

Aylesford School

and Sixth Form College



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SCHOOL VISITS AND JOURNEYS POLICY

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Lead: Assistant Head
Via: Finance and Premises

'from potential to reality'

Tapping Way, Warwick, Warwickshire, CV34 6XR
Tel: 01926 747100 **Fax:** 01926 494194 **Email:** office@aylesford-elearning.net **Web:** www.aylesfordschool.org.uk
A charitable company registered in England and Wales, company number 7848367
Headteacher: Steven Hall BSc MA

School Visits and Journeys Policy

Off-Site Activities* Policy

* Throughout this guidance, the term 'Off-Site Activities' is used to include all trips, visits, journeys and Off-Site Activities undertaken by staff and students.

Introduction:

Off-Site Activities greatly enhance students' personal and social development and contribute to the breadth of the curriculum.

One of the primary aims of education is to prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Many of the activities associated with the natural and built environment can only be understood outside the classroom. Off-Site Activities benefit students in all areas of the curriculum and enhance the work of the classroom.

It is vital to be clear about the aims and objectives for any off-site activity. These should be well defined and should be commensurate with the age and experience of the students. The students should be informed how the off-site activity fits into the context of their work as a whole.

It is essential to plan all Off-Site Activities very carefully and consider all safeguarding aspects. This policy document aims only to provide outline guidance for staff intending to undertake an off-site activity (whether for a day visit, a residential visit, or a visit abroad).

Responsibility for Health and Safety

The Governing Body of the school, the Headteacher, the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC – at Aylesford, the incumbent of this post shall be the Assistant Headteacher and the Party Leader, the accompanying staff, the accompanying adults (if any), and the students themselves all have responsibilities and a legal duty to ensure that Off-Site Activities are conducted so that participants and staff do not experience unacceptable levels of risk to health and safety.

Off-Site Activities must be planned and organised to reduce the potential risk of hazards. The party leader needs to understand that an activity may become hazardous when certain factors or a combination of factors occur. These could include various elements such as inexperience of the students, indiscipline of the students, equipment failure, lack of effective safety controls, interference from other parties, weather and location.

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment and risk management are legal requirements. They involve careful examination of what could cause harm and whether enough precautions have been taken. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill.

The party leader must consider risk assessment at three levels:

Generic – which are likely to apply wherever and whenever an offsite activity takes place;

Site specific – this will differ from place to place and group to group;

On-going – which take account of, for example, illness of staff or students, changes to the weather conditions etc.

The party leader must read the guidelines for completion of the Risk Assessment Form and they must complete a Risk Assessment Form copies of both appended to this document and both available from the Assistant Headteacher.

Three categories of Off-Site Activities which have differing levels of potential risk are recognisable:-

Category A activities present comparatively low risks (and include activities such as walking in parks, field studies in environments presenting no technical hazards, museum visits etc).

Category B activities present a higher potential risk. They include all residential visits. The Party leader will need to have undertaken an additional familiarisation and/or will need to be approved as competent by the EVC. (Category B activities include walking in non-remote open country, camping, cycling on roads etc).

Category C activities are the highest risk category. Safe supervision will require that the Party Leader should normally complete some prior test of their specific competence in the activity to be undertaken. They include activities such as skiing, canoeing, climbing, sub-aqua activities etc). All instructors should be suitably qualified.

The Party Leader will ensure that he/she submits Form OSA1 Off-site Activity Notification to the Assistant Headteacher at the earliest possible opportunity.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Access

The school shall make every effort to ensure that Off-Site Activities are available and accessible to all students who wish to participate, irrespective of special needs, ethnic origin, gender, religion etc.

Parental letters informing parents/carers about an off-site activity must contain the following paragraph in order to adhere to the schools agreed "Charging and Remissions" policy:

"Unfortunately it is not possible to cover the cost of this activity from school funds. It is therefore necessary for me to ask for a voluntary contribution of (£___) from those who wish to go. If you wish your child to take part, but feel unable to make this contribution, you are invited to contact me at the school. Should the visit go ahead, decisions as to whether your child can go will not depend on the contribution you have or have not made."

Medication

The Party Leader will pay close attention to the medical and dietary needs and ensure that all responsible adults fully understand both routine and emergency medical procedures. The party leader must use Forms OSA2 to ensure that medication requirements of students are known. The Party Leader will ensure that all medicines are kept in a safe place and that their administration is logged. The Party Leader will ensure that all staff are informed about medical issues – particularly regarding students with conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and epilepsy.

Emergency Details

The Party Leader must have ready access to the party's Form OSA2 information – particularly: *Parents' telephone number(s) and GP's telephone number.*

The Party Leader will ensure that all parents/guardians complete the Consent Form OSA2 (Young Person) prior to the commencement of the off-site activity.

For Residential OSAs, the Party Leader will ensure that all accompanying staff and other accompanying adults (if any) complete the Consent Form OSA3 (Adults) prior to the commencement of the off-site activity.

Child Protection/Safeguarding

Any adult volunteers helping teachers to supervise a residential off-site activity should be Criminal Records Bureau checked. Moreover, any adult volunteer who may be required to be in sole charge of a student during a 'day trip' must be DBS checked.

Any volunteer adults acting as drivers in their own vehicles for the transportation of students must complete Form OSA6 Volunteer Driver's Form. The Party Leader must ensure that all parents are aware of and have given their permission for such private vehicle transport arrangements.

