

# OFFSITE VISITS AND TRIPS POLICY

Aim: To set out the overarching principles and responsibilities with regard to visits and trips undertaken by pupils.

## ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR:

Heads Teachers, Visit Leaders and Organisers

**Date issued:** 1 September 2018 by: C Lloyd HSO

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**Next review: August 2024**

### Revision History

Issue Date:	Version:	Comments
August 2018	0.1	Draft for review
September 2019	1.0	First issue distributed to Headteachers, COO, SET SLT
September 2022	2.0	Section 7 Approval – updated. IMPORTANT School Education Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) Please note changes to section 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 Appendix A revised
November 2022	3.0	Section 4, 5.4, 6.2, 6.3, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 and Appendix A revised. New Appendix C. All changes highlighted.
August 2023	4.0	Sections 7.2, 7.4 and Appendix A updated. New text in <a href="#">blue font</a>

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This policy supports the Health and Safety strategy for schools within the Sapientia Education Trust (SET). It sets out how schools should decide if a visit or trip should take place and the associated responsibilities of members of staff and governors. It serves to meet the employer's duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated Regulations. The policy is reviewed annually or in the event of any significant change to the management structure or a significant incident involving an offsite trip. For the purposes of this policy the term 'visit' is used to include what is understood to be a trip. The term Head Teacher should be taken to mean the person in charge of the school if a different job title is used.

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

2.1 Any occasion when a student attends another location for the purposes of a school sponsored activity is subject to the requirements of this policy.

Typically, these include-

- Visits to other locations as part of the curriculum or for social purposes as part of school life. These may be residential or non-residential.
- Sporting events.
- Field trips

2.2 The journey to and from the venue forms part of the overall activity, other than when students travel independent of school provided transport or arrangements.

2.3 A joint visit is one undertaken with another educational establishment, where travel to the location and supervision at the event may be shared. A joint visit includes an occasion when a pupil is attending another school and journeys away from that establishment as part of the curriculum.

2.4 Simply attending a venue at which other schools are present is not a joint visit.

## **3. STANDARDS APPLIED TO ARRANGEMENTS**

3.1 The standards used, follow guidance provided within the current Employer Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Off Site Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom.

3.2 The guidance is provided by the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP).

3.3 The OEAP comprises of the nominated representatives of the Chief Officers of Local Authorities in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. It provides a forum for sharing and developing good practice in Outdoor Learning / Learning Outside the Classroom.

3.4 The OEAP guidance encourages a non-prescriptive risk based approach to many aspects of the planning and delivery of a visit.

3.5 HSE key messages (June 2011) are particularly relevant to the standards expected of schools within the SET and are fully supported-

‘Teachers should expect their schools to have procedures that encourage participation, are proportionate to the level of risk and avoid bureaucracy.’

Well managed school trips and outdoor activities are great for children. Children won’t learn about risk if they’re wrapped in cotton wool.

#### 4. CATEGORIES OF VISITS

4.1 The SET adopts a three-stage model for visits, level 1 being the lower and 3 being the higher level of risk and/or complexity.

##### Level 1

- Day visits and activities with no additional significant hazards, such as sports fixtures, theatres, museums, libraries, cinemas, concerts and other venues regularly used by the School.

##### Level 2

- Non adventurous activities at any location where the journey, venue or activity presents a higher risk than level 1 e.g. farms, zoos, forest schools, swimming (third party pools/leisure centres), theme parks.
- A joint visit will be a minimum of level 2.

##### Level 3

- Any **adventurous** activity including but not limited to:
  - Climbing
  - Camping
  - Caving
  - Ski trip
  - Trekking
  - Watersports e.g. canoeing, windsurfing or rafting.
  - Activities in open/remote country and/or adjacent to inland or coastal waterways.
- All **overseas** and exchange visits abroad.
- All **residential** visits.

#### 5. EVOLVE

5.1 This is an electronic system by which the planning and arrangements around a school visit receive external verification by the Educational Visits Advisor for Norfolk or Suffolk County Council.

5.2 Details of all visits must be recorded on the system by the school.

5.3 For a joint visit, it provides a means for schools to communicate regarding arrangements.

5.4 The entry of details onto the system is the responsibility of the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) or the member of staff leading the visit at the head teacher's discretion.

## **6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

6.1 Due to the complex nature of off-site visits, conventional 'risk assessment' as a stand-alone tool is not particularly useful and can on occasion be misleading. It is of greater benefit to consider the overall 'risk management' of visits by taking all aspects of visit planning and management into account. This can be achieved effectively through a combination of the 'EVOLVE' visit form itself, and where appropriate, any event specific notes or attachments.

6.2 For all offsite visits and trips the EVC and/or trip leaders should ensure that:

- risk assessment focuses attention on real risks – not risks that are trivial and fanciful;
- proportionate systems are in place – so that trips presenting lower-risk activities e.g. Level 1 are quick and easy to organise, and higher-risk activities e.g. Level 2 and above (such as those involving climbing, skiing or water-based activities) are properly planned and assessed.
- risk assessments from specialist higher risk activity providers involved must form part of the overall risk protection strategy for the trip.
- those planning the trips are properly supported – so that staff can readily check if they have taken sufficient precautions or whether they should do more.
- Where higher risk activities are controlled/provided by a third party, that due diligence checks have been undertaken using the Provider Statement at Appendix C.
- Ensuring that when assessing providers competence, preference will be given to those with a current Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTIC) accreditation.

