OFF-SITE VISITS & ACTIVITIES POLICY

Safely managed educational visits with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of a broad and balanced curriculum and a vibrant part of Wodensborough Ormiston Academy. They are an opportunity to extend young people’s learning and enrich their appreciation and understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. They can be the catalyst for improved academic performance, a lifetime interest or in some cases professional fulfilment. They are to be encouraged.

1. **Policy Objectives**

   1.1. To ensure that every young person has the opportunity to benefit from educational visits and offsite activities.

   1.2. To ensure all visits and off-site activities are safe, purposeful and appropriate to meet educational needs of young people taking part.

   1.3. To enable the academy to identify appropriate functions, responsibilities, training, support and monitoring for all Governors, Heads, staff, volunteers, young people and providers involved in educational visits and offsite activities.

   1.4. To comply with the OAT policy and guidance for off-site visits and related activities and keep up to date with further advice.

   1.5. To ensure, where appropriate, further advice is sought from technically competent persons either employed by or contracted to the employer.

2. **Access and Availability**

   2.1. All policy, guidance and other documentation e.g. forms, which relate to the visits process, are available from the Resources area of the Ormiston EVOLVE website (http://oatvisits.net). EVOLVE is the only source of up to date documentation. Staff referencing the documentation from other sources e.g. hard copies and electronic files, should ensure that they are the most up to date versions by reference to the definitive versions on the EVOLVE website.

   2.2. All staff (and Governors) involved in the visit process will have access to the EVOLVE website through a personal Username and Password. Staff requiring access must contact the academy Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) who manages the system.

   2.3. It is a requirement for all staff involved in visits, whatever their role, to have read and comply with this policy and the guidance referred to in 1.4 above. When in any doubt about those requirements, staff should contact the EVC in the first instance.
3. Visits

3.1. A visit is defined as any occasion when a young person on roll at this academy takes part in any type of activity, organised by or arranged through the academy, which is carried out beyond the boundary of the academy site. It does not include Work Experience programmes and young people attending courses provided by appropriately vetted local Offsite Learning Providers on their premises.

3.2. All visits must:

3.2.1. have a clear purpose with identified outcomes for those taking part;
3.2.2. be planned, approved and carried out in accordance with this policy and the employer's policy, guidance and approval procedure;
3.2.3. have a named and appropriately competent Visit Leader (and where appropriate, deputy) who will have sole, over-all charge of the visit. It is inappropriate for the role of Visit Leader to be shared during a visit.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. Governing Body/Management Board

The Governing Body/Management Board will:

4.1.1. have oversight of the visits process in accordance with the academy policy and guidance, but will not be required to approve individual visits;
4.1.2. delegate the authorisation of all visits to the Principal;
4.1.3. ensure that training is available, where appropriate, to support this policy and the employer's policy and guidance;
4.1.4. ensure that an appropriately competent EVC is in place who is adequately supported in their role;
4.1.5. Arrange for individual members of the Governing Body to be given Read Only EVOLVE accounts in order to fulfil their role with respect to visits and have access to up to date policy, guidance and visits (past, present and future).

4.2. The Principal

The Principal will:

