

The Blue Tangerine Federation

SPECIALIST & SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

POLICIES, GUIDANCE & PROCEDURES



The Blue Tangerine Federation Policy for Offsite Visits and LOtC Activities

Last Review: June 2020

Responsibility: Executive Headteacher

Review: September 2022

The Staff and Governors of The Blue Tangerine Federation acknowledge the immense value of off-site visits and related activities to young people, and fully support and encourage those that are well planned and managed.

This document provides concise and supportive guidance for the planning and management of off-site visits and related activities. It is available electronically on the school's Shared Drive and on 'EVOLVE', along with a number of other supporting documents.

All visits and LOtC activities will be planned in such a way as to ensure that the benefits and intended learning outcomes are clearly identified and understood by the supervising adults beforehand and can form the basis for objective evaluation afterwards.

This establishment uses Hertfordshire's Internet-based system, 'EVOLVE', to facilitate the efficient planning, management, approval, and evaluation of visits. All staff that lead or accompany visits can access their own 'EVOLVE' account, which is set up by their Establishment's Visits Coordinator (EVC).

Arrangements and considerations for all visits and LOtC activities will be recorded, either on 'EVOLVE', by means of standard operating procedures using generic risk assessments, or in standard lesson plan format, as deemed most appropriate by the Headteacher in order to minimise the associated bureaucracy.

Scope and Remit

It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements their employer's guidance. This policy relates to Hertfordshire's "Guidance for the Management of LOtC and Offsite Visits" and it is the expectation that all staff will follow its requirements

This policy applies to all members of establishment staff, and other adults associated with The Blue Tangerine Federation who take responsibility for children and young people participating in learning and recreational activities in environments that are different from where the young people are usually based. It therefore applies when organising and supervising children and young people taking part in off-site activities and visits, as well as when taking part in on-site activities outdoors.

This policy provides the key reference for sound planning for learning and recreational activities that involve taking groups of children and young people away from their classroom, or other usual operational base. It should be implemented when using places such as:

- the establishment's own grounds
- the local environment
- places further afield e.g. visits to local libraries, theatres and museums etc.
- residential venues
- learning ventures abroad

and involves any one of the following:

- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC);
- facilitating experiences for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- deploying staff who will supervise or facilitate experiences of or for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base.

Staff must ensure the young people are supervised in accordance with the contents of this policy, regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

Inclusion

This establishment policy endorses the following principles:

- A presumption of entitlement to participate
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- Integration through participation with peers.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled participants because of their disability, without material or substantial justification.

Visit Leaders are required to make reasonable adjustments to avoid participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage.

However, the Disability Discrimination Act does not require responsible bodies to place employees or participants at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises.

It is also the case that the adjustments made to include a disabled young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them (to include a given young person) is within their competence and normal work practices.

Roles and Responsibilities

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), health and safety responsibilities lie with the employer. This might be a Local Authority (LA) or Governing Body or a Management Panel. An employer has the legal responsibility to carry out the duties imposed by the Act. However, employers can delegate the tasks necessary to discharge these duties, even though the overall responsibility for health and safety rests with the employer.

In Hertfordshire, the tasks of scrutinising and approving arrangements for Offsite Visits and LOtC activities are delegated to the Headteacher of the school.

Headteacher (nominated delegate – Head of School)

The Headteacher (or their nominated delegate) will ensure that: -

- All off-site visits and LOtC activities comply with employer guidance and are notified or submitted for formal approval as required;
- All staff involved are competent to carry out such responsibilities as they may be allocated;
- There is a clearly designated person, either him/her self or another suitable member of staff, as the EVC and that the designated person meets employer requirements, including undertaking EVC Training as recommended or required by the employer;
- If taking part in the visit or activity as either an Assistant Leader or as a group member, s/he is clear about their role and that they should follow the instructions of the designated Visit Leader (who will have sole charge of the visit);

- Suitable child protection procedures are in place, including vetting at an appropriate level of all voluntary helpers. Where access to the young people is regular or significant, CRB checks must be in place as required;
- S/he is assured that the EVC, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained and competent to carry out such tasks as they are allocated;
- Sufficient time is assigned for staff to organise visits properly;
- A culture of apprenticeship /succession planning, to ensure sustainable visits and the development of competent visit leaders and EVCs, is supported within the establishment;
- The EVC is supported in ensuring that visits are effectively supervised with an appropriate level of staffing;
- The EVC is supported in ensuring that visit information has been shared with parents and that consent has been sought where necessary;
- Arrangements are made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the young people and staff;
- Inclusion issues are addressed;
- Suitable transport arrangements are in place and meet any regulatory requirements;
- Insurance arrangements are appropriate;
- Details related to the visit (including person details of both participants staff) are accessible at all times to a designated 24/7 emergency contact(s) in case of a serious incident;
- That there are contingency plans in place should the visit plan be significantly changed or cancelled (Plan B);
- Arrangements are in place for the governing body to be informed of such visits as are required by the establishment visit policy;
- Staff are aware of the need to obtain best value. Appropriate consideration must be given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships;
- Establishment visit policy should identify the types of visit that require a preliminary visit;
- Establishment visit policy should formally adopt a set format for recording written risk-benefit assessments. Such risk-benefit assessments should be proportional, suitable and sufficient and based on the 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management'.
- Where the activities or visit involves a third party provider, appropriate assurances have been sought; national schemes e.g. LOTC Quality Badge, AALS licence, Adventuremark, or a clear management Statement of Competence, are recognised in keeping with Hertfordshire's recommendations and make further seeking of provider assurances unnecessary
- All visits are evaluated with regard to best value, teaching and learning, quality experiences, addressing issues raised by any serious incident and to inform the operation of future visits;
- The establishment visit policy includes appropriate emergency procedures in case of a major incident
- The establishment visit policy includes a procedure to ensure that parents are appropriately informed in the event of a serious incident;
- Serious incidents are reported to the employer as required by employer guidance, meeting the requirements of RIDDOR.

