



Educational Visits Policy

The Lodestar Academy

Contents

1. Summary	2
2. What is this Policy About?	2
3. Who Does this Policy Apply to?	3
4. Policy Statement	3
5. Policy Requirements	12
6. Related Policies	12

This policy will be reviewed annually. The academy reserves the right to amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

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1. Summary

The External Visits Policy covers the following areas:

Suitability
Approval for Trip/Activity
Role and Responsibility
External Agency or Outdoor Providers
Planning and Preparation
Trip/Activity File
Appropriate Activities
Emergency Contacts
Parental consent
Information to Parents
Group Management
Risk Assessment
Insurance
Transport
Use of Minibus
Accommodation
Preparing the Group
Travel in a Member of Staff's Car
Policy and Practice

2. What is this Policy about?

Lodestar Academy recognises that educational visits offer an invaluable opportunity to enrich young peoples' learning, raise their self-esteem, increase their motivation and appetite for learning and raise levels of achievement in many aspects of their life and education. They can provide powerful opportunities for young people to develop confidence, learn to live and work with others, and respond to challenges.

England and Wales has an outstanding natural environment and a vibrant, unique culture and learning outside the classroom is a strong theme that runs through all stages of education. Therefore, Lodestar Academy will aim to identify opportunities for our students to experience life outside of the classroom wherever possible to ensure that all students experience a broad and balanced quality of education.

However, our aim is to ensure that young people benefit from these opportunities through participation in safe, well managed visits and off-site activities. This policy aims to support staff who are involved in the planning, management and delivery of visits and off-site activities, and to do so in ways which reflect current good practice and our duty of care.

Academy staff will organise and utilise external visits in order to support the curriculum undertaken and will take advantage of the resources of the local community wherever possible. External visits off site may include:

- Children travelling in staff cars
- Education staff using their own car for business use
- Education staff walking pupils on and off site
- Children and Young People travelling in a group on an approved coach or mini bus
- Residential visits (examples include Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme expeditions)
- Adventurous activities (examples include woodcraft or water-based activities)
- Visits abroad
- Day visits (examples include trips to sights of local educational interest)
- Work Experience and Vocational Placements (as appropriate)
- Sporting activities
- Other activities offsite such as rewards trips

Educational visits or journeys will be made from time to time as part of the process of curriculum delivery, and may be made by a group of pupils as part of an educational opportunity in the form of enrichment or as part of the active curriculum, or on an individual basis in order for a pupil to work towards the targets that are part of their individual learning plan.

To enable education staff to effectively carry out their role, they may be required to visit pupils in their own homes. This may be for initial engagement, for assessment, interim teaching or integration purposes. They will also liaise with other teachers in mainstream and special schools as well as other education and health professionals. They will liaise with other Local Authority colleagues and they may visit professional development centres, resource centres, the local library, rehabilitation units, other hospitals and satellite units where pupils in the community are being taught.

3. Who is this Policy for?

All staff, parents/carers and commissioners.

The approval process for any trip or visit is included in Appendix 1. 4.

4. Policy Statement

4.1. Purpose of the trip/activity

Trip Leaders should be clear as to the purpose and objectives of the trip/activities and how it contributes to the objectives of the service.

4.2. Suitability

It is essential to ensure that the trip/activity is suitable for the group, and that it is planned and then led by an appropriate person. The suitability of all trips is based on both how it widens the curriculum offer as part of the good quality of education the academy provides, and also the overall risk of the trip.

In all cases, the Trip Leader must complete an Initial Risk Assessment and have initial approval from the Head Teacher/Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) before entering the trip on Evolve.

For all sporting trips/activities, further specific safety standards, advice, checklists and guidelines from the appropriate national governing body for the activities must be sought on supervising and managing the specific activity being planned. The national governing bodies (listed in appendix at the end of this report, such as the National Governing Body for Climbing and Walking www.mltw.org) have established safety standards and working practices for their respective activities.

