



## **Educational Visits Policy**

Date Created:	Autumn 2017
Date Ratified:	Autumn 2017
Date for Review:	Summer 2019

# Educational Visits Policy

## Introduction

Inspire Multi Academy Trust adopts the guidance and procedures issued by the Educational Advisory Service based at Derwent Hill. This reflects the message contained in the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and DfE statements. This is to ensure consideration for the health and safety of all those involved and to maintain the educational quality of visits and value for money.

## Scope

This Policy applies to each academy within Inspire Multi Academy Trust where the trustees have adopted it as part of the services offered by Sunderland City Council's External Visits Advisory Service.

It applies to all External Visits involving children and young people and, where relevant, vulnerable adults. It applies regardless of whether the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

External Visits are defined as events that involve children and young people (or vulnerable adults) being away from their normal school, centre or residential home premises, while in the care of the school or other service. This includes educational visits, outings, school trips and off-site activities such as: local visits to parks, museums, libraries and sports facilities; cultural, educational, recreational and exchange trips; outdoor activities; residential; field trips.

## Inclusion

All children will be included on trips and educational visits regardless of their special needs, race, religion, culture, gender and gender orientation. Within the risk assessment the academy will identify children with disabilities, special educational or medical needs and address how their needs will be catered for. All educational visits must have specific stated objectives that are appropriate for the participating pupils.

All children and young people should be given the opportunity of learning outside the classroom and benefiting from participation in a wide range of visits and activities, including Learning Outside the Classroom, local activities, day visits, residential, field studies and outdoor adventure activities. Whether their emphasis is adventurous, academic, sporting, cultural, spiritual or creative, off-site visits and outdoor learning provide first-hand experiences that inspire and enhance learning and development in ways which are powerful and lasting. They provide a foundation for life-long learning and healthy lifestyles, as well as complementing classroom learning and enriching the curriculum.

## Procedures and approval of visits (Annex A)

Under the health and safety laws, schools are required to obtain appropriate approval for Educational visits.

For certain categories of visits (category 2 visits) schools must seek and obtain approval from the Authority via Derwent Hill.

The Academy should use the Evolve online system for notification, authorisation, approval and monitoring of visits. The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) and the Headteacher can use Evolve to plan, authorise and monitor visits. Certain visits (those in Category 3 below) require approval from External Visits Advisory Service, on behalf of the academy's governing body. Key information about a visit is available through Evolve in the event of an emergency.

EVCs should normally be responsible for setting up access for Academy staff to use Evolve.

For the purposes of notification and approval, external visits are classified into three categories. These are based on the 'Radar' model described in the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) National Guidance.

Category	Definition	Requirement for notification & approval
Category 1	Straightforward routine visits covered by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a generic risk assessment, regularly reviewed</li> <li>• blanket informed parental consent (not necessary if visits take place during school hours)</li> <li>• school/service operating procedures</li> </ul>	Evolve may be used but is not required.
Category 2	Visits requiring enhanced planning with event-specific risk assessment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All residential visits not in Category 3</li> <li>• Non-residential visits not in Categories 1 or 3</li> </ul>	Must be authorised by the Headteacher / Manager and the Chief Executive Headteacher using Evolve.
Category 3	Higher risk visits, defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits outside the UK</li> <li>• Visits which include adventure activities</li> <li>• Visits to remote or hazardous locations</li> </ul>	The planning process for Category 3 must commence at least 8 weeks prior to the visit. Must be authorised by the Headteacher / Manager, Chief Executive Headteacher and Trustees using Evolve at least four weeks before the visit, and then approved by the External Visits Advisory Service.

### Category 2 Visits

Staff wishing to undertake a Category 2 visit must seek approval from Derwent Hill Advisory Service, and complete Form (RA2). After the forms have been checked and approved by the EVC or Headteacher and Chief Executive Headteacher, they must be submitted to the Authority **at least 4 weeks prior the visit taking place**. It is recommended that for Category 2 visits, applications are made online, via Evolve. Staff must make the EVC aware of the visit.

### Category 3 Visits

The requirement of Category 3 visits to be authorised by the Headteacher, Chief Executive Headteacher and Trustees at least **eight weeks** prior to the visit, is to provide time for any issues arising to be dealt with to allow approval to be given by the External Visits Advisory Service. For more complex visits, more time should be allowed.

Academy employees should not sign contracts with providers or make commitments to participants or parents until they are sure that requirements for approval can be met, and are encouraged to ask the External Visits Advisory Service to comment on

unsubmitted draft plans in Evolve for complex visits at an early stage, which could be a year or more before the visit.

Following **all** visits the Visit Leader should undertake a review. Any incidents, accidents should be reported in accordance with the reporting requirements.

