

Policy for Outdoor Learning, Off-Site Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom

Introduction

This policy applies to all staff that conducts or is aiding an activity either on or off site that is classified under the title of this policy.

As a school we believe that outdoor education gives depth to the curriculum and makes an important contribution to the pupil's physical, personal and social education. Outdoor activities enable pupils to enjoy challenging and unfamiliar experiences that test and develop the above skills. By helping young people apply their knowledge across a range of challenges, learning outside the classroom builds bridges between theory and reality, schools and communities, young people and their futures.

Organising and booking visits – staff are expected to add visits in to their curriculum plan for the academic year and to book all visits and coaches for the year during the Autumn Term. This will then avoid clashes of dates in the school diary and difficulty in booking coaches at busy times of the year.

OEAP National guidance

As a school we have adopted the OEAP National Guidance. Staff must follow this guidance as well as the points outlined in this policy, some of which refers to the OEAP directly. If any conflict appears between the two documents then Courthouse Green Primary School Policy must be followed and clarification sought from the EVC (Philippa Clark/Louise Newham). All planned activities must meet at least 1 of the 10 outcomes (See attached information at the end of this policy).

www.oeapng.info

Clarification of roles

Visit leader

- A single visit leader should be appointed. If this changes during or before a visit then a clear handover will be made.
- Must ensure that the Head Teacher has given approval for the visit / activity to go ahead.
- A visit leader must be Accountable (having read this policy and agreed to all procedures), Competent (as assessed by the Head Teacher and / or EVC) and confident in leading the visit / activity.
- Must - fill out EVOLVE using the appropriate information. This includes evaluating the activity / trip afterwards.
 - Have valid Educational reason for the activity and have follow up activities planned so that the children gain the most from the experience.
 - Complete or amend a generic Risk Assessment (RA) based on the RADAR model and SAGED, depending on activity / visit planned.
 - Appoint an Assistant leader
 - Complete a pre visit to ensure they are able to adequately fill out the RA and lead the children effectively.
 - Ensure adequate first aid provision is in place
 - Ensure that everybody involved with the trip / activity is fully briefed on what is expected of them and taken through the RA.
 - Ensure RA and emergency procedures are taken with them and that 2 valid mobile numbers are given to the office before they leave school.
 - Ensure the EVC is notified of any activities / trips at **least 2 weeks in advance**.

Assistant leader

- Must be named on the RA.
- Must be suitably competent and aware of all policies and procedures relating to proposed activity.
- Must be fully briefed to ensure they understand the roles and responsibilities expected of them.
- Must be prepared to take on Visit leader responsibility if the need arises. If this happens then a clear handover must take place and the responsibilities of Visit leader taken on.

Head teacher

- Will ensure the group leader is competent and able to fulfil all responsibilities as outlined above.
- Is responsible for saying if a visit / activity should go ahead, based on risks and costs.
- Has final say on whether all paper work has been filled out to the appropriate standard (e.g., EVOLVE and RA's)
- Will organise appropriate training for staff as they see fit.

Educational visits Co-ordinator

- To have an understanding of how outdoor learning, off-site visits and Learning outside the classroom (LOtC) can support a wide range of outcomes and raise achievement.
- Has attended appropriate EVC training.
- Ensure all planned activities meet regulations and guidance
- Ensuring in partnership with the Head teacher that all visit leaders and assistant leaders are competent.
- Ensure all members of staff have read, agreed and understand the policy.
- Will support the Head teacher with approval and decisions.
- Monitor visit leader planning and sample monitoring of visits. As well as ensuring that activities are evaluated appropriately and any action needed is followed up.
- Ensuring that Emergency procedures are in place and each visit leader is aware of them.
- Ensuring that any policies or procedures are reviewed regularly, especially after any serious incidents or system failures.
- Ensuring that there is a procedure for recording near misses / accidents including following these up.

Procedural requirements

- **Evolve and accompanying RA will be filled in at least 2 weeks prior to visit for those activities within band 1 or 2 on the RADAR. Or for an activity that is in a higher band and within this country at least 4 weeks prior.**
- If the activity falls within band 3 and seen as particularly high risk or you are leaving the country then it will be necessary to discuss this further with the headteacher before booking and there is a possibility that extra insurance will need to be booked. The school would also take further advice from an accredited school trip adviser.
- Risk Assessment must be filled out (See RA section)
- A pre visit **MUST** be undertaken if **visit leader** does not have previous working knowledge of the activity / trip.
- All adults must fulfil their duty of care as outlined on the OEAP website.

Using external providers

- When using an external provider (such as the partnership centre or Brandon Marsh or having activities led within school) you do not need a copy of their RA if they hold a valid 'learning outside the classroom quality badge (LOtC) or an AALA adventure mark. This provides assurance that they meet accepted standards of risk management.
- If they do not have the above then you need written confirmation that they have risk management systems in place.

