



Star

NURTURING TODAY'S **YOUNG PEOPLE**,
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S **LEADERS**

OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY





Document control

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Introduction

1. Educational visits and outdoor learning are an important aspect of Star Academies' efforts to enrich the curriculum, make learning more engaging and relevant and ensure that each learner 'enjoys and achieves'.
2. However, all visits need to be planned thoroughly in order to minimise risks and ensure that all learners and members of staff are safe during the course of the visit. The level of planning should be proportionate to the complexity of the visit.

Aims

3. To provide enhanced curricular and recreational opportunities for pupils.
4. To provide a wider range of experiences for pupils than could be provided on a school site.
5. To promote the independence of pupils as learners, and to enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.
6. To ensure all educational visits are thoroughly planned and have appropriate procedures in place.
7. To ensure that all educational visits are planned in line with National Guidance.
8. To further develop confidence and enthusiasm amongst staff in relation to Educational Visits and to support staff in the planning and delivery of visits.
9. To support the mission, vision and values of the Trust and its establishments.

Who is responsible for this policy?

10. The Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory or Trust framework. The Trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to Star Central, the Local Governing Body and the Principal of each Trust school.
11. The Local Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team at each Trust school has a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

Status and remit

12. Any visit that involves leaving the school grounds, whether as part of the curriculum or recreational activities, during school time or outside the normal school day, is covered by this policy. This excludes local, routine sports fixtures and off-site swimming lessons if there are separate policies and procedures in place to cover these activities.
13. All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this policy. All staff should be familiar with their roles and responsibilities.

National guidance and DfE Guidance

14. Star Academies has adopted the "National guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom" (www.oeapng.info) as its source of guidance and good practice for educational visits and activities. In this policy this is referred to as 'National Guidance'.



15. Staff should use the National Guidance website as an additional source of information and good practice guidance for off-site visits.
16. Further guidance is available from the DfE: [Health and safety on educational visits](#)

EVOLVE

17. EVOLVE (<http://visits.staracademies.org>) is the web based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system, used by Star Academies.
18. All staff leading or accompanying visits must have an EVOLVE account, which is set up by the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), so that they have access to visit planning details and all relevant guidance.
19. All visits must be recorded on EVOLVE.
20. All relevant guidance for Educational Visits is available on EVOLVE.

Responsibilities

The Trust as the employer

21. The Trust will ensure that its employees are provided with:
 - appropriate guidance relating to Off-Site Visits and Adventurous Activities via a designated Educational Visits Coordinator;
 - employer-led training courses to support the guidance and to ensure that it is understood (e.g. Educational Visits Coordinator training, Visit Leader training);
 - suitable systems and processes that encourage good practice and help to monitor and ensure that those trained are kept updated;
 - access to advice, support and further training from an adviser that has proven expertise and experience, as well as a professional understanding of the guidance, the training and expectations set by current good practice.

Visit Leaders

22. Visit Leaders are responsible for the planning of visits and should involve both accompanying staff and the children in this process.
23. Visit Leaders are responsible for completing the visit form on EVOLVE. This is an important part of the planning process as well as acting as a check list for the visit leader.
24. Visit Leaders must not sign any contracts, enter into any agreements, pay any money or deposits or advertise visits with pupils/ young people until outline permission has been obtained from the designated Educational Visits Coordinator/Principal.
25. The visit leader must ensure that an appropriate risk assessment is in place covering all aspects of the visit. This should include a specific risk assessment (or event specific notes on EVOLVE) covering the key issues identified, in addition to any Generic Risk Assessments used.
26. Visit Leaders must make appropriate checks of any third party providers.

Visit Leaders must refer to

27. Table 2: Visit Leader checklist in this document, and the [Visit Leader Checklist](#) from the OEAP National Guidance.



EVC (Educational Visits Coordinator)

28. The EVC must be a member of SLT with significant experience of leading visits.
29. The EVC must be allotted sufficient time to carry out their duties effectively.
30. The designated Educational Visits Coordinator is listed in the Staff Handbook.
31. The EVC must have completed the Star Academies EVC training course (or have undergone a suitable induction programme if they have already completed an OEAP EVC training course with a previous employer). EVC update training is required every 3 years.
32. The EVC is the first point of call for advice on visit related matters.
33. The EVC will support and where necessary challenge colleagues with regard to off-site visits.
34. The EVC will check final visit plans before submitting them to the Principal/Headteacher for approval.
35. The EVC will support the Principal/Headteacher in ensuring that competent staff are assigned to lead and accompany visits, see section Staff competence, as well as providing support for approvals and other decisions.
36. The EVC must refer to the [EVC Checklist](#) from the OEAP national guidance.
37. The EVC, supported by the Admin EVC, will oversee the management of the EVOLVE website for the establishment and ensure that all staff leading or accompanying visits have their own EVOLVE account.
38. The EVC, with support from the Principal/Headteacher, will ensure that staff leading and accompanying visits receive appropriate training and support.

Administration support for the EVC – EVC (AS) Account

39. Administration support for the EVC may be provided by non-teaching staff.
40. Where such support is used, it is important that it is the main EVC (NOT the Admin EVC) that makes the important decisions with regard to competence to lead, appropriate ratios and effective supervision and submits the visit form to the Principal/Headteacher for approval.
41. An EVC (AS) account (AS stands for 'Admin Support') can be created on EVOLVE to help facilitate admin support for the role of EVC. Contact the Educational Visits Adviser for details.