Establishment (Educational) Visits Coordinator (EVC)

To help fulfil its health and safety obligations for visits, this establishment has a specifically designated EVC who supports the Head of Establishment. (In small establishments the EVC may also be the Headteacher or manager).

The EVC will: -

- Be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment. Commonly, but not exclusively, such competence will be identified in a person on the senior management of the establishment. Where the EVC role is attached to an administrative post, or where a post holder is not an experienced visit leader, s/he will receive structured support in the form of regular (twice Termly) supervision meetings from a designated establishment colleague who has that practical experience
- Attend training, and update training, as required by the local authority (LA).
- Support the head of establishment in ensuring that competent staff are assigned to lead and accompany visits and with approval and other decisions.
- Ensure that a policy is in place for offsite visits and LOtC activities, that it is updated as necessary, and is readily available to staff, (e.g. via EVOLVE) and that procedures should aim to minimise bureaucracy, taking full advantage of any national schemes that provide assurances regarding safety and quality of provision.(e.g. there should be no need to seek assurances from adventure activity providers who hold the LOtC Quality Badge, or a current AALS Licence, or Adventuremark).
- Have an understanding of the Manifesto for LOtC and the supporting rationale
- Ensure Offsite and LOtC activities meet employer guidance requirements.
- Ensure the Headteacher, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers understand that all staff involved in visits require access to training at an appropriate level to ensure that employers' guidance and establishment procedures are properly understood.
- Ensure Offsite activities must be led by competent leaders and that assistant supervisors are competent to carry out the tasks to which they are assigned.
- Organise the training of leaders and assistant leaders, including voluntary helpers.
- Support the Head/Manager with approval and other decisions.
- Monitor visit planning and arrange for sample monitoring in the field as appropriate.
- Ensure CRB checks are in place where required.
- Provide sufficient guidance to visit and activity leaders regarding information for parents and parental consent.
- Ensure there is a 24/7 emergency contact(s) for each and every visit and that emergency arrangements are in place.
- Ensure that medical and first aid issues are addressed.
- Ensure that emergency arrangements include emergency contact access to all relevant visit records, including medical and next of kin information for all members of the party and including staff.
- Ensure that visits and LOtC activities are reviewed and evaluated; this process will require the reporting of accidents and incidents.
- Ensure that visit policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis and immediately following any serious incident or systems failure.
- Keep up to date via EVC training events and employer information updates.

Visit Leaders

The Visit/Activity Leader will: -

- Have the overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of the visit. S/he must be an employee and not a volunteer.
- Be competent to take on such responsibilities and tasks as may be allocated or required for the duration of the visit/activity and be formally approved to do so.
- Plan and prepare for the visit, taking a lead on risk management. This establishment sees it as good practice to involve all participating staff in the planning and risk management process for any given offsite visit or LOTC activity to ensure wider understanding. It is also seen as good practice to involve young people in these processes wherever appropriate;
- Define the roles and responsibilities of other staff (and young people) to ensure effective supervision, and appoint a deputy wherever possible;
- Ensure that where any accompanying staff includes someone with a close relationship to a member of the group, there are adequate safeguards to ensure that this will not compromise group management;
- Ensure that child protection issues are addressed. e.g. CRB checks;
- Collate, make available and disseminate relevant information to supporting staff, parents and young people as appropriate
- Make sure there is access to first aid at an appropriate level;
- Arrange pre-visit information meetings where appropriate;
- Evaluate all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event;
- Ensure that staff and other supervisors have been appropriately briefed on:
 1. the young people making up the group, including age, health characteristics, capabilities, special educational needs, behaviour and any other information that seems relevant in the context of the planned activities.
 2. the nature, location and duration of the activity.
 3. emergency response procedures
- Ensure the visit is effectively supervised; the overarching duty of care remains with the accompanying establishment staff, even when partial responsibility is shared with a provider. Should the provider run the activity in a way that causes concern, the accompanying staff should consider stopping the activity at the first appropriate moment. Such an intervention will need to be used with great sensitivity and discretion to ensure that it does not result in young people being put at greater risk;
- Ensure that all staff and any third party providers have access to emergency contact and emergency procedure details.
- Have participated in Visit Leader Awareness training, either in-house, from the LA's Offsite Visits Adviser or from another accredited provider.

