



Educational Visits and Outdoor Learning Policy

Approved by:	Board of trustees	Date: February 2026
Last reviewed on:	February 2026	
Next review due by:	February 2028	
Monitoring & Review	To be monitored by Board of Trustees, Local Governing Bodies	
Links	<p>Internal Linked Policies: Minibus Policy, Driving at Work Policy, Critical Incident Plan, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Charging and Remissions Policy, Staff Expenses Policy</p> <p>Linked Guidance: The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel's (OEAP) National Guidance Link: https://oeapng.info/</p>	
Staff members responsible	CEO, Principal, Head of School, Estates & Facilities Director, Board of Trustees	

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1. Introduction

1.1 Educational visits and outdoor learning, provide valuable experiences for our learners. The aim of this policy is to ensure these are safe high-quality learning experiences.

1.2 We achieve this by:

- a) A clear process
- b) Providing access to the system EVOLVE, an online system to assist with planning, approval, and the management of educational visits.
- c) Appointing an Education Visits Co-Ordinator (EVC)
- d) Training for the EVC, & Trip Leaders
- e) Formally adopting the “Outdoor Education Advisers Panel National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Off-site Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom”.

(This guidance can be found on the following web site: <https://oeapng.info>)

- Clarification: *in the event of any apparent conflict between our Trust or Academy policies and the OEAP National Guidance, our policies must be followed; and clarification sought from the EVC.*

2. Roles & Responsibilities

2.1 CEO / Board of Trustees

- a) Ensure colleagues have access to updated copies of this and associated policies
- b) Provide access to the EVOLVE online system, which is the preferred solution for all academies within our trust, although we recognise there are times when the principal / head of school may choose to have an alternate system in place, i.e., a separate approval system for sports fixtures

2.2 The Principal / Head of School:

- a) Appointing a capable and competent EVC, and ensuring they are provided with the EVC training, time and resources required to fulfil their role. Where an EVC is not in post, the principal / Head of school will undertake the EVC role until filled.
- b) Overall approval of all trips
- c) Ensuring colleagues are competent for the roles allocated to them, and that there is a robust system in place for approving leaders and approving plans for activities and visits.
- d) Ensuring systems, forms and processes are in place for the documentation and approval of trips, and to use the EVOLVE online system, where it is possible to do so; or otherwise ensure an alternate suitable and sufficient system is in place
- e) Ensuring this policy is followed, and any additional academy specific guidance is issued alongside this policy to all relevant stakeholders if required

2.3 EVC:

- a) Co-ordinate all visits
- b) Ensure trips are well planned, with all reasonable steps taken to ensure the successful running of the trip, and the safety of staff members and learners attending.
- c) Ensure Visit Leaders are capable and competent and have received suitable and sufficient training to lead the visit within the last 3 years.
- d) Check all documentation provided
- e) Once all documentation is checked and in order, it is submitted to the Principal / Head of School
- f) Review the visit afterwards, noting any recommendations for future visits.