4.2.1. ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in the visit process are appropriately competent to carry out responsibilities allocated to them and have received training as appropriate;
4.2.2. ensure that all visits comply with the academy policy and employer's policy and guidance;
4.2.3. be responsible for approving all visits in accordance with the employer's approval procedure (OAT Guidance: Appendix 1.);
4.2.4. ensure that all visits are approved prior to departure in line with the academy's/employer's approval procedure;
4.2.5. ensure that an appropriately competent EVC has been designated and supported in accordance with this policy and the employer's policy and guidance;
4.2.6. be clear about their role when taking part in the visit as a Leader and should follow the instructions of the designated Visit Leader, who will have sole, over-all charge of the visit;
4.2.7. ensure that suitable child protection procedures are in place, including vetting at an appropriate level of all voluntary helpers;
4.2.8. ensure that they have assigned sufficient time for staff to organise visits properly;
4.2.9. support an apprenticeship /succession planning culture to ensure sustainable visits and the development of competent Visit Leaders and EVCs;
4.2.10. support the EVC in ensuring that visits are effectively supervised with an appropriate level of staffing;
4.2.11. support the EVC in ensuring that visit information has been shared with parents and that consent has been sought where necessary;
4.2.12. ensure that arrangements have been made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the young people and also address any inclusion issues;
4.2.13. ensure that they promote a staffing culture that encourages gaining formal accreditations in first aid, so enabling a visit culture that makes access to first aid more readily available;
4.2.14. ensure that suitable transport arrangements are in place and meet any regulatory requirements;
4.2.15. ensure that insurance arrangements are appropriate and, wherever possible, are set up to reduce the burden of bureaucracy for all concerned;
4.2.16. ensure that details related to the visit and participants (including staff) are accessible to a designated 24/7 emergency contact(s) at all times in case of a serious incident;
4.2.17. ensure that that there are contingency plans in place should the visit plan be significantly changed or cancelled (Plan B);
4.2.18. ensure that EVC functions are delegated as and where required;
4.2.19. ensure that arrangements are in place for the Governing Body/Management Board to be informed of such visits as are required by the academy visit policy;
4.2.20. be aware of the need to obtain best value. Appropriate consideration must be given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships;
4.2.21. ensure that academy policy identifies the types of visit that require a preliminary visit and the processes required when a preliminary visit is not reasonably practicable;
4.2.22. ensure that academy policy formally adopts a set format for recording written risk assessments or their equivalent. Such RAs should be proportional, suitable and sufficient and based on the 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management';
4.2.23. ensure that, where the activity involves a third party provider, appropriate assurances have been sought. Specifically note those national schemes that make seeking provider assurances unnecessary e.g. LOTC Quality Badge, AALS licence, Adventuremark, or a clear management Statement of Competence;
4.2.24. ensure that all visits are evaluated with regard to best value, teaching and learning, quality experiences, and address issues raised by any serious incident that might inform the operation of future activities/visits;
4.2.25. ensure that the academy policy includes appropriate emergency procedures in case of a major incident;
4.2.26. ensure that the academy policy includes a procedure to ensure that parents are appropriately informed in the event of a serious incident;
4.2.27. ensure that serious incidents are reported to the employer’s Emergency Planning department to enable the employer’s public relations unit to deal with the media.

4.3. The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

4.3.1. A named Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will be appointed who has received appropriate training and is competent to fulfil the role. The EVC may be assisted by a person who fulfils an administrative function only.

The EVC will, in accordance with academy policy and employer’s policy and guidance:

4.3.2. be familiar with and have a good understanding of the contents of the academy policy and the employer’s guidance and comply with their provisions;
4.3.3. manage the academy’s EVOLVE account and provide access to and training for staff and Governors on the system;
4.3.4. identify and record, with the minimum paperwork and using EVOLVE where appropriate, qualifications, training, development, induction and apprenticeship arrangements for all Visit Leaders and Leaders (employed staff and volunteers);
4.3.5. monitor visit planning, risk management and evaluation of all visits. This will include sample monitoring ‘in the field’;
4.3.6. advise the Principal in relation to Visit Leader/Leader competence and training requirements for all staff involved in the visits process;
4.3.7. ensure sufficient, appropriately competent and vetted staff and volunteers accompanying the visit in accordance with the risk management arrangements and employer’s guidance;
4.3.8. ensure sensible risk management is in place before, during and after the visit and recorded where appropriate. This will include arrangements for: risk assessment; vetting Leaders and volunteers; parental information and consent; emergency contacts; contingency arrangements; medical and First Aid issues; emergency procedures;
4.3.9. have access to update training opportunities and a technical adviser (e.g. Off-site Visits Consultant) either employed by or contracted to the employer.

4.4. The Visit Leader

The Visit Leader will, in accordance with academy policy and employer’s policy and guidance:

4.4.1. be an appropriately competent, employed member of staff at the academy or engaged through a thorough recruitment process;
4.4.2. ensure Best Value principles are used when selecting providers and make appropriate checks in accordance with academy policy and guidance. Visit Leaders should NOT normally request copies of risk assessments from providers;
4.4.3. undertake exploratory visits and/or make enquiries where appropriate;
4.4.4. ensure that parents are appropriately informed about visits and their written consent and other information are obtained where appropriate;
4.4.5. ensure that insurance and any financial support procedures are followed;
4.4.6. ensure emergency procedures, contingency arrangements (Plan B) and systems for recording and sharing information on accidents and near misses are in place before briefing young people and parents;
4.4.7. ensure that risks are managed;
4.4.8. ensure appropriate supervision of the young people at all times. The Visit Leader must be with the group at all times unless specific arrangements have been made and approved by the Principal;
4.4.9. ensure that the visit complies with the ‘All visits planning and monitoring checklist’;
4.4.10. ensure that the visit has been approved before departure
4.4.11. ensure that members of the group are aware of fire evacuation and lockdown procedures at venues.