School Principal/Headteacher

42. The School Principal/Headteacher has responsibility for monitoring and approval of all visits.
43. The School Principal/Headteacher must refer to this document (Star Off-site Visit Policy), the [Head or Manager Checklist](#) and the [Head Teacher/Manager Responsibilities](#) from the National Guidance.

Governors

44. The Governors will be informed of Level 1 and Level 2 visits on a termly basis. They will be informed of all Level 3 visits prior to them taking place. Visits are included on the agenda of Governor meetings, allowing Governors to fulfil their role as 'critical friend' in the scrutiny of visit procedures.
45. Governors will maintain an overview and monitoring role to ensure that all visits are carried out in accordance with this policy.
46. The Governors must refer to this document (Star Off-site Visit Policy), the [Management Board and Governor Checklist](#) and the [Member of a Management Board or Governing Body - responsibilities](#) from the National Guidance.



Types of visits

47. All visits must be placed in to one of three categories so that proportionate planning can be put in place for the visit relative to the complexity and the level of risk involved:
- Level 1: Local, routine, low risk (Walking distance, no transport used)
 - Level 2: All visits that are NOT Level 1 and NOT Level 3 (e.g. Day visits involving transport)
 - Level 3: Overseas, Residential and/or Adventurous
48. Adventurous Activities include activities which are considered to have a higher potential level of risk associated with them and would normally require a specifically competent/ trained/ experienced person to lead the activity. See Adventurous activities/visits.

Approving visits

Approval requirements

49. **All** visits must be approved by Star Central or the Principal/Headteacher in advance of the visit in accordance with this guidance.
50. Level 3 visits will require **Approval** by the Star Central Educational Visits Adviser.
51. For visits where approval is not required by Star Central, approval is delegated to the Principal/Headteacher.
52. Any visit or activities which have not been approved on EVOLVE in accordance with this policy must not go ahead.

Approval times

53. Where possible, visits should be submitted for approval in good time. Staff should be aware that EVCs, Principals/Headteachers and Star Central have other responsibilities as well as visit approvals and that staff should not place undue pressure on colleagues or Star Central with regard to visit approvals. The amount of time required to process and approve a visit will depend on the level of complexity. Time must be allowed to consider each visit in detail and request further information or clarification where necessary so that informed decisions and judgements can be made by those responsible for approving visits.
54. To ensure that visits are managed effectively, the following lead in times should be adhered to:

Level 1 Visits	Level 1 visits should be submitted to the EVC by the Visit Leader (via EVOLVE) 2 weeks prior to the visit date.
Level 2 Visits	Level 2 visits should be submitted to the EVC by the Visit Leader (via EVOLVE) 4 weeks prior to the visit date.
Level 3 Visits	Level 3 visits should be submitted to the EVC by the Visit Leader (via EVOLVE) at least 6 weeks prior to the visit date. The visit should then be Authorised by the Head/Manager and submitted to Star Central for approval at least 28 days prior to the visit date.

55. Some flexibility will be required to accommodate a degree of spontaneity with pupil/young people led activities, especially with Level 1 visits. Also, although Off-site Visits should normally be part of a planned programme, where opportunities arise at short notice, the EVC should be contacted as visit approval can usually be fast-tracked so that young people do not miss out on such opportunities.



Planning visits

56. Planning and recording for Educational Visits and Adventurous Activities should be proportionate to the level of risk involved. Local, routine, low risk visits are likely to require a lower level of planning, whereas an expedition abroad will need considerable and detailed planning over an extended period of time.
57. Table 1 sets out the planning and approval process.
58. Table 2 sets out the Star Trust Visit Leader's Checklist.
59. Refer to the following National Guidance documents for further information:
[Visit Leader Checklist \(from National Guidance\)](#); [Good Practice Basics](#); [Planning Basics](#);
[Group Management & Supervision](#); [Learning Outcomes Mind Map](#); [Ratios & effective supervision](#)

Learning outcomes/ purpose of visit

60. Learning outcomes should be the starting point of the visit planning process, not an add-on or an afterthought. Visit Leaders, EVCs and Heads/Managers should consider the learning outcomes as part of the planning and approval process, ensuring good 'value for learning' and a meaningful contribution towards school effectiveness. Learning outcomes could be curriculum related or focused on personal development or a combination of both.

Pre-visits

61. All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third party provision will meet group requirements. Wherever reasonably practicable, visit leaders should carry out a preliminary visit.

Staff competence

62. Staff competence is the single most important aspect of safe visit management. Staff are supported in developing this competence in the following ways:
 - an apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced visit leaders before taking on a leadership role;
 - supervision by senior staff of more complex visits where appropriate;
 - regular CPD for all staff involved with visits, including: risk management; emergency procedures; visit leader training; group management; first aid.
63. In deciding whether any member of staff is competent to be a visit leader, the EVC and Principal/Headteacher will take into account the following factors:
 - level of relevant experience;
 - any relevant training/induction undertaken (including any relevant qualifications – e.g. hill walking);
 - the emotional and leadership ability of any prospective visit leader to make on-going risk management judgements and take charge of any emergencies that may arise;
 - knowledge of the children, the venue and the activities to be undertaken.
64. Accompanying staff will have clearly defined roles, be involved in the planning process and be competent to carry out the roles to which they are assigned.
65. Staff leading adventurous activities will be 'approved' by the Trust Educational Visits Adviser in addition to the normal visit approval process on EVOLVE.
66. Staff are aware of, and able to comply with all relevant guidelines.