2.4 Visit Leader

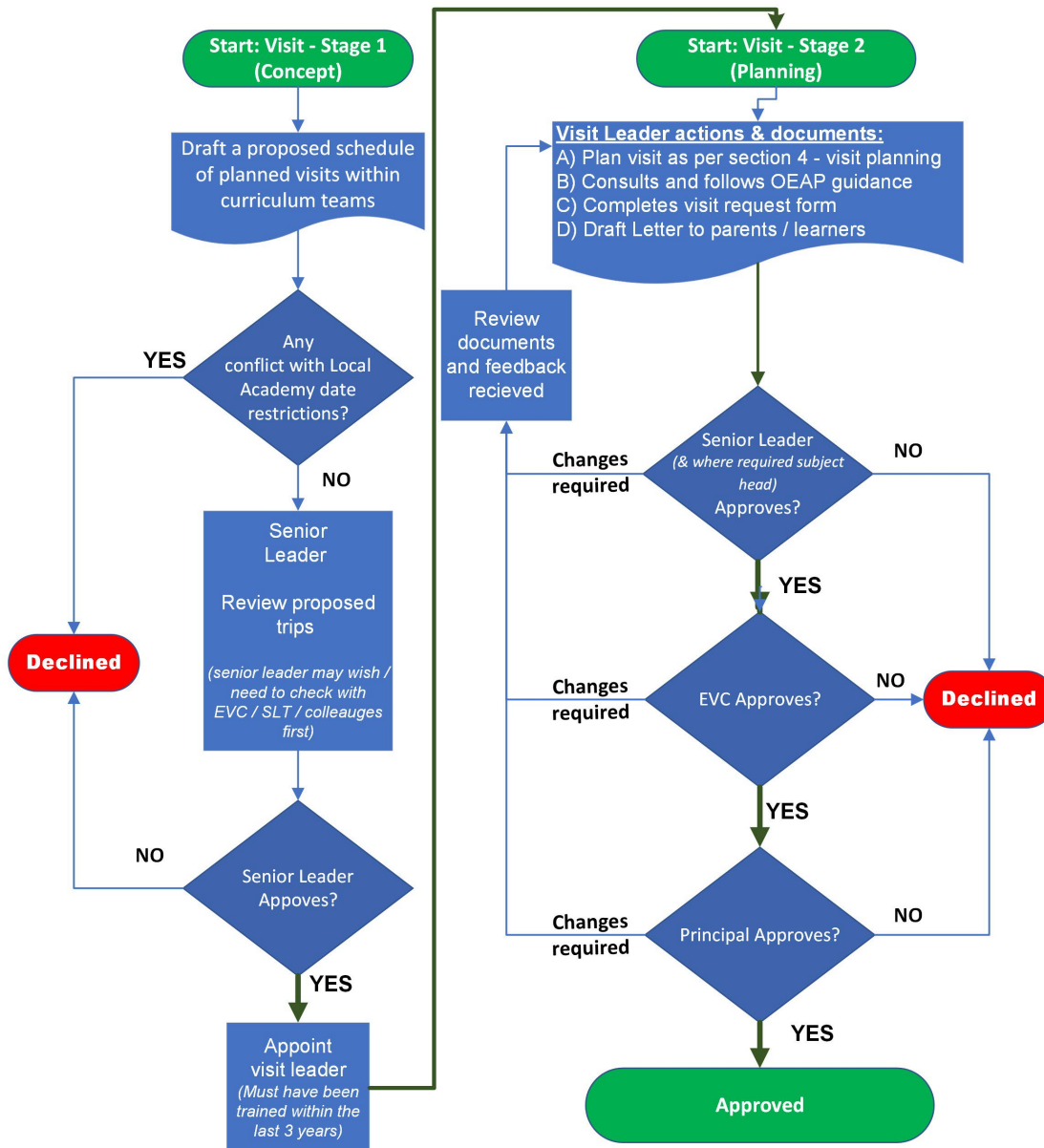
- a) Overall responsibility for planning and managing the visit, including costings, health and safety
- b) Checking the medical / accessibility / SEND needs disclosed, and ensuring relevant control measures / support is in place, and suitably documented
- c) Complete a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, and ensure it is shared with all relevant stakeholders, particularly the Visit Leadership Team.
- d) Has the delegated authority of the Principal / Head of School to direct colleagues and learners in the interests of safety.
- e) Ensure the Visit Leadership Team have been issued with this policy and all other documentation relevant to the visit.
- f) Ensure the Visit Leadership Team have been made aware of safety rules and arrangements for the location and activity concerned; and any actions they need to take to support the learners
- g) Assign members of the Visit Leadership Team with specific duties, where relevant and suitable to do so.
- h) For residentials allocated specific members of the Visit Leadership Team to a specific group of learners for regular registration, communication, supervision, and room checks
- i) Direct any member of accompanying colleagues to undertake any reasonable task related to safety and learner management
- j) Where a minibus is being used, ensure the Minibus Policy is followed
- k) Follow all other relevant policies as appropriate
- l) Consider the impact the visit may have on the other subjects in a learners' study programme
- m) Ensure volunteers have undertaken required safeguarding checks and are familiar with our Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- n) Cost the visit as per section 8 Financials, costs, budgets & expenses

2.5 Visit Leadership Team (all colleagues / approved volunteers, accompanying the visit)

- a) Duty of care for the learners
- b) Read, understand, and follow the risk assessment
- c) Read, understand, and follow this policy and all other documentation related to the visit.
- d) Communicating with learners and managing any independent time, should learners not be subject to direct supervision (note: this will depend on the age of the learners and the risk assessment.)
- e) Follow instructions of the Visit Leader, and give them your full support
- f) Collaborate with the Visit Leader, and all members of the Visit Leadership Team.
- g) Collaborate to always ensure appropriate supervision.
- h) If the continued presence of the learner presents a danger to themselves or other members of the party. This should be brought to the immediate attention of the Visit Leader, who should consult with the EVC or Principal / head of school to decide of the required action (*i.e.*, a decision to send the learner home during a residential visit, the safe way of doing so, and any follow up disciplinary action)

3. Approval Stages

3.0 Approval stages



NOTICE PERIODS

Sufficient notice must be given for the organisation of all visits.
 Half or full day visits or theatre visits = at least four weeks
 Residential activities = at least three months.