Governing Body

The governing body will ensure that: -

- They have a clear understanding of whether the management board or governing body is the direct employer of establishment staff; in which case the body will carry the same responsibilities as those of a Director of Children's Services;
- They have an understanding of how outdoor learning supports a wide range of learning outcomes;

- They have access to employer guidance as well as establishment policy;
- There is an EVC in place that meets with employer requirements;
- There are formal notification and approval procedures in place that meet with employer recommendations and requirements;
- The establishment visit policy supports the principles of inclusion;
- There are monitoring procedures in place.

1. Initial Approval

Outcomes (Benefits)

At a very early stage of the planning process, the provisional staffing team should meet to identify the benefits and learning outcomes that the activity (or range of activities) are intended to achieve. Up to four 'intended' outcomes may be identified during the planning process, which should be prioritised, and appropriately targeted. The outcomes will help keep the plan focussed and are also a vital part of the risk management process in providing some objectivity in a "Risk Benefit Analysis".

Work that takes place outside the classroom can provide a very powerful means of developing learning in all curriculum areas, and raise attainment. Experiential learning can also provide opportunities for development in other areas, including:

- Relationships
- Emotional & spiritual
- Cross curricular
- Individual
- Teamwork
- Environmental

['High Quality Outdoor Education'](#) can be used as a tool by visit leaders to assist in identifying outcomes.

Trip Request Forms

In the first instance staff planning visits must seek authorisation in principle from the Head of School. At this early stage, details may be limited but should include:

- Objectives of the visit
- Likely dates, duration and venue
- Size and make-up of group
- Staffing requirements
- Other resources
- Estimate of costs

2. Detailed Planning and Risk Assessment

Risks are expected to be reduced to an *acceptable* or *tolerable* level, and not necessarily eliminated. Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

Due to the complex nature of off-site visits, conventional 'risk assessment' as a stand-alone tool is not particularly useful and can on occasion be misleading. It is of greater benefit to consider the overall 'risk management' of visits by taking all aspects of visit planning and management into account. This can be achieved effectively through a combination of the 'EVOLVE' visit form itself, and where appropriate, any event specific notes or attachments.

Visit planning includes consideration of the question: '*What are the really important things that we need to do to keep us safe?*' It should focus on those issues that are specific to the individual event, taking into account the needs of the group (including special and medical needs), the experience and competency of the staff team, and the leader in the context of the event. Significant issues must be recorded on 'EVOLVE', either notes or as an attachment, and shared with all parties.

This planning process by the leader may be compared to the expectation of a teacher or youth worker to plan a lesson/session which is relevant to the needs of the group. It is good practice to involve participants in the planning and organisation of visits, as in doing so they will make more informed decisions, and will become more 'risk aware' and hence at less risk. They will also have greater ownership of the event.

Planning (see EG docs 1.1d, 3.3e, 4.3a, 5.2b, 5.2e)

The extent of planning required is related to the complexity of the visit, based on 'SAGE'.

Staffing requirements – trained? experienced? competent? ratios?

Activity characteristics – specialist? insurance issues? licensable?

Group characteristics – prior experience? ability? behaviour? special and medical needs?

Environmental conditions – distance from school? like last time? impact of weather? water levels?

There are three broad categories of complexity, which have their own requirements in terms of the extent of risk assessment that needs to be carried out:



Category 1

Straightforward activities that are carried out on site or in the local area are covered by 'blanket consent' and generic risk management, within the context of policy / operational guidelines. The school has defined a list of specific routine and low-risk activities, that usually take place within the near vicinity of the school and are not notifiable, which are run according to a set of standard operating procedures. Further information on these arrangements can be found in the "Local Learning Area SOPs" document on the server. These visits/activities do not necessarily need to be entered onto EVOLVE but may need to be supported by some Event Specific Notes.

- Walking in the local area
- Visits to local shops
- Transport on an establishment minibus
- Walking in parks or on non-remote country paths
- Field studies - unless in the environments stated in 'open country'
- Physical Education and sports fixtures (excluding adventurous activities, as defined below)

Category 2

Enhanced Planning with event specific risk management required. This includes the following activities:

- Swimming in publicly life-guarded pools
- Theatre

- Theme parks
- Tourist attractions
- Pedal go-karts
- Ice skating (rink)
- Farm visits
- Library
- Local traffic survey
- Museum
- Play Areas
- Water-margin activities that take place near or in water – such as a walk along a riverbank or seashore, collecting samples from ponds and streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow water ('shallow' typically means up to the knees of the participants).
- Residential trips
- Adventurous activities led by an external provider *

Such trips must be individually risk-assessed and logged using 'EVOLVE'. A selection of generic risk assessments is available in Word format from the Health & Safety pages on the Grid, which are stored on the school server. Whilst not exhaustive, the control measures contained within this selection are probably sufficient to cover most eventualities likely to be encountered in the course of most offsite visits and LOTC activities.