6.3 Generic risk assessment examples for Level 1 activities are detailed at Annex B as used by Wymondham College. Higher risk activities by their nature require a more bespoke approach however the methodology for assessing the risk of harm is the same. SET school Visit Leaders or EVC's are encouraged to compile their own "event-specific" risk assessments which can then be reviewed and re-used as required.

6.4 When drafting risk management documentation for higher risk activities the SET Health and Safety Officer is available to EVC's for consultation and advice as required.

## 7. APPROVAL

- 7.1 Staff must seek provisional approval from the Head Teacher before making any booking or financial commitment or advertising the visit.
- 7.2 Once the details have been submitted via EVOLVE, final approval for any visit is the responsibility of the Head Teacher. To assist the Head Teacher with additional competent advice on which to base their decision, SET are providing an additional layer of due diligence as follows:

**Level 3 trips and visits;** when the trip is logged with Evolve, the school EVC shall cc the SET Health and Safety Manager in to any documentation uploaded e.g. the trip itinerary and risk assessment/s. Alternatively they can forward the documents here: [health.safety@setrust.co.uk](mailto:health.safety@setrust.co.uk)

All suggested modifications from the Health and Safety team to either the itinerary or the risk assessment will be provided to the EVC and copied to the Head Teacher for consideration.

- 7.3 EVOLVE requires the submission of information no later than 30 days for residential and 14 days for non-residential visits before departure. In exceptional circumstances, should an opportunity arise at short notice, Head Teachers have the authority to approve a visit, subject to the same details and documents being available at the school as would have been uploaded to EVOLVE. However in the case of Level 3 trips and visits, the school EVC should still submit the documentation to the H&S Team for review and comment before a decision is taken by the Head Teacher to either approve or otherwise withhold consent for the visit.
- 7.4 Those planning visits must allow sufficient time for approvals to be considered including the time for additional checks of Level 3 trips by the SET H&S Manager or a member of their team.

## 8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.1 These are set out in Appendix A.
- 8.2 In the circumstances where the person organising the visit and specifically any safety related arrangements is not attending the visit, it is their responsibility to fully brief the Visit Leader and to ensure the planning responsibilities for the Visit Leader are met.

## 9. SAFEGUARDING

- 9.1 Safeguarding must be central to the planning of any visit. This must form part of the risk assessment for the visit.

9.2 Specific information relating to safeguarding during trips and visits is contained in the following OEAP National guidance and is endorsed by SET;

- Corporate Parenting
- Vetting and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks
- Safeguarding
- Young People in a Sexual Relationship

## **10. EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

10.1 The Evolve system allows for the recording of evaluation.

10.2 Where an evaluation indicates a failure or weakness in the school's trips and visits planning or implementation this must be reported to the Head Teacher.

# APPENDIX A

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Visit Leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To secure provisional approval from the Head Teacher before making any booking or commitment to a visit.</li><li>• To submit proposed visits within the required time scale.</li><li>• To provide sufficient information to enable approval including a risk assessment commensurate with the level of risk.</li><li>• Ensure the parent/carer provides consent and is aware of any adventurous activities to be undertaken.</li><li>• To ensure supporting documentation such as the nominal roll is in place.</li><li>• To ensure Head Teacher approval has been secured for the visit.</li><li>• To ensure any student absence from class has been notified to the relevant teachers and there is colleague agreement to the absence.</li><li>• To ensure staff cover arrangements have been approved.</li><li>• To check venue Covid safety arrangements in advance to determine any additional measures required during the visit.</li><li>• To manage a visit safely, efficiently and to achieve the intended outcomes.</li><li>• To ensure financial regularity.</li></ul>
<b>Supporting staff on the visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To support the visit leader in providing a safe event which meets the intended outcomes</li><li>• To manage the safety and conduct of pupils</li></ul>
<b>SET H&amp;S Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To review documentation for any proposed level 3 visit.</li></ul> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:health.safety@setrust.co.uk">health.safety@setrust.co.uk</a> Tel: 01953 609000 ext 3477</p>
<b>Educational Visits Coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To submit details via Evolve once provided by the visit leader</li><li>• To liaise with the Norfolk or Suffolk County Council Educational Visits Advisor as required</li><li>• To ensure the completion of the Evolve system</li><li>• <a href="#">To ensure SET H&amp;S Team is made aware of any level 3 visits and provided with links to trip itinerary and risk assessment/s within the timescales noted in sections 7.2 and 7.3.</a></li></ul>
<b>Head Teacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To approve visits once satisfied that the appropriate arrangements are in place and that the planning provides for a safe and suitable visit.</li></ul>

# APPENDIX B

## GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

The following generic risk assessment templates are available for information. Contact the SET H&S Team as required. Tel: 01953 609000 Ext 3477

Email: [health.safety@setrust.co.uk](mailto:health.safety@setrust.co.uk)

- Coach Travel
- Minibus Travel
- Car or Taxi Travel
- Rail Travel
- TFL Tube Travel
- Visit to low risk premises or indoor activity
- Sports Fixture
- Visit to a low risk outdoor venue or activity

# APPENDIX C

## PROVIDER STATEMENT TEMPLATE



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