System

Preferred method = Evolve
 (although paper based systems are permitted
 if properly recorded and managed by the EVC)

4. Visit planning:

- 4.1 A clear intent for the visit, focusing teaching, learning & development.
- 4.2 All visits and activities must be available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special educational, medical needs, disability, ethnic origin, gender, religion and anything protected by the Equality Act. For further details see the national guidance or discuss with the EVC.
- 4.3 Risk assessment
- 4.4 Supervision (Ratio's - see section 5)
- 4.5 Adequate first aid provision
- 4.6 Ensuring our existing insurance is suitable for the visit, otherwise arrange suitable cover.
- 4.7 Budget / costs are realistic, approved & comply with section 8 of this policy.
- 4.8 SEND - Where a learner attending the trip has SEND needs, the Visit Leader should discuss the requirements with the SENDCO for that academy, to ensure support is suitable & sufficient (Ideally no later than 4 weeks before the visit)
- 4.9 Visit Leadership Team aware of their roles & responsibilities, risk assessment, learners with special support / medical needs, and the relevant section(s) of the Critical Incident Plan
- 4.10 Visit Leader trained (*within the last 3 years, by either a trained EVC, or an approved online training provider, such as the national college*)
- 4.11 Visit Leadership Team suitably trained / briefed for this specific visit by the Visit Leader
- 4.12 Visit Leadership Team all meet our safeguarding requirements i.e., enhanced DBS, trained in safeguarding, etc.
- 4.13 Two contact points assigned, (usually a senior leader and the relevant curriculum leader).
- 4.14 Communication sent to parents and carers outlining details of the visit, activity, and any costs / voluntary contributions.
- 4.15 For more complex visits / residentials, this should be followed up with a second communication giving full details of the activity, including the emergency contact number.
- 4.16 Parental consent forms are obtained for all learners on trips
(*no approved consent form = no visit for that learner*)
(*Learners over 18 who do not want to get parental consent can self-consent though an emergency contact number is still required.*)
- 4.17 See & follow the appropriate check lists: https://oeapng.info/search-results/?download_search=check+list

5. Ratios

- 5.1 Plan Ratio's as appropriate to the age of the learners and the proportion of SEND learners with complex needs attending, consider the type of visit i.e. what are the planned activities, is the trip aim behaviour intervention and the support needs of the learners attending, etc.
- 5.2 **For Early Years:** consult the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework which sets out legal minimum ratios for all providers working with children up to age five - Link: www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2.

- 5.3 **For other ages:** Trips will normally be accompanied by at least two members of staff. For small groups (less than 10) on local trips, one may be sufficient, but this needs to be carefully considered in the risk assessment. As a guideline, the minimum staff member : learner ratios are as follows:

Day trips by coach	2 colleagues	to	50 learners
Residential visits	2 colleagues	to	25 learners
Higher Risk activities	1 colleague	to	10 learners

- 5.4 These are the minimum ratios and must be modified according to the nature of the activity as part of the risk assessment.

- 5.5 A useful framework for assessing requirements for ratios and effective supervision is **STAGER:**

Staffing: Who is needed/available? The plan must work within the limits of available numbers, abilities, and experience.

Timing: How will the time of year or time of day affect the visit and its staffing? If the visit takes place out of the establishment's normal working hours, or at a weekend or during holidays, how will this affect staffing and the availability of support back at base?

Activities: What do you want the group to do and what is possible?

Group: Prior experience, abilities, behaviour and maturity, gender, any specific individual needs.

Environment: Indoors or out; a public space or restricted access; urban, rural, or remote; quiet or crowded? Do not overlook environments to be passed through between venues. For residential visits consider the accommodation and surrounding area. For outdoor environments, consider remoteness, the impact of weather, water levels and ground conditions. Avoiding infection during an epidemic.

Remoteness: Do the activities take place within the establishment grounds, close to it or at a distance? Communications between the group and base. How easy will it be to summon help in an emergency, and for emergency services to reach the group?

(See OEAP National Guidance document for further details)

6. Risk Assessment

- 6.1 A risk assessment must be completed by the Visit Leader, that is specific for that trip and proportionate to the level of risk
- 6.2 Identify the potential benefits to be gained from an activity, and any significant risks to the health and safety of those involved.
- 6.3 Plan and implement measures to reduce these risks as low as reasonably practicable without losing the benefits, and use professional judgement to decide whether, to gain the benefits, the remaining risks are acceptable.
- 6.4 Conduct sufficient research to establish the suitability of the venue, facilities, and third-party provision. The amount of research required should be proportionate to the level of risk, and if reasonable to do so may include a preliminary visit.