Staff must review and adapt the generic risk assessments to ensure that they are appropriate for their specific events and in line with their practice.

Where generic risk assessments are not available for the proposed activities, staff are encouraged to compile their own "event-specific" risk assessments and store these on the server. These can then be reviewed and re-used as required.

Risk assessments should be attached to the visit on 'EVOLVE'.

Note: whilst it is not possible to "clone" visits on 'EVOLVE', it is possible to re-use risk assessments and other documents that have been attached to previous visits. Staff should liaise with their EVC about this.

* Where adventurous activities involve delivery by an external provider, the provider will have responsibility for risk assessing and managing the activity. As such, the provider's risk assessment is not the concern of the establishment leader, does not need to be requested from the provider, and does not need to be attached to 'EVOLVE'.

Category 3

Activities that require detailed planning that reflects challenging environments, locations and/or higher perceived risk activities. This includes:

- All overseas visits
- Any trip taking place in 'open country' - normally defined as land above 300m or more than 1km from vehicular access. However, these are arbitrary boundaries and there may be occasions where this definition is inappropriate. Where staff are uncertain further guidance should be sought from the Local Authority Offsite Visits Adviser.
- Establishment-led activities which are regarded as 'adventurous', including:
 - Swimming (all forms, excluding publicly life-guarded pools)
 - Camping
 - Canoeing / kayaking
 - Sailing / windsurfing / kite surfing
 - Rafting or improvised rafting

- Use of powered safety/rescue craft
- All other forms of boating (excluding commercial transport)
- Water skiing
- Snorkel and aqualung activities
- Hill walking and Mountaineering
- Rock climbing (including indoor climbing walls)
- Abseiling
- River/gorge walking or scrambling
- Coaststeering/coastal scrambling/sea level traversing
- Underground exploration
- Shooting and archery
- Snowsports (skiing, snowboarding, and related activities), including dry slope
- Air activities (excluding commercial flights)
- Horse riding
- Motor sport – all forms
- High level ropes courses
- Off road cycling
- ‘Extreme’ sports
- Other activities (e.g. initiative exercises) involving skills inherent in any of the above

Activities that meet these criteria are subject to more stringent risk assessments. Guidance specific to the prerequisite skills and qualifications necessary to lead each activity can be found in the document ‘Standards of Competency to Lead Adventurous Activities’, located on the school server.

Risk Factors to Consider

Staffing and Supervision (see EG docs 4.2a, 3.2g)

The LA requires establishments to ensure there is an **appropriate level of supervision at all times** for all visits and that such supervision is ‘effective’.

Ratios for Early Years are specified and must be adhered to; see [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)

For all other visits the Visit Leader, EVC and Head of School will make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of staffing on an individual visit basis after consideration of the following factors:

- the type, level, and duration of activity;
- the nature and requirements of individuals within the group, including those with additional needs;
- the experience and competence of staff and other adults;
- the venue, time of year and prevailing/predicted conditions;
- the contingency or ‘Plan B’ options.

A visit must not go ahead where either the Visit Leader, EVC, or Headteacher is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision exists.

A useful ‘starting point for consideration’ is at least 1 adult for every 6 young people. Where departure from this starting point results in fewer staff, the justification should be recorded as a note on ‘EVOLVE’.

Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group.

Consideration should be given to the implications of one member of staff effectively being removed from the intended supervision arrangements for a period of time e.g. to accompany a pupil to hospital.

When determining the supervision ratio, particular consideration should be given to how each supervisor is likely to react in an emergency situation, and the additional implications that may arise if staff are to be accompanied by family members (or partners) on visits.

Staff and volunteers who work *frequently* or *intensively* with, or have regular access to young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo an enhanced CRB check as part of their recruitment process. For the purpose of this policy:

- '*frequently*' is defined as 'once a week or more'.
- '*intensively*' is defined as 3 times in a 30 day period or overnight (2am - 6am).

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. 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;
- the emergency systems in place.

Use of Voluntary Helpers

The use of parents and other adults with a clear association with the establishment, as helpers or supervisors on offsite visits or LOtC activities, is seen as a valuable means of encouraging or maintaining closer links with the local community and accessing a wider set of skills and experience than may exist amongst the establishment's staff.

Such volunteers will need to understand and consent to the fact that they will be answerable to the visit/activity leader.

It is a fact that a volunteer will not be accountable through a legalistic audit trail (as would exist were their involvement based on a contractual relationship) and is therefore the case that a volunteer helper cannot be appointed as a Visit Leader.

It is good practice that all adult helpers and volunteers are subject to CRB checking; however this may not be required where there is no possibility for unsupervised direct contact exists.

Clear CRB-checks must have been returned before a volunteer adult helper may participate in a residential visit or activity.

Competence

The competence of the Visit Leader is the single most important contributory factor in the safety of participants. Competence is a combination of experience, training/qualifications and common sense.

