



Offsite Visit Policy

1. Introduction

This policy covers all off-site visits and activities organised through the academy and for which the Trustee Body and Headteacher are responsible.

The Trustee Body endorses the West Sussex County Council policy document “Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities” as the basis for the academy’s health and safety policy for the management of visits and off-site activities.

The Trustee Body seeks to ensure that every pupil has access to a wide range of educational experiences as an entitlement. As part of this entitlement the Trustee Body recognises the significant educational value of visits and activities which take place away from the immediate school environment.

The HSE recognises the importance of Offsite Education and ‘play’ opportunities and states:

‘Play is great for children’s well-being and development. When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool’.

The Trustee Body aims to enable this academy to become an educational environment in which all members of the academy community can thrive, regardless of race, religion, culture, gender or individual need. We intend to apply this aim to the planning and management of all visits and off-site activities.

Visits and off-site activities support, enrich and extend the curriculum in many subject areas, encourage co-operation, team work and the application of problem solving skills and develop independence and self confidence.

Residential opportunities, physical challenge and adventure can have a particular part to play in the development of personal and social qualities for all young people.

Outdoor education helps young people to be physically active and to understand how to assess and manage risk.

The management of visits and off-site activities places particular responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of all participants on the Governing Body, Headteacher, the party leader, members of staff and volunteers, pupils and parents. The academy also has responsibilities to other members of the public and to third parties. This policy on visits and off-site activities therefore complements the wider academy health and safety policy.

It is a priority of The Southwater Junior Academy that all visits and off-site activities are safe, well managed and educationally beneficial.

2. Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will;

- (a) Ensure that all visits and off-site activities have specific and appropriate educational objectives;
- (b) Approve all visits and activities, based on compliance with the L.A., the academy's health and safety policy, relevant West Sussex County Council guidance and recognised good practice in line with EVOLVE;
- (c) Ensure off-site programmes are led by competent staff that are appropriately experienced to assess the risks, manage the activity and manage the specific group;
- (d) Check that the staffing ratio is suitable for each visit;
- (e) ensure party leaders have access to a planning checklist, based on the West Sussex policy, and adapted as necessary to meet the particular needs of the academy;
- (f) Check that risks have been assessed, significant risks recorded, appropriate safety measures are in place, and that all details have been uploaded onto EVOLVE and submitted to the EVC, Head and/or L.A. for approval.

3. Responsibilities of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator

In order to carry out the above responsibilities effectively the Headteacher may delegate specified tasks to a suitably experienced and competent Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC). The Headteacher will be considered to be the EVC where tasks are not delegated to a named member of staff. The EVC and Head will be responsible for carrying out agreed tasks and attending relevant training provided by the Council.

4. Approval of off-site activities

The Headteacher (or the EVC on his behalf) will be responsible for approving all off-site activities. This includes approving the party leader for each visit or off-site activity.

A summary of the programme for the following categories of visits (those deemed Category B or C), together with a risk assessment, will be sent to the Adviser for Outdoor Education, West Sussex Education Services, for endorsement:

- (a) hazardous outdoor and adventurous activities (except those taking place at West Sussex County Council outdoor and residential centres) (Category B activities);
- (b) visits abroad (Category C activities);
- (c) activities where there is significant concern about health, safety and welfare (Category C activities).
- (d) The Headteacher will monitor off-site visits and activities and will provide a regular report to the Trustee Body about the off-site activities which have taken place from the academy.

5. Responsibilities of the party leader

The party leader will:

- (a) Have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit or activity;
- (b) Obtain the Headteacher's approval (or the EVC on his behalf) before any off-site visit or activity takes place;
- (c) Follow policy and procedures of the academy and the L.A.;

- (d) Assess the risks involved and amend as appropriate any previously recorded risk assessment;
- (e) Use the academy planning checklist to ensure all procedures have been followed;
- (f) Ensure form SOE5 from the policy is completed where commercial, charitable or private (non-DCC facilities) are being used for adventurous or residential activities;
- (g) Inform parents fully about the visit and, where appropriate gain their consent;
- (h) Re-assess risks while the visit or activity takes place;
- (i) Ensure there is a contingency plan (Plan B) should a significant change to the programme be necessary due to weather etc.

6. Responsibilities of additional members of staff taking part in visits and off-site activities

Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

- (a) Assist the party leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils on the visit;
- (b) Be clear about their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in a visit or activity.

7. Responsibilities of pupils

Whilst taking part in off-site activities pupils also have responsibilities about which they should be made aware by the party leader or other members of staff, for their own health and safety and that of the group.

Pupils should:

- (a) Avoid unnecessary risks;
- (b) Follow instructions of the party leader and other members of staff;
- (c) Behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct;
- (d) Inform a member of staff of significant hazards.

8. Responsibilities of parents

Parents have an important role in deciding whether any visit or off-site activity is suitable for their child. Subject to their agreement to the activity parents should;

- (a) support the application of any agreed code of conduct;
- (b) inform the party leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit;
- (c) provide an emergency contact number; particularly important if this varies from the one written on the Annual Pupil Data Information form.
- (d) sign, date and return the consent form.

9. The provision of training and information

A copy of this policy and associated school procedures will be made available to all staff within the academy who may be responsible for leading off-site visits and activities and to any parent requesting a copy.

The Headteacher (or EVC on their behalf) will make additional information available to staff to help ensure the safe management of off-site activities, including the West Sussex policy statement “Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities” and access to the DES website.

<http://www.deseducation.org/outdooreducation>

Appropriate training will be made available to leaders and other adults taking part in off-site activities in order to reflect identified academy health and safety priorities and educational priorities.

The Headteacher (or EVC on their behalf) will maintain a record of the qualifications held by staff and volunteers involved in outdoor activities including first aid, life-saving, mini-bus driving and specific hazardous activities.

An Offsite Visits Folder prepared by the EVC is provided for each Year Group and is required to be taken on all visits and offsite activities; this provides information and guidance on what to do in emergency situations.

10. Action in the case of emergency

The Headteacher will ensure that emergency arrangements are in place (Emergency Plan), known to staff and in line with academy and L.A. EVOLVE guidance, to cover the range of activities undertaken from the academy and the times at which they take place. This will include a minimum of two emergency contact numbers for designated senior members of staff or the governing body out-of hours. First aid provision and training of staff will be in accordance with good practice. All information is also detailed in the Offsite Visits Folder.

11. Accidents and incidents

An injury or incident which may not be reasonably foreseen = an accident. Accidents and incidents that occur during off-site visits and activities will be reported and recorded in accordance with the academy health and safety policy and incidents will be noted on EVOLVE; RIDDOR and the HSE will be informed of significant/notifiable accidents and incidents (e.g. death, loss of limb, loss of eyesight).

Accidents and incidents will subsequently be reviewed within the academy to identify any learning points.

12. Management of specific provision

The arrangements above apply to the management of specific provision for the following off-site visits and activities:

- (a) visits to playing fields
- (b) visits to the swimming pool
- (c) field trips
- (d) city-centre trips
- (e) visits to the library

13. Monitoring and review policy and practice

The Trustees will review this policy:

- (a) Bi-annually
- (b) At such time as there are significant changes to guidance on the management of Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities
- (c) Should significant issues be brought to the attention of the Trustees through the report of the Headteacher.

Reviewed January 2019

Policy to be reviewed January 2021