Highcroft School

Education Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy

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Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy

Policy Number:	EDU.POL.028	Policy Owner Job Role	Quality Manager
Issue Number:		Ratified By	Quality Director
Issue Date:	01.07.26	Service Type:	Schools
		Applicable Services:	Education
Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
Mandatory Policy	No		
Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

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1. Supporting Documents

This policy connects to the Risk Assessment policy, the Health and Safety policy (EDU.POL.038), the First Aid and Medication policies, the Positive Handling and Physical Intervention policy (EDU.POL.020), the Safeguarding Children in Education policy (EDE.POL.002) and the Critical Incidents policy (EDU.POL.045).

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

At Highcroft School, we believe that educational visits and off-site activities are a valuable part of a broad and ambitious education. For our pupils, time spent learning beyond the classroom builds confidence, independence and life skills that are hard to teach in any other way. We are committed to making visits safe, well planned and inclusive, so that every pupil can take part. This policy sets out how we plan, approve and run off-site activities, and the standards we hold ourselves to.

3. Aim & Scope

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This policy applies to all staff, pupils and volunteers at Highcroft School and to every off-site activity, from short local visits to residential trips and visits abroad. It aims to:

- Keep pupils and staff safe on off-site activities through proportionate planning and risk assessment.
- Make sure every pupil can take part, with reasonable adjustments for those with SEND, medical or behavioural needs.
- Set clear roles, approval steps and supervision arrangements for all visits.
- Make sure parents and carers give informed consent and have the right information.
- Make sure the school is ready to respond if something goes wrong.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

- Routine visit means an off-site activity that involves no more than an everyday level of risk and is covered by the school's existing arrangements.
- Higher-risk visit means a visit that needs its own risk assessment and extra planning, for example because of the distance, the activity, the location or the need for staff with specialist skills.
- Residential visit means any visit that includes an overnight stay.
- Adventurous activity means an activity such as caving, climbing, trekking or watersports, some of which require a licensed provider.
- EVC means the educational visits coordinator, the member of staff who oversees the planning and approval of visits.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

No pupil is excluded from a visit because of SEND, disability, a medical condition or behaviour. We plan around needs and make reasonable adjustments. Planning and risk assessment are proportionate to the activity. Everyday visits are not over-engineered, and higher-risk visits are planned in detail. Visits are approved before they take place, by the right person for the level of risk. Supervision is matched to the needs of the pupils, not just to numbers, and individual risk assessments are used where needed. Safety never depends on a single point of failure. Plans include what to do in an emergency.

5.2 Planning and Running a Visit

Types of visit and approval

Routine local visits are covered by the school's standing arrangements and a generic risk assessment. Higher-risk, residential and overseas visits need their own risk assessment, extra planning and approval before they go ahead. The EVC oversees planning and the headteacher gives final approval.

Risk assessment

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Every visit is risk assessed in proportion to the activity. The risk assessment considers the activity, the location, transport, weather, the needs of the pupils and the staff skills required. It is shared with the team before the visit and reviewed if circumstances change.

Supervision and staffing

Supervision is planned around the needs of the group. Because many of our pupils have SEND, medical or behavioural needs, we use individual risk assessments and enhanced staffing where needed, and we plan how positive handling, medication and personal care will be managed off site. There is always a clear plan for how pupils are accounted for and supervised at all times.

Consent

Parents and carers give consent to routine visits through an annual consent process, and are still told about each one and given the chance to withdraw their child. Higher-risk, residential and overseas visits require specific written consent with full information about the activity.

Using external providers

Where we use an outside provider, we seek assurance that it is safe and competent, for example through the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge or a completed provider assurance form. For licensable adventurous activities, we check that the provider holds a current licence from the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority.

Visits involving pupils attending alternative provision remain subject to Keys educational visit procedures unless the alternative provider has formally assumed responsibility.

Adventurous activities and visits abroad

Adventurous activities and visits abroad need extra planning, including:-

- FCDO travel advice checks.
- Travel insurance checks.
- Medical cover considerations.
- Emergency repatriation arrangements.
- Clear arrangements for supervision and communication.

Transport

Transport is planned as part of the risk assessment, including the type of vehicle, driver arrangements, seating, supervision and accessibility for pupils with mobility or sensory needs.

Emergencies

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Every visit has an emergency plan and a named emergency contact at the school who can be reached throughout. The emergency contact must not be participating in the visit. Staff know how to respond to an incident, and serious incidents are managed under the Critical Incidents policy (EDU.POL.045).

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Visit plans, risk assessments, consent and provider checks are recorded and retained using the templates in the appendices below, and accidents or near misses are recorded on RADAR. The EVC monitors the quality of visit planning and reports to the headteacher, and the headteacher reports to the proprietor and governors on off-site activity.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At Highcroft School, this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We monitor the impact of this policy on pupils with protected characteristics and adapt our practice to remove disadvantage. Any concern that this policy disadvantages a pupil or group should be raised with the headteacher.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

Pupils are prepared for visits in advance and supported to understand the expectations and to take part safely and fully.

6.2 Staff

Visit leaders plan the activity, complete the risk assessment, brief the team and lead the visit. All staff follow the plan and act on their training.

6.3 Leadership

The headteacher approves visits in line with this policy and makes sure the EVC, staff and resources are in place. Higher-risk, residential and overseas visits are approved by the headteacher and notified to the proprietor and governors or the regional director as required.

6.4 Governance

The proprietor and governors provide oversight of the school's approach to off-site activity and assurance that visits are well managed.

6.5 Parents and carers

Parents and carers provide consent and the information the school needs, including medical and dietary needs, and support their child to prepare for the visit.

6.6 Named leads

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The Educational Visits Coordinator at Highcroft School is Christine Wade. The Headteacher is Stephanie Goddard.

7. Training Requirements

The EVC and visit leaders receive training appropriate to the visits they lead, including first aid where required, and new staff cover this policy at induction.

8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

This policy reflects current legislation and guidance, including:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which require risk to be assessed and managed so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Health and safety on educational visits (DfE guidance, last updated 2018), which sets out the approach to routine and higher-risk trips, consent, outside providers and emergencies.
- The Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 and the role of the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority, where a provider offers licensable adventurous activities.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which require the welfare, health and safety of pupils to be safeguarded and promoted, including on off-site activities.
- The Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled pupils are not excluded from visits.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, on safeguarding pupils away from the school site.
- The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel National Guidance, which Highcroft School follows as best practice.

10. Version Control

This document can also be found in Radar. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The next review date and version history are recorded in the control table above. The named owner for review at Highcroft School is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

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11.1 Appendix A: School-Specific Annex

Keys

Highcroft School

Highcroft School Off-Site Visits Form

All staff (education and care) accompanying the pupils off site on a visit should ensure they have read and understood the appropriate risk assessments. All staff to have a short briefing with group leader before leaving and leader to delegate 1:1 responsibility where appropriate. Information relating to individual medical issues such as inhalers to be discussed at briefing.

All staff to sign below to indicate they have complied with the above.

Date of trip..... Return Time.....

Departure time..... (including keys returned to locked drawer)

Staffing:

Pupils:

Group Leader:

Medical Information:

1:1 delegation:

Location of trip and leaders prior knowledge:

Details of Activity:

Staff contact details:

I confirm that I have read the appropriate risk assessments, attended a briefing (If Required) and understand the role of 1:1.

Print Name:	Signature:

Trip authorised by.....

Date.....

Keys returned to.....

Vehicle clean and tidy?.....

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11.2 Appendix B: Visit Planning and Risk Assessment Template

This template is completed for any visit that needs its own risk assessment and approval. Square bracket fields are completed for each visit.

Field	Detail
Visit, date and destination	[complete]
Visit leader and staff team	[names and roles]
Group, numbers and supervision ratio	[complete, including individual needs]
Type of visit	[routine, higher risk, residential or overseas]
Activities and provider	[activities, provider name and assurance or licence checked]
Transport	[type, driver, seating, supervision and accessibility]
Hazards and controls	[identified hazards and the controls in place]
Pupil needs	[medical, SEND, behavioural and personal care arrangements, individual risk assessments]
Emergency plan	[procedure, first aid, named emergency contact at school]
Approval	[EVC and headteacher approval and date]

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11.3 Appendix C: Parental Consent Form

This form is used for higher-risk, residential and overseas visits. Routine visits are covered by the general consent given at admission, and parents are still informed of each one.

HIGHCROFT SCHOOL

Educational Visit Consent Form

Pupil name and year group	
Visit date and destination	
Activities	
Medical needs and medication	
Emergency contacts	

Consent

☐ I give permission for my child to take part in the visit and the activities described above.

I confirm that the medical and emergency contact information provided on this form is accurate and up to date.

Parent / carer name			
Signature		Date	

Please return this completed form to Highcroft School.

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