



Educational experiences and Off-site activities

Primary and Secondary Academies

July 2022

Introduction

Off-site activities are those activities arranged by or on behalf of the Academy but which take place outside the boundaries of it.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the evaluation and planning of off-site visits and to ensure any risks are both managed and kept to a minimum for the safety and health of pupils at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all students and, wherever possible, to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the academy day.

All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose which is clearly related to the curriculum.

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must ensure all off-site activities take place under the terms of this procedure.

Aims and objectives

The Board of Trustees and the governing bodies believe that off-site activities should: -

- complement and enhance both curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils
- provide a wider range of experiences than could be provided on the Academy site alone
- promote the independence of our pupils as learners and enable them to both grow and develop in new learning environments

Planning and approving the visit or trip

A list of key documents and checks, collectively known as a visit plan, are usually prepared prior to any visits or trips. A summary of the visit plan can be found at the conclusion of this section.

The Head teacher will appoint a leader responsible for running the activity who must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety is of utmost importance, including an awareness of any medical conditions party members may have. This will normally be a teacher employed at the academy (although it could be a teacher from one of the other academies within North Star Community Trust).

Preliminary visits

Wherever possible, staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue in order to familiarise themselves and make a proper assessment, taking into consideration the: -

- age of the children

- size of the group
- time of the year (and probable weather conditions)
- suitability of the facilities
- venues own approach to security and health & safety

It is important to assess any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit as this helps form the risk assessment which must state both the extent of any risks involved and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them.

Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is made as to whether the visit should proceed.

Venues providing activity-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand (or if they are unable to make informed judgements about the risk it may involve). Academies will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

The cost of a preliminary visit will be borne by the academy and should be built into the overall cost of the visit / activity itself.

Risk assessment(s)

Before undertaking any off-site activity, the named lead person, will complete a written risk assessment to assess the specific / individual risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them such as: -

- what are the specifics of the trip and the potential risk of harm?
- what are the hazards and who might be affected by them?
- what safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group leader ensure safety measures are in place?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- Are there any specific individual needs of children including any known medical conditions or (with advice from the parents and / or the academy's welfare assistants) where the child has an individual healthcare plan?
- do all accompanying adults have satisfactory DBS checks?

The risk assessment will be signed by the Head teacher and kept on file. So that they may be potentially used again, it is important to not include personal data in the risk assessment. Where a

venue / attraction provides a risk assessment, this can be attached before submission to the Head teacher.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the academy, the party leader should discuss with the Head teacher the possibility of excluding the child from the activity.

Authorisation

Where a member of staff is proposing to arrange an off-site activity, the appropriate approval must be obtained before any commitment is made on behalf of the academy.

Educational trip

The member of staff must complete obtain head teacher approval

Residential trip

Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay or a journey by sea or air, approval must be obtained by both the head teacher and the Chief Executive Officer.

Cost calculation

The costing of off-site activities should include any costs associated with the visit which would normally fall on the academy for example: -

- preliminary visits
- transport
- entrance fees
- insurance
- provision of any resources or equipment specific to the activity
- refreshments the academy has opted to pay for
- costs related to adult helpers.

Funding for off-site activities which take place during the academy school day is sometimes supported by voluntary parental contributions. However, no child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Head teacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

Minimum adult to child ratio

When planning academy trips, there should normally be sufficient adults in order to provide the minimum ratios: -

Year group	Ratio
Nursery	One adult for every 4 pupils
Reception	One adult for every 5 pupils
Year 1	One adult for every 6 pupils
Year 2	One adult for every 8 pupils
Years 3 - 6	One adult for every 10 pupils
Years 7 - 9	One adult for every 15 pupils
Year 10 and upwards	One adult for every 20 pupils

Depending on the group / activity, additional supervision may be required (e.g. some venues have additional requirements and primary pupils may need extra supervision on minibus trips).

Transport

Transport arrangements should provide a seat for each member of the party. It is academy policy to use coaches with seat / lap belts and that they are worn by all those participating in the visit.

Where private cars / mini-buses are used for transport, the party leader is responsible for ensuring that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the required DBS checks.

Communication and notification

The parents / carers of children taking part in an off-site activity should always be provided with appropriate information about the activity and intended visit.

Where the activity is taking place entirely within a normal academy day it is usually sufficient to obtain an acknowledgement that the parents are aware of the arrangements.

Written permission will always be sought from parents where the activity extends beyond the time of a normal academy day, is a residential trip or involves arrangements that may be considered unusual (such as a journey by sea or by air).

Further health and safety considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply to the activity / visit.

Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the academy number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal academy day, the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

Before a party leaves, the academy office must be provided with a list of everyone travelling with the party (pupils and adults) along with a programme / timetable for the activity and a copy of emergency contact numbers.

Record keeping

Records of visits should be kept no longer than is necessary, however assessments of risks should be updated and reviewed where there are frequent visits to the same location or venue and / or situations change (e.g. new road crossing on the way to a local park).

Visit plan

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following and it is safer to assume that all apply unless the nature of the visit / location dictates that they do not.

- report on preliminary visit (where possible)
- risk assessment
- application(s) for approval of visit
- general information: -
 - names
 - ages
 - contact details permission forms
 - medical records
 - other relevant details of all those going on the visit
- travel schedule
- accommodation plan (if applicable)
- full plan of activities
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures
- intended arrangements for supervision

- intended arrangements for all members of the group
- appropriate DBS checks
- emergency contacts and procedures
- general communications information
- guidance for party leader, the emergency contact and Head teacher
- medical questionnaire returns
- first aid boxes