If the trip/activity involves a hazardous or adventurous activity, a licensed outdoor activity provider must be used to deliver the activity, and advice must be sought from this provider regarding suitability. For all other outdoor activities and for trips/activities near water or in open country, advice must be sought from suitably qualified professionals with knowledge of the suitability of the activity and of the local area where the trip is being planned. If there is any doubt, a licensed outdoor activity provider must be used.

4.3. Approval for a Trip/Activity

No trip or activity can proceed without authorisation from the Head Teacher. Initial approval of the proposed trip/activity should be gained in principle from the relevant senior manager, prior to any detailed preparations taking place. This initial approval should be in the form of an e-mail.

Once this initial approval is completed, the Trip Leader should complete the Evolve Trip Submission form on Evolve. Planning and preparation must be done sufficiently far ahead to ensure that there is no unreasonable risk to safety, quality or finance as a result of preparations being made in haste.

The approval form must be submitted by the Trip Leader to the Head Teacher for approval of the trip/activity details, once all preparations are complete.

Approval must be gained at least one month prior to the intended trip date for trips abroad and at least two weeks before for any other trip.

The academy will consider any breach of this approval process as serious misconduct and would take disciplinary action against any member of staff not following the process.

4.4. Roles and Responsibilities

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher (Beth Woodward) is responsible for making the final decision on whether a trip/activity can go ahead and will stop a trip/activity if the guidance has not been followed or if the safety of the party cannot be guaranteed. This decision is evidenced on Evolve.

Education Visits Co-Ordinator

The Head Teacher is (or will nominate) an Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) who has undertaken the approved training, and will complete the refresher course at least every two years. All visits will need to be discussed with the External Visits Co-ordinator who will ensure that the leader is familiar with the visit/location and has completed a risk assessment specific to the young people involved and the location of the visit. Appropriate notice, dependent on risk level of the trip, must be given to the EVC of any visit so that all checks can be made, letters checked and risk assessments completed and checked. Local visits that are a regular part of our daily work will need to be discussed with the leaders and checked with the EVC on the first visit if it is to be a regular or frequent occurrence.

Trip Leader

It is the responsibility of the Trip Leader to complete the Evolve Trip submission, which will include:

- Obtaining approval from the relevant Senior Manager before the visit goes ahead
- Following the guidelines, policies and procedures set by this policy and those by the visited establishment
- Planning and preparing for the visit, including briefing the group members and next of kin as required
- Completing adequate risk assessments that consider all significant hazards about the trip and also review individual pupil risk assessments
- Appointing a deputy for the trip/activity and define what this entails (this includes who would lead the group if the Trip Leader is absent)
- Confirming that the named First Aider has up to date First Aid Training
- Defining each trip/activity assistant leader's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned, especially if students need to have a named adult on the trip
- Being familiar with the age range of participants and be competent to lead the activities proposed
- Assessing the suitability of the activity for the participant's abilities and ages and ensure that their needs are appropriately met
- Ensuring that the trip/activity assistant leaders have information on any specific needs or requirements of the participants involved, including, but not limited to, details of any pupil with known allergies and the measures taken to ensure adequate AAI devices are included with first aid resources.

- Ensuring all parental consents are in place
- Being aware of safeguarding issues and consider this when planning the visit and throughout the visit (any Safeguarding concerns are to be recorded using CPOMS)
- Ensuring that there is adequate first aid provision for all aspects of the trip/activity, including travel
- Ensuring that the group and the Senior Manager have contact details for inside and outside the normal hours of the establishment
- Ensuring that there is a suitable supervision ratio based on the nature of the activities and pupils involved
- Curtailing a trip/activity if the risk to the health and safety of participants is deemed unacceptable
- Reviewing each visit and where necessary make changes to future visits based on the experiences had by the participants and supervisors

Trip/Activity Assistant Leaders

All staff who are taking part in the supervision of a trip/activity have a 'Duty of Care' towards all members of the group. Trip/Activity assistant leaders have the responsibility to provide the same care that a 'reasonable, prudent, and careful parent or carer would take in the same circumstances. If assistant leaders have any doubt as to the safety of the group, the trip/activity must not continue unless or until they have sufficient further information and advice to remove the doubts. The duty of care applies to all who take responsibility for the supervision of the trip/activity, including volunteers.