- 6.5 When using an outside organisation to provide an activity, the Visit Leader must make all relevant checks to ensure the organisation has appropriate safety standards, risk assessments, qualifications, a good reputation, and public liability insurance.
- a. Check the provider has been awarded the 'Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge'
 - b. If not, then they should be asked to complete a 'provider statement' – as per the national guidance - <https://oeapng.info> (follow link and search for provider statement)
- 6.6 All risk assessments must be submitted with the trip forms and signed off by the EVC and Principal / Head of School, before the trip can go-ahead.
- 6.7 During the trip, the Visit Leader and Visit Leadership Team should remain vigilant to changing circumstances, and complete and communicate dynamic risk assessments where needed
i.e., the trip includes an activity crossing steppingstones. However, the water is far higher than anticipated, so the activity leader decides that it is too dangerous to cross, and quickly organises an alternative safer route that avoids the risk
- 6.8 For fuller guidance on risk assessment please consult the national guidance
LINK: <https://oeapng.info/>

7. High-risk activities, residential and foreign trips:

- 7.1 A more detailed risk assessment is required for high-risk activities, residential and foreign trips.
- 7.2 For high-risk activities, residential and foreign trips the Visit Leader must consult the national guidance, and where possible follow the advice or where not possible, ensure alternative measures are put into place that exceed these safety standards – the hazards, risks and control measures must be included in the risk assessment.
LINK: <https://oeapng.info/>
- 7.3 Adventure activities i.e., caving, climbing, trekking and water sports, must always consider the abilities of the learners when assessing risk.
- 7.4 These kinds of activities must be identified, and risk assessed as part of the visit beforehand and can never be added during the trip.
- 7.5 Organisations may need a licence to provide some adventure activities. (Look for the LOtC Quality Badge, if they do not have this award then ensure they complete a 'provider statement' – as per the national guidance - <https://oeapng.info> (follow link and search for provider statement))
- 7.6 Check the academies current insurance covers the activities and visit.
- 7.7 The Visit Leader should organise a meeting to be held for parents and carers to discuss requirements of the visit, for example, passport, money, contingency plans, specialist clothing, etc.
The Visit Leader will ensure:
- a) a suitable room is booked
 - b) times after teaching are agreed with the Site Manager in advance
 - c) a risk assessment is completed for the meeting
 - d) plans taken to welcome learners, parents and carers
- 7.8 Parents or carers of learners on visits covered should be issued with a pack which includes the Code of Conduct for learners, summary of insurance cover, statutory provisions governing the lawful behaviour of learners and emergency contact details.
- 7.9 For residential visits, details / times for departure, returning to the academy, flight details, emergency contact numbers, the address and telephone number of the destination should be provided to learners, parents, carers and relevant colleagues. The Visit Leader should hold copies of passports for the Visit Leadership Team and learners.

8. Financials, costs, budgets & expenses

- 8.1 Leadership teams consult with their Finance Business Partners, Academy Leadership Teams & EVC to develop guidance for Visit Leaders on how they should budget for their visit; This should then be approved by the Finance Business Partner before implementation.
- 8.2 Pre 16 academies should consult our Charging & Remissions Policy and ensure the DfE's document 'Charging for school activities' is understood and followed.
- 8.3 FE academies should consult the DfE's most recent 'Funding guidance for young people' document, to ensure it is understood and followed.
- 8.4 For details on what staff members can claim, see our Staff Expenses Policy.
- 8.5. For any financial queries, please discuss with the relevant Finance Business Partner.

9. Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE)

- 9.1 Academies wishing to deliver the DofE must be a Directly Licensed Centre with the DofE; Responsibility lies with that academy, to operate as per their DofE license with the DofE.
- 9.2 Where DofE expedition activities are involved, all appropriate external and internal notifications and approvals should be gained.
- 9.3 A DofE Expedition is notifiable as an adventurous activity.
- 9.4 The regional Central DofE office can also offer help and advice on award issues.
- 9.5 Advice can be sought from Educational Visits and Outdoor Learning Advisers.
- 9.6 You can also refer to the OEAP National Guidance Document:
 - 7b "DofE Award Expeditions" <https://oeapng.info/download/1206/>
 - 7k "Unaccompanied Expeditions" <https://oeapng.info/download/4056//>
 - 7d "Camping" <http://oeapng.info/download/4059/>

10. Final checks before departure

- 10.1 Immediately prior to the trip a register of learner's should be produced which also includes the names of the Visit Leadership Team.

This should then be issued to all accompanying staff, reception, EVC, and the two Academy contact persons.

The register should include details of medical conditions, emergency contact numbers, information on allergies/phobias, and special dietary requirements.

- 10.2 On the day of the visit, the organiser should collect the trip mobile phone (unless they already have a trust issued work mobile phone) and issue learners, where appropriate with that phone number and the academy's contact numbers.
- 10.3 The academy contact persons should have copies of, or access to, all relevant information, including a list of all participants, address and telephone number of the destination, the itinerary, travel arrangements (flight details, departure, and arrival times), home addresses and telephone numbers of all members of the party, parents or carers and next of kin, insurance details and the risk assessment.
- 10.4 Ensure the Visit Leadership Team have all the relevant details, and that they are aware of the risk assessment and control measures
- 10.5 Ensure the Visit Leadership Team have copies of the relevant sections of the critical management plan that relates to visits