Consideration will be given to the following when assessing the competence of a member of staff to lead a visit, or to be an Assistant Leader where they may take sole responsibility for a sub-group:

General Competencies (assessed and approved by the establishment prior to leading any trip)

- a) Is the leader competent in planning and managing visits?
- b) Is the leader an employee at the establishment?
- c) Does the leader have the ability to manage the pastoral welfare of participants?
- d) Does the leader exhibit sound decision making abilities?
- e) Is the leader aware of all relevant guidelines and able to act on these?

Trip-specific Competencies (assessed on a trip-by-trip basis)

- f) What experience has the leader in leading or accompanying similar or other visits? (check Visit History on 'EVOLVE').
- g) Does the leader possess appropriate qualifications, especially if leading adventurous activities? (see 'Standards of Competency to Lead Adventurous Activities', located on the school server.)
- h) What are the leader's reasons for undertaking the visit?
- i) What experience has the leader of the staff and children he/she intends to supervise?
- j) What experience has the leader of the venue, environment and geographical area chosen?
- k) If appropriate, what is the leader's personal level of skill in the activity, and fitness level?

The establishment undertakes to ensure that all such staff, will undergo an induction process that typically entails Visit Leader Awareness training, either in-house, from the LA's Offsite Visits Adviser or from another accredited provider, access to (and training where required) the establishment's 'EVOLVE' site and practical experience of accompanying visits and LOtC activities *before* being tasked with leading a visit for themselves.

Individual Risk Assessments and Needs of Trip Participants

Individual risk assessments are an important part of the overall visit risk assessment, and must therefore be in place for all students prior to any trip. They consider what risks that individual may present, both to themselves and to others. Further, they identify potential triggers, and strategies that can be used to support the child and reduce risk. It is essential to consider all children's dietary, medical and special educational needs as part of the visit risk assessment. If risks are identified, then staff must be confident that effective measures have been put in place to mitigate those risks before approval can be granted.

Information included in individual risk assessments is stored on Arbor. A printed copy of each participant's individual risk assessment must be taken on every visit. If the group will split up into smaller groups, the Visit Leader must ensure that any Assistant Visit Leaders who are in sole charge of a given group has access to the individual risk assessment for each pupil in their group.

Suitability of the Venue and Preliminary Visits

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third-party provision will meet group expectations. This may include checking [Kaddi](#), a venue review site that only Visit Leaders who have used the venue with school or youth groups can contribute to. Such information gathering

is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management.

Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice for the Visit Leader to carry out a preliminary visit to a venue or provider in order for them to familiarise themselves with the layout and surroundings, and any site-specific procedures or issues which may have an impact on the visit or members of the group.

Within the UK, highest priority for preliminary visits will be for trips taking place in 'open country' and establishment-led adventurous activities. Preliminary visits should also be strongly considered when the Visit Leader has no experience of the venue/activity, particularly where no serving member of staff from the establishment has visited before.

For overseas visits, advantage should be taken of any offers by tour operators for "leaders' orientation"-type visits.

Suitability of External Provider

It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of the nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes that are now available, which remove the need for use of Provider Assessment Forms (OV6) and sight of Safety Management Systems documentation including risk assessments.

Examples of such schemes include:

- [The LOfC Quality Badge](#)
- AALS licensing
- Adventuremark
- NGB centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

Holding one of the above is a credible assurance of Health and Safety, and Visit Leaders should seek no further verification. The LOfC Quality Badge also covers learning quality.

National Institutions and Public Buildings: - by their very nature these venues and providers are extremely unlikely not to conform to current Health & Safety legislation so it should not be necessary to require them to complete an OV6 or send out copies of their risk assessment documents.

HCC Providers and Establishments: - OV6 forms are not required from HCC-run providers such as Cuffley Camp, Herts Young Mariners Base, Hudnall Park or The Old Coach House in Snowdonia.

If the provider **does not** meet the above criteria, an OV6 'Provider Assessment Form' is required to help provide an audit trail for arrangements and checks. Many providers have websites and offer information packs which contain the sorts of information asked for on the OV6, including a Safety Management statement, so it may not be necessary to use one.

The OV6 is a generic form, for use for all kinds of provider, so if one is sent to a provider, it should be specified that they only need to complete the parts applicable to them/their services.

Once an OV6 has been received, signed and dated by a manager or person in authority, it is not always necessary to send a new one to the same provider each time you use them. It is sufficient to annotate the existing form already held by the establishment to show the school has checked back with the provider and that there have been no major or significant changes since the form was originally signed; this will not apply if the time interval is not more than 12 months or so.

First Aid

It is not always necessary that a qualified First Aider accompanies an offsite visit or LOfC activity. First aid issues for any LOfC activity should be considered as part of the risk management process and the exact requirements should be determined by ensuring that first aid support is available at an appropriate level, with regard to level of staff training and the nature of the medical supplies available. What is “appropriate” will be determined by:

- The nature of the activity.
- The nature of the group.
- The likely injuries associated with the activity.
- The extent to which the activity will isolate the group from normal ambulance support, or a known point where a qualified first aider will be available.

If there is any uncertainty, the Visit Leader should consult with the school’s Medical HLTA for further guidance on what would be appropriate given the circumstances of the visit.

