



Policy for Outdoor Education and Off-site Educational Visits

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Version number	Date Approved	Change/Reasons for Change/Comments
1	March 2008	
2	14 November 2011	Review/EVOLVE System./Change to GB constitution
3	14 November 2011	Change DfES to DfE and LEA to LA
4	9 December 2013	Removal of specific reference to name of insurance company.
5	2 February 2015	Revised to account for changes to LA model policy. Amended/increased student and parent section.
6	25 April 2016	Revised date for latest WSCC guidance.
7	19 June 2017	Reviewed latest guidance. Changed 'Department advice' to 'Government & DfE advice'. Changed 'disaffected' to 'disadvantaged'.
8	18 June 2018	Reviewed WSCC guidance Sept 2017.
9	13 May 2019	Addition of the delegation of the Headteacher's role to the Deputy Headteacher inserted.
10	19 Nov 2020	Reviewed. No changes.

Distribution list
Governors
Head
Leadership Team



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Introduction

Oathall Community College provides many opportunities for its students to enrich and enhance their on-site learning through use of Outdoor Education and Off-site Educational Visits. This encompasses residential activities, environmental studies, sports, physical and cultural activities, business visits, conference and adventurous activities.

The value of off-site educational visits is well recognised by the Governing body and fully supported throughout the school. It is emphasised that a culture of safety must prevail and there is a need for careful planning and adherence to statutory procedures. Off-site educational visits must be well managed, information communicated and responsibilities recognised.

This document outlines the specific policies and procedures for Oathall Community College. It supplements and follows the advice and guidance contained within the following significant publications:

- West Sussex County Council's Regulations for Educational Visits and the use of EVOLVE and national guidance: Latest version 2018-2019.
- Government & DFE advice on health & safety for schools, regularly updated.
- Department for Education advice on 'Legal Duties and Powers For Local Authorities, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies
- The Health and Safety Executive statement: "School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities – Tackling the Health & Safety myths".

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body satisfies itself that the appropriate procedures, risk assessments, and control measures are in place and that the documented guidance notes are being followed. All off-site visits that are residential, abroad, or hazardous need to be approved by the Governing Body. Such approval must be recorded in the minutes of the Governing Body.

The Headteacher is delegated by the Governing Body to approve all off-site educational visits of a perceived low risk, local, daily or regular nature. This is recorded through use of the Local Authority Off-Site Visits Approval process known as EVOLVE. This in turn is delegated to the Deputy Headteacher.

The educational visits co-ordinator (EVC) ensures that all off-site activities follow the correct procedures. The person with these responsibilities will approve the group leader for every visit and monitor the written risk assessments to ensure good practice. In addition, the following responsibilities and duties are undertaken:

- Support the group leader in identifying the purpose for the visit and the selection, training and briefing of appropriate supervising adults and volunteer helpers.
- Ensure that Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are in place where necessary
- Arrange duty emergency contact and draw up proper procedures to be followed in such an event.



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- Keep records and make reports of accidents and “near misses”
- Review and regularly monitor procedures
- Liaise with the LA Outdoor Education Adviser where necessary to ensure the proposed visit complies with the LA regulations.

The group leader is responsible for identifying the purpose of the visit and following the checklist published in the LA guidance. A risk assessment is necessary for all off-site visits. Significant risks and their control measures will need to be recorded on the EVOLVE system. This will take account of:

- Generic risks as published in this document and the LA Regulations and Notes of Guidance for Off-site Activities.
- Event Specific Risks as identified from a pre-visit or thorough knowledge or experience of the environment, accommodation, the leader’s competence, the group and other factors such as transport.
- On-going risks identified by the professional staff responding to changing circumstances and the success of planned activity and procedures. The participants and staff will be fully briefed on the purpose and the risk assessment control measures

Student participants are encouraged to consider risks involved in an off-site educational activity and to assist in the design of appropriate risk management strategies that support their learning. They will be fully aware of the purpose of the visit and understand expectations of behaviour. Students whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. If a student’s behaviour fails to meet the expected requirements on a visit, disciplinary procedures may be instigated in line with the college’s behaviour policy.

