



Educational Visits Policy

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Purpose	This policy aims to provide advice and guidance to enable those involved with educational visits to have confidence in knowing they have taken all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of those in their care, their colleagues and themselves, and have minimised the likelihood of anything going seriously wrong while maximising the benefit to those taking part.								
Consultation	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Governors</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parents</td> <td>x</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pupils</td> <td>x</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staff</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> </table>	Governors	✓	Parents	x	Pupils	x	Staff	✓
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Parents	x								
Pupils	x								
Staff	✓								
Links with other policies	Health and Safety Charging SEND Safeguarding First Aid Teaching and Learning								



Managing Educational Visits

Guidelines for Managers and Staff in Sutton and Kingston Schools, LBS and AfC Youth Services

Document: Educational Visits Guidance

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Foreword

Educational trips and visits provide an excellent opportunity for personal growth of pupils and students. They can have a positive effect on pupils' self-esteem and can significantly improve many skills including their ability to work with others, powers of investigation and improved understanding of their surroundings. They are an integral part of the life of children and young people and can enhance the quality of their educational experience providing opportunities which cannot be easily offered in schools and settings.

It is important that all visits are well-managed and risks assessed to ensure our children and young people get the very most out of their experience in an environment which encourages 'safe' risk taking.

Guidance for Successful Offsite Visits

Introduction

This document aims to provide advice and guidance to enable those involved with educational visits to have confidence in knowing they have taken all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of those in their care, their colleagues and themselves, and have minimised the likelihood of anything going seriously wrong while maximising the benefit to those taking part.

Scope

This guidance is for all schools in the Boroughs of Kingston and Sutton, and all service areas within the People Directorate (Sutton) and associated teams in Achieving for Children (AfC). Terms such as "child", "student", "pupil" or "young person" should be considered to be interchangeable. Similarly it may be necessary to substitute "youth group", "education setting" etc. for "school" throughout the document. The importance of this document, and of following the guidance contained in it, cannot be overemphasized when reflecting on the accidents which have happened on educational visits. Similar principles apply to all visits regardless of the destination or purpose.

Maintained schools, youth, play and other council services must make themselves fully conversant with this guidance. Governing bodies of Academy, Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools are welcome to use this guidance as the basis of their policy for controlling health and safety risks associated with off-site visits.

Sutton and Kingston Local Authorities have adopted most of the national guidance published by the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP). This provides detailed guidance about many aspects of off-site visits and the advice contained within it also forms part of this policy. In order to keep this policy succinct, links have been provided to this more detailed guidance where this is appropriate. The OEAP guidance incorporates a regular update process to ensure that all documents are kept up-to-date

Both Councils are committed to protecting and enhancing the environment as well as ensuring safe practice. It is hoped that all those involved in educational visits will encourage young people to enjoy the outdoor environment responsibly and take care of their surroundings (for example by following the [Countryside Code](#)), and will take practicable steps to uphold the principle of "sustainability"

Roles and responsibilities

The Local Authority (LA) is the 'employer' for maintained schools and other education settings. In all other schools the employer is the Governing Body or Management Board who must have their own signed policies and procedures. All establishments should have a health and safety policy that includes responsibilities related to Educational Visits. Advice on the responsibilities associated with specific roles is detailed below.

These procedures are available for Governing Bodies to adopt when developing their school's policy.

[Checklist for Governing Bodies](#)

[Checklist for Head teachers](#)

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

All schools and council services which provide off-site visits must have an EVC in post. Normally, the EVC will be a member of the establishments' senior management team. The EVC should be competent, ideally with significant practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment. The EVC may delegate responsibility to staff for the administration associated with the role.

The EVC should attend initial training, and annual updates as provided and required by the LA, or their employer.

[Checklist of EVC responsibilities](#)

Competence to lead a visit

Head teachers or Service Managers, advised by their EVC, must ensure that visit leaders are competent to carry out their responsibilities.

[Guidance for assessment of competence](#)

Advice and support

The Councils provide advice, training and support for EVC's and head teachers and the sharing of good practice through the Outdoor Education Adviser (OEA) based at Cantium House, Wallington. The OEA is Mick Bradshaw and he can be contacted on 07736 338471 or by email

mick.bradshaw@cognus.org.uk

Notification and approval of visits

Approval of visits in all schools is delegated to the Head of Establishment for all visits, except for the following;

- ❖ **Visits with a destination abroad**
- ❖ **Visits involving an overnight stay**
- ❖ **Visits that include adventurous activities (a list of adventurous and non-adventurous activities can be found in the Evolve Resources area, under the 'Visits Guidance' tab)**

Kingston and Sutton Councils monitor and approve these types of journeys for all maintained and voluntary aided schools, and strongly encourage all other schools to submit these types of visits for approval too. This should be requested via the Evolve online system:

Link to Evolve Online Educational Visits System for Kingston Schools:

<http://www.kingstonvisits.org>

Establishments may request advice with the planning or management of any visit – whether approval is required or not.