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 the activity:

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

For some activities (most commonly in defined adventure activities) there is a good practice expectation that requires those leading such activities to hold a current first aid “qualification”. To be a “qualification”, the first aid course must include a formalised assessment process; otherwise any certification will have the status of a certificate of attendance. In practical terms, the course will be a minimum of 16 hours.

It is a legal requirement that all minibuses must carry a first aid kit.

Transport (see EG doc 4.5a)

Children may have additional support needs relating to transport. It is important to refer to any support plans they may have to check on particular access requirements.

Private Cars (see EG 4.5c)

Where a private (staff or parent) car is to be used to transport young people then this must be approved by the Head of Establishment, and an [OV7D](#) Form must be completed and retained by the establishment on an annual basis.

Coaches

The LA does not ‘approve’ coach companies. Whilst UK legislation ensures that coach companies are fit for public use, the facilities available on coaches may vary. Liaising with other establishments within the LA that have used a particular company (via a search on ‘EVOLVE’) will help to determine the level of service that may be provided.

Minibuses (see EG doc 4.5b)

All drivers of minibuses should undertake HCC’s Minibus Drivers’ Assessment Scheme training, and keep that training current (5-yearly reassessments). This applies to pre & post 1997 licence holders operating under the section 19 permit scheme as ‘volunteer drivers’. Post 1997 licence holders may drive a minibus provided:

- Drivers are aged 21 years or over.
- They have held their category B driving licence for at least two years.
- The minibus is being used by a non-commercial body for social purposes, but not for hire or reward.
- Drivers are not being paid to drive the minibus, other than out-of-pocket expenses.
- The minibus does not exceed 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if specialised equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers is included) gross vehicle weight.
- No trailer is towed.

When driving a minibus as an employee of HCC or on behalf of an HCC establishment, a full D1 PCV is required.

Hertfordshire's recommendations for minibus drivers are:

- All drivers should take a break every 2 hours (or sooner if tired).
- The break should be a minimum of 15 minutes. Second and subsequent breaks may need to be longer to prevent fatigue.
- After 4½ hours of driving, the accumulated length of breaks from driving should be at least 45 minutes.
- If you do no other work than driving, your maximum working day should be 13 hours, of which you should spend no more than 9 hours driving.
- If you do any other work as well as driving, your maximum working day, taking account of other work undertaken before starting a journey, should be 10 hours, of which you should spend no more than 4 hours driving.

For further information, see also:

- HCC Minibus Manual <http://www.hertsdirect.org/envroads/roadstrans/rsu/driving/advice/minibus/>
- DVLA www.dvla.gov.uk Select 'Online leaflets', INF28 'Driving a minibus'
- ROSPA '[Minibus Safety: A Code of Practice](#)' 2008
- MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) via [Community Transport Association UK](#). This also contains information on PCV licences, weight limits and towing.

Public Transport

For public transport within the Greater London area contact 'Transport for London', who offer special arrangements for establishment parties on London buses, Underground, Tramlink, and Docklands Light Railway, to cultural destinations. See [Transport for London](#) Tel. 020 7918 3954.

Insurance (see EG doc 4.4c)

Advice regarding insurance may be sought from the Local Authority's Insurance department.

Contact details are given on the 'Contact' page and from the 'Insurance' section when completing a visit entry on 'EVOLVE'.

In addition to the standard public liability cover which all establishments will have in place Hertfordshire County Council has taken out 'blanket' personal accident cover / travel insurance for all trips/visits at home or abroad. Details are available from the County's insurance department on 01992 555480 or by email at insurance@hertscc.gov.uk

Additional personal accident / travel insurance should be considered for visits in Category 3, and must be taken out for all visits abroad.

For travel within the European Union (plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland), all participants must hold a valid EHIC (European Health Insurance Card). See www.dh.gov.uk

Emergency Procedures

Emergency situations can occur despite the best precautions and therefore contingency planning and consideration of emergency procedures are necessary. Staff involved in a visit must be aware of, and adhere to, the establishment's policy on emergency procedures.

For all "out of hours" and residential visits there will be a nominated person(s) that can provide 24/7 cover as an Emergency Contact and that the person(s) so nominated will have 24/7 access to all details of the visit. This will include medical and next-of-kin information regarding staff as well as young people.

Consideration will be given to the following:

1. The emergency contact is typically the EVC or Head of School, although may be delegated to another member of the leadership team if the circumstances dictate.
2. It is preferable to identify two emergency contacts wherever possible as a contingency.
3. What means of communication will be available during the trip, e.g. will there be mobile phone reception and if not what alternatives will be used.
4. Visit plans are stored on Evolve to enable them to be accessed in the event of an emergency.

The establishment maintains a number of mobile phones specifically for use during offsite visits which should have all relevant contact details pre-programmed into them. It is each Visit Leader's responsibility to ensure these phones have:

- the correct details programmed into them beforehand;
- fully-charged batteries (and chargers available if necessary)
- sufficient credit available for the duration of the visit

Visit Leaders should complete an Emergency Contacts sheet (OV9); they should carry a copy with them and leave a copy with the Emergency Contact. Where available, landline numbers for providers should be given to avoid reliance on mobile phones.

