



# Easterside Academy Educational Visits & LOtC Policy

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## CONTEXT

Safely managed educational visits and opportunities for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of a broad and balanced curriculum and a vibrant aspect of the programme of Easterside Academy. They are an opportunity to extend the learning of young people including an enrichment of their understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. They can be a catalyst for improved personal performance, promote a lifetime interest and in some cases lead to professional fulfilment. They are to be encouraged.

## STATEMENT

Easterside Academy recognises its 'Duty of Care' and statutory responsibilities for the Health, Safety and Welfare of participants, staff, voluntary assistants, providers and members of the public in connection with educational visits for which it is accountable. (reference: DfES/0803/2001, Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers)

In order to achieve and maintain the highest possible standards in this regard the School has adopted the following guidelines issued by the DfES:

- Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits DfES/HSPV2, September 1998
- Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits DfES/0564/2002, July 2002
- Standards for Adventure DfES/0565/2002, July 2002
- A Handbook for Group Leaders DfES/0566/2002, July 2002
- Group Safety at Water Margins DfES/CCPR/2002, December 2002

These guidelines will form the basis of good practice in the management and conduct of educational visits. From time to time they will be supplemented by complementary guidelines, instructions and procedures issued by the LA or by the Academy. Together they will be known as 'Safety Guidelines for Educational Visits and Adventure Activities'.

## PURPOSE

1. To ensure that **every** pupil has the opportunity to benefit from educational visits and LOtC opportunities in order to promote personal development and well-being and integrated learning;
2. To ensure that all visits and opportunities are safe, purposeful and appropriate to meet the educational needs of pupils taking part;
3. To enable the School to identify appropriate functions, responsibilities, training, support and monitoring for governors and all committees, staff, volunteer assistants, pupils and providers involved in educational visits and LOtC opportunities;
4. To enable compliance with LA 'Safety Guidelines for Educational Visits and Adventure Activities' which incorporate guidelines published by the DfES in 1998 entitled 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' together with Supplements 1-3 published in July 2002 and Group Safety at Water Margins issued by the DfES in conjunction with the CCPR in December 2002;
5. To ensure that whenever appropriate, further advice is sought from the LA and from other technically competent sources.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

### STAFF

- All educational visits and LOtC opportunities will be linked to the objectives of the School and planned sufficiently well in advance in accordance with good practice and effective planning procedures;
- Governors will include in their role the support of School policy and procedures for educational visits and external providers including the reporting of visits;
- The Head Teacher will be responsible for the approval of all visits and external providers but may delegate the approval of local routine and low risk visits (Category A – see Appendix 1 for categories) to an Educational Visits Coordinator; We currently have two others in school.
- The Head Teacher will approve all higher risk visits and external providers including adventure activities, residential experience and foreign travel (Categories B and C). The most demanding of visits (Category C) will be signed off by the Chair or Vice Chair of the governing body; and advice would be sought from the academy's insurance company and an external School visits specialist. Where external providers are used Easterside Academy ensures that the educational quality and risk management level is appropriate e.g. by checking for accreditation such as the LOtC Quality Badge.
- A named Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will be appointed; This is currently the Head Teacher: Mrs D. Linacre. Other EVCs are Mrs C. Thomas (Deputy Head Teacher) and Mrs P. Pennock (SBM).
- The EVC will support the Governors with approval, decisions and the management of educational visits and external providers in accordance with 'Safety Guidelines for Educational Visits and Adventure Activities' and in particular as described in 'DfES: Standards for LAs in Overseeing Educational Visits' section 6;
- There will be a named and approved Group Leader (and where appropriate, deputy) on all educational visits and where external providers are used;
- Working with the EVC as necessary, the Group Leader will be responsible for all aspects of the planning, risk assessment and organisation of the visit or external provider. The Group Leader will assume full responsibility during the visit or activity, including ongoing risk assessment, in accordance with 'Safety Guidelines for Educational Visits and Adventure Activities' and in particular 'DfES: A Handbook for Group Leaders' and 'DfES/CCPR: Group Safety at Water Margins';
- The Group Leader will ensure Best Value principles are used when purchasing goods and services, that appropriate checks are made, that insurance and financial procedures have been followed;
- NQT's will not be Group Leaders in their first year of teaching. They will however be given experience of supporting school visits and observing experienced group leaders, as well as completing the school visits training.

### PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARERS

- The School will provide parents/guardians with information about policy and procedures relating to the safe management of educational visits and LOtC opportunities;
- Parents or guardians will be given sufficient written and supplementary information about educational visits and LOtC opportunities to enable them to make informed decisions and give written consent together with medical and emergency contact details;
- Whenever appropriate for high risk, residential and foreign visits a briefing meeting with parents/guardians will be arranged;
- Expectations with regard to behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents and guardians. This information will include the necessity of meeting additional costs and making collection arrangements in certain circumstances.

