

## OFF SITE VISITS POLICY DSDT

	Date	Name/signature
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Date for next review	Regul arly	

### Introduction

Off-site visits are activities which take place outside the charity's main provision site and are arranged by the charity. The Trustees and staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the charity's provision by providing experiences, which would otherwise be impossible.

### What is the educational visit policy?

An educational visits policy provides support for staff in the effective and safe planning and operation of provision trips. This policy isn't statutory, but it's best practice to have one.

### What is the purpose of educational visits?

Educational trips can be used to support all kinds of subjects – bringing learning to life. Learners can develop a sense of responsibility outside the classroom, giving them opportunities to put into practice, the content learned in the classroom.

Our charity assesses and writes risk assessments for all our activities including classroom work and off site visits.

### The 2 main types of trips

#### Routine visits

These involve no more than an everyday level of risk, such as slips and trips and are covered by the charity's current policies and procedures. They only need a little extra planning beyond the educational aspect of the trip. They can be considered as lessons in a different classroom.

#### Trips that need a risk assessment and extra planning

These are trips not covered by current policies. This could be due to things like:

- the distance from provision
- the type of activity
- the location
- needing staff with specialist skills

Sometimes the charity may just need to review its current plans or arrangements that were successful on previous trips. However, some trips will need additional risk assessments beyond the usual level of assessment, detailed planning and informed approval of lead teacher and senior staff. The person given the job of managing this should:

- have the skills, status and competence needed for the job
- understand the risks involved
- be familiar with the activity

Plans should be proportionate and sensible, focusing on how to manage genuine risks

#### When to get consent from parents

Written consent is usually only needed for trips that:

- need a higher level of risk assessment
- are outside normal provision hours

We ask parents to sign a copy of our consent form when their young person enrolls. This will cover them for their whole time at the provision.

The charity should still tell parents about these trips and give them the opportunity to withdraw their young person.

#### Using outside organisations

When the charity uses an outside organisation to provide an activity they must check they have appropriate safety standards and liability insurance.

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) awards the [Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge](#) to organisations who meet nationally recognised standards.

The charity can check if an organisation holds the LOtC Quality Badge.

If an organisation does not hold the badge, the charity must check that they're an appropriate organisation to use. This could include checking:

- their insurance
- that they meet legal requirements
- their health and safety and emergency policies
- their risk assessments
- control measures
- their use of vehicles
- staff competence
- safeguarding
- accommodation
- any sub-contracting arrangements they have



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- that they have a licence where needed

The charity should have an agreement with them that makes it clear what everyone is responsible for. This is especially important if they'll be taking over supervision of the children.

### **Adventure activities: caving, climbing, trekking, and watersports**

These kind of activities should be identified and risk assessed as part of the visit beforehand. Staff managing or leading visits must not decide to add such activities during the trip.

Always consider the abilities of the children when assessing risk.

Organisations need a licence to provide some adventure activities. Organisations who hold the LOtC Quality Badge should hold a licence for the activity they provide.

Find out more about [licensing](#) on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website.

### **Watersports**

When planning watersports, consider the need for:

- instructors
- lifeguards

The charity should take particular care when using hotel swimming pools and other water leisure activities which may not have a trained lifeguard. Although there are no swimming pool specific health and safety laws, the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) provides advice when undertaking adventure specialist activities, including swimming.

Charity staff could also be liable under civil law for any injuries to the children due to negligence.

If the trip includes significant risks, such as challenging terrain, going to remote places or extreme climates, exercise caution and complete full risk assessments.

### **Knowing what to do in an emergency**

The charity has an emergency response plan that covers what to do if there is an incident away from the charity's usual premises. The charity also has a communications plan that covers how routine communications should be handled, including regular check-ins and calls to reassure people.

Trip leaders should be familiar with these plans.

The charity can get advice on these plans from their outdoor activity adviser or the [OEAP website](#).

### **Evaluating trips**

Set up a clear process for evaluating all visits once they have been concluded from the planning through to the visit itself. The charity should keep a record of any incidents, accidents and near misses.

This will help the charity:

- evaluate whether its planning has worked
- learn from any incidents which took place

### **Trips and visits coordinators**

The charity should appoint a trips and visits coordinator and make sure they

have the training they need. The lead teacher has this duty if there is no coordinator. The coordinator works with the senior leadership team to help their colleagues to assess and manage risks.

The coordinator should:

- be an experienced visits leader
- have the status to be able to guide the working practices of other staff
- be confident in assessing the ability of other staff to lead visits
- be confident in assessing outside activity providers
- be able to advise the senior staff when they're approving trips
- have access to training, advice and guidance

Coordinators can also get guidance on the [OEAP website](#).

### **Point of contact:**

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