

ACT Schools Off Site Activities Policy

Commitment

ACT Schools is committed to ensuring that all pupils have appropriate opportunities to participate in off-centre activities that are planned, managed, and delivered within a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment. Off-centre activities provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence, independence, social skills, and wider experiences beyond the classroom, supporting their personal development and progression. ACT Schools will ensure that activities are appropriately planned and risk assessed, with suitable consideration given to individual pupil needs, safeguarding, accessibility, supervision, and any reasonable adjustments required to support participation. Staff will work collaboratively with pupils and relevant stakeholders to ensure that off-centre activities are purposeful, inclusive, and contribute positively to each pupil's journey, enabling them to grow, learn, and develop skills within different environments and real-world contexts.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and consistent framework for the planning, organisation, and delivery of off-centre learning activities at ACT Schools. It ensures that employees understand the processes and responsibilities involved in providing safe, healthy, inclusive, and purposeful learning opportunities away from school. The policy supports effective risk management, appropriate supervision, safeguarding, and consideration of individual pupil needs, while ensuring that off-centre activities provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence, independence, skills, and wider learning experiences. It also promotes consistency in practice and ensures that appropriate arrangements are in place to identify and manage potential risks before, during, and following an activity.

Scope

This policy applies to all ACT Schools programmes where pupils participate in activities, visits, trips, or learning opportunities away from their school environment. It applies to all employees, pupils, volunteers, and other individuals involved in the planning, organisation, supervision, or delivery of off-centre activities. The policy covers activities undertaken both within and outside of normal learning environments and should be followed alongside relevant safeguarding, health and safety, risk assessment, and emergency procedures.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher will hold overall responsibility for the implementation, oversight, and effectiveness of this policy, ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to support the safe delivery of off-centre activities across ACT Schools.

The Enrichment Manager will have responsibility for the day-to-day management and coordination of the policy and associated processes, including supporting staff with the planning and organisation of activities, ensuring appropriate risk assessments and safeguarding arrangements are considered, and maintaining relevant records.

All employees involved in off-centre activities are responsible for following the procedures outlined within this policy, completing any required planning and risk assessment processes, and taking reasonable steps to safeguard the health, safety, and wellbeing of learners and others participating in activities.

Communication and Storage

This policy will be communicated via Calon and will be stored on Calon under School Policies & Procedures.

Procedure

Please note: Under no circumstances should off centre activities be undertaken without following the guidance outlined within this policy.

Introduction

Off-site visits are activities which take place outside school grounds and are arranged by, or on behalf of, the School. The School Senior Management and staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the Schools by providing experiences, which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our pupil's learning experiences.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to acceptable levels, for the health and safety of pupils, staff and volunteers at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with protective characteristics.

All visits will comply with the requirements outlined in Welsh Government Guidance 'Educational Visits- A safety guide for learning outside the classroom'. Further advice will be sought from competent persons where necessary. Copies of these guidance documents are available on the national guidance web site or from the Enrichment Manager (EM). All staff leading or participating in a visit are required to have read this Policy and to have signed it to say this is the case.

The following links provide a wealth of information for conducting visits and are the source of information embedded into this policy:

- [National guidance](#)
- [Dfe guidance and legal framework](#)
- [Hse advice on duties and powers](#)

Aims

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- Enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils
- Provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the ACT Schools site alone
- Promote the independence of our pupils as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

The visits are planned to enable our pupils to progress in skills and knowledge of the curriculum and of life skills.

Curriculum links

Off-site visits provide valuable opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their learning in authentic, real-world contexts. In line with the Curriculum for Wales, visits are planned to support the four purposes of the curriculum and contribute to the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and experiences across the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs).

Examples of how off-site visits may support curriculum learning include:

- **Languages, Literacy and Communication** – theatre, museum and cultural visits; opportunities to develop communication, listening, speaking and literacy skills; and visits that support pupils to explore Welsh culture and heritage.