### **Parent / Carer Consent**

It is a requirement that a signed parental consent form is obtained from the parents/carers of all pupils participating in Educational Visits. Letters should be submitted to the Headteacher prior to the visit. Proposed activities/aims of the educational visit should be outlined to parents/carers.

Details of departure/arrival should be explained to parents. Medical information and emergency contacts must also be obtained.

### **Payment for Visits**

Please refer to the Trust's Charging Policy. Cost for visit needs prior approval from the Headteacher.

### **Duties and Responsibilities.**

- All staff have a duty of care for the welfare and safety of all children taking part in an educational visit.
- Every person has a duty to stop or curtail any activity when it is considered that unsafe practice has been observed.
- Every adult accompanying the visit must have a role.
- The Visit Leader should brief all adults as to their roles and responsibilities during the educational visit.
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**By signing the Risk Assessment, the Visit Leader confirms that all adults on the visit have read, understood and adopted the written Risk Assessment.**

### **Leader competence and approval**

A Visit Leader is the person responsible for planning and leading a visit, which may involve other members of staff and volunteers, including Group Leaders. A Group Leader is responsible for the supervision of a group of children or young people during a visit. This may be a Teacher, Teaching Assistant or volunteer.

The Headteacher / Managers must ensure that Visit Leaders and Group Leaders are competent to carry out their responsibilities. The External Visits Advisory Service provides Visit Leader and Group Leader training courses and can advise about competence requirements.

The OEAP National Guidance includes documents on "Assessment of Competence" and "Good Practice Basics". Visit Leaders, Group Leaders and other staff who require guidance or support should contact their Academy's EVC.

Academy staff who wish to lead adventure activities must have approval to do so by the Headteacher and External Visits Advisory Service on behalf of the Academy. Approval will be based upon evidence of competence, which may include evidence of relevant qualifications, training and experience.

Leader approval is managed through Evolve.

- For a category 2 or 3 visit, evidence of the leader's competence is required by the Activity Leader Form (ALF) which is part of the normal Evolve visit planning process.

- If a leader wishes to apply for generic approval to lead a specific adventure activity, then they should complete a Leader Approval Request (LAR) in Evolve for endorsement by their Headteacher/Manager who submits it to the External Visits Advisory Service for approval. When this approval is given, it may be attached to future ALFs as evidence.

## **Accident/incident reporting**

### **Emergency Procedures**

Procedure in the event of an incident, accident or emergency – **This is the responsibility of the Visit Leader.**

- First instance contact the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher
- For minor accidents/incidents follow the risk assessment
- For serious accidents/incidents Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher to advise following the Critical Incident Plan
- Ensure that an appropriate adult is accessible by phone

The Academy's incident reporting procedures (see the Critical Incident Plan) must be followed.

After any major incident, schools/services should undertake a review of the incident, their risk assessments and emergency procedures, and should share the findings with the External Visits Advisory Service. (It is also good practice to record and learn from previous experiences). The Academy should establish a system for doing this and should consider how best to share the learning outcomes of such incidents.

## **Ratios**

The staffing required to run the visit safely needs to be identified and should take the following factors into account:

- Gender, age and ability of group.
- Pupils with special education needs or medical needs.
- Nature of activities.
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision.
- Duration and nature of journey.
- Type of any accommodation.
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.
- Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited.
- Competence and behaviour of pupils.
- First aid cover.

The following are regarded as the minimum ratio acceptable on any visit:

- Nursery            1:2
- Reception        1:4
- KS1                1:6
- KS2                1:15 (1:6 for high risk)

## **Bus / Coach Hire**

Visit Leaders must liaise with the School Office to book an operator who holds a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) licence (appropriate to the type of vehicle and/or nature of the journey being undertaken), MOT, tax and insurance. All drivers must have a DBS check. Every passenger must have their own seat. All coach seats must be fitted with seat belts.

## **School Lunches**

The school kitchen will provide packed lunches as required for children receiving Free School Meals. Lunches must be ordered with the kitchen 2 weeks prior to the visit.

## **Further Information**

Farrington Academy's current EVC coordinators are Claire McDermott Headteacher, Susan Matthews Deputy Headteacher, Joanna Forster Assistant Headteacher, Susan Stubbs TLR and Susan Connelly School Business Manager.

For any further information regarding Educational Visits please consult the EVC's or:

- Sunderland City Council's External Visits Policy and Guidance – Code of Practice
- the Evolve site
- discuss with the Heateacher/Deputy Headteacher.

Copies of Educational Visits booking forms are available from the school staffroom.

## **Monitoring**

The Headteacher/Manager is responsible for ensuring compliance with this Policy and for the monitoring of visits organised by the Academy. The EVC is often best placed to carry out routine monitoring. The OEAP National Guidance includes a document on monitoring. In case of doubt or concern, advice may be obtained from the External Visits Advisory Service.

