SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL
SINCE 1576

Visits and Off-Site Policy

(Senior School)

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Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) provides powerful opportunities for young people to develop confidence, learn to live and work with others and respond to challenges.

As a result, our pupils can adapt to changing conditions, solve problems, lead and become increasingly independent. It contributes to the five outcomes within the Every Child Matters framework and is an essential feature of the pupils' development.

Our aim is that pupils will benefit from opportunities to take part in safe, well-managed visits and off-site activities. This document should support everyone who is involved in the planning, management and delivery of visits and off-site activities and to do so in ways which reflect current good practice and our duty of care.

At Sutton Valence School we use the EVOLVE Trip and Activity Planning, Approval and Management System to support our internal protocols. EVOLVE services more than 28,000 schools, colleges and youth centres across England, Scotland and Wales and supports their planning and management processes of school trips. EVOLVE also offers a wide range of support materials but most importantly links to National Governing Bodies (NGBs).

EVOLVE links directly to iSAMS, our management information system, which is regularly updated with correct pupil information.

The main source of DfE Advice on organising educational visits used to be the DfE good practice guide, '*Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits'* **(***HASPEV: HSPV2 1998***).**

Other useful sources include:

- *'Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits' (2002)* This three-part supplement to HASPEV sets out the functions of the EVC in schools and the levels of risk management that schools could use;
- *'Standards for Adventure'* is aimed at those leading young people on adventure activities;
- *'A Handbook for Group Leaders'* is for leaders of educational visits. It sets out good practice in supervision, ongoing risk assessment and emergency procedures;
- '*Group Safety at Water Margins'* is for organisers of learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along a river bank or seashore, collecting samples from ponds or streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow water.

These documents have recently been replaced by simplified guidelines accessed by the links below:

http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00191759/departmental-advice-on-health-andsafety-for-schools (updated - 5th April 2022)

https://www.hse.gov.uk/education/faqs.htm

HASPEV guidelines, although superseded, are useful for staff carrying out risk assessments for higher risk activities. Therefore, a number of extracts from HASPEV inform our policy, as they provide clear and useful procedures that are core to our risk management and contribute to the welfare of our pupils.

This policy also has reference to the National Guidance good practice documents:
https://oeapng.info/downloads/good-practice/

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

1. The Risk Assessment Policy;
2. Trips and Expedition Guide;
3. Health and Safety Policy;
4. The School-wide critical incident plan.

Key elements of the policy

This policy reflects the determination of the School's Leadership Team to promote the wellbeing of all pupils through taking a strategic, comprehensive and inclusive approach to identifying and managing the risk of harm to pupils' wellbeing. Consequently, the following protocols are adhered to;

The staff involved in the visit must be sufficiently able and experienced to re-assess risks on an on-going basis throughout the visit.

A preliminary visit to the site should be made where possible to check arrangements.

If it is too distant for a pre-visit, action must be taken to ensure the group leader is aware of potential hazards and opportunities.

At Sutton Valence Senior School, the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) must approve all visits with all associated paperwork being submitted to the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) for scrutiny in a timely fashion and certainly no later than a week prior to planned departure.

For residential and overseas visits, a longer run in period should be allowed with a continued dialogue.

The EVC needs to be informed for any of the four categories of activities via EVOLVE with completed paperwork:

A1 Day visits not involving adventurous activities;
A2 Residential visits not involving adventurous activities. This can include the use of outdoor and residential centres;
B1 Adventurous activities - residential or non-residential;
C1 Overseas and other high-risk activities.

The EVC needs to see evidence and assess if the members of staff, including volunteers, are suitably competent, experienced, qualified and able to supervise in the environment of the visit. Should the activity warrant it, members of staff should hold relevant qualifications, for example a Mountain Leaders Award. If they do not, they should defer to an expert. (Supplied by the activity provider)

The EVC/group leader needs to assess if those leading the adventurous activity (activity provider) are suitably competent to do so.

Sutton Valence School must hold DBS disclosures for all members of staff or adult volunteers on the visit.

The EVC will ensure that the group has the acceptable staff: pupil ratio necessary for the planned activities

We have a responsibility to ensure that staff and pupils have the appropriate clothing and equipment necessary for the activities proposed. The clothing and equipment should allow for a range of weather conditions.

Electronic consent from parents or guardians will be required before the pupil is permitted to go on any trip that is overnight, overseas, medium to high risk or any combination of those. An opportunity for the parent to inform any change of relevant medical details or emergency contact details will be routinely requested as part of this process.

The EVC will assess the suitability of the programme for all participants with the Group Leader.

Group Leaders should do all that is reasonable and practicable to include in their trip those pupils with medical, behavioural or special needs whilst maintaining the safety of the whole group.

At the conclusion of the trip, a reflective meeting will be held between the EVC and the Trip Leader to ensure that as an institution the School continues to develop its processes and procedures appropriately.

