

Educational Visits Policy

Document Control

This document is issued, controlled and impact assessed by the Senior Leadership Team.

The latest version of the procedure will be maintained on the School Website.

Scope

This policy applies to all students and all trips or visits regardless of the visit duration or distance. (The Endeavour Academy will not exclude a student with a disability from participating in a trip or visit).

Purpose

This policy has been produced to make visits enjoyable, rewarding and as safe as possible. It summarises the procedures which should be followed by all school employees in the management of visits and similar off-site activities.

Comment

Endeavour Academy recognises that there are many opportunities for students to experience challenging, rewarding and exciting visits and activities. The range of opportunities is increasing, with many new and exciting locations to visit and greater opportunities for learning outside the classroom.

Learning outdoors or in venues away from the normal classroom is an important part of every student's development in the broadest sense. Students may return stimulated, enthused and with much greater knowledge about themselves, their own physical skills and a deeper understanding of the environment they live in.

Large numbers of our students will enjoy a wide range of visits and off-site activities each year and staff are encouraged to continue to organise visits and activities with the same high level of safety experienced when students are in a classroom setting.

Roles

The Educational Visits Co-Ordinator

The Head of School is the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) and will agree all external visits and be responsible for checking that adequate planning and preparation has gone into ensuring that the risk will be as low a risk as possible and meet its educational objectives.

Local visits i.e. within the County Durham area will be classed as Level 1 (lasting no longer than a normal school day) visits and will be covered by the annual consent form signed by the parents / carers.

Trips / Visits outside of the local area will be classed as Level 2 or 3 visits. Applications to conduct Level 2 or 3 visits will be made to the EVC who will raise the request for discussion at senior team meetings.

If the trip is agreed it is the responsibility of the visit leader to complete all of the appropriate forms. The EVC will be responsible for checking that the paperwork has been fully and accurately completed and will sign off the visit, before copying the information across to the Head of School for final clearance. This must be agreed no later than 2 weeks prior to the visit.

On higher risk Level 3 visits, the Head of School will share the contents of the paperwork with the nominated off-site visit governor.

The Visit Leader

The Visit Leader is responsible for completing the necessary paperwork, including budgetary arrangements, which must be signed and agreed by the Head of School. On completion of the paperwork, the necessary documents need to be passed to the EVC for sign off.

The following forms require completion:

- Parental Consent
- Budget Checklist
- EV 1, 2, 3, 4

Following a visit, the Visit Leader will be expected to review the experience and report back its value to the EVC. This will help to decide the value of future visits. The visit leader will need to report back on any contingency arrangements which were applied, as such eventualities often provide the best evidence for future planning.

Training

All staff will be introduced to the off site visits policy during induction.

Staff Competency to Lead

The EVC is required to make a judgement on the most relevant staff to attend the visit or residential and approve an event organiser.

When making the decision of competence the Head of School has the final say in this matter.

Decisions should be made based on the following;

- The visit leader must be employed by the school or sponsor School / College and should know their levels of accountability and have a clear understanding of the school safeguarding policy and procedure.
- The visit leader must have demonstrated competence in managing a similar group of students and is able to maintain control, they must have sufficient experience and knowledge of working with the group. Other competence may include;

- Providing evidence of holding relevant qualifications, including any specific qualification required by the law, the employer or the establishment (e.g. in First Aid).
- Providing evidence of having undertaken appropriate training.
- Providing verified evidence of relevant experience.

Where a visit leader wishes to lead an adventure activity, their competence should be confirmed by a robust verification process, such as:

- Holding a National Governing Body leadership / coaching award at an appropriate level.
- Being "signed off" by a suitably-qualified Technical Adviser appointed by the school.

All staff must understand fully the aims of the visit / residential as well as matters relating to health, safety and discipline requirements. Students and staff are expected to act as role models and advocates of the school. A full briefing must be given to all students on these matters before departure.

Staffing Ratios

Activity and Visit Leaders must ensure that young people are supervised in accordance with the principles of "Effective Supervision", requiring them to take account of:

- 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).
- Staff competence.

This means that arrangements for supervision, including staff / student 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.

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 / student ratios for a particular age group or activity however a guide is outlined below.

It is not essential that all staff are teaching staff. In certain cases, support staff or part-time staff may be employed with supervisory duties on these activities. For activities spanning an overnight stay, ideally there should be at least one member of staff present of the same sex as the participating students, although this may / should not always be necessary for centre based residentials.

The guide to staffing ratios is shown below. In certain circumstances it may be necessary to vary these terms. In such cases, the variation may only be approved by the Head of School following recommendation from the appropriate EVC.

Number of participating students	Adventure based visits * (Level 2,3)	Non adventure based visits ** (Level 1)	Residential visits
Fewer than 10	1	1	Head of School's discretion
10 - 15	2	2	Head of School's discretion
16 - 24	3	2	Head of School's discretion
25 - 30	4	3	Head of School's discretion
30+	Head of School's discretion	Head of School's discretion	Head of School's discretion

Adapted from the guidance from Durham County Council

Adventure Based Visits* (Level 2, 3)

Including:

- Residential Visits
- Overseas visits (including expeditions)
- Adventurous activities (see definition below)
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions
- Ski trips
- Other visits where the level of risk is similar to the visits listed above.

Definition of adventurous – The following activities are regarded as “adventurous”

All activities in “open country” – any activity on moorland (open uncultivated land) at any height or mountainous ground over 600 metres above sea level when it would take 30 minutes to reach an accessible road or refuge.