Table 1: Planning and approval process summary

Definition	Documentation Required (<i>templates in EVOLVE</i>)	Approval Process
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Local, routine, low risk Walking distance No transport used</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit Proposal Form (paper form) • Star Generic Risk Assessments used as starting point by staff • School generic risk assessment to cover any local issues (eg local procedure for crossing busy roads, local park, walking by water/local reservoir/canal) • Event-Specific Risk Assessment to cover additional factors/ specific issues (where required) • Itinerary for the visit • List of staffing • List of pupils including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of pupils on Medical Needs Register • details of pupils with SEND needs • details of pupil eligible for Pupil Premium • Visit Leader Emergency Card (EV7) • Emergency School Contact/Principal's Emergency Card (EV8a) • Purchase Order as required where costs involved • Transport Booking Form as required • Information letter for parents • Annual parental consent to cover all Level 1 visits is recommended. Where visits take place outside of school time the school may seek specific consent • Any further supporting documentation deemed relevant 	<p>SUBMITTED AT LEAST 14 DAYS BEFORE VISIT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit Proposal Form (paper form) completed by Visit Leader. 2. Provisional agreement from the Line Manager and EVC/Principal obtained before any commitment is made. 3. All planning documentation completed on EVOLVE by Visit Leader. 4. All planning documentation checked and submitted by EVC. 5. Approved by Headteacher / Principal.
<p>Level 2</p> <p>All visits that are: NOT Level 1 and NOT Level 3 (eg. day visits involving transport)</p>	<p>As for Level 1 and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star Generic Risk Assessments may be used as starting point by staff • In addition, visit Leaders are required to attach a Specific Risk Assessment (or Event Specific Note) to EVOLVE to cover the specific issues relating to each particular visit • Annual parental consent may be sufficient • Specific parental consent recommended for visits taking place partly or wholly outside of school hours or where long journeys are involved • Provider checks - evidence of LOTC Badge or copy of EV4 Form attached to EVOLVE (if required) 	<p>SUBMITTED AT LEAST 4 WEEKS BEFORE VISIT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit Proposal Form (paper form) completed by Visit Leader. 2. Provisional agreement from the Line Manager and EVC/Principal obtained before any commitment is made. 3. All planning documentation completed on EVOLVE by Visit Leader. 4. All planning documentation checked and submitted by EVC. 5. Approved by Headteacher / Principal.
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Overseas Residential Adventurous</p>	<p>As for Level 1 and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star Generic Risk Assessments used as starting point by staff • Star Generic Risk Assessment for 'Residential Trips' used as a starting point (where required) • In addition, visit Leaders are required to attach a Specific Risk Assessment (or Event Specific Notes) to EVOLVE to cover the specific issues relating to each particular visit • Specific parental consent required • Provider checks - evidence of LOTC Badge or copy of EV4 Form attached to EVOLVE (if required) 	<p>SUBMITTED AT LEAST 6 WEEKS BEFORE VISIT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit Proposal Form (paper form) completed by Visit Leader. 2. Provisional agreement from the Line Manager and EVC/Principal obtained before any commitment is made. 3. All planning documentation completed on EVOLVE by Visit Leader. 4. All planning documentation checked and submitted by EVC. 5. Approved by Headteacher / Principal. 6. Approved by Trust Educational Visits Adviser.



Table 2: Visit Leader checklist

Planning the Visit	
Purpose	Ensure the visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has clear learning outcomes • has activities appropriate to the group
School Policy	Plan and execute the visit in accordance with the 'Star Off-Sites Visits Policy'
Provisional approval	Obtain provisional agreement from Line Manager and EVC/Principal before any commitment is made.
Finances	Agree funding arrangements and charging policy. Where required, complete: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Booking Form • Any associated Purchase Orders where costs are involved
Insurance	Trust wide Travel Insurance is in place to cover all visits (blanket policy). Insurance 24/7 contact details held by Visit Leader for all visits abroad. Any issues – contact EVC/Adviser.
Preparation/checks	Where practicable, undertake a pre-visit to check suitability, gather information and to inform risk assessment and planning
	Make suitable checks on any external providers. Where possible, use providers with the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge (see 'Star Off-site Visits Policy'). If required, ensure EV4 Provider Form is uploaded to EVOLVE.
	Ensure there are contingency plans to meet changing conditions – a risk assessed 'Plan B'
Risk assessment	Implement 'Star Generic Risk Assessment for All Visits' (incl basic transport)
	Attach a Specific Risk Assessment to cover the specific issues/arrangements for each visit
	Where required, implement the Star Generic Additional Transport Risk Assessment
	Where required, implement the Star Generic Residential Risk Assessment
	Where required, implement the Star Generic Visits and the Threat from Terrorism Risk Assessment
	Where required, implement the Star Generic Group Walking Risk Assessment
Safeguarding	Ensure all staff are involved in reviewing and writing the risk assessment and the planning
Safeguarding	Ensure the trip complies with the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
Informing parents and pupils	Involve pupils in the planning. Ensure pre-visit and ongoing pupil briefings are provided.
	Ensure parents are kept fully informed of nature of visit (including contingency plans), purpose of visit and any special requirements e.g. waterproof clothing.
Consent	Ensure appropriate Parental Consent is in place. 'Blanket' annual consent for Level 1 and some Level 2 visits. Specific consent for all Level 3 and some Level 2 visits.
Pupil information	Maintain a list of all pupils (including contact details) taking part in the visit and share with relevant staff and providers.
(Ensure GDPR compliance)	Maintain list of pupils with SEND taking part in the visit, brief staff and make any necessary arrangements – ensure any significant issues are adequately risk assessed.
(Take care with personal data and it keep secure.)	Maintain list of pupils with medical needs taking part in the visit, brief staff and make any necessary arrangements
	Maintain list of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium taking part in the visit, brief staff and make any necessary arrangements
Staffing	Ensure adults involved have appropriate skills for the visit
	Volunteers have been approved as suitable and appropriate DBS checks undertaken
	Ensure the level of staffing meets requirements, ensuring 'effective supervision' is in place
	Ensure the Visit Leader has necessary skills to lead visit and is comfortable with role
	Identify a deputy leader
	Ensure at least one member of staff has good working knowledge of First Aid and First Aid provision is appropriate to the activity



