

# EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM POLICY

**The OHC&AT Board of Directors has agreed this Policy – 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019.**

Jay Mercer  
Chair of OHCAT Board

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Peter Lauener  
Chair of OHC Board

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# Educational Visits and LOtC Policy

## INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) is a 'family' of providers, comprising Orchard Hill College (OHC) and Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT), which works together for mutual benefit. OHC&AT is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. Educational visits (EVs) and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) are a key component of that provision, broadening experiences for our pupils and students and enabling a deeper understanding of learning to take place.

Amongst other things, EVs and LOtC comprise:

- Activities within the College/Academy's own buildings, grounds or immediate area
- Educational visits organised both within and outside of the hours of the College/Academy day beyond the grounds of the provision and in the local and/or wider community
- Overnight stays on the College/Academy grounds
- Residential visits that take place during the College/Academy week, a weekend or holiday, away from College/Academy grounds
- Inclusion placements and integration with local schools and colleges
- Work placements with local organisations
- Involvement in clubs, musical groups, and sporting activities held during break times or after the end of the College/Academy day, either on or off-site
- Participation in dramatic productions, concerts and other special events.

LOtC is therefore distinct from EVs in that the former also includes learning within the College/Academy boundary that does not occur solely in the classroom.

All learning outside the classroom is risk-assessed in accordance with OHC&AT's Risk Assessment Policy, and with reference to our Health & Safety and Risk Management policies. The purpose of this policy is to confirm our commitment, as an organisation, to delivering high quality LOtC and educational visits, and to delineate our procedures for planning, assessing and managing educational visits. This policy has been written with reference to 'Health and Safety on educational visits' (DfE, 2018) and should be read in conjunction with OHC&AT's Risk Assessment, Risk Management and Health and Safety policies.

## AIMS AND RATIONALE

OHC&AT has a firm commitment to LOtC and educational visits. It is acknowledged that organising and leading off site activities puts a great deal of responsibility on all involved.

However, the benefits are immense and make an invaluable contribution to the academic, personal, emotional and social development of young people.

### **Aims of LOtC and EVs**

- To develop LOtC as an entitlement for all young people by overcoming potential barriers such as complex needs and challenging behaviour.
- To ensure enriching, high quality curriculum provision through LOtC experiences that facilitates pupils'/students' holistic progress.
- To deliver a wide range of progressive and frequent LOtC activities for all pupil/student groups.
- To provide young people with LOtC experiences that promote personal development and wellbeing, by increasing engagement and maximising access.
- To design the curriculum so that it embeds progressive experiences for all young people.
- To improve the effectiveness of learning outside the classroom through better planning and evaluation of outcomes for young people.

### **Rationale**

Educational visits and LOtC can have valuable and discernible benefits for our children and young people, playing a crucial part in promoting their overall progress and achievement by, for example:

- Providing memorable, fun experiences that inspire, engage and motivate.
- Providing young people with divergent experiences that enable them to generalise their skills in contexts that they would not experience in College/Academy alone.
- Supporting the development of positive relationships through building trust.
- Developing greater independence and skills for daily living.
- Promoting social inclusion and engagement with the wider community, through the development of self and other awareness.
- Promoting confidence and self-esteem via engagement with challenging tasks and encouraging pupils/students to take more responsibility.
- Being responsive to the different learning styles possessed by the range of young people in College/Academy.
- Supporting better progress by upping the level of challenge, taking young people out of their comfort zone and working within a framework of managed risk.
- Revealing young peoples' 'hidden talents' that may not manifest within a classroom or standard setting.

### **PLANNING AND APPROVAL**

OHC&AT adheres to [Department for Education guidance on educational visits](#) – please refer to Appendix A for a copy of this guidance.

Educational visits and Learning Outside the Classroom is embedded within OHC&AT curriculum provision and therefore should be treated as any other lesson with respect to planning. In order to plan an off-site activity the EVC should be involved in discussing plans at an early stage. Routine or local visits also need to be planned ahead. It may be possible to approve a series of events on a termly basis. No financial commitment should be agreed until all relevant approvals have been achieved.

Staff should be mindful of ongoing risk assessment. It is essential that there is sufficient lead-in time proportionate to the complexity of the visit and the level of approval required.

In relation to equality and inclusion, it is important to consider:

- Entitlement: the right to participate
- Accessibility: direct or by realistic adaption or modification
- Integration: participation with peers

OHC&AT has appointed an external Outdoor Educational Advisor to advise and support our Academies and the College with educational visits. Every OHC&AT provision must have a named Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) who will work with the Principal of the provision and the Outdoor Educational Advisor to ensure that EVs are planned, delivered and evaluated to the highest standard.

Educational visits fall into one of four categories:

- Local (NB: this is not determined solely by geographic location – the nature of activities will also be a determining factor)
- Residential
- Adventurous
- Overseas

The EVC reviews all proposals for educational visits, and approves all those categorised as local (i.e. those which do not fall into any of the other three categories). Anything categorised as residential, adventurous or overseas must go to the Outdoor Educational Advisor for approval. The Principal of each provision must be notified of all upcoming educational visit activity. Additionally, the Local Governing Body (LGB) should be informed of any educational visit activity categorised as residential, adventurous or overseas.

### **Risk assessments and safeguarding**

Risk assessments should identify suitable supervision ratios and whether or not a qualified first aider or suitably trained staff member is required.

Children and young people should be involved in the process of risk assessment, along with families as necessary or relevant.

Employees and/or supporting adults who have, or could have, substantial and regular access to pupils/students must undergo an enhanced DBS check.

The consumption of alcohol on educational visits is **always** prohibited, along with any misuse of substances – please refer to the Substance Misuse Policy for further guidance on this matter.

Risk Assessment proformas can be found in Appendices B and C.