- Swimming (all forms except publicly life guarded pools)
- Camping (including Duke of Edinburgh's Award Expeditions)
- Canoeing / kayaking / rafting / improvised rafting
- Sailing / windsurfing / kite surfing
- Use of powered safety / rescue craft
- All other forms of boating (except commercial transport)
- Water skiing
- Snorkel and aqualung activities
- Hill walking and mountaineering
- Rock Climbing (indoors and outdoors) and abseiling
- River/gorge walking or scrambling
- Coasteering/coastal scrambling/sea level traversing

- Underground exploration
- Off site mountain biking
- Skiing, snowboarding, and related activities (including dry slope)
- Air activities (excluding commercial flights)
- Horse riding
- Motor sports – all forms including go-carting and quad bikes
- High level ropes courses
- “Extreme” sports
- Water based activities
- Adventurous activities with the armed services
- Any other activities involving skills inherent in any of the above or that may contain a similar level of risk to participants or staff.
- Activities undertaken by the arboriculture team.

Non adventurous based visits** (Level 1)

The following visits are not regarded as adventurous. These activities must however be supervised by a member of staff who has previous relevant experience and who has been assessed by the EVC as competent to supervise the activity

- Walking in parks or non-remote country paths
- Field studies (unless in the environments defined as adventurous)
- Swimming in publicly life guarded pools
- Independent Travel Training
- Theme parks
- Tourist attractions
- Pedal go-carts
- Archery clubs
- Ice rink skating
- Farm visits
- Local traffic surveys
- Museums, libraries etc
- Physical Education and sports fixtures
- Water margin activities – such as walking along a riverbank or stream, collecting samples from streams & ponds, or paddling in gentle shallow (up to the knees) water. If the activity exceeds this definition the activity is water based and therefore adventurous.

Risk Assessment

There is a legal requirement for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks (i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual, or harm several people), and for the results of the risk assessment to be recorded.

It is important to appreciate that the legal requirement is to manage risks (requiring them to be reduced to an acceptable level) and not necessarily to eliminate them altogether – as might be a reasonable expectation when risk assessing an industrial workshop or manufacturing process.

The risk management of a given off-site activity needs to be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating, as well as the possible hazards to be encountered and risks to be managed. It is therefore good practice to make the starting point for any risk assessment a consideration of the anticipated benefits and learning outcomes. An appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is “acceptable”. Where the planning of activities is in accordance with this policy, the identification and recording of benefits will have been tackled at the very outset of the planning process.

Young people encountering risk sensibly managed are presented with an unrivalled learning opportunity. Exposure to well managed risk helps young people learn important life skills, including how to manage risks for themselves. Responding to this need may well be one of the fundamental aims of many areas of outdoor learning provision. It therefore follows that such aims should be encouraged, rather than avoided.

Managing Risks in practice

A risk assessment for an off-site activity need not be complex. It could be thought of as the recorded minutes of a staff meeting, where the challenges (significant risks) that are reasonably foreseeable in a particular activity are discussed, and the actions (control measures) identified to address those challenges are recorded.

The recording of the risk assessment process in the context of outdoor learning activities should avoid using technical or numerically based formulae. Such an approach to risk assessment is unlikely to be practicable in a dynamic activity situation. Managing groups of young people in an off-site context often requires decisions to be made in the context of rapidly unfolding (and possibly unforeseen) events that are also subject to the vagaries of human behaviour within an evolving (and possibly stressful) group dynamic. On this basis, there is good reason to say that a formula-based approach to risk assessment is too complex and therefore “not fit for purpose”. Visit leaders and their supporting team should be reassured that, where they have the appropriate competence (based on training and experience), it is their professional judgement that will provide the basis upon which they should make their decisions on how best to manage risks.

Leaders should also be reassured that HSE has long promoted the view that the risk management process should be:

- Simple
- Manageable
- Proportional
- Suitable and sufficient

These principles can be refined in an outdoor learning context, where the process should manage risks by:

- Being an integral part of the overall planning process for the visit.
- Ensuring leaders have the competence to manage the process positively and successfully.
- Focusing on the competence of leaders and group members.

- Building upon previous experience of similar visits.
- Encouraging this process to be collaborative, ideally involving both the staff team and the young people.

The process will be most effective when it:

- Recognises the experience and professionalism of leaders.
- Provides evidence that the process has been followed.
- Those leading visits and outdoor learning activities will be investing their time wisely if they ensure that they are familiar with some of the basic terminology that has evolved to support a better understanding of risk management.

The key terms are as follows:

- Benefits – positive outcomes to be achieved by participating in the chosen activity.
- Hazard – anything with the potential to cause harm.
- Risk – the possibility that someone will be harmed by the hazard.
- Control measures – the arrangements in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Parental Consent

Adventure based/Overseas/Overnight/Out of County/Out of Hours - Before a trip takes place Parents and those with parental responsibility should be made fully aware of the likely risks and how these are to be managed, so that informed consent or refusal can be given on a fully informed basis. Parents will be informed of exceptional risks only.

A parental consent letter will be sent to parents/guardians by Endeavour Academy once the trip has been approved by the EVC.

Non Adventure Based low risk / or activities which take place during normal School opening hours (08.30 – 17.00) and within the Durham County boundaries – Consent will be obtained on an annual basis or until the young person reaches 18 (in some cases annual consent is required for Students over 18). This will be arranged through the application and enrolment process at the beginning of the academic year.

Supporting Documents & Records

- EV1 – Initial visit proposal
- EV2 – Risk Assessment
- EV3 – Student data and medical declaration form
- EV4 – Incident Notification
- EV4 – Visit Evaluation Sheet
- OV1 – Overnight/Overseas Initial Visit Proposal
- OV2 – Overnight/Overseas Visit Details
- OV3 – Overseas Passport and Medical Card Information
- OV4 – Overnight/Overseas Expenses Log

Educational Visits Policy

Related policies and procedures

- Equality and Diversity Policy and Statement
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Risk Assessment (Activity)
- Safeguarding Policy