External Agency or Outdoor Providers

Where an activity involves an outside agency or outdoor provider, the Trip Leader must ensure that the agency or provider involved is competent and any establishment safe.

Outside providers must be able to demonstrate that their qualifications and experience of the staff are in line with the requirements of this policy. This would include ensuring that they have sight of the providers current public liability certificate, any relevant risk assessments covering the activities they will deliver and any activity licences, for example AALA (adventure activities licensing) if deemed appropriate for the activities planned. The relevant qualifications required will be established on a case by case basis, depending on the activities planned. A decision on competence of the provider should be made by the senior manager and evidence will include the quality of documentation, site visits and in some cases testimonials.

Whilst the agency or provider may be given the responsibility to instruct/lead a group on a trip/activity, the Trip Leader/Assistant Leader must still fulfil his/her duty of care to the group, and must stop the trip/activity immediately if there are any concerns, whether this is due to safety concerns or for any other reason.

The Lodestar Academy is part of the Torbay/Devon Evolve group; this allows the academy to access risk assessments and trip submissions for local trips that are already approved by the Local Authority. It is the responsibility of the Trip Leader to ensure that the risk assessments completed are suitable for the students involved.

4.5 Planning and Preparation

Careful advance-planning is crucial to ensuring the safety of the group on an off-site trip/activity, and it is the responsibility of the Trip Leader to ensure each of the following aspects are addressed.

Trip/Activity File

The Trip Leader must compile a file for each trip/activity being planned that contains all of the relevant planning documentation and information required (where applicable) as outlined in this policy. This file must be made available to the senior manager prior to commencement of the trip. Contents of the file must include:

- Purpose of the Trip/activity
- Location and itinerary
- Programme of activities
- Safety guidelines for the specific trip/activity planned
- Details of any outside provider involvement and their qualifications/suitability
- Transport arrangements
- Financial arrangements
- Insurance details
- Risk assessments
- Details of staff and accompanying adults
- Emergency contact information
- Information on members of the party Parental/carer consent forms
- Any last-minute changes

All of this information can be downloaded from Evolve.

Appropriate Activities

When activities are in the planning stage, the Trip Leader must ensure that the venue, programme and cost are appropriate to the aims of the venture, the needs and abilities of participants and the resources available. Safety, Security and Welfare must be the prime considerations.

Pre-Visits

The Trip Leader must research the background and implications of an off-site activity thoroughly to ascertain the appropriateness of the venue whenever possible the Trip Leader should make preliminary visits to the venue, to risk-assess any potential dangers. When a venue involves naturally hazardous areas such as mountains and moorland coasts, forested areas and sizeable areas of still and moving water that are unfamiliar, a pre-visit must be carried out unless the trip is being run by a suitably qualified or licensed outdoor activity provider.

Emergency Contacts

A senior member staff not on the activity or trip should act as the Emergency/Home Contact for the group throughout the duration of the trip, including out of hours if necessary. The Emergency Contact is the focus for communications between the party and those at home. The Emergency Contact must have access to the trip/activity file containing all relevant information about the group, programme and venues. The Trip Leader must brief the Emergency Contact prior to departure. Each parent/carer also needs to know how to contact the Emergency Contact and this should be stated on a parent/carer Trip Information Form.

In the event of an incident or emergency, the Trip Leader must alert the Emergency Contact. In case of a critical incident, emergency details of staff are kept with the Head Teacher and on Arbor.