THESE SHOULD NOT REPLACE YOUR OWN RA AS THIS IS SPECIFIC TO YOUR CHILDREN'S NEEDS

- Always ensure there is a clear understanding of who is responsible for 'duty of care' and when. ENSURE there is a clear handover. THERE MUST BE NO GREY AREAS

Parental consent

- Schools are not required to obtain parental consent for pupils to take part in off-site activities that take place within school hours (Nursery aged children are exempt from this). However – It remains school policy that parents will be informed of the trip or activity. This will then be their opportunity to withdraw consent after meeting with the Head teacher.
- If the activity is outside of school hours a consent form can be obtained from the office.
- If the activity / trip is classed as adventurous, residential or a compulsory charge made then informed consent MUST be obtained.

Special needs

- If a child attending the activity / trip has specific needs whether this be behavioural, medical or educational then this must be taken into account on the RA with specific arrangements being made and recorded.
- All inhalers / epi pens etc MUST be taken with you. (See RA section)

Checking in and out of school

- Before leaving medical forms for every child must be obtained from the office and taken on the trip.
- Office staff must have an up to date list of adults and children who are on the trip. The office can obtain this through EVOLVE or a paper copy given if changes have been made to this.
- If changes have been made these MUST be updated onto evolve within 2 weeks

Emergencies

Visit leaders MUST follow emergency procedures outlined on each RA.

Monitoring

Monitoring of; planning, follow up and evaluations of activities / visits will be monitored at the discretion of the Head teacher and EVC to ensure policy and procedures are being followed. This monitoring may include accompanying the group on the visit / activity.

Risk Management and Risk benefit assessment

"Young people encountering risk sensibly managed are presented with an unrivalled learning opportunity. Exposure to well managed risk helps children learn important life skills, including how to manage risks for themselves"

As a school we follow the RADAR model of Risk assessment (See attached sheet) and use SAGED to assess risk. ALL RA'S ARE A WORKING DOCUMENT AND MUST BE TAKEN WITH YOU ON A VISIT / TRIP. **The RA should be collaborative; involving all staff taking part and shared with the children and volunteers before EVERY visit.**

- For band 1 visits / activities a generic RA can be obtained from the schools system. This must be read and ratios verified. There is an option to alter ratios dependant on your specific groups needs. E.g., 1:1 support for specific need.
- For band 2 or 3 visits an individual RA MUST be completed in the generic format.
- Any accidents or near misses MUST be recorded in the space provided on the RA.
- The RA must then be returned to the office after each visit.
- After each visit an evaluation MUST be completed on EVOLVE, specific to your experience.
- A first aider from school must accompany each trip unless agreed otherwise by the EVC and or Head teacher.

An RA process should include;

- Clear identification of the anticipated benefits.
- Referral to existing generic RA documents and School policies.
- Reflection on any lessons learned from similar visits.
- Reflection on lessons learned from other parties on similar visits.
- Identification of a plan B

- Fully briefing all staff, volunteers and children.
- Reviewing and evaluating when returning from your visit / activity.

Preliminary visit

- Suitability of the venue must be researched and checked prior to visit / activity so you are fully able to assess its safety. This is essential in enabling you to ensure you can supervise the children effectively.
- Where a preliminary visit is not practicable check if the destination has a nationally accredited provider assurance scheme e.g., LOfC Quality badge (This covers quality and safety) or an AALA Licence (This covers the safety of certain activities).
- A preliminary visit is NOT required if you have successfully planned and lead this specific activity / visit before.
- If in doubt seek advice from the EVC.

Visits involving animals

Staff should visit or discuss with staff at the site to check that all animals on the visit are properly controlled and supervised. Visitors should not touch the animals unless encouraged by their handlers. Supervisors should ensure children wash their hands well with soap and water after handling any animal and then again immediately before eating. Supervisors should adhere to notices and instructions provided by staff at the site.

Special Educational needs and disabilities

- Deciding to include or exclude children with specific needs, whether these be medical, behavioural or educational, for a visit / activity should be done after a wide discussion with all interested parties E.g., Head teacher, Visit leader, Teacher, Parents etc. The result of which should take into account any risks to that child or others taking part in the trip / activity.
- All staff involved in the trip / activity should be fully briefed ensuring they understand their roles concerning said children.
- Staff who work closely with said children should accompany the trip / activity if possible.
- Ratios MUST be increased to meet said children's needs. The following should be taken into account when deciding the ratio:
 - The need to administer medication
 - The need for a member of staff to accompany child to the toilet.
 - The likelihood of the child absconding.
 - The likelihood of a medical emergency arising.
 - The way in which change in routine will effect behaviour
 - The risk of violence or assault
 - The need for 'Team Teach' and trained staff being available.

Ratios

- Leaders must ensure that children are supervised in accordance with the principles of 'effective supervision' as outlined in OEAP guidance.
- Ratios MUST be adhered to as a minimum unless there is a specific stated reason written on the RA and these have been agreed by the EVC and / or Head teacher.
- Ratios MUST be increased when thinking about;
 - The nature of the activity and its duration
 - The location and the environment
 - The age and gender of the children
 - The ability and need of the children
 - Staff competence.

When assessing Ratios needed use **SAGED**:

Staffing requirements – Trained? Experienced? Competent?

