under these circumstances will be used.

5.11 A copy of the completed risk assessments will be given to the Head of 11-16 Education, Health and safety manager, Educational Visits Coordinator and all adults supervising the trip and will be available to parents and Directors/Governors on request.

5.12 It is important that the risk assessments are communicated and understood by everyone involved in the trip (staff, volunteers, pupils and parents) before it takes place. This includes risks, control measures, emergency arrangements and contingency plans.

5.13 Dynamic risk assessments will be required during the visit if changes occur e.g. weather, illness or an unforeseen hazard. These involve professional judgements in response to changing circumstances. It is critical that control measures are monitored and confirmed or adapted as required.

5.14 On completion of the visit the risk assessment must be reviewed and any learning points and recommendations for improved control measures documented and communicated to relevant staff.

5.17 Any accidents that occur to employees, volunteers or pupils during the visit must be investigated and recorded following normal accident reporting procedures. RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reportable accidents will require the School's Health and Safety/Compliance Manager to be notified as soon as reasonably practicable.

6 Transport

6.1 When hiring coaches and minibuses, it is our policy only to use reputable companies with vehicles fitted with appropriate seatbelts and to insist that all those participating in the visit wear them.

6.2 When using company vehicles, where possible all journeys will be supported by two staff members. However, on occasions where a staff member is transporting a learner on their own, they will adhere to the lone working policy, ensuring the learner is seating in the rear of the vehicle, on the passenger side. The staff member must notify senior management prior to beginning the journey where a dynamic risk assessment will be done to manage risk.

6.3 All staff using company vehicles to transport learners will have read and accepted the 'Use of a company car policy' and will have been added on to company insurance.

6.4 Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party and appropriate child restraints will be used, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach.

6.5 The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- food and refreshments
- accommodation
- external providers.

7. Communication with parents/carers

7.1 The parents/carers of pupils taking part in an off-site activity will be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit to make an informed decision.

7.2 Parents/carers must give their written permission, medical and contact details, before a child can be involved in any off-site educational visits. Parents/Carers will be required to complete the Consent Form during the learners induction process and annually thereafter at school. Verbal consent may be given if written consent is not forthcoming. This must be noted in the learners file with date and time of consent.

7.3 If deemed appropriate, high risk activities, may require additional consent forms to ensure parents/carers are fully briefed on the potential risks. These may be in the form of ACT consent forms or, where applicable, consent forms provided by external companies to comply with their processes.

7.4 Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by the School. This includes any additional costs associated with the visit i.e transport, refreshments.

7.5 Expectations of behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents.

8. Pupils

8.1 Pupils should be briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all visits. Training and careful briefing on activities will be given, particularly for unfamiliar ones. Ongoing briefings are an important part of learning and safety and will always be provided whilst on the visit.

8.2 Where possible pupils should be involved with planning, developing codes of conduct, assessing/managing risk and evaluating their own attitude, behaviour, development and learning.

9 Further health and safety considerations

9.1 All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the Visit Leader, of the emergency procedures that will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school office number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal working day the home telephone number/mobile telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

9.2 Before a group embarks on the visit, the Head of 11-16 Education and emergency contact should have access to a list of everyone, pupils and adults, travelling with the group, together with the emergency contact information for every individual, programme and timetable for the activity.

9.3 The safety of the group, and especially the pupils, is of paramount importance. During the activity the group leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure their safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that pupils are both safe and well looked after at all times.

9.4 Prior to a visit, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the School, the Visit Leader should discuss with the Head of 11-16 Education the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

10 Visit documentation

10.1 The documentation for educational visits must include the following where applicable to the visit. The required documents will be available to be accessed by Head of 11-16 Education and EVC. Paper copies should be taken on the visit by the Visit Leader including:

- risk assessments;
- general information;

- names, ages, contact details, consent and medical fitness forms, and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- accommodation plan, where relevant;
- contingency plan details;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;
- guidance for the emergency contact and Head of 11-16 Education;
- first-aid arrangements;
- accident report forms.

Appendix 1

APPLICATION FOR OFF-SITE VISIT

Visit Leader and contact details:				
Visit Location (Including address, postcode and contact phone):				
Curriculum Relevance:				
Date of proposed visit:				
Timings (approx):	Depart school	Arrive at visit	Depart Visit	Arrive school
Number of visit	Learners		Staff	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Any Special Educational or Medical Needs:				
Method of transport:				
Coach/minibus details (if applicable):				
Expected cost of visit:				
Risk Assessment	Date Completed:			
	By:			

Name (Print)

Signature

		Visit Leader	Date:	
		EVC	Date:	
		Head of 11-16 Education	Date:	