Emergency procedures	Finalise/secure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of staff and young people on visit (with access to emergency contact details) EV7, EV8a & EV8b Emergency Cards First Aid kit Mobile phone Any other relevant documentation/items (e.g. SEND/medical info; medication; contact details; insurance)
	Fully brief the base contact at school and ensure they have access to/copies of all relevant information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of staff and young people on visit EV7, EV8a & EV8b Emergency cards (including Visit Leader contact details while on the visit) Any other relevant documentation (e.g. contact details where appropriate)
Final approval	Upload all associated documentation to EVOVLE
	Secure final approval in line with policy
During the Visit	
Briefing	Set out the expectations of behaviour
	Ensure pupils understand any recall system if pupils are working away from staff and where the rendezvous point is
	Ensure pupils understand what action they should take if they become separated from the group
	Ensure all staff are fully briefed about their roles and responsibilities during the visit
	Ensure pupils know what to do in the event of an emergency
	Ensure pupils are aware of the procedures where there is traffic
Equipment/Resources	Ensure all staff have a list of pupils/groups
	Ensure First Aid kit appropriate to the visit is available
	Ensure staff have all relevant literature, worksheets etc
	Ensure staff have any other relevant equipment (mobile phone, sick bags, litter sacks etc)
	Ensure staff have sufficient funds to allow for contingencies
Risk Assessment	Ensure on-going risk assessments are undertaken
	Ensure pupil numbers are checked at appropriate times (head counts/ smaller sub-groups)
Emergency Procedures	Ensure Visit Leader holds the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of staff and young people on visit EV7 Emergency card (including 24hr Emergency Contact details where appropriate) First Aid kit Mobile phone Any other relevant documentation/items (e.g. medication/ contact details where appropriate)
	Ensure emergency contact (at the base) holds the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of staff and young people on visit EV7, EV8a & EV8b Emergency cards (including Visit Leader contact details while on the visit) Any other relevant documentation (e.g. contact details where appropriate) And should have 24/7 access to all Visit details and documentation
After the Visit	
Debriefing	Debrief the Educational Visits Coordinator
	Debrief the group and complete any relevant follow-up work
Administration	Tie up all loose ends, e.g. paperwork, finance, thank you letters, etc
Evaluation	Complete Visit Evaluation



Ratios and effective supervision

67. Visits must have 'effective supervision' in place that has been approved by the EVC and Principal/Headteacher. For all visits the visit leader, EVC and Principal/Headteacher will make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of the staff team leading the visit.
68. Points to consider for effective supervision:
- Can that staff team effectively manage that group, on that visit/activity, at that venue, in that environment, that distance from base?
 - A visit must not go ahead where either the visit leader, EVC, or Principal/Headteacher is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision is in place.
69. Refer to National Guidance documents:
- [Ratios and Effective Supervision \(OEAP\)](#)
- [Underpinning Legal Framework and Duty of Care](#)

Staff support for SEND

70. Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual, cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group.

Staff family members on visits

71. In general, the Trust considers it to be inappropriate for staff to include family members on school visits. Staff responsibility and duty of care should be focused on the pupils. It is likely that this will be compromised if family members are present.

Indirect and remote supervision

72. Young people must be supervised throughout all visits. At times, where appropriate, they may be unaccompanied by a member of staff or other responsible adult, e.g. DofE expeditions, 'down time' in a shopping mall.
73. Both indirect supervision and remotely supervised activities can bring purposeful educational benefits, and the progression from dependence to independence is to be encouraged.
- Indirect supervision – e.g. pupils given opportunity to shop in town square/tourist market (time bound within a clearly defined area with staff on hand)
 - Remote supervision – e.g. DofE Expedition, independent groups checked regularly by staff
74. The decision to allow indirect/remote supervision should be based on professional judgement taking into account such factors as:
- The age and maturity of the group;
 - The appropriateness of the venue/area chosen (consider crowds, is it easy to get lost);
 - Can clear boundaries/limits be easily set and managed;
 - The competence of the supervising staff.
75. Clear procedures should be adopted:
- Central meeting point identified and staffed throughout;
 - Pupils work in buddy groups;
 - Clearly defined boundaries;
 - Pupils carry contact cards and mobile phones for emergency communication;
 - Active supervision by staff (in the designated area);
 - Indirectly/remotely supervised activities should be time bound and limited to short periods;



- Pupils must be briefed about what to do if they are separated from the group.