External Providers

Organisations providing accommodation, activities or other services involving the acceptance of a duty of care should have their own emergency response procedures with which Visit Leaders and other staff should normally co-operate fully. In addition Visit Leaders must familiarise themselves with the procedures outlined in this section to enable them to fulfil any additional responsibilities and make prompt and appropriate notifications.

Plan B

It should be recognised that 'on the day' all may not go according to plan, and an important contributing factor to safety lies in there being sufficient flexibility to change or modify the nature of the planned activity in the face of adverse factors such as weather, road conditions, water levels or overcrowding of a venue. Alternative arrangements should be included within the planning process where such factors have the potential to affect the trip, most typically for 'adventurous activities' or trips taking place in 'open country'. These should be recorded on Evolve as Event Specific Notes. Where appropriate, all alternative activities should be fully considered and risk assessed beforehand.

3. Approval of Visits

Approval is delegated to the Head of Establishment for all visits.

However the following types of visit are required to be notified to the LA: -

- Overseas (anywhere that involves crossing a substantial area of open sea, including Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Hebrides and the Channel Islands)
- Those involving one or more adventurous activities to be led by a member of establishment staff.

Notifiable trips must be recorded on 'EVOLVE' at least four weeks prior to the event taking place; by doing so the LA is notified automatically.

Regardless of whether a visit should be notified to the LA or not, there should be a clear, unambiguous audit trail for arrangements with clear evidence of approval. Such evidence will usually be recorded on EVOLVE but where this is not the case an email granting approval from the EVC or Head of School will suffice.

The process for approval has three main stages:

1. Visit/activity proposed and planned by Visit Leader and accompanying colleagues;
2. Arrangements scrutinised by EVC until satisfied to recommend approval;
3. Arrangements re-scrutinised by Head and, when satisfied, approved.

An offsite visit or LOtC activity should not proceed without clear evidence of approval.

4. Once Approval is Granted

Consent

Section 35 of the Education Act 2004 states: *'Where a visit is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time, then parental consent is not necessary although it is recommended good practice to ensure that parents are informed'*.

Annual consent is appropriate for regular, routine activities in the local area that take place during normal school hours, covered in 'Category 1', although it is good practice to ensure that parents are informed.

For all other visits, parents must be informed in advance that the trip is taking place. It is essential to obtain specific parental consent for any visits taking place outside of normal school hours, visits involving establishment-led adventurous activities and/or visits taking place in 'open country'. Information provided to parents prior to granting consent should include full details of the activities and any other significant information, to allow 'informed consent'.

Codes of Behavioural Conduct

This establishment encourages the use of codes of behavioural conduct as a means of establishing appropriate expectations of young persons' behaviour. Such codes need to be explained to both the young people and those in a position of parental support before the visit, so reducing the opportunity for misunderstanding both expectations and the sanctions that may be invoked where the code is breached.

As part of encouraging social responsibility, young people should be encouraged to sign up to a "behavioural contract" for all residential visits. As part of the request for consent, it may be considered appropriate to require parents to sign and accept responsibility for removing young people in prescribed circumstances.

Preparatory Work

Preparatory work should take place in advance of the visit where appropriate, in order to maximise the educational value of the trip. This, in conjunction with the activities that will take place during the visit, should feed into any follow-up work.

5. The Visit

The Visit Leader must ensure that all staff involved are clear what their responsibilities are. All staff must be aware of the risk assessment(s) in place and actively following them.

The Visit Leader must ensure that all children have had a safety briefing before starting the activity.

All staff must continue to assess risks during the visit and act to mitigate such risks should they occur.

All staff must ensure that children are closely supervised at all times.

All staff must perform regular head counts of pupils, at least prior to and following each group movement from one location to another, to ensure that all children are present and correct.

Visit Leaders and Assistant Visit Leaders who may take sole responsibility for a sub-group must take with them:

- Emergency Contacts information, including Critical Incident Support
- Mobile phone
- First Aid kit appropriate to the visit
- A copy of the risk assessment(s) in place for the visit
- A copy of the individual risk assessments for each child (OV5)
- A copy of the key information for each trip participant (including adults), with details of next of kin, medical needs and dietary needs (OV8)
- A completed copy of the emergency contacts form (OV9)
- Any medical equipment required for the children on the trip

Emergency Situations

There are three levels of emergency, which help to guide the necessary response from the Visit Leader. The principles outlined provide a format for response and communication for school groups encountering misfortune whilst away from their normal base; these principles do not attempt to provide details for all possible situations, and Visit Leaders should use their own judgment and experience to determine the most appropriate course of action.

1. Incident

This is a situation in which the Visit Leader is able to remain in control and cope without having to refer to the Emergency Contact. The majority of problems occurring on educational visits fit this definition. Examples include a pupil who feels ill, minor injury, poor behaviour or a homesick pupil.