Teacher/Student Ratios for Off-Site Activities

Primary School

	CATEGORY A	CATEGORY B	CATEGORY C
Reception (4 yrs) Y1 (5 yrs) Y2 (6 Yrs) Y3 (7 yrs) Y4 (8 yrs) Y5 (9 yrs)	1:4 1:6 1:6 1:6 1:6 1:8	n/a	n/a
Y6 (10 yrs)	1:8	Day 1:8 Minimum one competent adult per group	n/a

Secondary School

	CATEGORY A	CATEGORY B	CATEGORY C
Y7 (11 yrs) Y8 (12 yrs) Y9 (13 yrs) Y11 (15 yrs)	1:15	Day 1:15 Minimum one competent adult per group Resid 1:15 Minimum one competent adult	Day 1:15 Minimum one competent adult per 15-20 young people Resid 1:15 Minimum one competent adult per 15-20 young people
Y12 (16 yrs) Y13 (17 yrs and over)	1:15 Minimum of one competent adult for groups of more than 12. (N.B. If there is no competent adult, one adult must be designated as Party Leader by the head of establishment)	Day 1:15 Minimum 1 competent adult per group Resid 1:15 Minimum one competent adult	Day 1:15 Minimum 1 competent adult per group Resid 1:15 Minimum one competent adult

Planning Checklists and Procedures

- 1 In the first instance, the Party Leader should complete an “OSA Consent Form” and return this to the EVC for signed consent. This process ensures that the proposed activity does not clash with any other event on the school calendar nor broach the school policy that no more than two members of staff are normally granted absence from their teaching duties on any given day.

Next, the Party Leader will meet the EVC to discuss the outline proposal of the intended off-site activity. The location of visit, proposed date(s), age and numbers of students, anticipated staffing needs, costs, (including insurance), proposed transport arrangements etc will all need to be considered and agreed.

The EVC will provide the Party leader with an ‘Off-Site Activities’ checklist document to assist with further planning and organization – together with various relevant “OSA documents” and appropriate ‘risk assessment’ documents. All such documents are to be submitted complete to the EVC at least one full the day before the off-site activity commences.

Prior to departure, a list of all students attending the OSA is to be provided to the EVC and General Office.

- 2 Submissions using Form OSA1 WCC Off-Site Activity Notification must be made at least four weeks in advance of the proposed Off-Site activity commencing.

Timescales will of course vary depending on the nature of the off-site activity. Major day trips involving large numbers would be expected to be planned at least three months in advance whereas major residential trips abroad would normally be expected to be booked over 12 months in advance.

The Party Leader must complete the Aylesford ‘Off-Site Activities’ Checklist for both day visits and residential visits. The completed document is to be submitted to the Assistant Headteacher and the Headteacher the day before the off-site activity commences.

Communication with Parents

The Party Leader shall communicate appropriately with parents prior to a planned activity. For day trips, this will involve an initial letter informing about the off-site activity including details about location and/or itinerary, cost, (using the standard paragraph regarding voluntary contributions), transport arrangements, departure time and return time. A “template parental letter” has been created for staff which they must modify accordingly. The parental letter must contain a reply slip in which the parent may grant permission for their child to attend the off-site activity and give their agreement to collect the child from school at a later time if required. In the case of residential trips, the Party Leader must also plan a Parents Evening (through liaising with the Deputy Headteacher responsible for the school calendar to establish the date of the parents evening).

In the case of residential trips, the Party Leader must make arrangements for parents to be contacted speedily in the event of an emergency or change of circumstances either on route or when the party is away. Arrangements should also be made for parents to be able to contact the party in emergency circumstances through named contacts at the school.

Insurance and Financial arrangements

The party leader should complete the school’s insurance pro forma for all OSAs. These forms will be provided by the Finance Assistant.

For all residential OSAs, the Party Leader should check with the Finance Assistant to determine whether the school's annual insurance is sufficient for the nature of the residential OSA to be undertaken.

The party leader must liaise with the Finance Assistant over the setting up of a 'Parent Pay' account specifically for the OSA in question. Detailed financial accounts will need to be made which will need to comply with the schools auditing procedures.

Emergency Procedures

The likelihood of an emergency will be reduced if all Risk Assessment procedures have been adhered to.

Staff in charge of students during Off-Site Activities have a duty of care to make sure that students are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonable, prudent parent would. Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency and take life-saving action in an extreme situation.

Party leaders must take Form OSA5 Emergency Action Form – Party Leader with them and follow its instructions.

Any accidents should be logged (as near contemporaneously as possible) and reported to the Assistant Headteacher upon return. In the case of serious incidents during the activity, the named contact at school (who will normally be a member of the SLT in all cases) must be informed as soon as possible.

The member of SLT who is the agreed contact will use Form OSA4 Base Contact Form as the basis for their action.

Leadership and Supervision

It is good practice for the Party Leader to make an exploratory visit to the location of the proposed off-site activity on a pre-visit. This will give the Party Leader familiarisation with the environment and reduce the risk of surprise elements that may impede the smooth running of the activity

The Party Leader is responsible for the group at all times although supervisory roles may be delegated to other adults. All such arrangements should be made prior to the visit's commencement. The Party Leader should be competent to exercise appropriate control of the group. Their expectations of staff and student behaviour should have consideration for members of the public and other educational groups. These expectations should be made very clear to staff and students prior to, and if necessary, during the visit itself.

There should be arrangements for staff duty rotas throughout the duration of the visit; procedures agreed for making regular 'head counts' particularly before leaving a venue. Staff should carry lists/registers at all times (containing emergency medical info if appropriate). Students should be given meeting points and told what to do if they become lost or separated. All such arrangements will vary depending on the number of staff, the venue, and nature of the activity.