Blackpool Aspire Academy - Educational Visits Policy Statement

Blackpool Aspire Academy has formally adopted the ‘National guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom’. [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info/)

Blackpool Aspire Academy has opted into the guidance, along with the Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT)’s systems and processes for supporting and monitoring activities. The Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT) uses a web-based system, EVOLVE, to facilitate the efficient planning, management, approval, monitoring and evaluation of visits. All staff that lead or accompany visits can access their own EVOLVE account, which is set up by the Academy Educational Visits’ Coordinator (EVC), Mr Tock.

As well as being an efficient tool for planning and approving visits, EVOLVE also contains a variety of features including search and report facilities, downloadable resources and information, staff records and visit history.

EVOLVE can be found at [www.blackpoolvisits.org.uk](http://www.blackpoolvisits.org.uk/)

It is a requirement of FCAT that at least one senior member of staff from Blackpool Aspire Academy should attend an OEAP accredited EVC Training course and will then act as EVC and support the academy in its programme of visits. The headteacher and members of the SLT team will ensure that the EVC undertakes a formal revalidation approximately every 3 years.

The EVC will be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the academy. This policy is in place for supported and offsite visits, and will be updated as necessary and readily available to staff as well as uploaded on to EVOLVE.

# Definition

For the purpose of this policy, a school trip or visit is defined as any occasion when a student or groups of students are away from the school site, undertaking a school activity and under the supervision of a member of staff. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, the word ‘trip’ will largely be used throughout this policy but where this occurs, please understand ‘trip and/or visit’, as appropriate.

# This policy pays attention to the following guidance:

* Students should be able to experience a wide range of activities. Health and Safety measures should help them to do this safely, not stop them;
* It is important that children learn to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life;
* Common sense should be used in assessing and managing the risks of any activity. Health and safety procedures should always be proportionate to the risks of an activity;
* Staff should be given the training they need so they can keep themselves and students safe and manage risks effectively.

A member of SLT, appointed person and/or Health and Safety Lead will have the role of Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) in conjunction with The Fylde Coast Academy Trust. Each can give advice about all aspects of school trips and visits. The EVC coordinators have copies of relevant documentation from the DfE and other agencies. Staff are asked to consult as fully as possible with the EVC before, during, and after a school trip or visit. Feedback from trips and visits is an important mechanism for ensuring against future incidents.

The EVC **must** be notified of all occasions when a student or group of students leave the school premises, either accompanied by members of staff or to meet members of staff at a pre-arranged location. This forms a key part of the duty of care we owe to our students. It is not easy to give a definitive list of such trips but examples include trips to museums, galleries and theatres, trips to educational conferences, residentials both in the evenings and at weekends, overseas trips, and all sports fixtures and sports tours. If staff are in doubt about the nature of a trip or visit then they should seek the advice of the EVC.

# All staff must complete a School Trip Information Form, An EVOLVE form, online before departing on a trip:

[**https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/evchome\_public.asp?domain=blac**](https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/evchome_public.asp?domain=blackpoolvisits.org)[**kpoolvisits.org**](https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/evchome_public.asp?domain=blackpoolvisits.org)**)**

The EVC **must** also give permission before any trip can take place. Staff wishing to organise a trip **must** complete an EVOLVE form and submit it **as far in advance as possible**.

After the school calendar has been checked, and after members of the SLT team have been consulted, where relevant, the EVC will give approval for ‘routine’ day trips. Any residential visits, or visits likely to have a significant impact on the day to day running of the school, need to be approved by the EVC in consultation with FCAT EVC.

# Staff must not spend any money or inform students or parents that a trip or visit is going ahead until it has been formally approved.

**The Timing of Trips and Visits**

It is essential to the smooth running of the rest of Blackpool Aspire Academy that trips are properly planned and arranged to ensure minimal disruption to all, both those on the trip and those left behind.

Departments are strongly encouraged to plan their pattern of trips and visits for the coming academic year as early as they can, informing the EVC, Mr Tock, and The Entitlement Curriculum coordinator, Miss Plancke. This allows clashes in the school calendar to be kept to a minimum. Trips and visits planned well in advance must be included in the termly school calendar. Events listed in the school calendar take priority over non-calendared events. The earlier a trip is planned, the more likely it is to be approved. If two events clash then the Vice Principal will resolve the matter.

**Students must miss lessons as rarely as possible.** While it is often easy to justify a trip from the benefit to one’s own subject, lessons missed in other subjects need to be considered. Obviously, there will be times when it is impossible to avoid taking students out during lesson time, but full consideration must be made of alternative times before making such a decision.