Parental Consent

The Trip leader must ensure that the parents/carers are aware of the trip/activity and the nature of it, before the trip occurs. Prior to the trip departure and for each group member, the Trip Leader must receive written permission from the parent/carer for each young person to attend, and authorisation for emergency medical treatment. Where a series of short visits are to be made over a period of weeks e.g. swimming lessons or community work, one consent form should be sufficient for the whole series. This must be renewed on a regular basis, for example termly/quarterly as necessary, so that parents/carers are reminded that these activities are still being carried on. The parent/carer must still be made aware of the details of each trip when it occurs as it might also be necessary to update medical information in such cases. The Trip Leader must be aware of any medical conditions or dietary needs that might have an effect on the activities and discuss individual needs with the parent/carer and the young person to ensure a full understanding.

Information to Parents

Parents/Carers must be given clear information on the trip/activity on a Trip Information Form. This form should include:

- Date of trip
- Objectives of trip
- Details of planned activities
- Times of departure and return
- Location where the young people will be collected and returned
- Modes of travel
- Details of accommodation
- Procedures if young person becomes ill
- Names of leader(s)
- How to contact the party if necessary
- What young person needs to bring
- Details of any unsupervised activities
- Name of staff where students are to be accompanied on trip or visit

Note: If any of this information changes, it is the responsibility of the Trip Leader to ensure this is communicated effectively internally and externally to participants.

Trip Management

The Trip Leader is responsible for the management of trip/activity Assistant Leaders during a trip or activity. The Trip leader must make clear to Assistant Leaders their responsibilities and roles at all times during the trip, including any handover of students between transport and arrival on the trip or visit.

On the day of the trip, a signed copy of the agreed risk assessment and pupil register must be held by the Trip Leader and also by the school.

Any adults brought into help with a trip or activity in a supervisory role and/or who will have unsupervised access to young people or vulnerable adults must be DBS checked to enhanced level.

For all trips/activities, there must be at least one adult who is qualified in first aid.

Risk Assessment

The Trip Leader must ensure that all activities are subjected to risk assessments and that adequate health and safety arrangements are in place. Risk assessments must be conducted both before and during the trip.

Where reasonably practicable, a visit to the proposed trip location, prior to the trip taking place, must be completed in order for accurate risk assessments to be completed.

Risk Assessments must be written, signed by the Trip Leader, and recorded in the Trip/Activity file as evidence that they have been carried out. Risk Assessments for a typical trip or activity would need to cover the following areas as a minimum:

- Transport to and from the venue
- The activity venue
- The nature of the activity
- The group members e.g. any medical factors
- Other external factors e.g. changes in the weather

The Senior Manager, prior to final trip approval, will check that risk assessments have been completed and agree mitigation arrangements. The risk assessments and planned journey checklists should be copied and a copy of these left at the academy. A further copy should be carried in the car.

Where visits within walking distance are to be made, the risk assessments still need to be completed and names left at the academy as with car journeys. Copies of names and addresses are to be carried along with a work mobile phone. Ensure that road safety rules are followed and pupils are never out of site of the members of staff on the trip.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

Risks must be monitored throughout the visit and where appropriate activities modified or curtailed to suit changed or changing circumstances. The responsibility for this rests primarily with the Trip Leader or EVC. Where more than one person has a duty of care each must be made aware of this and liaise with each other. In an emergency the Trip Leader, or EVC, should call the Head Teacher.

Insurance

The Trip Leader must ensure that adequate and appropriate insurance arrangements are made for all aspects of the particular trip/activity. The Trip Leader must consult with Facilities to check whether the activity being proposed is covered under current insurance underwriters, or whether additional insurance is required.

For residential and foreign trips, off-site activities lasting more than twenty four hours, journeys by air or sea, and all trips and visits involving hazardous activities suitable journey insurance cover must be taken out, on behalf of the next of kin. This must cover risks arising from cancellation, loss of personal possessions, personal accident and medical expenses. The next of kin must be informed of the nature and extent of insurance taken out on their behalf. The Trip Leader must ensure adequate insurance is in place for motor vehicles used in the trip and for their intended purpose.

