



CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Policy of Safety and Guidance -

Offsite Events and Adventurous Activities

This policy provides the background and context for planning Educational Visits as a Dorset Council school/unit or as a school/unit subscribing to the Dorset Council Outdoor Education Advisory Service.

Schools and units must produce their own Policy for Educational Visits which is specific to their own processes. Further information is available on the Dorset Council Evolve page.

1. Scope of the Policy

- 1.1 Adherence to the content of this policy is a requirement for all who are working with children and young people where the local authority (LA) is the employer. Where schools have bought in to the Dorset Council Outdoor Education Advisory Service it is advised that schools adhere to this policy.
- 1.2 Others, e.g. academies and voluntary aided schools are strongly advised to adhere to the content of this policy, but the LA can accept no liability for its use outside its statutory areas of responsibility. Responsibility for use rests with the employer.

2. Guidance

- 2.1 This policy, all national guidance, supplementary DC guidance and planning forms issued by DC can be accessed via the Outdoor Education Advisory Service or through the school's Evolve account.

Comprehensive employer guidance on organising offsite events and adventurous activities is provided by the national organisation; The Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP). This is accessed at www.oeapng.info

Other valuable guidance can be accessed at www.hse.gov.uk/education and www.lotc.org.uk

Although most content and wording is specific to schools the organisational principles are relevant to all who work with children and young people and must be adopted as set out in section 1.

- 2.2 Organisers will also need to refer to:

- Any organisational unit policies that may apply
- Any local site instructions and advice relevant to sites being used
- National Governing Body guidelines
- Other sources of good practice

3. Organisational Unit

- 3.1 Every organisational unit **must** include a trained Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) (see paragraph 7) who may be the unit head or a member of staff acting on behalf of the head. Details of the EVC's role and competence can be found here <https://oeapng.info/download/1122/?tmstv=1738230324>

- 3.2 A school would typically operate as an organisational unit.

4. Organisational Unit Policies

- 4.1 Every organisational unit **must** have a policy for the effective planning and execution of offsite events and adventurous activities. This policy must clearly state the responsibilities of all who play a role within the system, the preparations that must be undertaken before an event and expectations during and after any event. Operating procedures must ensure that the organisation will be following the employer's guidance.
- 4.2 An example policy along with documents to support in the writing of an Organisational Unit Policy can be found on the Dorset Council Evolve site. This is a link to Outdoor Education Advisers Policy National Guidance (NG)
<https://oeapng.info/download/1184/?tmstv=1738230448>

5. Approval

- 5.1 All offsite events and adventurous activities **must** receive approval from the unit head before commencement. This task may be delegated to a suitably competent person, (for example, the visit coordinator), but responsibility for approval remains with the head.

An organisational unit has responsibility for approval of events and activities.

6. The role of the Local Authority (LA) / Outdoor Education Adviser

- 6.1 It is the role of the LA / Outdoor Education Adviser to provide guidance, assess proposals, advise and to monitor practice.
- 6.2 Monitoring will be undertaken as follows.
- Through the 3 yearly EVC refresher updates plus a formal audit of procedures if requested by the Unit or the LA. This is provided by the Outdoor Education Adviser.
 - Through the general programme of health and safety audits provided by the Unit employer.
 - Field monitoring which may be provided by the Outdoor Education Adviser, the unit EVC, Head or designated person

7. Educational Visit Coordinator

- 7.1 All units **must** have a member of staff who acts as the knowledgeable person with regards to the organisation of offsite events and adventurous activities - the Educational Visit Coordinator or EVC.

More detail on the role of the Educational Visit Coordinator can be accessed at
<https://oeapng.info/download/1122/?tmstv=1738230324>

This person may be the unit head or a person acting on behalf of the unit head.

The person appointed should be specifically competent. The level of competence required will relate to the size of the unit and the type and number of events undertaken.

- 7.2 The appointed person **must** attend the DC Educational Visit Coordinator training, details of which can be obtained from the Outdoor Education Adviser or <http://www.dorsetnexus.org.uk/> and log in, click on Training and scroll down to Quick Course Search and search for EVC. This person **must** demonstrate relevant CPD by attending an EVC Refresher course every 3 years. They are expected to log into Evolve regularly and keep up to date with the “Latest News” section.
- 7.3 All correspondence from the LA will be sent in the first instance to the Educational Visit Coordinator unless an alternative contact has been requested.