# Informing Other People

It is essential that all people concerned with the trip are fully informed at appropriate times, including the EVC and Entitlement Curriculum Coordinator. Once the planning has been completed and the trip has been approved, the full details of the trip must be prepared. These details, together with copies of letters for parents, must be submitted to the EVC before being sent out.

# Communicating with parents

Parents must be informed in writing about all trips. Blackpool Aspire Academy operates a policy where **Parental permission is required for all trips**. Where smaller numbers are involved, where a trip leaves very early or returns very late, and **for all residential visits**, specific signed permission must be obtained from parents. Trip leaders must have an alternative option planned for any student whose parents decline permission to go on a trip.

If a trip involves overnight accommodation, parents must be given full details of the type of accommodation provided and the security arrangements which are in place to ensure the safety of their child. They must be fully informed as to the nature of the trip, with a clear indication if the students may be unaccompanied while away from school. Parents must acknowledge that their child is fit enough to go on the trip, outline any health problems and authorise the leader of the party to act on their behalf in an emergency. They must also provide a contact number for the duration of the trip.

For longer trips, particularly those overseas, it is a good idea to hold a Parents’ Information Evening a few weeks before departure. This allows information to be shared, questions to be asked and answered, and reassurance to be given where appropriate. The publication of an information booklet for parents and students is also strongly advised. The EVC and Entitlement Curriculum coordinator can give advice about the best way to organise such events and to prepare such booklets.

# Informing the School

The school must also know all the relevant details for a trip. The EVOLVE School Trip Information Form **must** be completed in full and submitted to the EVC, well in advance of the departure date. For day trips, this should be at least one week before the trip departs, if possible. For residential trips, where possible, the EVOLVE School Trip Information Form should be handed in at least 6 weeks prior to departure so that any concerns or problems that may arise can be sorted out. This form, when properly completed, must contain all the information required about a trip and include all relevant documents and risk assessments.

The trip leader **must** ensure that he/she is in possession of all parental consent forms and all contact number details throughout the trip. The EVC acts as the school contact for the trip. If the EVC is unable to do this, for example for a residential trip, he/she will ensure that another senior colleague is designated as the school contact.

Supervision, including ratios and vetting checks (for example, DBS checks for volunteers on overnight stays)

There are no exact ratios for school trips. The trip leader must ensure that the staffing for a trip is ‘reasonable’. This will depend on the age, gender mix, ability and behaviour of the students involved. It will depend on the type of activity undertaken, the nature of the journey and the type of accommodation if the trip is overnight. The competence of the adults supervising a trip must also be considered, together with the need for first aid cover.

**Blackpool Aspire Academy advises the following ratios for general activities such as visits to local historical sites and museums or for local walks, in normal circumstances:**

* **1 adult for every 15-20 students in school year 7 onwards.**

However, it is stressed that these are only examples. Trip leaders must assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular trip.

Trips to remote areas or those which involve more hazardous activities will clearly require a higher level of supervision. It is also the case that many institutions which are open for visits by school parties have their own staffing guidelines which need to be adhered to. Staff taking trips must always check with the locations they are visiting about such matters.

When trip leaders are considering the staffing for their trips they must always bear in mind the consequences of staff absences on those left behind.

If a school trip is taking place which involves several members of staff, each person going on the trip must ensure that the relevant paperwork has been completed. The composition of the staff involved with a trip often changes from the time the initial form is submitted. It is very important that the school Administration team know exactly who will be out on trips and that sufficient cover arrangements, for lessons and duties, have been put in place. The trip leader must co-ordinate this process, but **all staff who go on trips must take responsibility for ensuring their lessons and duties are covered appropriately**.

If a trip cannot be fully covered by members of staff, there are circumstances where parents can be used to supervise trips. All adults who supervise school trips should have completed a full Disclosure check. Staff that need further guidance and clarification on this matter should discuss it with the headteacher or EVC during the planning stages for a trip.

# Equally, any concerns with regard to staffing or staffing ratios on trips should be referred to the EVC coordinator who can give further guidance and advice.

**Risk Assessments**

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

It is not a legal requirement to complete a risk assessment for every activity or trip. Some activities, especially those happening away from school, such as mountaineering, canoeing and sailing, involve higher levels of risk. In these cases an assessment of significant risks will be carried out. Aspire Academy will ensure that the person assessing the risk understands the risks and is familiar with the activity planned.