Applications for LA approval should be submitted at least one month in advance. Some types of visit (such as ski trips and overseas expeditions) involve an enhanced planning process and in these cases requests for approval should be submitted at least a term in advance.

Please contact the Outdoor Education Adviser if there is uncertainty over whether a particular activity requires Local Authority approval.

Visit planning

A thorough planning process, usually including a preliminary visit, is integral to the success and safety of a visit.

[Pre visit guide & provider assurance](#)

Where a provider is being used for the first time, and is not recognised by a suitable body then it will be necessary to seek further assurances and information from them. The [Provider form](#) is a comprehensive way to gather these details.

A Flowchart and checklist for organising visits can be found in the Evolve Resources area, under the 'Visits Guidance' tab)

Assessing venues and providers

There are a number of nationally recognised schemes that provide assurances about activity providers. These schemes include:

- [The LOtC Quality Badge](#)
- School Travel Forum (STF) [Assured Member Status](#)
- [AALA licensing](#)
- [Adventuremark](#)
- NGB centre approval schemes (applicable where the only provision is a single, specialist activity)

If the provider holds such an accreditation, there should be no need to seek further assurances.

Farm visits

Visits to farms are popular with young children, and allow children from more urban areas to develop an understanding of the countryside and food production.

[Farm visits guide](#)

See also our guidance on farm visits on our H&S Website – [Action HR website](#) for those schools buying the Action HR H&S SLA.

Inclusion

Schools and other services planning offsite visits should make every effort to ensure that visits are available to all children or young people regardless of their background, abilities or specific needs. The requirements previously contained in the Disability Discrimination Act have now been absorbed into the [Equality Act](#).

[Inclusion guide](#)

Charging for visits ‘Voluntary Contributions’

Complex legislation covers what parents may or may not be asked to pay towards the cost of a visit.

[Charging guide](#)

Each school should have their own charging policy that is agreed by the Governing Body. This may be based on the model charging policy available in the Evolve Resources area under ‘Model School Policies’

Supervision

Neither the DfE nor Sutton or Kingston Councils prescribe minimum staff to participant ratios for visits (the law requires minimum ratios for Early Years settings and information on these can be found in the revised [EYFS Statutory Framework](#) (2021). Ratios and other arrangements for the effective supervision of all children and young people should be determined as part of the risk assessment process by proper consideration of factors including:

- age (including the developmental age) of the group
- ability of the group and individuals (including special needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc)
- nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions)
- staff competence/ experience
- gender issues

Starting points on what may be considered reasonable staff: pupil ratios for off-site visits (with no special circumstances) are:

- 1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3
- 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in school years 4 to 6
- 1 adult for every 15-20 pupils in school year 7 onwards

The specific circumstances of a visit may lead to these ratios being insufficient, but they are unlikely to be excessive.

OEAP National Guidance includes documents on [Ratios and Effective Supervision](#) and Group Management and Supervision; [Effective Supervision guide](#)

Remote supervision

Young people must be supervised throughout all visits. At times they may be unaccompanied by a member of staff or other responsible adult, e.g. During D of E expeditions, ‘down time’ in a shopping mall etc. This is known as ‘remote’ supervision.

‘Remotely supervised’ activities can bring purposeful educational benefits, and the progression from dependence to independence is to be encouraged.

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on professional judgement taking into account such factors as:

- prior knowledge of the individuals (including their maturity and levels of responsibility)

- venue and conditions
- the activity taking place
- preparatory training
- the competence of the supervising staff

Where remote supervision is undertaken during an expedition (such as D of E) then the advice contained in the [Remote Supervision Guide](#) published by Mountain Training should be adhered to.

Vetting and DBS checks

The Councils follows the national guidance regarding the requirements for employees and volunteer helpers to undergo vetting and CRB checks. There is no requirement for every parent volunteer who accompanies a day visit to be DBS checked – unless undertaking ‘Regulated Activity’.

[DBS checks guide](#)

Insurance

The Council’s Insurance Sections have arranged blanket insurance cover for off-site visits. This policy includes all service areas and schools that have bought into the insurance service (including academy, foundation and voluntary aided schools). The cover for school journeys is in relation to all off-site visits, including worldwide, and there is no distinction between a local trip to a museum or a visit abroad.

The Local Authorities also hold Employers Liability Insurance. Any other insurance related questions should also be forwarded directly to the relevant InsuranceSection at insurance@sutton.gov.uk or <mailto:insurance@kingston.gov.uk>

Where schools engage external providers to deliver activities then it is recommended that the provider should have Public Liability Insurance in place to the value of £10 million. Where providers have a lower limit to their cover then the advice of the relevant insurance section should be sought. Any other insurance related questions should also be forwarded directly to the Insurance Section.