4.5. Leaders (Teachers, Teaching Assistants, other academy staff, volunteer adults)

Leaders will, in accordance with academy policy and employer’s guidance:

4.5.1. be appropriately competent to fulfil the requirements of the visit;
4.5.2. have a thorough understanding of their role within the visit;
4.5.3. follow the Visit Leader’s instructions at all times;
4.5.4. inform the Visit Leader of any safety concerns, or the Principal if for some reason the Visit Leader does not implement control measures necessitated by changes in circumstances
4.5.5. have sufficient information and resources to enable them to contribute to the effective and safe running of the visit, particularly relating to the young people taking part, itinerary for the visit, risk management arrangements and the emergency procedures and contacts;
4.5.6. if the main group separates into smaller groups, each group should be led by a suitably competent Leader. Leaders who are not employees (e.g. volunteers) should not normally be left in charge of a group unless previously agreed at the planning stage of the visit. A possible exception could be where an unanticipated emergency requires a volunteer to step-in.
4.5.7. Leaders are not permitted to consume alcohol on any visit.

NB – Any staff member of the academy on a visit, must remember that although there may be times when they have ‘non-contact’ time away from students (including when they may be in bed) they maintain responsibility to respond to students in their care. All staff remain bound by all academy policies including: the Adult Behaviour policy, KCSIE and the responsibilities of ‘in loco parentis’.

4.6. Parents

4.6.1. The academy will give parents details about off-site visits practice and safety procedures;
4.6.2. Parents will be given sufficient written and other information about all visits to make informed decisions and give written consent, medical and contact details, where appropriate, in accordance with this academy policy;
4.6.2.1. For Adventurous Activities, residential and overseas visits, meetings with parents will be arranged and visit-specific written consent will be required together with up to date information on participants (e.g. current medical issues, emergency contact details);
4.6.2.2. For visits other than those stated in 4.5.2.1 above, parents will be required to sign a generic consent form;
4.6.3. Expectations of behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents. This will include the need to meet the cost and make arrangements for collecting children in certain circumstances.

4.7 Young People
4.7.1 Young people should be briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all visits. Ongoing briefings are an important part of learning and safety and must be carried out when necessary;

4.7.2 Where possible young people should be involved with planning, developing codes of conduct, assessing/managing risk and evaluating their own attitude, behaviour, development and learning.

4.7.3 Visit leaders should make mobile phone use and accessibility clear to students before any visit takes place. This is flexible and can be agreed with the EVC on how mobile phones and other electronic devices can be managed.

4.7.4 Academy rules on smoking should be maintained on any visit.

4.7.5 Students are not permitted to consume alcohol on any visit.

4.7. Voluntary Helpers

4.7.1. Unless a volunteer has been processed through the academy checks and vetting process they will not be treated as a ‘helper’ and cannot be left unsupervised with

4.7.2. Any volunteer who is accompanying the trip and has not been through the academy checks must be risk assessed

4.7.3. Volunteers who have complete all checks and vetting can be used as ‘helpers’ however they must be clearly briefed on their role and responsibility and the risk assessment should acknowledge their position clearly.

5. Visit Leader / Leader Competence

5.1 Support

The competence of those leading a visit is a vital aspect of safe visit management. Staff will be supported in developing competence in the following ways:

5.1.1 An apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced Visit Leaders before taking on a leadership role;

5.1.2 Supervision by Senior staff of some off-site visits;

5.1.3 Support for staff to attend training courses relevant to the roles of Leader and Visit Leader.

5.2 Assessing Competence

In deciding whether any member of staff is competent to be a Visit Leader/ Leader, the Principal will take into account the following factors:

5.2.1 Level of relevant experience;

5.2.2 Any relevant training undertaken;

5.2.3 The emotional and leadership ability of any prospective Visit Leader to make dynamic risk management judgements and take charge of any emergencies that may arise:

5.2.4 Knowledge of the children, the venue and the activities to be undertaken.

6. Parental Information and Consent

All communication with parents must be uploaded to EVOLVE and written consent must be obtained to attend any trip or visit.