The risk assessment must be based on the following considerations:

* What are the hazards?
* Who might be affected by them?
* What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
* Can the trip leader put the safety measures in place? What steps will be taken in an emergency?

While every trip will have its own particular risks that must be assessed, research has shown that the following are the most commonly found dangers, so are worthy of particular consideration when doing a risk assessment for any trip away from school.

For trips that will involve outdoor or adventurous activities or indeed residential trips, staff are reminded to request copies of risk assessments from the service provider well in advance of the trip and to make reference to these in their own risk assessments.

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| **Hazard** | **Risk** | **Control measures** |
| Separation from the party | Getting lost | Regular head count, small groups. Must stay with an adult. |
| Leaving party member behind | Risk of assault or abduction | Check numbers before every departure. |

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| Road crossing | Being hit by vehicle | All groups to line up parallel with kerb and cross as one. Ensure good sight line. Staff to arrive first at kerbside. |
| Road traffic | Falling off path into traffic | Keep buffer zone between group and kerb. |
| Sea/lakes | Drowning | Adults always on waterside. Group maximum of 6. Adults trained. |
| Sand | Damage to eyes | Student’s briefed and strong action at first sign of throwing. |
| Sun | Sunburn | Hat, sun block, parental letter, supervised use. |
| Heat | Heat stroke or dehydration | Pre-visit and establish access to shaded area. Plentiful supply of liquids. |
| Trains | Falling into the path of a vehicle | Keep buffer zone between group and train. |

If possible, an exploratory visit should be made by a teacher before any trip is undertaken. A key factor in reducing risk is knowledge of the place to be visited. Whilst such visits may not always be practical, staff should make every effort to consider such an undertaking.

A member of staff who is to lead a group abroad, on a residential visit or on an outdoor activity will make a special effort to carry out a reconnaissance visit. If this is not possible then a minimum measure will be to obtain specific information by letter from the venue and from reputable organisations who can provide such information.

It is important to remember that places such as outdoor pursuit centers, leisure centers, museums, theatres, etc., have to carry out their own risk assessments for the facilities they provide. If copies of these are obtained by members of staff then this will reduce the burden of the risk assessment process.

# Factors to Consider in Planning a Trip

The following list is not exhaustive, but it tries to summarise what needs to be done during the planning and organisation of a trip at Aspire Academy. The list also gives further ideas about areas for risk assessment.

* Facilities/equipment the group will need to take
* Facilities/equipment provided at the venue
* Staff training needs
* Designating someone to record the visit and carry accident forms, etc
* Transport arrangements, including meeting arrangements for trips which leave before the start of morning school and collection arrangements for trips which return after the end of normal school
* Insurance arrangements
* Communication arrangements
* Supervision ratio
* Contingency plans for enforced changes of plans or late return
* Information to parents
* Information to school
* Preparing students
* Arrangements for sending students home early
* Emergency arrangements

# Emergency Procedures

Staff that are in charge of students have a duty of care to make sure that the students are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take lifesaving action in an extreme situation.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school visit. If an emergency happens Aspire Academy staff will:

* + Assess the situation
  + Safeguard the uninjured members of the group
  + Attend the casualty
  + Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident

*Guidance on Emergency Procedures*

A copy of the following guidelines must be taken by all trip leaders and their deputies.

* + Establish nature and extent of the emergency.
  + Make sure that all other members of the party are accounted for and safe.
  + If there are injuries, establish their extent and administer first aid (if you have been trained or feel capable – but be aware of consequences that might follow were you to give incorrect treatment).
  + Establish names of the injured and call relevant emergency

services.

* + Advise other party staff of the incident and that emergency procedures are in operation.
  + Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies casualties to hospital.
  + Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout and arrange for their early return to base.
  + Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all children are accounted for.
  + Control access to telephones until contact is made with the Principal and relevant contacts and until they have had time to contact those directly involved. Pass full details of the incident (name, nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, details of injuries, names and telephone numbers of those involved, action taken so far).
  + Telephone numbers for future communication identify alternate

telephone numbers in case telephone lines become jammed).

* + The school will arrange to contact the parents of those involved. In serious incidents the parents of all party members should will informed.

# Media:

* + A designated person should act as the point of contact with the media to whom all involved should direct questions.
  + Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be divulged to the media.
  + The Party Leader should write down as soon as practicable all relevant details. A record should be made of any witnesses. Any associated equipment should be kept in its original condition.
  + Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.
  + All accident forms should be completed and insurers and Blackpool Aspire Academy leads contacted
  + Inform parents of any delays that will be necessitated.