All students are entitled to take part in off site visits and activities except where this is not possible for health and safety reasons; tutors and the Inclusion team encourage students to take part in trips and activities and particular attention is paid to those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or have special needs. Our charging and remissions policy outlines how we will provide financial assistance for trips.

Parents should be able to make an informed decision about whether their child should go on the visit. The group leader should ensure that parents are given sufficient information in writing and are invited to any briefing sessions.

Selection Criteria

Should a trip be oversubscribed, the selection criteria will be clearly defined in the initial letter to parents. As all trips have different purposes these will vary from trip to trip. In general the priorities will be:

1. Curriculum purpose – e.g. History students would take priority for a History trip.
2. Age - when trips are run annually or bi-annually such as the Ski trip, students would be selected in age order. (Oldest first)
3. Students who have previously been unsuccessful in applying for a place on a trip.

All other names will be selected randomly ‘from a hat’ by a leadership team member.



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Notes for Off-Site Educational Visits

To ensure proper good practice and compliance with the necessary regulations it is expected that:

- All group leaders will familiarise themselves with the published advice and guidance. Further information is available from the Evolve web-site (www.westsussexvisits.org) and the West Sussex Services for Schools site. Training for group leaders will be arranged to include all aspects of supervision, ongoing risk assessments (including being prepared to stop an activity that has become too hazardous) and how to deal with an emergency. Access to such training is also available through the Outdoor Education Office.
- In order to plan an off-site activity the EVC should be involved in discussing plans at an early stage. Routine or local visits such as PE fixtures also need to be planned ahead. It may be possible to approve a series of events on a termly basis. No financial commitment should be agreed until all relevant approvals have been achieved.
- Informed Parental Consent. Parents now agree on admission to allow their child to take part in any off site visits and PE fixtures but parents should always be informed about a trip or activity that takes place off site. Additional parental consent is required for residential or hazardous trips. Trip leaders should refer to guidance.
- Cover Form. This local form is to achieve any necessary cover arrangements.
- EVOLVE. This online trip approval system must be completed for all trips.
- An Evolve Visit form must be completed for all residential visits and for those that are either visits abroad or for adventurous/hazardous pursuits. It will need to be approved by the Head of Establishment (or EVC) and submitted to the Local Authority one month in advance and certainly before becoming financially committed. These types of off-site activity also need the Governing body's approval. School Journey Insurance is automatically covered by the Local Authority unless the establishment has 'opted-out' of the arrangement. Off-site Group Leaders should check to see if such cover is already being provided by a tour operator, or external provider. A refund may be possible. The details are published at Appendix Z in the WSCC Regulations and Notes of Guidance for Off-site Activities 2007 and are available on the Evolve website.
- Evaluation Report: On return the Group Leader must report to the EVC and, where necessary, an evaluation report should be completed in order to achieve any learning about a 'near miss' or where an incident took place. A new on-line accident reporting procedure is now available. If such a form was completed at the venue, there is a need to place such an occurrence on the record at the 'home' establishment. A general evaluation of the visit is possible, within 28 days, through the EVOVE visit form. This can inform future visits and may be a useful check on the value of the risk assessments undertaken.
- Risk Assessment forms should be completed and lodged with the EVC when risks are perceived as significant. External providers will have their own risk assessment documents that can be used to help in this process. For certain activities an Adventurous Activity Licence is legally required. (See the LA guidance or www.aala.org.uk) If this is the case their licence number need only be quoted instead of actually requiring copies of their risk assessment documents.
- Providers that hold a LOTC (Learning Outside the Classroom) Quality Badge have been externally assessed and are acceptable as a 'checked' provider on the EVOLVE site.