Transport

A risk assessment must be completed on the transport arrangements to and from the venue, and whilst at the venue. Factors which need to be considered include:

- Distance of travel
- Time of travel
- Cost of travel
- Rest stops
- Qualified drivers/number of drivers needed
- Level of supervision needed; risk assessment should be carried out to decide on the level of supervision required for any journey. Issues to consider would include the numbers being carried, the length of journey and the individuals being transported, to confirm whether other supervision is required in addition to the driver

Use of Minibuses

If using minibuses, the Trip Leader and the driver must check that the vehicles are roadworthy and insured. They must ensure that they have all necessary documentation and that they drive safely and within the law.

Accommodation

If the trip is overnight, the Trip leader must ensure that:

- separate sleeping/bathing arrangements have been made for male and female young people and supervisors
- Security arrangements at the accommodation are in force to stop unauthorised visitors

- They are familiar with the layout of the fire exits and lifts and that all young people are aware of the arrangements in the event of an emergency

Preparing the Group

The Trip leader must ensure that assistant leaders and the young people are aware of their responsibilities to the safety of themselves and to others. Providing information and guidance to young people is an important part of trip or activity preparation. Where appropriate, the Group must ensure that the young people receive a written copy and a verbal briefing covering the following:

- The purpose of the trip
- Who the Trip leader is
- Where they are going and what the trip will entail
- What standard of behaviour is expected of them
- Appropriate and inappropriate conduct
- What rules must be followed
- Any equipment they need to take and any forbidden items
- Consequences of breaking the rules
- Potential risks and dangers
- Behaviour required ensuring their own safety and that of others
- Rendezvous procedures if they become separated from the group

Travel in a Member of Staff's Private Vehicle

A passenger list must be completed for all adults and children/young people with their contact details and medical needs identified. A copy must be carried in the car and a copy left at the school.

Staff will carry their work mobile phone in order to maintain contact with their base and the office. They must be switched on at all times when off-site.

Staff will have the appropriate insurance for business use. The insurance company should be aware that the person transports children. They will have a valid driving licence and an up to date MOT certificate. It is recommended that staff have breakdown cover.

Children under 12 years of age or less than 4 feet 11inches (150cms) should travel in the back seat of the car with the seatbelt on. They will be required to use a booster seat that can be supplied by the parents. It is recommended that all young people sit in the back of the car wearing the appropriate seat belt. Where appropriate a second member of staff will escort the pupil if the risk assessment indicates this as a risk area.

All staff must complete a planned journey checklist when making visits by car with pupils or alone.

Evaluation of the Trip/Activity

Upon completion of the trip/activity, the Trip Leader should consider the completion of an evaluation form recording the following information:

- Whether the aim and objectives of the trip were achieved
- Costs against actual planned expenditure
- High/lows of the trip
- Views of the young people
- Pitfalls – places/things not to do/go to/stop at again
- Problems encountered with any specific young people
- Any incidents, including non-emergency

4.6 Policy and practice

Offsite trips/activities should be accessible to all regardless of gender, religion, ethnic origin, social background, medical need or physical ability in accordance with the academy's Equality and Diversity policy and with the Equalities Act 2010. Staff have a commitment to ensure all activities are relevant to all pupils and are taught in a way that is age and stage appropriate. All reasonable adjustments will be made as necessary to enable access to curriculum opportunities including visits. All educational trips and visits will be made in accordance with the DFE Guidance on Health and Safety on Educational Trips. This advice can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/healthand-safety-on-educational-visits>

In respect of the nature of the support that pupils require, we will carefully consider the types of visits we undertake. In every aspect of external visits, either alone or accompanying pupils, the National guidelines for Accident/Incident Investigation and Notification Procedures will be followed and reported using the Health and Safety incident reporting process.

5. Policy Requirements

The Head Teacher must ensure that this policy is followed by all staff who are arranging any external visit, they may choose to delegate this responsibility to a named EVC for low risk regular trips, however ultimate responsibility is with the Head Teacher.

6. Related Policies

- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Allergy Policy
- Home Visits Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy

- Health and Safety Policy