Where schools/ Trusts hold insurance for educational visits through the DfE’s Risk Protection Arrangements (RPA) or through other alternative providers, then they must ensure that this insurance does not exclude any of the types of visit or activities that may be undertaken.

Parent/ Carer consent

It is established good practice to inform parents that a visit or activity is to take place, and residential visits, adventurous activities or activities for which a charge is made will need specific informed consent, including agreement to any payment or cancellation terms.

It is acceptable for establishments to obtain ‘blanket consent’ (e.g. at the start of a school year), for visits that take place during the school day, as a means of reducing the paperwork associated with routine activities and visits.

Where blanket consent is in place it remains good practice to inform parents that a visit or activity is to take place (and this may be a useful opportunity both to remind them that they have given consent, and to give them an opportunity to withdraw it).

Consent forms can be used as a means to update information about young peoples' medical issues

or food allergies and parental contact details etc. It is essential to ensure that this information is available and each establishment should have some means of providing relevant and up-to-date information to activity/visit leaders.

Consent may also be gained via on-line systems, including systems such as Google Forms or Microsoft Forms, and payment platforms such as ParentPay and School Gateway.

First Aid

For all visits there should be an adult responsible for first aid arrangements, and a very basic level of first aid support must be available at all times. This will require that one or more of the staff leading or accompanying a visit:

- Know how to access qualified first aid support.
- Have a working knowledge of simple first aid, ensure a first aid kit is taken, and are competent to use the first aid kit carried with the group.

Visits that include a more remote or rural destination, or activities where assistance from the emergency services may be slower to reach the party, will usually demand an appropriately qualified first aider in attendance.

It is a Department for Education requirement for settings covered by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework that all visits have a trained paediatric first aider.

First Aid guide

Where schools utilise Action HR's service, full details of first aid requirements are provided in the First Aid Policy Template for Schools downloadable from their health and safety website for schools at actionhr.uk

Transport

Where transport is provided in minibuses then the Kingston and Sutton Councils Minibus Driver Policy applies and can be downloaded from the [Action HR website](#) (again where schools utilise Action HR's services). Further guidance is available from the National Guidance website;

Transport in Minibuses

Private cars

Where a private car (belonging to staff or parents) is to be used to transport children then this must be approved by the Head of the Establishment,

Transport by private car guide

Kingston and Sutton Councils do not take out insurance to cover any claim as a result of transport provided in a private car, and it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that their policy includes appropriate 'business use' cover.

Coaches

Kingston and Sutton Councils do not 'approve' coach companies. Professional operators of buses and coaches are though legally required to hold a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operators' Licence. Some coach companies are also accredited under the [Coach Marque](#) quality scheme (although this is not a requirement)

Minibuses

The licence requirements for driving a minibus are complex and are explained fully at [What Can You Drive](#)

More information on driving, driving hours and minibus permits is contained in the [Minibus guide](#)

Further detailed guidance and advice is available from [RoSPA](#)

Kingston and Sutton Councils Minibus Driver Policy applies and can be downloaded from the [Action HR website](#) (again where schools utilise Action HR's services).

Public Transport

The use of public transport for visits can reduce costs significantly, and potentially enable more visits to be made and more children or young people to participate. Within Greater London, Transport for London (TfL) organise the '[School party travel scheme](#)' which offers two free off-peak trips per child, per term for school group travel on buses, tube, tram and DLR. London Overground train companies need to be contacted directly for their own schemes.

Assessing and managing risks

Good planning and management of visits or activities should be about reducing risks to an acceptable level, taking into account the potential benefits to the learners or participants - a 'risk-benefit assessment'.

Although some paperwork may be required in order to record and communicate decisions made, risk management should be a logical process - centred upon competent staff – as follows;

1. **Establish clear aims, and identify anticipated outcomes:** Essential in making sound judgements as to whether the level of risk is acceptable.
2. **Make effective use of generic risk assessments:** These are a starting point for developing a safety management plan - based on experience of similar visits. They provide generic prompts to leaders and set out the risks usually associated with that type of activity, as well as how those risks can be controlled.
3. **Undertake event-specific risk assessments** (where required): Using the generic risk assessment as a prompt, consider the chosen venue, the unique characteristics of the particular group, and any activity-specific needs, including the environment, accommodation, the leaders and factors such as transport, to identify if the generic risk assessment needs to be revised or added to in any way.
4. **Ongoing or Dynamic risk assessment:** This steers how decisions are made while the visit is taking place, and is about making sound decisions and applying appropriate group management strategies in response to changing circumstances.
Having a "plan B" can often aid the dynamic risk assessment on what action to take next. Further guidance can be found in the Evolve Resources area under Visits Guidance, in the Plan 'B' guide.