### **Emergency procedures**

The risk assessment for each visit will identify the relevant emergency procedures during the visit. For visits extending beyond the Academy or College day this includes designating a home contact from the Academy or College who may be needed as a link between the party, parents/carers and the Academy/College in the event of an emergency.

In the event of a delay (of more than one hour), or of an incident resulting in harm to any pupil/student, staff member or volunteer, the Academy/College must be contacted as soon as possible to inform the Principal or Vice Principal who will inform families/others as required.

In the event of a party being overdue and without contact by more than one hour, the Academy/College must investigate.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **OHC&AT Directors will:**

- Review and approve this policy on a regular basis and receive termly reports as part of health and safety monitoring.

#### **The OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team (ESLT) will:**

- Monitor risk assessment and LOtC/EV activity across the organisation as part of regular safeguarding/health and safety monitoring.
- Regularly review this policy and any attendant procedures to ensure that they are effective and compliant with all relevant requirements.

#### **Principals will:**

- Appoint a suitable member of staff to act as Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) for their provision, and ensure that they access the relevant training.
- Ensure that relevant training around LOtC and EVs is provided for all staff and regularly refreshed as necessary.
- Regularly report on LOtC and EV activity to the OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team and to the Local Governing Body (LGB).

- Produce and maintain a school- or College-specific procedure for managing students before, during and after any educational visit, and ensure that all staff implement this procedure effectively during EV activity.

**Educational Visit Coordinators will:**

- Liaise with the external Outdoor Educational Advisor to ensure that visits comply with all guidelines and regulations regarding health and safety.
- Approve all educational visits categorised as 'local' rather than 'residential', 'adventurous' or 'overseas'.
- Ensure that all appropriate Academy/College procedures are in place and understood by staff, including child protection/safeguarding, health and safety and the Academy/College's own 'Before, During, After' procedures.
- Ensure that relevant consents have been sought and obtained for each visit.
- Evaluate all educational visits after they have taken place, including any incidents/accidents and lessons learned, and regularly report on these to the Principal.
- Ensure that their EVC training is kept up to date.

**The externally appointed Outdoor Educational Advisor will:**

- Advise all OHC&AT provisions on the safe and effective planning and execution of educational visits.
- Provide training to EVCs on an annual refresher basis.
- Review and approve all educational visits categorised above 'local' level.

**All staff will:**

- Ensure they are familiar with and adhere to all relevant risk assessment and educational visit policies and procedures.
- Report any incidents promptly via the correct channels.

**POLICY REVIEW DETAILS**

|                                    |                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Version:</i>                    | 1.1                            |
| <i>Reviewer:</i>                   | John Prior                     |
| <i>Approval body:</i>              | Family Board                   |
| <i>Date this version approved:</i> | 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2019 |
| <i>Due for review:</i>             | Autumn 2022                    |

**RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures  
Equality and Diversity Policy  
First Aid Policy  
Health and Safety Policy  
Missing Child Policy (Academies)

Missing Student Policy (OHC)  
Risk Assessment Policy  
Substance Misuse Policy

## **FURTHER RESOURCES**

Health and safety in schools (DfE)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/health-and-safety-in-schools>

Health and Safety of Learners Outside The Classroom (HASLOC) (Nov 2009)

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/10664/>

Council for Learning Outside the Classroom: <http://www.lotc.org.uk/>

## **APPENDIX A: Health and Safety on Educational Visits (DfE, 2018)**

### **1. The 2 main types of trips**

#### 1.1 Routine visits

These involve no more than an everyday level of risk, such as slips and trips and are covered by a school'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.

#### 1.2 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 school
- the type of activity
- the location
- needing staff with specialist skills

Sometimes a school may just need to review its current plans or arrangements that were successful on previous trips. However, some trips will need risk assessments, detailed planning and informed approval of headteachers or governing boards. 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.

### **2. When to get consent from parents**

A school must always get written consent for nursery age children.

For children over nursery age, written consent is not needed for most trips, as they're part of the curriculum. However, it's good practice to tell parents about them.

Written consent is usually only needed for trips that:

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

Ask parents to sign a copy of [our consent form](#) when their child enrolls. This will cover them for their whole time at the school.

Schools should still tell parents about these trips and give them the opportunity to withdraw their child.



### 3. Using outside organisations

Schools using an outside organisation to provide an activity 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.

Schools can [check if an organisation holds the LOtC Quality Badge](#).

If an organisation does not hold the badge, the school 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
- that they have a licence where needed

The school 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.

### 4. 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

Schools 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.

## **5. Trips abroad**

Trips abroad can have extra risks and need a higher level of risk assessment.

Schools should make sure any organisation that is providing activities holds the LOtC Quality badge or similar local accreditation.

The HSE does not cover incidents overseas. However, it can investigate work done in Britain to support the trip, like risk assessments. School 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, follow the guide to the [British Standard for adventurous activities outside the United Kingdom](#) as the basis for the planning and risk assessment. Organisations employed by the school should follow this too. If they have LOtC Quality Badge then they follow this standard.

Schools should consider the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's detailed guidance on [safer adventure travel and volunteering overseas](#) when organising adventure visits abroad. A [teachers' pack](#) is also available.

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

Schools should have an emergency response plan that covers what to do if there is an incident away from school. Schools should also have 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.

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

## **7. Evaluating trips**

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

This will help the school:

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

## **8. Educational visits coordinators**

Schools should appoint an educational visits coordinator and make sure they have the training they need. The headteacher has this duty if there is no coordinator. Local authorities or academy trust outdoor education advisers can advise on appointing and training coordinators.

The coordinator works with the local outdoor education adviser to help their colleagues in schools 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 headteachers and governors when they're approving trips
- have access to training, advice and guidance

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