- **Mathematics and Numeracy** – applying mathematical concepts to real-life situations, such as calculating distances, measuring spaces and exploring shape, scale and number in sporting venues and other environments.
- **Science and Technology** – visits to factories, recycling centres, nature reserves, ponds, science museums and coastal areas, providing opportunities to explore scientific concepts, sustainability, the natural environment and the impact of human activity.
- **Humanities** – visits that develop pupils' understanding of their local area, Wales, culture, heritage, communities and the wider world, including museums, historical sites and local environmental settings.
- **Health and Well-being** – participation in sporting and outdoor activities, visits to recreational areas and opportunities to develop physical health, emotional well-being, relationships, resilience and an understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- **Expressive Arts** – visits to art galleries, theatres and cultural venues, alongside opportunities to use the local environment for drawing, photography, sculpture, performance and other creative activities.
- **Careers and the World of Work** – visits to workplaces, local businesses and community organisations to develop pupils' understanding of different careers, employability skills and the world of work.

Off-site learning may also contribute to pupils' Cross-curricular Skills, including literacy, numeracy and digital competence, while supporting the development of integral skills such as creativity, planning and organisation, problem-solving and personal effectiveness.

How visits may be planned and approved

The Enrichment Manager (EM) has overall responsibility for the planning and management of off-site visits. Each visit will be considered by the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team who is involved in supporting the EM in the planning and management of off-site visits.

The EM and Headteacher should be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment. Commonly, but not exclusively, such competence will be identified in a person on the senior management of the establishment.

The EM should attend initial EVC training as soon as possible after appointment. Subsequent update training or a repeat full course is particularly recommended for those who are involved in the role infrequently. Further guidance on the role of EVC is available at <https://oeapng.info/evc/>

The EM, Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team will:

- Assign competent staff to lead and help with trips (being competent means that the Leader has demonstrated the ability to operate to recognised standards of good practice, and has sufficient relevant experience and knowledge of the group, the activity and the venue).
- Check that Visit Leaders are competent and ensure all details of necessary training and qualifications are logged on Calon.
- Ensure that risk assessments are completed and are supported by competent trained staff.
- Check visit plans and sign-off risk assessments with support from the Facilities Manager.
- Organise related staff training.
- Liaise with the Purchasing Department to verify that all private car drivers/minibus companies, have had satisfactory DBS checks
- Ensure that regular volunteers and those assisting with overnight/residential stays have had satisfactory DBS checks carried out. Volunteers used for one off activities, who are not left alone at any time (out of sight/ear shot of a member of staff) to supervise pupils, do not necessarily need DBS checks completing.

- Make sure that all necessary consent and medical forms are obtained.
- Ensure that all visits are recorded.
- Ensure that risk assessments for frequent/regular visits are routinely reviewed (for example a swimming facility) and update where necessary.

The EVC will appoint/approve a competent Visit Leader to be responsible for running the visit. This will normally be a teacher employed at the School, with an appropriate level of experience, training and qualifications.

Visit Leaders and staff arranging, or otherwise involved in, off-site activities must read thoroughly the guidelines published within this Policy. Visit Leaders will:

- Ensure all off-site activities take place in accordance with School procedures
- Check to ensure sufficient staff and helpers of the right experience are DBS checked (as detailed above) and briefed throughout the visit
- Review risk assessments and ensure management to reduce risks including site specific, general and dynamic risk assessments are undertaken and recorded
- Ensure a named person, emergency procedures and systems for recording and sharing information on accidents and near misses are in place before briefing pupils and parents
- Where appropriate and when considered necessary undertake exploratory visits or seek references from other schools if using new venues and reassess from time to time
- Ensure any accidents / incidents are reported
- Feedback any learning points from visits to the EM/Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must first seek and obtain the initial approval of the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team before any commitment is made on behalf of the School. Staff should discuss the basic details with the EM and when initial approval is granted, the necessary paperwork should then be completed and passed on to the relevant parties.

It is our policy that all pupils including those with medical conditions should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a protected characteristic is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that they are included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with protective characteristics. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment. It is acknowledged that many of our learners have additional learning needs, in particular those with BESD, therefore additional adaptations will be made to ensure the risks are managed on visits.

Risk assessments

The EM must carry out a comprehensive risk assessment, before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks that might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. All identified hazards must be reduced to an acceptable level (Medium or Low rating) before Facilities or Headteacher will approve the visit. Advice may be sought from the EVC where required.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- Look for the hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done Implement safety measures needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level
- Include the SEN/medical needs of the specific pupils participating
- Plan for emergencies and identify alternative arrangements or “Plan B” if the risks change and activities cannot be completed

- Record findings
- Review assessment and revise it if necessary.

