

Venture Learning

Off-Site Visits & Outdoor Learning Policy

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Introduction

Venture Learning believes that outdoor learning an off-site visits are an integral part of the educational experience. This policy lays out guidelines to ensure that outdoor learning and off-site visits take place within safe and meaningful context. In particular it ensures that:

- Off-site Visits/Activities have an identifiable benefit, with clear objectives.
- All those involved in the organisation and running of off-site visits/ activities or outdoor learning will comply with OEAP National Guidance, NCC Off-site Visits Policy and Venture Learning's guidelines relating to the health and wellbeing of children and young people undertaking such activities.
- The management of all visits/activities will be based on the outcome of suitable and sufficient planning.
- Systematic written procedures, based on reasonable and sensible risk/benefit management process support staff when leading outdoor learning. These procedures and any associated risk assessments are reviewed as and when necessary but not less than annually.
- Standards and procedures exist to ensure that staff and accompanying adults lead activities/sessions within their own proven area of competence.
- While undertaking outdoor learning it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that the risk to participants is minimised by a process of continuous vigilance and ongoing risk management.
- Equipment used is fit for purpose and systematically checked, maintained and replaced when necessary.
- When appropriate, staff should hold an appropriate current first aid qualification and have access to a first aid kit at all times.

Key Staff and Contacts

Provision Based Contacts

Name	Role
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Section 1: Approval and Notification of Outdoor Learning and Off-site Visits

Every off-site visit or outdoor activity must be either notified or approved by the Head of Provision. For the purposes of approval, off-site visits are classified into 3 categories.

1.1 Category A – Local and Regular Activities

Local and regular activities are defined in this policy in terms of the nature of the activity and their location e.g. sports fixtures, swimming, local parks, places of worship, libraries, theatre, cinema, city centre, museums, allotments etc.

All of these visits are included in the general off-site visit consent form which is collected at the commencement of placement. All visits must have the approval of the Head of Provision.

For 'regular and routine' activities staff will be trained in the operation of this policy. 'Regular and routine' visits will include those that take place as part of a planned programme of activity over a given period of time.

All local regular and routine visits both around and local to the site must be notified to the Head of Provision at least one week before the trip is to take place, using the VLOV1 form. The general off-site visit consent is sufficient for these Category A trips. The trip leader is responsible for ensuring that consent has been received and parents notified.

1.2 Category B – Visits to Locations Beyond City or County

Category visits are usually stand alone or annual ad may include the seaside, major visitor attractions or UK cities. All of these visits will require the approval of the OVC and Head of Provision. Visit Leaders should complete the following:

- obtain specific written consent from parents/carers;
- complete risk assessments for travel, visits and any activity specific risk assessments;
- inform the HoP and OVC at least 4 weeks prior to the trip using the VLOV2 form; and,
- programme of activites/timings.

1.3 Category C

Category C includes alll residential visits, visits abroad and activities in hazardous environments or involving 'adventurous' activities. All of these visits MUST be approved using EVOLVE and will require the approval of the OVC, Head of Provision and commissioning schools/local authorities at least 6 weeks prior to the trip taking place.

Section 2: Pre-visit/activity Planning and Considerations

All necessary paperwork must be completed and approved by the Head of Provision prior to the trip taking place.

2.1 Staff Competence

The Head of Provision should be satisfied that staff are sufficiently competent to lead the activity/session. Specific levels of competence may be required depending on any activities being led.

In addition, it is important that supervising staff are competent and understand their roles and responsibility and are briefed regarding the outcome of risk assessments. Appropriate levels of first aid cover must be available according to the activity and establishment risk assessment.

All staff in sole supervision of young people must have undergone suitable DBS checks as part of their recruitment procedures, including the taking up of references.

2.2 Gathering Information

It is recommended that a pre-visit should be made to any new venues, or by staff using existing venues for the first time.

Trip leaders must ensure that personal information on all participants is known (as regards any medical, dietary or special requirements) so as to assist in the safe inclusion of all participants. Refer to the Medical Policy if a student has a care plan or requires the administration of medication.

