# Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy

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| Note | This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director | | |

**Table of Contents**


**Section**

**1 Supporting Documents**
**2 Introduction**
**3 Aim & Scope**
**4 Abbreviations/Definitions**
**5 Policy Content**
**6 Responsibilities**
**7 Training Requirements**
**8 Equality Impact Statement**
**9 Sources of Information / References**
**10 Version Control (where else is this policy located, ie. Circle, Nourish, Radar)**
**11 Appendices**


## 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 The Acres, 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 The Acres 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.

These visits are approved by the headteacher in advance.

**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.



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### Emergencies

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 The Acres, 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 The Acres is Jo Rawlinson, Deputy Headteacher. The Headteacher is Karen Ayres.

## 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 The Acres 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 named owner for review at The Acres is the headteacher.

## 11. Appendices



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## 11.1 Appendix A: School-Specific Annex

**Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)**

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) for The Acres School is:

**Jo Rawlinson, Deputy Headteacher**
The EVC is responsible for:

- Supporting staff with visit planning.
- Reviewing risk assessments.
- Ensuring appropriate staffing levels.
- Quality assuring educational visits.
- Maintaining records of educational visits.
- Monitoring compliance with this policy.
- Supporting post-visit evaluation and review.

The Headteacher retains overall responsibility for approving visits.

**Visit Approval Process**
**Local Community Visits**
Examples:

- Local walks
- Community access activities
- Shopping visits
- Library visits
- Local sporting activities

Requirements:

- Covered by generic risk assessments where appropriate.
- Authorised by the EVC.
- Staff briefed on individual pupil risks.
- Emergency contact arrangements confirmed.

**Higher-Risk Visits**
Examples:

- Off-site sporting events
- Theme parks
- Activity centres
- Public transport visits
- Coastal visits

Requirements:

- Specific risk assessment completed.
- EVC review completed.
- Headteacher approval required.
- Parent/carer information shared.



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**Residential and Overseas Visits**

Requirements:

- Detailed visit planning.
- Individual pupil risk assessments reviewed.
- Headteacher approval required.
- Regional Director informed.
- Specific written parental consent obtained.

**Staffing Arrangements**

Staffing ratios are determined by pupil needs rather than pupil numbers alone.

When planning visits, consideration is given to:

- EHCP requirements.
- Behaviour support plans.
- Medical needs.
- Positive handling plans.
- Staffing familiarity.
- Accessibility requirements.

Additional staff may be allocated where pupils require:

- 1:1 support.
- Personal care.
- Medical supervision.
- Enhanced behavioural support.

**Emergency Contact Arrangements**

For all visits:

- A designated school-based emergency contact will remain onsite.
- The emergency contact will not attend the visit.
- Visit leaders will carry emergency contact information.
- Serious incidents will be managed in accordance with the Critical Incidents Policy.

Out-of-hours contact arrangements will be agreed prior to residential visits.

**Approved Transport Arrangements**

The Acres may utilise:

- School vehicles.
- Staff vehicles (where authorised and insured).
- Licensed coach providers.
- Public transport.
- Walking routes within the local community.

Transport arrangements are assessed as part of the visit risk assessment process.

**Approved Providers and Regular Venues**

The Acres regularly uses a range of educational, vocational and enrichment providers to support pupils' personal development and curriculum learning.

Providers are subject to:

- Safeguarding checks.



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- Risk assessment review.
- Insurance verification.
- Provider competency checks.
- Health and safety assurance.

A central register of approved providers is maintained by the EVC.

**Individual Risk Assessments**

As a specialist setting, many pupils require additional planning prior to educational visits.

Visit leaders will review:

- Risk assessments.
- Behaviour support plans.
- Positive handling plans.
- Medical care plans.
- SEND information.
- Attendance and safeguarding information where relevant.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure visits remain inclusive and accessible.

**Monitoring and Quality Assurance**

The Acres monitors educational visits through:

- Pre-visit approval processes.
- Risk assessment scrutiny.
- Review of incidents and near misses.
- Staff feedback.
- Pupil voice.
- Post-visit evaluations.

Learning from visits is used to improve future planning and ensure pupils continue to access a broad range of educational opportunities.

**Educational Visits as Part of Our Personal Development Curriculum**

At The Acres, educational visits are an important part of our curriculum and support pupils to develop:

- Independence.
- Community awareness.
- Employability skills.
- Social communication.
- Emotional regulation.
- Preparation for adulthood outcomes.

Educational visits are planned to support both curriculum learning and personal development outcomes linked to EHCPs, behaviour support targets and preparation for post-16 destinations.



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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.

| Field | Detail |
|---|---|
| Pupil name and year group | [complete] |
| Visit, date and destination | [complete] |
| Activities | [description of activities] |
| Medical needs and medication | [conditions, medication, allergies and dietary needs] |
| Emergency contacts | [names and numbers] |
| Consent and signature | [parent or carer consent, signature and date] |



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