Complete the review process: The lessons learnt from Ongoing/Dynamic Risk Assessments should inform future visit plans and be incorporated as refinements to generic risk assessments. A review process should be seen as an essential part of sound risk management.

See the following link for a more in-depth description of the [risk management process](#)

A Model 'risk-benefit assessment' is available, from the Resources area of Evolve (under 'Model School Policies'), for schools to utilise and adapt as required

Emergency planning

Even when accepted principles of safe practice are followed, accidents may occur. This eventuality should be prepared for, so that in the stressful event of a serious incident, the best

course of action will be taken by the group leader. Home contacts and the party leader should have access to the full list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of parents/carers and the next of kin of staff. Comprehensive guidance for establishments and visit leaders on managing [emergencies and critical incidents](#) is available from the National Guidance website;

Accident/ incident reporting

Information about reporting accidents incidents or near misses, can be found on Action HR's health and safety website at actionhr.uk.

To report incidents, accidents or near misses, please use the Action HR online reporting system: <https://app.workrite.co.uk/SecureLogin/SecureLogin.aspx>

Where schools do not utilise Action HR's services, then accidents, incidents or near misses must be reported via your own alternative providers.

Visit evaluation

Rigorous evaluation of individual visits or of a series of visits or activities, are the key to maximising the benefits and learning outcomes of these experiences. See the attached document for in-depth guidance.

[Evaluation guide](#)

Visits added to the Evolve system can be evaluated by the visit leader against the intended Learning Outcomes (up to 28 days after the visit has taken place). Any additional concerns or notes can also be added to inform the planning of similar future visits.

Collecting accurate information enables us to recommend good provision to others – and to investigate any concerns that may arise.

Monitoring

Head teachers/ Managers are responsible for ensuring the monitoring of visits organised by their school/service, although in practice the EVC may be best placed to carry out routine monitoring.

Monitoring may take place by:

- using the on-line approval system, including LA approval of visits;
- a review with Service Managers / Head Teachers / EVCs / Visit Leaders of specific issues and relevant procedures and documentation, including policies, risk assessments and plans for specific visits;
- direct observation of a visit in progress

Where visits have been approved by the LA, a sample of visits in progress will be monitored by the OEA. This monitoring process is intended to be positive, supportive and developmental, and feedback and recommendations will be given. In many cases this feedback will be largely concerned with the quality of provision of the centre or destination being visited. Any areas of significant risk will be referred to the Service Manager or Head teacher and the provider informed.

Useful Contact Numbers for Kingston and Sutton Councils

In the event of a visit emergency or incident the following officers should be contacted:

<u>Kingston Council</u>	<u>Sutton Council</u>
<p>Chris Begley Contingency planning Manager 07880 785751 020 8547 5400</p> <p>Jack Molyneux Resilience Support Officer – 07562 434773 – 02085475285</p> <p>LALO (Local Authority Liaison Officer) on call 24/7 - 07836 789962</p> <p>Major Incident Team Via CCTV Service - 020 8547 5800</p> <p>Council's Out of Hours service CCTV Service 020 8547 5800</p>	<p><u>First point of contact during normal office hours (9.00am until 5.30pm)</u></p> <p>Emergency Planning (EP) Officer: Michael Lewis 020 8649 0608/ 07429 537725</p> <p>A cascade system is enacted by the Emergency Planning Officer who will contact People Directorate Officers and Director or Executive Heads of Service as relevant.</p>
	<p><u>First point of contact outside normal office hours (5.30pm to 9.00am) – or if the above is unavailable</u></p>
	<p>Civic Security Liaison: Tel. 020 8770 5170/ 020 8770 5000</p>
<p>Charis Penfold, Director for Education Services, AfC, charis.penfold@achievingforchildren.org.uk</p> <p>Outdoor Education Adviser: Mick Bradshaw Tel: 0773 633 8471</p>	<p>Service Group Liaison Officers:</p> <p>Kieran Holliday Tel: 020 8770 6553 Laura Byrnes Tel: 020 8770 4929</p> <p>Outdoor Education Adviser: Mick Bradshaw Tel: 0773 633 8471</p>
<p>Head of Communications and Marketing AfC javade.khan@achievingforchildren.org.uk</p> <p>Health & Safety Team: healthandsafety@kingston.gov.uk</p> <p>Insurance Officer: insurance@kingston.gov.uk press.enquiries@kingston.gov.uk</p>	<p>Health & Safety Team: healthandsafety@sutton.gov.uk</p> <p>Insurance Officer: insurance@sutton.gov.uk</p>