The Head of Provision should have access to the following information, prior to and during and off-site visit taking place:

- names, addresses, dates of birth and phone number of all students taking part;
- names of all staff attending, with contact phone numbers; and,
- full details of the venue, transport company, departure and arrival times, with appropriate phone numbers.

The trip leader should have easy access to emergency contact numbers of all parents/carers, the Head of Provision and the nominated contact person.

Appropriate details should be placed in an accessible location or available electronically.

Section 3: During a Visit/Activity

3.1 Role of the Trip Leader

The trip leader is responsible for:

- ensuring young people are wearing appropriate clothing/equipment for the activity being undertaken;
- ensuring that the visit is managed in order that risks are reduced to staff and young people, as far as is reasonably practicable;
- curtailing the visit or stopping the activity if the risk to the health and well-being of any participant reaches an unacceptable level;
- ensuring that participants, including staff, are aware of the need to be involved in the process of on-going risk assessment, including the reporting of hazards and potential risks;
- retaining ultimate responsibility for participants at all time; and,
- contacting the Head of Provision or nominated contact person if they anticipate returning later than estimated.

3.2 Group Management

As part of the risk assessment staff-student ratios should be set. Young people should be adequately supervised throughout the activities/visit with suitable group control measures implemented (e.g. named leaders of smaller groups).

The itinerary, arrangements and code of conduct should be discussed with young people and staff prior to the visit. This briefing should include the protocol for if someone is separated from the group. It is important that young people understand arrangements, that they are part of a group and need to follow instructions.

Head counts should be undertaken by leaders particularly at arrival/departure points, and when separating and reforming groups. If a person is separated from the group the Head of Provision and parents/carers should be informed. A member of staff should be identified to remain at the venue if transport leaves before the young person(s) return.

3.3 Incident Management and Containing Emergencies

The following conditions should be ensured:

- all participants, including staff, are aware of the emergency procedures and risk assessments for this visit and understand their role how it may affect them, especially in an emergency;
- provision is made for any incident, including First Aid, and a procedure is known and understood in the event of an emergency or other serious incident;
- there are sufficient supervisors to deal with an incident and take charge of the rest of the group;
- individual medication is brought where appropriate;
- mobile phones are carried by staff;
- lists of young people and contact details of parents/carers are held by visit leader, deputy leader and Head of Provision/nominated contact, and after-hours emergency person and contact number are available; and,
- there is an emergency plan for lost or missing young people which is known and understood by group leaders.

3.4 Illness or Injury

At least one staff member must be prepared, and appropriately trained, to take the lead in first aid and this person should carry a fully stocked first aid kit.

In the case of illness or injury a member of staff must be identified to remain with the injured party if they need to remain at the visit site, return to the provision, or attend a hospital. In any event the emergency contact of the injured party should be contacted as soon as possible.

Supervision of the remaining group should be reorganised to take into account the preoccupied staff member. The group should return home early if supervision levels fall below the required standard for safety to be maintained.

All accidents should be recorded via normal accident recording procedures when back on site.

3.5 Indirect/Remote Supervision

If the location is suitable for this type of supervision (e.g. a theme park) the trip leader must ensure that:

- young people are sufficiently briefed and competent (any individual young people for whom indirect supervision is not suitable must be directly supervised);
- clear guidelines and emergency procedures should be set and understood;
- young people remain in pairs or groups (buddy system - each responsible for named other);
- rendezvous points and times are set and young people know how to contact staff;
- designated staff remain at a central contact point known by young people;
- clear boundaries are set; and,
- parents/carers informed and specific consent given for indirect/remote supervision.

3.6 Post Visit

Where appropriate the visit should be reviewed and a report made to the head of Provision including any incidents/near misses.

Pertinent information acquired from or about the visit or activity is drawn to the attention of the Off-site Visits Coordinator and shared with colleagues for consideration in the planning of future educational visits and activities.