Where necessary, and if possible, staff planning an off-site visit should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments should be considered to ascertain if they are of an appropriate standard and can be adopted. To reduce bureaucracy, Visit Leaders are encouraged to take advantage of national schemes that have been established to eliminate the need for questionnaires and forms e.g. LOTC Quality Badge, AALA Licence, Adventuremark. Holding one of the above is a credible assurance of appropriate Health and Safety management systems, and no further verification should be necessary. The LOTC Quality Badge also covers learning quality.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the risk assessment must show the extent of any hazards involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate the risks.

Activity and Visit Leaders must ensure that young people are adequately supervised and take into account the following:

- The nature of the activity (including its duration)
- The location and environment in which the activity is to take place
- The age and gender (including developmental age) of the young people to be supervised
- The ability of the young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs)
- Medical conditions and Individual Healthcare Plans
- Staff competence.

This means that arrangements for supervision, including staff/pupil ratios, must take into account the nature of a group and the individuals in it. It is therefore important that, when planning a repeat visit or a series of activities, the previous plan (no matter how well it worked in the past) is reviewed to ensure it meets current group needs.

Ratios are a risk management issue, and should be determined through the process of risk assessment. It is not possible to set down definitive staff/pupil ratios for a particular age group or activity. However, some guidance documents do set out ratios (OEAPNG Guidance-<https://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/4-3b-ratios-and-effective-supervision/>), but these should be regarded as starting points for consideration rather than being definitive, as they may only be appropriate where the activity is relatively straightforward and the group has no special requirements. For example, the DfES publication Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (1998) suggested the following “starting points”:

- School years 4 - 6, 1:15 NON RESIDENTIAL 1 : 10 if residential
- School years 7 onwards, 1:15/20 NON RESIDENTIAL 1: 10 if residential

Even though the School operates only at Key stages 3 and 4, ratios for years 4-6 (Key stage 2) have been included in this policy based on the potential needs of our pupils.

Normally at least two adults will accompany any off-site visit. The Visit Leader will usually be a teacher but this is not compulsory and the other may be a responsible and competent adult.

These ratios are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases. Higher levels of supervision may be required or determined by the risk assessment.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue and must include provision for:

- Appropriate level of supervision
- The required use of child restraints
- DBS vetting of the driver
- Insurance for the driver
- Details of first aid and emergency procedures
- Breakdown procedures.

The Visit Leader will double-check with the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team through our safeguarding procedures that all regular volunteers and those assisting with overnight/residential stays on the trip have been subject to satisfactory DBS checks. Those volunteers used for one-off activities, who are not left alone at any time (out of sight/ear shot of a member of staff) to supervise pupils, do not necessarily need DBS checks completing. The Headteacher's discretion under these circumstances will be used.

A copy of the completed risk assessments will be given to the Health and safety Manager and all adults supervising the trip and will be available to parents and Directors on request.

It is important that the risk assessments are communicated and understood by everyone involved in the trip (staff, volunteers, pupils and parents) before it takes place. This includes risks, control measures, emergency arrangements and contingency plans.

Dynamic risk assessments will be required during the visit if changes occur e.g. weather, illness or an unforeseen hazard. These involve professional judgements in response to changing circumstances. It is critical that control measures are monitored and confirmed or adapted as required.

On completion of the visit the risk assessment must be reviewed and any learning points and recommendations for improved control measures documented and communicated to relevant staff.

Any accidents that occur to employees, volunteers or pupils during the visit must be investigated and recorded following normal accident reporting procedures. RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reportable accidents will require the School's Health and Safety/Compliance Manager to be notified as soon as reasonably practicable.

Transport

When hiring coaches and minibuses, it is our policy only to use reputable companies with vehicles fitted with appropriate seatbelts and to insist that all those participating in the visit wear them.

When using company vehicles, where possible all journeys will be supported by two staff members. However, on occasions where a staff member is transporting a pupil on their own, they will adhere to the lone working policy, ensuring the pupil is seating in the rear of the vehicle, on the passenger side. The staff member must notify Headteacher prior to beginning the journey where a dynamic risk assessment will be done to manage risk.

All staff using company vehicles to transport pupils will have read and accepted the 'Use of a company car policy' and will have been added on to company insurance.