7. Monitoring of the Visits Process
7.1. The EVC will monitor all visits through scrutiny of the visit forms;

7.2. Depending on the nature of the visit and the experience of the EVC, the Principal or delegated senior manager will be expected to provide additional scrutiny of visit arrangements for the visit;

7.3. When necessary, the EVC will require further information and action from the Visit Leader and/or those responsible for organising the visit until the EVC is satisfied that the visit meets the requirements of the academy policy and employer's guidance;

7.4. When necessary the EVC will inform the Principal/Senior Manager of any concerns, in relation to the organisation of the visit, that may have safety implications or may significantly reduce the quality of experience for those taking part;

7.5. Field monitoring of visits will take place on a sample basis by the EVC/Head/senior manager and the results of such monitoring will be recorded and made known to the Head/EVC & Visit Leader and any other Leaders, as appropriate;

7.6. For some visits or aspect(s) of a visit, it may be necessary to seek advice from a technical adviser, e.g. OAT Off-site Visits Adviser as part of the visit scrutiny, monitoring and evaluation;

8. Risk Management

8.1. In accordance with the employer’s policy and guidance, all those involved in the visits process are required to manage risks associated with any significant hazards identified in a visit.

8.2. Risk management training will be available to those staff requiring it.

8.3. Academy generic risk assessments/operational guidelines are available for some areas and activities (e.g. coach travel) to support the Visit Leader with visit planning and the risk management process. The most up to date versions are available from the academy area of EVOLVE. Generic risk assessments should not be attached to EVOLVE visit forms.

8.4. Some visits and activities will require consideration of additional hazards and their associated risks that are specific to the visit (e.g. comfort breaks/service area stops on longer coach journeys). They will usually take into account the nature and needs of the young people participating (e.g. special and medical needs), experience and competency of the Leaders, the venue and activities being undertaken. They should be recorded on an Event Specific Notes Form which should be attached to the EVOLVE visit form as part of the approval procedure.

8.5. It may be that for some visits e.g. low risk, local visits within walking distance of the academy, there are no significant additional hazards and a generic risk assessment/operational guidelines will be sufficient.

8.6. Visit Leaders should involve other Leaders (including volunteers) in the risk management process. They must be aware of the academy’s generic risk assessments and any additional controls recorded on the Event Specific Notes form.

8.7. Where appropriate and where possible, the young people participating in the visit should be involved in the planning and risk management. This will increase their risk awareness and enable them to have a greater ownership of the event.

9. Emergency Procedures and Contacts

9.1. For all visits, the Visit Leader must carry and be familiar with, the contents of the academy Emergency Card (Visit Leader) which outlines actions they need to take and gives details of those who may need to be contacted;

9.2. There must be a nominated Emergency Home Contact for all visits, who has access to all the visit details including medical and next-of-kin information for the Leaders as well as the young people. Copies of completed consent forms should not be attached to EVOLVE visit forms;
9.2.1. For visits that take place entirely during the academy day, this is likely to be the academy office;

9.2.2. For visits that take place out of academy hours or extend beyond the academy day, this will be an appropriately competent, named person (e.g. IC, Office Manager, Senior Manager) who is available at all times (24/7) for the duration of the visit. For some visits (extended residential visits) it may be necessary for more than one contact to be nominated in order to ensure 24/7 support;

9.3. Emergency Home Contacts must be familiar with and have access to an academy Emergency Card (Home Contacts) which outlines the action that needs to be taken in an emergency and gives details of others that may need to be contacted;

9.4. Emergency Home Contacts should have access to and be familiar with EVOLVE so that they can view visit forms if necessary. This will require Read Only Account access as a minimum;

9.5. The EVC will test procedures from time to time (e.g. availability of Emergency Home Contact(s) to respond to an emergency call).

9.6. Incident reporting should be reported through the emergency contact in the first instance and then through the EVC

10. **Insurance**

    All trips are covered by the academy policy, however each trip should be reviewed by EVC to assess whether high risk activities need additional cover.

11. **Finance**

    All finance concerns are dealt with through the charging and remissions policy

12. **Inclusion**

    It is the aim of the academy to make all visits inclusive and accessible to all students in line with the academy inclusion policy. Individual risk assessments should be completed for students who may present with additional or specific needs.

13. **Transport**

    Buses & Coaches – reputable licenced companies must be used with fitted seatbelts etc. The Visit leaders with risk assess coached etc on arrival to ensure they are satisfied with the standard of the safety features

    Use of staff cars to transport students – This is subject to an individual risk assessment based on the students being transported. In addition to the driver they must always be another staff member present. The diver I only responsible for driving and not responsible for supervising the students.

14. **Forms and Checklists**

    The definitive versions of the following forms and checklists are available from the Resources area on the EVOLVE website. These forms and checklists must be used in accordance with academy policy and employer’s policy and guidance:

    OAT Forms & Docs:

    All visits planning and monitoring checklist
    Event Specific Notes Form
    Provider Enquiry form
    Is the activity adventurous? (checklist)
    Use of private car to transport young people (form)

    Academy’s Docs: