

# Appendix 1:

## Oxfordshire Local Authority Children, Education and Families

### Employer Visits Guidance Policy for Schools and Settings

#### Abbreviations

OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
LOtC	Learning Outside the Classroom
PE	Physical Education
OEAP	Outdoor Education Advisers Panel
HSE	Health & Safety Executive
NG	National Guidance
EVC	Educational Visits Co-ordinator
AALA	Adventure Activity Licensing Authority
HSWA	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

#### Introduction to this policy

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils and its employees. In order to safeguard both children and staff, OCC aims to provide clear guidance and appropriate training within the resources that can reasonably be made available.

This policy applies to OCC schools / settings establishments / settings employing staff to lead and/or take part in high quality outdoor learning, off site visits and/or LOtC activities for school aged participants.

The policy has a clear focus on providing guidance in the delivery of outdoor learning, off site visits and / or LOtC activity and requires its schools / settings to have in place:

- A trained and current EVC as advised by the DfE ([DfE Guidance on Health and Safety on educational visits 26 November 2018](#))

The coordinator should:

- i. be an experienced visits leader
- ii. have the status to be able to guide the working practices of other staff
- iii. be confident in assessing the ability of other staff to lead visits

- iv. be confident in assessing outside activity providers
  - v. be able to advise headteachers and governors when they're approving trips
  - vi. have access to training, advice and guidance
- Competent visit leaders and assistants able to safely deliver the visit they are leading

The policy specifically does not include:

- The management of pupils travelling between split sites
- Work experience
- Duke of Edinburgh activity
- PE where the activity supervision should be that required or recommended by specialist PE guidance. Any journey element is subject to visits management policy
- Non-maintained OCC schools/settings e.g. academies or free schools

### **OCC Employer Guidance**

OCC has adopted the OEAP [National Guidance](#) as its operating guidance for the management of *Visits* and *LOtC* activities. This guidance has received widespread endorsement from professional associations and organisations, including HSE and these can be viewed on the [National Guidance](#) website.

In addition to *National Guidance*, additional local OCC policies relevant to the management of visits can be viewed on the [OCC Health and Safety](#) web page and the [Education Visit Co-ordination page](#).

This document also draws on, and recognises the [DfE Guidance on Health and Safety on educational visits](#)

### **Employer/employee responsibility**

To comply with the HSWA both employers and employees have defined responsibilities:

- OCC, as the employer, **must** ensure that its employees are provided with appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision.
- OCC employees **must** follow the requirements of their employer guidance. This means that OCC employees must follow the requirements of this Policy and other relevant OCC policies together with those of the school / setting.

Where a non OCC school/setting (e.g. Academy, Voluntary Aided, Foundation school, Free school etc.) wishes to use the Oxfordshire policy, systems and processes for supporting and monitoring visits, they should produce their own Employer policy statement that explicitly states the precise linkage to this policy.

### **Key policy principles**

Set out below are the key policy principles:

### **OCC Employer training, advice and support for visits**

The OEAP is the responsible body for the accreditation, management, delivery and content of EVC and Visit Leader training courses. OCC will continue to use these as its core training for staff involved in managing and delivering visits.

To support schools/settings with their off site visits programmes OCC provides:

- EVC, EVC revalidation and Visit Leader training delivered by OEAP endorsed providers. This is a requirement of OEAP and provides quality assurance to OCC
- Access to relevant, current and appropriate advice and support for those managing and leading visits

The purpose of the training enables employees to:

- Access appropriate guidance and support for the management of outdoor learning, off site visits and LOtC activity
- Develop competence in the management and delivery of outdoor learning, off site visits and LOtC activity

The specific training courses provided are:

- EVC – for those new to the post
- EVC revalidation – a 3 year update for existing EVC's
- Visit Leader – for those leading outdoor learning, visits and /or LOtC activities
- Governor training – to inform Governors of the specific needs for managing and delivering high quality visit programmes
- Management of Visit Emergencies – aimed at supporting SMT and above in the event of a visit emergency
- Training for Business Managers on supporting outdoor learning, visits and LOtC activities

Heads / Managers must ensure their EVC's and Visit Leaders are competent to lead a safe and quality experience. The OCC training programme will help to provide a validation of this.

Further specialist support may be obtained from:

Off Site Education Visits Officer 07818 035365

[Education.visits@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Education.visits@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Approval and Notification of Activities and Visits**

OCC delegates the responsibility for approval of all outdoor learning, visits and /or LOtC activities to Heads / Managers, who should use the OEAP National Guidance and related OCC policies as their principal reference points.

In delegating approval to schools/settings and in order to meet insurance requirements, OCC requires schools/settings to notify the Off Site Visits Officer and OCC Insurance of visits and activities operating within these criteria:

- Overseas visits (day and residential)
- Within the remit of AALA Regulations
- Visits/activities in more remote / demanding settings
- Visits involving access to significant water

For all such visits a [Visit Notification](#) form must be completed and returned in order for the appropriate insurance cover to be arranged.

## **Risk Management**

OCC, as the employer, has a duty to ensure suitable, sufficient and proportional risk management processes are in place for its employees. OCC delegates visit management to schools/settings who must ensure it applies to all those leading, helping or participating in outdoor learning, off site visits and LOtC activity.

Good practice states risk management follows the principles of an identified risk benefit process as outlined in the National Guidance. Heads / Managers must ensure that policies are accurate and the actual delivery of the visit reflects these, so creating a culture of safe and effective practice in both planning and delivery.

## **Safeguarding**

Heads / Managers must ensure all those involved in the planning and delivery of visits programmes must comply with current Safeguarding requirements as set out in [OCC Schools pages](#).

## **Monitoring**

Responsibility for monitoring is delegated to schools/settings and should principally be carried out through systems put in place by the Head/Manager/EVC. Schools/settings should routinely arrange for their own monitoring of actual visits as they happen.

OCC reserves the right to undertake monitoring visits of its school or setting establishments on a random basis and will provide feedback to the head teacher and EVC on weaknesses and strengths as a result of the monitoring activity. A monitoring visit request may also be triggered if there are concerns or reports made to OCC about the practice relating to off site visits planning or activity.

## Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support

A critical incident is where any member(s) of a group undertaking outdoor learning, visits and /or LOtC activities are involved in an incident that will typically:

- Result in single or multiple fatality
- Incur life threatening injury requiring immediate hospitalisation
- Suffer life threatening ill health, requiring immediate hospitalisation
- Involve one or more participants having gone missing for a significant period of time
- Incur significant media coverage

By definition a critical incident will be beyond the normal coping mechanism of the Visit Leader and additional expertise will be required to support the Visit Leader on the ground and also the school/setting itself.

OCC's Emergency Planning Unit helps the Council to meet its statutory duties to have robust emergency plans and business continuity arrangements in place. OCC provides appropriate support in the event of a critical incident occurring. To activate support from OCC, the following telephone number should be used:

- 24 hour OCC contact for major emergencies: 07771 878725  
Thames Valley Fire Control Service 01183 589333 with a request for the OCC Duty Emergency Planning Officer to be contacted

**This number should only be available to Head teachers / Managers and, as appropriate, to the leaders undertaking outdoor learning, visits and /or LOtC activities, and all should receive specific guidance for its use.**

[emergencyplanning@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:emergencyplanning@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### Inclusion

OCC schools/settings are required to comply with the Equality Act 2010. National Guidance specifically requires Heads/Managers to ensure the planning and delivery of outdoor learning, visits and /or LOtC activity demonstrates:

- Reasonably practicable measures are taken to include all young people
- Reasonable effort is made to find a venue and activities that are suitable and accessible
- Enable the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved

## Charges for Off-site Activities and Visits

Head teachers / Managers must take into account the latest [DfE advice](#) relating to charging for outdoor learning, visits and /or LOfC activities and especially those undertaken as a curriculum related activity.

OCC does not recognise or condone the surcharging of participants, unless parents provide specific consent for this action.

## Insurance for Off-site Activities and Visits

OCC provides appropriate Employer Liability insurance to cover employees involved in outdoor learning, visits and /or LOfC activities. Schools/settings are required to have appropriate insurance to cover other events e.g. cancellation, belongings, travel disruption.

Further details of policy cover can be obtained from [OCC Insurance insurance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:OCC_Insurance@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or 0333 014 3385

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Significant recorded changes</b>
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