8. Using an External Provider

- 8.1 An external provider is any individual or organisation that contracts to provide services to an organisational unit.

Organisers have a responsibility to make suitable and sufficient checks on a provider to establish that required standards of safety and quality are met.

Checks should be made using:

External Provider Statement (Known locally in Dorset as Form 4). It is the responsibility of the EVC to ensure that they scrutinise the responses on a Form 4 and address any concerns directly with the Provider. Additional support can be provided by the LA Adviser. A Form 4, from the same provider delivering a similar service can be used by a unit to cover multiple visits covering one academic year. However, the EVC must ensure that Providers have confirmed there have been no changes since a previous visit.

However, Form 4 does not need to be used if the provider has other verifications of safety and quality that provide the same assurances.

These are:

- Holders of the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge
<https://www.lotc.org.uk/educators/developing-your-lotc/find-a-lotc-quality-badge-holder/>
- Dorset Council Outdoor Education Service (Carey Camp, Cranborne Ancient Technology Centre, Leeson House Field Studies Centre and Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre).

- 8.2 If doubt exists as to whether the checks made are sufficient or the responses received through use of Form 4 are adequate then further advice should be sought from the LA.

9. The Planning Process

9.1 The Planning Process is coordinated via the Evolve software system and all schools must buy in to the Outdoor Education Advisory Service to access the system. **Service users must submit trips to the LA at least 28 days before departure for visits which are overnight, overseas or adventurous/higher risk activities. Please seek guidance from the Outdoor Education Adviser if unsure.**

Visits may only be submitted to the LA by Evolve. Schools must set their own timeline for planning and submitting visits to ensure they meet the LA's requirements.

9.2 Planning must be sufficient, and evidence of planning and any agreed operational procedures is essential for all events and activities. The Evolve system will automatically determine the level of planning and approval required for different types of trips. All trips which are overnight, overseas or those involving adventurous activities will be submitted to the LA. Trips which fall outside of these categories should be recorded on Evolve but will be authorised at school level rather than LA. **School should submit trips to the LA at least 28 days before departure. Where a school submits a visit inside of the 28 days rule the LA may not be able to provide formal acknowledgement on behalf of Dorset Council. In these circumstances a Head teacher may decide to proceed with the visit, however it will be recorded as having taken place without Dorset Council acknowledgement.**

It is best practice to undertake a pre-visit to venues and providers before they are first used. Pre visits should be made by the visit leader, it is best practice for other staff who will accompany the visit to also attend the pre visit. Where there is a regular programme of visits taking place within an academic year to a provider there is unlikely to be a need to make repeat pre-visits. This is dependent on the staff being deployed by the unit and their familiarity with the venue or provider in addition to the specific needs of the group. Dorset advises that the SAGED model (which is discussed during all EVC training courses) is used whilst risk assessing visits and determining whether a pre-visit is required. Information on the SAGED model is available from the Dorset Council Evolve homescreen.

It is always best to undertake a pre-visit.

Appendix 1

The Resources section of Evolve (Home screen, RESOURCES, PINK TILE) contains a range of resources to support EVC's. Schools should always refer to documents in this section (as they are maintained and kept up to date) rather than storing forms such as Provider Statements and Generic Risk Assessments on school drives/folders where they may become obsolete.

If organisers cannot find advice specific to their plans they should contact the Outdoor Education Adviser

Appendix 2

Useful Dorset Council Contacts

- Outdoor Education Adviser
Tel: 01929 552265
e mail: trips@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Health and Safety – Senior Adviser
Tel: 01305 224092
e mail: paul.downton@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Insurance and Risk Management – Technical Officer
Tel: 01305 224075
e mail: daphne.samways@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Minibus guidance / Driver training
Tel: 01305 221591
E mail: timothy.woolford@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Questions regarding the content or implementation of this policy should be addressed to;

Paul Burrows, Outdoor Education Adviser

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