Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy

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Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
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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 Acorns 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 Acorns 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.

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 Acorns 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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Acorns School Marple

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator at Acorns School is Liam Morrison. The Headteacher is Miranda Rathmell.

Acorns School Ashley

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator at Acorns Ashley is Naomi Mitchell. The Headteacher is Paula Tankard.

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 Acorns School follows as best practice.

10. Version Control

This document can also be found in Radar.

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This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The named owner for review at Acorns School is the headteacher.

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11. Appendix A: School-Specific Annex

At Acorns School Marple, the following local arrangements apply:

Liam Morrison is our Educational Visits Co-ordinator. Out of hours emergency contact is Miranda Rathmell, Headteacher.

At Acorns Ashley, the following local arrangements apply:

- Naomi Mitchell is the named educational visits coordinator. Out of hours emergency contact is Paula Tankard, Headteacher.

We use a range of providers regularly at Acorns School, including:

- Rope Walk Climbing Centre
- Romiley Sports Centre
- Brinnington Lesiure Centre
- Marple Park
- Tatton Park
- Local Dairy /
- Bidlea Ice cream farm
- Sale water parkp
- Beaches driving range
- Hale high street
- Real fruit creamery
- Knutsford gym
- Higher farm
- Bank Fram riding school

Approval for visits follows this process:

1. Educational Purpose

- Visit leader identifies the educational purpose and links the visit to the curriculum, EHCP outcomes or personal development programme.
- Consider how the visit supports pupils' learning, wellbeing or preparation for adulthood.

2. Initial Proposal

- Visit leader completes an Off-Site Visit Request Form including:
  - Date and timings
  - Venue
  - Pupils attending
  - Staffing ratios
  - Transport arrangements
  - Estimated costs

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- Initial assessment of risks

3. Educational Visits Co-ordinator Approval in Principle

- Educational value
- Suitability for the pupils
- Staffing levels
- Financial implications
- Calendar availability

If appropriate, approval in principle is granted for planning to continue.

4. Risk Assessment
The visit leader completes or reviews:

- Venue-specific risk assessment
- Travel risk assessment
- Individual pupil risk assessments (where required)
- Medical needs and medication arrangements
- Behaviour support strategies
- Emergency procedures and contacts

5. Safeguarding Checks
Confirm:

- Appropriate staffing ratios
- First aid provision
- Mobile communication arrangements
- DBS requirements where applicable
- Venue safeguarding arrangements (if relevant)
- Dynamic risk assessment arrangements

6. Parent/Carer Communication
Parents/carers receive:

- Visit information
- Consent (where required by school policy)
- Clothing/equipment requirements
- Emergency contact arrangements
- Medical reminders

7. Final Approval
The Headteacher gives final approval once satisfied that:

- Risk assessments are complete.
- Staffing is appropriate.

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- Medical and behavioural needs have been planned for.
- Transport arrangements are suitable.
- All documentation is complete.

Residential or higher-risk visits should also receive proprietor/governor approval where required by the school's policy.

8. Day of Visit
The Visit Leader ensures:

- Registers are completed.
- Emergency contacts are available.
- Medication and first aid equipment are taken.
- Dynamic risk assessments are undertaken throughout the visit.
- Any incidents are recorded and reported.

9. Post-Visit Review
Following the visit:

- Record any accidents, incidents or near misses.
- Evaluate whether educational objectives were achieved.
- Identify improvements for future visits.
- Update risk assessments where necessary.

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11.1 Appendix B: Visit Planning and Risk Assessment Template

Acorns School

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

Acorns School – Offsite Register Form			
GROUP LEADER NAME			
DATE OF VISIT			
PLACE OF VISIT / TYPE OF VISIT			
TIME OF DEPARTURE		Estimated return time:	
VENUE/ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEWED	YES/NO	Any actions required?	
STUDENTS INDIVIDUAL RISKS CONSIDERED FOR ACTIVITY	YES/NO	Any actions required?	
FIRST AID KIT	YES/NO		
STUDENTS OUT ON ACTIVITY:			
STAFF OUT ON ACTIVITY			
VEHICLE REGISTRATION			
SCHOOL MOBILE NO			
SEATING PLAN FOR TRANSPORT			

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SIGNATURE OF SLT AURTHORISATION	

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11.2 Appendix C: Parental Consent Form

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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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11.3 Appendix D: Emergency Information and Contacts

This information travels with the visit leader and is held by the named emergency contact at Acorns School.

- the named emergency contact at the school and an out of hours number
- the school's procedure for reporting and managing an incident, linked to the Critical Incidents policy (EDU.POL.045)
- insurance details and policy numbers
- for overseas visits, travel and health documents, consular contacts and currency for emergencies

The named emergency contact at the school and an out of hours number for Acorns Marple site is:

	Contact details during the school day	Out of hours
Emergency contact at the school and an out of hours number	Miranda Rathmell or Liam Morrison **0161 449 5820**	**Miranda Rathmell** 07920558213

The named emergency contact at the school and an out of hours number for Acorns Ashley site is:

	Contact details during the school day	Out of hours
Emergency contact at the school and an out of hours number	Paula tankard or Naomi Mitchell **0161 5525130**	**Naomi Mitchell**: 07549225567 **Paula Tankard** : 07795655259

The school's procedure for reporting and managing an incident, linked to the Critical Incidents policy (EDU.POL.045)

Staff who become aware of a serious incident must contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) immediately to ensure that appropriate support, oversight and decision-making can be implemented without delay. Once the incident has been reported, staff will follow the school's reporting and management procedures in accordance with the Critical Incidents Policy (EDU.POL.045). This includes recording the incident, implementing any immediate safeguarding or health and safety measures, communicating with relevant stakeholders as directed by SLT, and supporting any subsequent actions required to manage the incident effectively and minimise its impact on pupils, staff and the wider school community.

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Summary of Steps

- Staff must immediately notify a member of the **Paula Tankard** or **Miranda Rathmell** in the event of any serious or critical incident.
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will assess the situation and determine any immediate actions required.
- Any urgent safeguarding, health and safety, or welfare concerns must be addressed without delay.
- The incident must be recorded in accordance with school procedures.
- Communication with parents/carers, external agencies and other stakeholders will be coordinated by SLT as appropriate.
- Staff must follow all reporting and management requirements outlined in the Critical Incidents Policy (EDU.POL.045).
- Any follow-up actions, support arrangements and review processes will be undertaken in line with the policy to minimise the impact on pupils, staff and the wider school community.

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