### **Assessing Venues and Providers**

The OEAP National Guidance includes guidance on Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances.

The Learning outside the Classroom Quality Badge Standard held by activity providers provides sufficient reassurance that a provider meets nationally required minimum standards of safety and quality. Details of a provider's status can be checked on the Quality Badge website [www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk](http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk).

If a provider of activities does not hold the Quality Badge, then detailed checks should be made to ensure that it meets required standards. The most straightforward way of doing this is to use a Provider Statement Form – the External Visits Advisory Service can provide a template.

Policy developed in conjunction with Derwent Hill Advisory Service and reviewed annually by EVC Co-ordinators and approved by Trustees.

## **Annex**

### **Annex A**

**Procedural requirements – see visits procedure below and booking form attached.**

- Risk assessment – examples on Evolve
- Approval of staff to lead activities and visits by Headteacher
- Evaluation of external providers – Risk Assessment for venue

- Parental communication and consent
- Information about participants' medical conditions, special needs behaviour etc
- Prior notification and approval of visit plans
- Any type of visit that should be approved only after consultation with an external adviser
- 'Checking out' and 'checking in' before, during and after a visit
- Emergencies
- Monitoring
- Evaluation

## **Educational Visits Procedure**

### ***One months notice must be given for a trip to be booked.***

First you must obtain verbal permission, from Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher, for the trip ***before*** organising the trip. You will need to explain reasons for the trip and what the learning objectives and success criteria will be for children. You will also need to work out an approximate cost for the trip.

Only after verbal permission has been given the following procedure should be carried out:

1. Complete a booking form, Appendix 4, (ensuring that you have enough helpers for the trip to meet correct adult/child ratios remembering that all helpers must be CRB checked and where ever possible parents should be used). Names of helpers including staff to be written on the reverse of the booking form.
2. Complete a risk assessment for travel to and from the venue.
3. Obtain a risk assessment for the venue.
4. Booking form and risk assessments need to be authorised by Head/Deputy Headteacher.
5. Completed, authorised forms can then be given to the office to book buses and venue and inform the kitchen of date of your trip (dinners will not be required for your class for the day of trip).
6. Letter to be sent to parents informing them of the trip and costs involved.
7. Date of trip to be written in main school diary located in the school office.

Before the date of the trip all staff and helpers who are going on the trip should be given a copy of the risk assessments, all risks should be identified and controls required eliminating the risks should be discussed.

On the day of the trip the office will need to be informed of the:

- number of children and adults who are attending the trip
- mobile telephone numbers for the leader and deputy leader of the trip incase of emergencies



## Annex B

Adventure activities are defined as including:

- Abseiling
- Air activities (excluding commercial flights)
- Camping (except 'official' campsites)
- Caving, potholing, mine exploration
- Climbing (including indoor climbing walls)
- Coasteering, coastal scrambling, sea-level traversing
- Fishing in hazardous environments (e.g. sea, fast rivers, on deep water)
- High level ropes activities
- Horse riding & equestrian sports
- Motor sport – all forms
- Mountain Biking
- River/gorge/ghyll walking or scrambling, canyoning
- Shooting, Archery, Paintballing
- Skiing (including Indoor or Dry Slope)
- Snorkel and aqualung activities
- Snowboarding (including Indoor or Dry Slope)
- Swimming (all forms, excluding UK public pools with lifeguards)
- Walking (hills, mountains, open country)
- Watersports - powered craft, waterskiing (excluding commercial transport)
- Watersports - Canoeing/Kayaking
- Watersports - Rafting or improvised rafting
- Watersports - Rowing
- Watersports - Sailing / windsurfing / kite surfing
- Watersports – Surfing

Remote or hazardous locations include:

- areas more than 30 minutes walk from a road or refuge
- coastal areas with significant tidal hazards
- hazardous quarries
- steep terrain

These lists are not exhaustive: if in doubt, advice should be obtained from the External Visits Advisory Service.

If the Academy organises adventure activities routinely and finds the requirement for External Visits Advisory Service approval on each occasion to be a disproportionate barrier, there are two possible options.

- The Academy may apply to the External Visits Advisory Service to delegate the authority to approve visits involving adventure activities to the
- Headteacher/Manager (thus in effect defining them as Category 2). It would need to demonstrate that they have the knowledge and systems in place to make the required decisions. External verification, such as an AALA licence or Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, may be appropriate. Such delegation should be subject to regular review.
- The Academy may choose to define a specific type of visit as Category 1 in a written policy. If this includes adventure activities, then approval from the External Visits Advisory Service is required, which will be based on an assessment of:
  - The definition of the type of visit

- The generic risk assessment
- The operating procedures
- Leader Approval for specific school/service staff if they are to lead the adventure activities.

Normally this approval will be given for a limited time, subject to review.