Activity Characteristics – Specialist? Insurance issues? Licensable?

Group characteristics – Prior experience? Behaviour? Special or medical needs? ability?

Environmental conditions – Like last time? Weather? Water levels?

Distance from support mechanisms – transport? Shelter? Telephone signal?

Our schools agreed minimum ratios are;

Two year olds 1:2 (parents will normally accompany their child)

Nursery	1:3
Reception	1:5
Years 1 -3	1:6
Years 4/5/6	1:10

Volunteer / parent helpers

- Must be suitably competent
- Must have read and understood the RA and their role within this.
- Must not use their mobile telephone or separate from the group at any time.
- Must NEVER be left unsupervised with children – this includes separating from the group for a task or taking children to the toilet.
- Should not have supervisory / group leader role where the group involves their own child, unless a specific reason is stated and agreed on the RA or with the EVC.

During the visit / activity

First aid

- All inhalers / epi pens etc must be taken as well as permission forms for these.
- A person is appointed in charge of first aid arrangements (Usually the first Aider)
- A suitably stocked first aid kit and sick bags taken.

Transport

- Hired from a reputable company
- All coaches and minibuses must be fitted with seatbelts
- If using public transport children will not use the front 2 seats and sit downstairs where possible.
- If using Staff cars, staff MUST have business insurance and MOT and have documents checked by school. If children are under 135cm then child car seats should be used – please see government information for latest regulations.
- If using staff cars ensure that more than one adult is present in the vehicle.

Sub groups

- Allocate supervisory responsibility to each adult for a named group and ensure children know who their adult is.
- Ensure each adult knows they are responsible to the visit leader.
- Ensure each adult has a copy of the RA with them.
- Ensure, where an adult is a volunteer / parent, they are NEVER left alone with the children.
- Ensure the Medical forms are appropriately shared between staff so that if groups are separated each member of staff has the required medical consent needed.

Head counts

- Regular head counts are to take place, increasing in frequency when needed.
- Ensure children are aware of a rendezvous point when you first arrive at destination, in case they get separated from the group.

Behaviour

- The schools behaviour policy is to be followed

Insurance

- Triumph Trust has joined the Government's RPA scheme that offers insurance for school visits. This does not need to be mentioned when teachers complete the Evolve system.
- Extra insurance may need to be arranged for hazardous visits, residential visits or visits out of the country – these must be discussed fully with the Headteacher and the School Business Manger before making any bookings.

Finance

Letters sent to parents notifying them of the trip / activity must state that the contribution is voluntary and whether or not the trip / activity will go ahead if there are insufficient contributions. No children are to be excluded if contributions are not made. Please see school charging policy

10 outcomes of outdoor education

The following 10 outcomes are indicators of high quality outdoor education.

Outcome	Why is it important?	Indicators
Enjoyment	Enjoy and adopt a positive attitude to learning	Smile often, happy and eager to opt into activities, talk about experience with enthusiasm, encourage friends to take part.
Confidence	Gain self-esteem and confidence through achieving	Overcome apprehensions, want a second try at things, feel proud of what they have achieved, want a new challenge, talk openly about what they are and are not good at, a can do attitude, are able to modify aspects of behaviour that restrict them.
Social awareness	Developing social skills, appreciate their own and others contributions	Appreciate their own strengths, recognise where others are better at things than them, trust others, support others, challenge intolerance, understand how their actions impact others, encourage others to achieve, make new friends.
Environmental awareness	Aware of natural environment and understand importance of conservation	Respond positively to new challenges, understand their personal impact on the environment, keen to participate in conservation activities, appreciate and draw inspiration from natural environment, respect power of natural forces, demonstrate care for the environment and living things.
Activity Skills	Acquire and develop new skills.	Develop and adapt new skills, transferring old skills, develop mental skills, take responsibility for kit worn and its suitability,
Personal qualities	Increased initiative, self-reliance and responsibility, perseverance and commitment	Actively involved in planning activity, take responsibility for their own belongings, demonstrate initiative in overcoming their own obstacles, try hard to succeed in activities they find challenging, persevere with good humour, take responsibility for not letting others down.
Key skills	Developing key skills in of communication, problem solving, leadership and team work	Listen to instructions well, come up with and express their own ideas, importance of listening to ideas of others, are able to record and describe their experiences, work cooperatively with others, are willing to step back and let others take charge,
Health and fitness	Lifelong value of healthy activities	Keep themselves fit, have a positive self-image, talk about things they do to keep fit, eat healthily, want to continue their interest in activities outside school,
Increased motivation and appetite for learning	Increased motivation contributed to raised levels of attainment in other aspects of their education.	Always aim to achieve their best, become self-motivated learners, show a desire for new challenges, have good or improving relationships with teachers and their peers, display good or improving behaviour, talk positively about school, have a good or improving attendance, participate in a wide variety of school life.
Broadened horizons	Become open to a wider range of employment opportunities and life choices	Exposed to and more aware of different cultures, become more open minded, are happy to leave known environments, perceive a wider range of career options, always aim higher and aspire to achieve.