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party and appropriate child restraints will be used, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach.

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- Transport
- Entrance fees
- Insurance
- Provision of any special resources or equipment
- Food and refreshments
- Accommodation
- External providers.

Communication with parents/carers

The parents/carers of pupils taking part in an off-site activity will be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit to make an informed decision.

Parents/carers must give their written permission, medical and contact details, before a child can be involved in any off-site educational visits. Parents/Carers will be required to complete the Consent Form during the pupil's induction process and annually thereafter at school. Verbal consent may be given if written consent is not forthcoming. This must be noted in the pupils file with date and time of consent.

If deemed appropriate, high-risk activities, may require additional consent forms to ensure parents/carers are fully briefed on the potential risks. These may be in the form of ACT consent forms or, where applicable, consent forms provided by external companies to comply with their processes.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by the school. This includes any additional costs associated with the visit i.e., transport, refreshments.

Expectations of behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents.

Pupils

Pupils should be briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all visits. Training and careful briefing on activities will be given, particularly for unfamiliar ones. Ongoing briefings are an important part of learning and safety and will always be provided whilst on the visit.

Where possible pupils should be involved with planning, developing codes of conduct, assessing/managing risk and evaluating their own attitude, behaviour, development and learning.

Further health and safety considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the Visit Leader, of the emergency procedures that will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school office number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal working day the home telephone number/mobile telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

Before a group embarks on the visit, the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and emergency contact should have access to a list of everyone, pupils and adults, travelling with the group, together with the emergency contact information for every individual, programme and timetable for the activity.

The safety of the group, and especially the pupils, is of paramount importance. During the activity the group leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure their safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that pupils are both safe and well looked after at all times.

Prior to a visit, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the School, the Visit Leader should discuss with the Headteacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

Visit documentation

The documentation for educational visits must include the following where applicable to the visit. The required documents will be available to be accessed by Headteacher and EM. Paper copies should be taken on the visit by the

Visit Leader including:

- Risk assessments
- General information
- Names, ages, contact details, consent and medical fitness forms, and other relevant details of all those going on the visit
- Accommodation plan, where relevant
- Contingency plan details
- Intended arrangements for supervision
- Emergency contacts and procedures
- General communications information
- Guidance for the emergency contact:
- First-aid arrangements
- Accident report forms.

Document / Policy Change Request

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher and Facilities.

Document / Policy Reviewing and Approving

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher and Facilities.

Glossary

AALA	Adventure Activities Licensing Authority – the body responsible for licensing certain providers of adventure activities involving young people.
AoLE	Area of Learning and Experience – one of the six areas through which learning is organised within the Curriculum for Wales.
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – a term used within the policy to describe additional needs that may affect a pupil's behaviour, emotional wellbeing or social development.
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service – the service used to undertake criminal record checks and support safer recruitment and safeguarding decisions.
Dynamic Risk Assessment	An ongoing assessment of risk undertaken in response to changing or unforeseen circumstances during an activity or visit, with control measures adapted where necessary.
EM	Enrichment Manager – the person responsible for the day-to-day management and coordination of off-site activities within ACT Schools.
EVC	Educational Visits Coordinator – a competent person who supports the planning and management of educational visits and provides guidance on safe practice.
Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP)	A plan setting out the healthcare needs of an individual pupil and the arrangements required to support them safely.

LOtC	Learning Outside the Classroom – learning that takes place beyond the traditional classroom environment.
LOtC Quality Badge	A national quality indicator for organisations providing learning outside the classroom experiences, covering the quality of learning and risk management arrangements.
OEAP / OEAPNG	Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel / National Guidance – national guidance supporting the safe and effective management of educational visits and learning outside the classroom.
Off-site / Off-centre Activity	An activity, visit, trip or learning opportunity organised by or on behalf of ACT Schools that takes place away from the normal school environment.
Protected Characteristic	A characteristic protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.
Reasonable Adjustment	A change or adaptation made to remove or reduce a disadvantage experienced by a disabled person.
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations – legislation requiring certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrences to be formally reported.
Risk Assessment	A structured process for identifying hazards, considering who may be harmed and determining appropriate measures to eliminate or reduce risk.
Visit Leader	The competent member of staff appointed or approved to take responsibility for the planning and safe delivery of a particular off-site visit.