76. Refer to National Guidance documents:

[Group Management and Supervision](#)

[Indirect/remote Supervision and Downtime FAQ](#)

Risk management

77. A risk assessment will be undertaken for all visits.
78. There must be evidence on EVOLVE demonstrating that a specific risk assessment process has taken place for each visit (e.g. ensuring a conversation/meeting takes place between the visit leader and the staff team with the key points recorded and attached to the visit form on EVOLVE).
79. The 'Star Generic Risk Assessment for All Visits' will be implemented by staff for all visits. It should be considered as a starting point. Additional significant risks, must be included in a Specific Risk Assessment and uploaded on EVOLVE or included on EVOLVE as Event Specific Notes.

Level 1 visits

80. For Level 1 visits, a routine check of the 'Star Generic Risk Assessment for All Visits' to make sure the precautions remain suitable and sufficient is all that may be required. Where additional factors apply such as unusual/ challenging activities; SEND/medical/behaviour considerations; extreme weather; or an inexperienced leader; then a Specific Risk Assessment/ Event Specific Notes will be required to cover any additional issues.

Level 2 and 3 visits

81. For Level 2 and Level 3 (more complex) visits evidence of a specific risk management plan must be included on EVOLVE. Visit Leaders will attach a Specific Risk Assessment/ Event Specific Notes to EVOLVE to cover the arrangements and the specific issues relating to that particular visit.

Visits and the threat for terrorism

82. For visits to high profile destinations, venues of crowded events, the 'Star Generic Risk Assessment – Visits and the Risk of Terrorism' must be reviewed and implemented.

Specific risk assessments – what to include

83. When considering whether there are any significant risks that need managing, it is recommended that staff use the following model:

S taffing	Including competence, experience, ratios, effective supervision
A ctivities	Programme, activities to be undertaken. Who will lead? Adventurous? (Consider the itinerary, timings and any downtime.)
G roup	Additional needs: learning, behaviour, disabilities, medical. Challenging group?
E nvironment	Venue/location/area, remoteness, weather, water levels, accommodation, crowds, other users, culture
D istance from base	Including transport arrangements, support systems, residential visits, visits abroad

Additional points to consider

84. All risk assessments and associated planning documents must be uploaded on EVOLVE for monitoring by the EVC and Principal/Headteacher before approval can be given.



85. All staff, volunteers and young people will be briefed appropriately regarding the risk assessments prior to departure.
86. Where possible, all staff participating in the visit will be involved in the planning process which will include the checking/writing of any risk assessments.
87. Young people will be included in the risk assessment process where appropriate. This will help them learn how to manage risk for themselves.

On-going/dynamic risk assessments

88. During a visit, staff will undertake on-going risk assessment - continuously assessing situations as they unfold and adjusting the responses to effectively manage any issues/risks that may arise. This is not a written risk assessment but is considered 'active risk management'.
89. All staff are responsible for carrying out effective on-going risk assessments based on competence, experience and common sense. Staff teams will be suitably competent and experienced so that they are able to effectively manage any situations they are likely to encounter on the visit.

Provider and venue risk assessments

90. Where an external provider is being used, the provider has responsibility for risk assessing and managing the activities they deliver. Visit Leaders will not ask for copies of providers' risk assessments, but will ask for any information that they publish that is specifically aimed at helping Visit Leaders to manage their visit (e.g. a visit leader pack).

Reviewing risk assessments

91. All staff have a responsibility to review risk assessments after every visit, including the generic risk assessment. If there are any issues with the 'Star Generic Risk Assessment for All Visits,' then staff should bring them to the attention of the EVC immediately who will, in turn, raise with the Star Central Educational Visits Advisor as required.

92. Refer to following documents:

[4.3c Risk Management – an overview \(National Guidance\)](#)

[4.3f Risk management - some practical advice \(National Guidance\)](#)

[4.3g Risk management - what to record and how \(National Guidance\)](#)

[Principles of Sensible Risk Management \(HSE\)](#)

Plan B

93. Alternative arrangements (Plan B) should be included within the planning process where appropriate, for example, where weather conditions or water levels might be critical, or where an overcrowded venue might necessitate an alternative option.

Parent Consent

94. Staff will ensure that appropriate consent is in place.

Annual consent

95. Annual consent can be used for Level 1 and Level 2 visits (with some exceptions, see 'Specific Consent').

Specific consent

96. Specific consent is required for Level 3 visits; visits that extend beyond the school day; and visits involving long journeys.



Informed consent

97. Visit Leaders must ensure that any consent given is 'fully informed consent'. For most visits this will be achieved through an Information Letter to parents. For residential visits, in addition to written information, parents should be invited to a 'parents meeting' so that the details and arrangements can be explained in full and parents have the opportunity to ask questions.
98. Where annual consent has been given, prior to each visit Visit Leaders must provide parents with an information letter informing them of the arrangements. This will ensure that 'blanket consent' has been converted to 'fully informed consent'.
99. Where annual consent is deemed sufficient, no reply slip is required from the Parental Information Letter.
100. Parental consent will, where possible, be secured by the Visit Leader at least two weeks before the trip.
101. Parental consent slips can be used to provide parents with an opportunity to provide up to date medical information and emergency contact numbers where appropriate.
102. Parental consent slips will be kept securely until after all pupils have returned from the trip safely. If there is an incident on the visit then they should be retained.