Response: The Visit Leader would be expected to deal with these.

2. Emergency

This is an incident which the Visit Leader cannot deal with alone, and would need to refer to the Emergency Contact for help. Emergencies are infrequent. The school's emergency contact is available at all times to provide support when a situation is beyond a Visit Leader's experience, training or coping strategies. Examples

may include a stomach bug affecting several pupils, a safeguarding issue, repeated poor behaviour causing concern or hospitalization due to injury.

Response: Contact the Emergency Contact for support.

3. Critical Incident

This is an incident that cannot be dealt with by the Visit Leader and the Emergency Contact alone. Critical incidents are rare. Examples include where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has suffered a life-threatening injury or fatality, is at serious risk or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

Reponse: Contact emergency services, e.g. ambulance if needed. Contact the Emergency Contact. Contact Hertfordshire Critical Incident support:

Monday – Friday 08.30-17.30 and Saturday 09.00-16.00: **01438 737261**

All other times: **0800 547547**

These numbers should be carried by Visit Leaders at all times during an off-site activity but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. *Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.*

Contacting Parents

If it is necessary to contact parents to make them aware of an emergency or critical incident, this will typically be the role of the Emergency Contact.

Late Return

When a group is overdue the scheduled return time, it is important that a systematic approach is adopted in responding to the late return of groups. This should ensure there is no dramatic over-reaction to simple unavoidable delay, but should equally ensure a prompt response in circumstances where the overdue return may be the result of a serious incident.

The Visit Leader must make every effort to inform the Emergency Contact of any significant delay in order to circumvent unnecessary worry and response. Failing this the following procedures should be implemented:

Group Overdue By:	Status	Actions and Response
Less than one hour	Heightened awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Telephone Visit Leader or last known point if possible 2. General awareness raised – looking out for safe return 3. Reassure any concerned relatives
Less than two hours	Low key search	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiate a low key search of the general area where the group are expected to be, if possible, including expected location of vehicle 2. Use local people/knowledge where possible. Have they been seen?
Two hours or more	Full scale response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact Critical Incident support if you have not already done so. 2. Initiate full scale search.

Safe return of the group **must** always be reported as soon as possible.

Plan B

In the interests of safety, conditions on the day of the trip may necessitate a change of plans. A decision to change the plan to Plan B may be made by the Visit Leader, either on the basis of their own recognised experience and technical expertise, or on the advice of another member of the staff team delegated with responsibility for the conduct of the activity. In either case, if the changes made involve the activity taking place in a different location or is likely to result in a delayed return, the Visit Leader must notify the Emergency Contact person prior to commencement of the activity. Although rare, in some situations it may be necessary not to proceed with the visit.

6. After the Visit

Investigation of Incidents

If an emergency situation, or near miss, does arise during a visit, this will be investigated. As such, to avoid compromising the investigation it is important that details of the situation are not shared with other staff unless advised otherwise by the investigating officer. The person assigned to deal with an investigation will depend on the nature of the incident, and will typically be:

- Incidents – informal discussion with EVC; EVC to advise Head of School or Executive Headteacher if there are concerns so that an investigation can be carried out.
- Emergency – investigation by Head of School.
- Critical Incident – investigation by Executive Headteacher.

If the EVC, Head of School or Executive Headteacher were involved in the emergency situation, the investigation will be carried out by someone higher in the line management structure.

The investigation is an information gathering exercise; as such it is carried out in a reasonably informal and non-judgmental manner. Typically it will involve any staff members taking part in the visit, and any other suitable witnesses; the investigating officer will draw upon the observations of staff and participants in a form they feel appropriate. The intent is to seek the causes of incidents in order to inform the ongoing development of good practice. Investigation does not automatically imply incompetence or negligence.

Where, as a result of the investigation, there is a possibility of disciplinary or other action being followed the investigating officer will exercise caution to ensure that one process does not compromise another; advice from leadership, HR or other relevant professionals should be sought before proceeding with the investigation of the incident.

Evaluation

Following the trip, the intended outcomes are evaluated in 'EVOLVE' by the Visit Leader, alongside other members of the visit team where possible. The venue or provider used during the visit should also be evaluated. These evaluations can therefore be used to help inform future visits.

['High Quality Outdoor Education'](#) can be used as a tool by visit leaders to assist in the evaluation of the learning taking place.

Follow-up Work

Appropriate follow-up work, which provides opportunities for children to consider their learning or to apply it in different contexts, helps to multiply the value of hands-on experiences outside the classroom.

Accidents

Reporting

Any accidents that occur during a trip should be recorded following standard school procedures, both for adults and children. Please see the school's Medical HLTA for further guidance on this.

In some circumstances, such as serious injuries, it is necessary for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to be notified of accidents. The HSE website provides further guidance on what to report;

- www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm

As pupils are non-workers they are treated as members of the public in this guidance.

All incidents that are reported to the HSE must also be reported to the LA's Health and Safety Team using the online forms via Solero.

If a reportable incident has occurred, or you need further advice, you must contact the school's Medical HLTA who will be able to assist in the reporting process.