# Residential Visits

All visits involving a period of residence need to be planned well ahead.

Whether at home or abroad, residential visits will include periods of time which are not taken up with organised activity. Students may want to leave the group accommodation in order to shop for souvenirs, to take a walk, or to have a cup of coffee at a café. After careful risk assessments guidelines must be laid down by the Party Leader and clearly understood by all members of the party. The following points may be helpful:

•Students should not be allowed to wander unsupervised in groups of less than 4. Larger groups may be required

•The geographical area in which students are allowed to wander should be clearly defined

•A time limit should be set in proportion to the age of the students. Anyone who returns late should understand that he/she will subsequently be penalised. Before dispersal, everyone should know where a member of staff can be found during the whole of the period and exactly where the group is to reassemble

•If students are leaving from and returning to the group accommodation, a signing in and out book should be used

•After the evening meal, students must only go out in escorted parties accompanied by members of staff

•If the party is staying in a hotel or near shops etc. students should be reminded that in the UK it is an offence for persons under 18 to buy alcohol in public houses, off licenses or shops. Other laws apply abroad. Parents and students should be clearly informed of the school’s policy in connection with consumption of alcohol i.e. it is not permitted. The Party Leader should ensure that relevant staff in the accommodation being used are made aware that alcohol should not be served to students at any time.

•Students away from home may well strike up acquaintance with students from other school parties or people from the locality. This can be a problem if it leads to proposed meetings at times when the group is supposed to be engaged on organised activities or safely in their accommodation.

•The group register should be checked regularly, say at meal times and whenever the party is about to move from one venue to another. It is often convenient to give small groups of student’s responsibility for one another, reporting to the leader if anyone is missing.

Staff should not drink alcohol on school trips.

The Party Leader should check the fire exits in any group accommodation and ensure that students are aware of them and of the fire procedures. A fire drill should be held on the first evening, before bedtime.

If students are staying in private homes, appropriate guidelines in connection with their safety and conduct (based on those set out above as appropriate) should be given to host families.

Some special additional precautions as necessary for foreign visits.

# Health

A check should be made to see whether inoculations are required. Parents and students should be carefully briefed on any health and hygiene precautions which are necessary in the regions where the students will be travelling. Items to keep in mind:

•Tap water is not always safe to drink

•In some localities, salads may need to be avoided and fruit should be carefully washed in purified water or peeled

The strength of the sun should never be underestimated, especially at high altitudes, and students should use sun protection cream and may need a hat

Rabies can be transmitted by bites or scratches from infected cats, dogs, foxes and farm animals

**Funds**

Careful estimates should be made of the need for cash in the currency of the country to be visited. Staff should have sufficient funds in appropriate form to provide for all anticipated needs plus an emergency fund.

# Foreign Customs

Students should be advised beforehand of any local customs they may meet which might surprise them and be warned of the possibility of giving offence.

**Additional Procedures for Visits Overseas**

Prior to the visit the tour leader should obtain and take with them:

* European Health Insurance Card (where appropriate) and significant medical histories.
* Details of insurance arrangements and the company’s telephone number.
* Location of local hospital/medical services.

In the case of an emergency the framework outlined above should operate. In addition the group leader should notify the British Embassy/Consulate.

# After the Trip

The trip leader must inform the EVC (or whoever has been delegated as the school contact) that the party has returned safely and ensure that all the students are safely collected from school by a responsible adult, such as a parent or guardian.

If any difficulties or incidents occur on a school trip, the EVC must be informed as soon as possible after the trip returns to school so that appropriate follow up action can be taken quickly.

# Additional Guidelines

**Residential Trips Involving Mixed Parties**

Staff organising such trips should try to ensure that a male and female member of staff accompanies the party. If this is not possible the spouse of a member of Staff who is willing to accompany the party is acceptable, but this should be discussed in advance with the Headmaster. If this is not possible then the matter should be discussed in good time with the headteacher before plans are finalised. All adults involved in residential trips require a DBS disclosure before accompanying students. This will have been processed on appointment for school staff. Volunteers and other adults will need to have a disclosure application processed in good time before departure. Group leaders must seek permission for adults who are not employed by the school to accompany a trip. This must be sought at least **three months** before the date of departure. Failure to seek such permission is a serious breach of school discipline.

# .Medical Treatment on Trip abroad

In case of medical treatment required abroad, please contact the Insurance and Travel Company will be contacted. If any medical costs have to be paid whilst on a trip the school will reimburse on the trips.

**This policy will be reviewed annually. Last reviewed October 2024.**