## PUPILS

- Wherever possible pupils should be involved with the planning of an educational visit or a LOtC opportunity, establishing codes of conduct, assessing and managing risk and evaluating their own learning, development, attitudes and behaviour;
- Pupils should be adequately briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all educational visits. Ongoing briefings are an important element of learning and safety.

## LINKS

Although this policy focuses on the management of Health, Safety and Welfare, educational visits and LOtC opportunities are an integral part of the strategy for learning and the curriculum plan. The policy should therefore be linked to complementary policies concerned with such issues as **equality of opportunity**, special educational needs, social **inclusion** and staff development.

These procedures will clearly form part of the wider Health & Safety Policy of Easterside Academy.

## **Appendix 1**

Categories of visit:

### **Category A**

These comprise activities that present no significant risks.

The key issue is that leaders require only general supervision skills to preside competently over a visit. The EVC will normally assess the competence of the individual to lead this category of visit.

The EVC will also vet and approve these visits. In this case the Headteacher and/or EVC need no special assistance from the LA to make the appropriate judgements beyond observing any guidance notes identified or provided by the LA or visitor attraction.

Types of Visits that fall into Category A:

- walking in parks or on non-remote country paths
- field studies in environments presenting no technical hazards
- regular locally based activities such as sporting events, cycle proficiency training, school
- swimming programme, visits to local venues by foot or by transport
- special day activities further afield such as visits to Darlington or Durham
- non-adventure sporting activities which do not involve an overnight stay

### **Action**

The general principles of responsibility, planning and risk control apply but the level of detail recorded should be kept within reason and proportionate to the complexity and level of risk involved. For routine and frequently repeated activities the generic procedures (to be issued) may suffice but EVCs will need to make judgements about this in individual situations.

The EVC/Headteacher will approve the visits without involving the LA except for general advice where required.

### **Category B**

These visits, other than to Middlesbrough Local Authority maintained centres, comprise some higher risk or higher profile activities. Safe supervision requires that the leader should, as a minimum, have undergone an additional familiarisation process or induction specific to the activity and/or location.

Types of visit that fall into Category B:

- visits abroad (see also Category C for more demanding visits abroad)
- visits which involve an overnight stay
- walking in non-remote countryside
- camping
- cycling on road or non-remote off road terrain
- low level initiative challenges
- visits involving outdoor and adventurous activities

## **Action**

In the light of the increased potential risk associated with these types of visit and in particular the increased complexity of the organisation required, a more robust approach to planning, recording and monitoring is required.

The Group Leader needs to inform the EVC/Headteacher at the outset of planning in order that any issues that need discussion can be clarified before the event.

A specific and up to date risk assessment and supplementary information (parent/guardian consent forms, itinerary, details of pupils and staff, emergency contacts etc.) must be completed. This information needs to be updated and accurate on departure and copies left with the 'home' contact person.

For visits to more distant or remote locations, including those within Great Britain as well as all foreign visits, which do not fall into Category C but where the assistance of the LA may be required to assist in the event of misadventure, the contact person needs to know how to contact the LA. The Academy Emergency Planning Document would also be used at this point.

## **Category C**

This is the most demanding category where the level of risk involved may well be at the highest level that can be justified for an educational visit.

The visit will involve an activity that requires a specific level of training or qualification. It includes all those activities that, if not school-led, would be in the scope of the Adventurous Activities Licensing Regulations 1996.

It also includes activities which fall outside the scope of licensing, or are less commonly followed, whose safe supervision requires that the leader should normally complete some prior test of specific competence.

Types of visit that fall into Category C:

- in or near water
- in winter conditions
- on or near cliffs or steep terrain including high ropes courses
- motor sports
- involving aircraft (excluding registered airline transport)
- in an area subject to extremes of weather or environment change
- in developing countries or those with civil unrest
- visits taking place at Centres not registered with the Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority and involving outdoor and adventurous activities that fall outside the scope of Adventurous Activities Licensing, and organised/controlled by staff from those Centres
- school led activities that would come within the scope of AALA
- NB including all foreign visits which fall within these conditions

## **Action:**

The Headteacher will approve the visits and seek advice from the LA if required or a relevant person. This also includes informing the academy's insurance company. Governors must endorse these visits.

After obtaining approval from the governors, a specific and up to date risk assessment and supplementary information (parent/guardian consent forms, itinerary, details of pupils and staff, emergency contacts etc.) must be completed in sufficient time. This information needs to be updated and accurate on departure and copies left with the 'home' contact person.

'Sufficient time' should be taken to meet at least six weeks in advance except in agreed circumstances. This information needs to be updated and accurate on departure and copies left with the 'home' contact person.

For visits to more distant or remote locations, including those within Great Britain as well as all foreign visits, which do not fall into Category C but where the assistance of the LA may be required to assist in the event of misadventure, the contact person needs to know how to contact the LA. The Academy Emergency Planning Document would also be used at this point.