Assessing venues, external providers and provider checks

103. Schools must carefully consider any proposed venues or providers. Staff should carry out research to ensure they offer high quality and are fit for purpose. Prior knowledge, word of mouth, reviews/feedback and pre-visits should be considered as part of the process.
104. Where providers are delivering practical activities to the pupils then the Visit Leader must carry out the necessary Provider Checks (low risk classroom type activities, where our school staff are present throughout, do not require an EV4 Provider Form completing).
105. When checking providers, to confirm that all aspects of their operation are satisfactory, the school will ensure that either:
 - Provider holds a **Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge** www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk; or
 - An **EV4 Provider Form** has been satisfactorily completed by the provider (and attached to EVOLVE). It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader to ask the provider to complete the EV4 Form. The EV4 Form can be found in the 'Forms' section on EVOLVE.
106. If a Provider holds an [AALA licence](#) (and/or any other accreditation), but not a LOTC Quality Badge, then an EV4 Provider Form is still required.
107. Where an external provider is being used, the provider has responsibility for risk assessing and managing the activities they deliver. Visit Leaders will not ask for copies of providers' risk assessments but will ask for any information that they publish that is specifically aimed at helping Visit Leaders to manage their visit.

Volunteers

108. Volunteers may require a Disclosure and Barring Service Check if they are involved in a regulated activity (carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service). Staff will discuss this with the EVC and the 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' (DSL) to establish if a check is required.
109. Volunteers will be inducted/ briefed and assessed as competent to carry out their assigned role. They will also require supervision by staff.



Emergency procedures

110. The visits emergency procedures align to the school's/Trust's emergency planning (see Appendix 1).
111. In the event of an incident, staff will use the EV7, EV8a and EV8b – by doing so staff will be led through the correct procedure.
112. Both the Visit Leader and the base contact will have 24/7 access to all the details of the visit, including medical and next of kin information for both the staff and the young people.
113. In addition to the Off-site Visits Emergency Procedures the school 'Business Continuity and Emergency Response Plan' (BCERP) may also be implemented depending on the severity of the incident.

Behaviour

114. Pupils will be expected to follow a code of conduct while on Off-site Visits. On occasions, parents may be asked to sign the code of conduct as well.
115. Consideration will be given to how mobile phones and other electronic devices will be managed.

Inclusion

116. The Trust ethos supports inclusion in all areas of school life including visits.
117. All visits will comply with the Equality Act 2010.
118. Staff will plan early to overcome any inclusion issues. Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate any young person with disabilities as long as the adjustments do not unduly impinge on the outcomes for the rest of the group.
119. Expectations placed on staff will be reasonable, so that what is required of them is within their competence.
120. Staff will discuss any issues with the EVC, the SENCO and Principal/Headteacher. The views of the young person and the parent/carers will be sought and included throughout.
121. Refer to National Guidance/DfE documents: [Inclusion](#)
[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#)
[Special Educational Needs - FAQ](#)
[DfE Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools](#)

Transport

122. Careful thought must be given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits. Statistics demonstrate that it is more hazardous to travel to an activity than to engage in it and establishments must follow the National Guidance and any relevant Star Academies guidance (e.g. the Star Academies Minibus Policy). All national and local regulatory requirements must be followed.

General considerations and effective supervision during journeys

123. Care should be taken to assess the maturity and the needs of the group, the competence and experience of the staff, as well as the distance from base so that the Visit Leader, EVC and Principal/Headteacher can be confident that 'effective supervision' is in place.
124. Ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. The Star Academies Transport Booking Form should be used and the recommended checks carried out.
125. Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration. Where this occurs, there should be recorded procedures.



Seat Belts

126. Seat belts must be worn at all times on all vehicles where seat belts would normally be expected, including cars, minibuses, coaches and buses – with the exception of public transport. Establishments should only commission vehicles with appropriate seat belts fitted.
127. Refer to National Guidance document: [4.5c Transport in Private Cars](#)
[4.5a Transport General Considerations](#)
[4.5e Hiring a coach](#)

Minibuses

128. The driving and operation of school minibuses is a complex matter. All establishments must operate to the Star Academies Minibus Policy which is in accordance with the guidance documents referred to below.
129. The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey, giving proper consideration to issues of driver-distraction when considering what supervision is required for the specific group of passengers being transported in a minibus. In addition, on longer journeys consideration should be given to factors such as driver fatigue and comfort breaks.
130. Refer to Star Academies Minibus Policy and National Guidance document: [4.5b Transport in Minibuses \(OEAP\)](#)
131. *NB Star Academies requires all employees driving minibuses to hold current MIDAS training and certification (or equivalent).*

First aid arrangements

132. For all visits, there will be a responsible adult with a good working knowledge of first aid appropriate to the environment (e.g. urban, remote, water, etc.).
133. A course such as the Emergency First Aid at work (1 day) course may be suitable for routine urban visits, however the nature of the visit may indicate that a higher level qualification is appropriate (e.g. a 2 or 3 day qualification), especially in circumstances where it is likely that access by the emergency services may be delayed.
134. Based on the nature of the particular visit, the Visit Leader/EVC/Principal/Headteacher will make a professional judgement regarding the level of first aid required. However, any residential visit or adventurous activity must be accompanied by, or have access to, a qualified first aider. For residential visits the first aid cover must be available 24/7.
135. A first aid kit appropriate to the visit will be carried, and there will always be someone who is nominated to deal with first aid issues.
136. The first aid requirements relating to EYFS settings are specified and will be adhered to, see Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
137. Refer to National Guidance document: [First Aid 4.4b](#)

Insurance

138. The Principal/Headteacher will liaise with the Trust to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is in place to cover staff, volunteers and children participating in Educational Visits.
139. The Trust has a blanket policy in place to cover all Educational Visits.
140. For visits abroad please ensure that the visit leader and accompanying staff hold a copy of the Policy Summary and the Emergency 24hr Insurance Claim/Support contact number.



141. Where unusual/high risk activities are being planned the Trust Educational Visits Adviser to must be contacted to discuss plans.
142. When visiting European countries EHIC cards are not a requirement because the Trust insurance is comprehensive and covers all such costs. However, where staff and pupils already hold EHIC cards then they should be used in order to reduce costs for the insurers where possible.
143. There are some exemptions from the Trust Travel insurance (eg. Injury/illness as a result of attempted suicide or self-harm is not covered by the policy). If staff have any concerns about specific insurance issues they should discuss them with the school EVC and contact the Trust Educational Visits Adviser.

Charging for activities/ visits

144. Charging for activities must be in line with the school's Charging and Remissions Policy.
145. The Education Act 1996, sections 449-462 sets out the law on charging for school activities in England. The Department for Education provides guidance to Heads of Establishments and Governing Bodies as to the requirements of a charging & remissions policy, voluntary contributions and what can or cannot be charged for.
146. Staff must follow the school procedures which must be in accordance with the guidance documents referred to below.
147. Refer to National Guidance document: [3.2c Charging for School Activity](#)
148. DfE document: [Charging for School Activities](#)

Finance

149. Procedures adopted will ensure:
 - initial approval of financial plans/ costings is provided;
 - requirements for accounting, banking and reporting are followed;
 - appropriate contingency is built into the proposed cost;
 - appropriate management of voluntary contributions;
 - arrangements are in place for young people unable to afford a visit.

Monitoring visits

150. The role of monitoring is shared between the EVC, the Principal/Headteacher, the staff, the Governors and the Trust.
151. The checking and approval process is a very important part of monitoring and is shared between the EVC, Principal/Headteacher, Governors and Trust.
152. Field monitoring is also recognised as important. Staff are encouraged to peer monitor and give feedback to colleagues. In addition, the EVC, Principal/Headteacher or other experienced senior staff will carry out monitoring visits from time to time in order to support staff and encourage good practice.
153. Visits will be evaluated against the learning outcomes. Where appropriate, evaluations will be shared and should help to inform future planning. All stakeholders will be considered when carrying out evaluations. Visit Leaders must complete the evaluation form on EVOLVE within 28 days of the visit which enables staff to comment on the learning outcomes identified on the EVOLVE visit form.
154. Any monitoring will be intelligently targeted to support staff where appropriate and to identify and share good practice.



Overseas visits

155. All plans for overseas visits must be discussed with the Star Central Educational Visits Adviser.
156. The visit leader should consider the relevant country information from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. All relevant FCO information should be circulated amongst the staff team.
157. Refer to National Guidance document: [Overseas Visits](#).

Exchange visits

158. Star Academies follows the National Guidance document: [Exchange Visits and Home Stays](#). Star establishments are required to adhere to all relevant aspects of this guidance.

Adventurous activities/visits

159. For the purposes of this policy a range of activities are classed as adventurous and require an enhanced level of planning and scrutiny. See the list in Table 3 below which gives examples of activities and clarifies whether they should be regarded as adventurous. If in doubt over the classification of an activity, class it as adventurous in the first instance and contact the Educational Visits Adviser. Unusual activities may need to be discussed with the Star Central Educational Visits Adviser to ensure that insurance is in place.
160. Refer to National Guidance: [7a Adventure Activities](#)

Table 3: List of activities (examples of routine and adventurous)

Normal, routine	Adventurous activities
Athletics	Gorge scrambling
Bike training (e.g. Bike-ability)	Caving/ Potholing/ Mine exploration
Cinema	Mountain biking, BMX and Cyclocross
Park	Cycling (competitive or led by school staff)
Places of worship	Fell running
Shopping	Kayaking
Sports fixtures	Climbing/ Abseiling
Swimming lessons	Hillwalking
Theatre	Mountaineering
Restaurant visits	Climbing – artificial structures
Sports centres	Canoeing
Ice skating	Sailing/ Windsurfing
Leisure pools	Skiing/ Snowboarding
Roller skating	Stand-up paddle boarding
Forest schools (no bladed tools)	Surfing
Bushcraft (with no bladed tools)	Orienteering
Geography fieldwork (in everyday environments)	Body boarding
Field studies	Beach schools
Laser Quest	Bushcraft with bladed tools
	Forest schools (using bladed tools)



Normal, routine	Adventurous activities
Professionally lifeguarded pools	Geography fieldwork (hazardous environments)
Parkour using gym equipment	Archery
	Coasteering
	Scuba diving
	Snorkelling
* Consult the Star Central Educational Visits Adviser before booking any of these activity	Open water swimming/ bathing*
	High Ropes course activities*
	Non Lifeguarded swimming pools*
	Karting and motorsports*
	Paintball*
	Trampolining /Trampoline parks*
	Overseas expeditions*

Adventurous activities led by school staff

- 161. Any school staff who plan to lead adventurous activities must be able to demonstrate their competence. They must hold an appropriate qualification or have a statement of competence from a technical adviser with evidence recorded on EVOLVE.
- 162. Records of any relevant staff qualifications (e.g. Mountain Leader Award or First Aid qualification), including a scanned copy of the certificate, will be saved on the member of staff's profile on EVOLVE. In addition, a note from the EVC or Principal/Headteacher will be attached to the member of staff's profile on EVOLVE, verifying that the original certificate has been seen.
- 163. Where school staff are planning to lead adventurous activities, the EVC will contact the Trust Educational Visits Adviser in advance to discuss the proposals.

Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) expeditions and training

- 164. Where the school is running a DofE Programme, then the visit leader/EVC must contact the Educational Visits Adviser to discuss the arrangements for the Expedition section and related training.
- 165. Where schools are planning to engage an external provider to deliver the Expedition section, then the visit leader/EVC must contact the Educational Visits Adviser before entering in to an agreement/signing a contract/making any payments.
- 166. Refer to National Guidance: [DofE Award Expeditions](#)

Overseas expeditions

- 167. Overseas Expeditions (for the purposes of this document) are defined as those which typically involve journeying in remote areas of the world and/or in developing countries.
- 168. There are stringent requirements on Overseas Expedition providers, and establishments may therefore need to allow up to 18 months for Star Central approval to be granted. A 'Note' (for the attention of Star Central) should be added to the EVOLVE Visit Form as soon as possible during the planning stages. Establishments must seek initial agreement from Star Central before making any commitments.



169. Overseas Expeditions will only be approved by Star Central if the provider either:
- Holds an LOTC Quality Badge www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk; or
 - Provides a statement of compliance with the OEAP guidance document: [Overseas Expeditions](#)
170. Visit leaders may find it beneficial to attend the one day course entitled 'Overseas Expeditions and Fieldwork: a Course for Teachers and Youth Leaders' organised by the Royal Geographical Society www.rgs.org/eac.
171. Please ensure that the following National Guidance document is used by staff planning overseas expeditions: [Overseas Expeditions](#)

Trampoline parks

172. Star Schools must NOT organise visits to Trampoline Parks involving free-bouncing group sessions. This is due to the inherent risks involved and the difficulty in ensuring the effective supervision of such activities.
173. Single bed vertical bouncing sessions led by BG (British Gymnastics) qualified instructors may be considered – please contact the Trust's Educational Visits Adviser to discuss any such proposals prior to booking and before advertising to the pupils.

Induction, training, apprenticeship, succession planning

174. The EVC will attend a full Star Academies EVC training day (or other OEAP EVC training course as designated by the Trust), and thereafter attend Star Academies EVC update training at least once every 3 years.
175. New staff will be trained by the EVC so that they are familiar with the procedures for Off-Site Visits as part of their induction. This will be included and recorded as part of their induction programme.
176. All staff will undergo regular training in relation to Educational Visits. This will be at least every 3 years or when significant changes are implemented. The training will be led by the EVC and Principal/Headteacher or by the Trust Educational Visits Adviser.
177. An apprenticeship model will be used so that inexperienced staff can shadow experienced and competent visit leaders until they are ready to lead visits themselves. This model allows for effective succession planning.
178. Training records will be kept by the EVC.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

179. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout all Trust schools.
180. The Trust will monitor the operation and effectiveness of arrangements referred to in this policy at each Trust school.
181. As part of its monitoring process, the EV3 Form will be completed annually by the EVC and Principal/Headteacher. Any action points raised by the EV3 Form will form the basis of an action plan and training programme for the coming year. A copy of the completed form will be provided to the Governing Body and to the Trust.
182. The Trust will review this policy every two years in consultation with each Trust school.

Appendix 1: Incident management summary

Visit Leader must follow **EV7**

Visit Leader calls their school's Emergency Base Contact.

(If they can't contact the school Emergency Base Contact then they should ring the Star Academies Emergency Contact Number to inform them and ask for support)

Base contact/Head must follow **EV8a**

School Emergency Base Contact rings Headteacher *(if the Headteacher is not the Emergency Base Contact)* to inform them and ask for support.

Base contact/Head must follow **EV8a**

The Headteacher/School Emergency Base Contact should:

- Ring Star Academies Emergency Contact Number

08:30-5:00pm: 0330 313 9800

Out of hours: 0330 313 9134

- Set up a School Incident Management Team *(School Silver Team - senior staff and admin support)*
- Liaise and coordinate response with the Star Academies Incident Management Team *(Trust Gold Team)*

Trust senior staff must follow **EV9**

If the Trust Senior Staff on call receives a call notifying of incident they should:

- Ask for and record details of incident - ensure they have contact numbers for school
- Contact CEO of Trust
- Work with CEO to set up Trust Gold Team

Trust Incident Management (Gold) Team set up by CEO (or CEOs representative)
TRUST GOLD TEAM

TRUST GOLD TEAM WILL TAKE THE LEAD Follow **EV9** (and refer to: **EV7, EV8a, EV8b**)

- Appropriate team set up in order to support the school and deal effectively with the incident
- Set up effective lines of communication
- Senior member of staff from the Trust may be deployed to the school to support the Headteacher
- Gold Team to work with Silver Team to effectively manage incident
- Gold Team to work with agencies below as required

School Incident Management (Silver) Team set up by Head (or Head's representative)
SCHOOL SILVER TEAM

TRUST GOLD TEAM WILL TAKE THE LEAD Follow **EV8a & EV8b** (and refer to: **EV7 & EV9**)

- Appropriate team set up in order to deal effectively with the incident
- Set up effective lines of communication
- Provide support for the visit leader, staff, pupils, parents
- School may deploy a member of staff to the scene to support the visit leader
- Silver Team to work with Gold Team to effectively manage incident
- Silver Team to work with agencies below as required

Educational Visits Adviser

Media Support and Advice

Insurance Company

Tour Operator/ Travel Company/ Activity Provider/ Coach Company

Educational Psychologist