Home stays and exchange visits

The leader of the visit should prepare an alternative programme (a plan B) in the event of poor weather (or other necessary change, such as local disaster) and submit the risks related to plan B to the EVC.

Each visit should reflect a responsible attitude towards the environment in terms of camping and disposal of rubbish etc.

Staff on the visit must be aware of the dietary and medical needs of pupils and staff.

Provision of First Aid and arrangements for the use of it must be planned.

All minibus drivers must be DBS checked and qualified, insured and medically fit to drive the vehicle(s).

A clear budget is essential and must include all associated costs.

Insurance cover must be sufficient and suitable to the activities and the venue. Travel companies and Activity Centres often have their own insurance cover and it would be prudent to get a copy to see what is covered in the event of an incident. All that said, the School policy is comprehensive.

The party leader will brief all the adults on the visit. The briefing will include:

- The anticipation of hazards and the nature of the programme;
- The defining of roles and responsibilities of staff;
- The allocation of supervision to cover the whole time away;
- Arrangements for any remote supervision where applicable;
- The standards of behaviour expected from young people;
- The regular counting of participants;
- How much and type of help to give to pupils in their tasks;
- A list of names of people in sub-groups;
- Emergency procedures;
- Confirmation of receipt, either by email or written, that the accompanying members of staff have read and understood the applicable Risk Assessment.

All the staff should be aware of emergency procedures and will have the relevant emergency and base (School) contact numbers. (All accessible via EVOLVE)

The group leader should arrange for appropriate follow up work and evaluation with pupils after the visit.

The group leader should arrange for a review and evaluation meeting with the EVC within two working weeks of the visit and complete the online evaluation contained within EVOLVE.

Planning for visits and activities must take account of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability Act, 2001 and The Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Sutton Valence School seeks to anticipate the needs of pupils who are disabled as well as the needs of specific pupils.

When young people are staying with host families, supervisory staff will not be able to have the same level of control as in a residential setting. Young people cannot participate in outings with their host family which involve adventure activities (high risk), unless electronic, written and signed consent has been given by the parent to the Group Leader in advance of the visit.

Health and Safety

Responsibility for Health and Safety is shared between the parties involved (group leader, expedition provider, centre leader etc.) in managing any work or activity.

The 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act requires that the employer does all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing at work of employees and young people, who are affected by their work. This includes activities off-site.

The 1974 Act and associated regulations including The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require that employers:

- Produce a health and safety policy linked to risk assessment;
- Have in place systems for reporting accidents and incidents;

- Produce and implement risk assessments;
- Develop measures to control those risks including training and providing information;
- Appoint people competent to carry out specific tasks;
- Develop emergency procedures, monitor and review procedures and practice.

Under the same legislation employees, including volunteers, should:

- Take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety;
- Co-operate with their employer over safety matters;
- Carry out activities in accordance with training and instruction;
- Inform the Head, EVC, manager or party leader of any serious risks.

The level of judgment expected of staff is related to that individual's knowledge, experience and training

The Health and Safety Executive HSE has provided a three-page document *'School trips and outdoor learning activities: Tackling the health and safety myths'*.

HSE - School trips - Tackling the health and safety myths

This document states that a common sense, reasonable and proportionate approach should be taken to risk and associated paperwork. It offers guidance on the Health and Safety of pupils on educational visits.

The EVC should work with staff and group leaders involved in off-site activities to help ensure:

- Educational visits follow the policies and procedures of the School and with reference to legislation;
- The management of visits and off-site activities is informed by an appropriate risk assessment;
- Approval arrangements are satisfactory and based on safe practice and clear educational objectives;
- Staff have access to advice and information;
- Leaders and staff meet identified standards and are competent to lead and support particular visits and activities;
- Relevant training, induction and other CPD opportunities are provided;
- Procedures are in place to inform parents and for them to give consent;
- Emergency arrangements are in place for off-site activities;
- The EVC should maintain and manage the internal system to enable review;
- Records of visits, accident and incident reports should be maintained;
- The EVC should review visits with leaders and refine the process on the basis of such reports.

Risk assessment

Every educational visit must be subjected to a risk assessment process. The complexity of the risk assessment, and the method of recording the risk assessment, will vary according to the nature of the visit. In every case, documentary evidence should exist to show that a proper assessment of the risks involved has been made and precautions identified to reduce the risks to an acceptable level.

At Sutton Valence School, an event-specific risk assessment should be completed by the party leader and is unique to each visit. It takes into account the site, individuals within the group and activity specific needs such as the environment, accommodation, travel and transport and the leaders' expertise

There are four categories of activities:

A1 Day visits not involving adventurous activities;
A2 Residential visits not involving adventurous activities. This can include the use of outdoor and residential centres;
B1 Adventurous activities - residential or non-residential;
C1 Overseas and other high-risk activities.

The Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 applies to many centres, which offer adventurous activities such as caving, trekking, climbing and water sports to young people under the age of 18. Sutton Valence School will use centres licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Service (https://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/), wherever possible or applicable.

The aim of the adventure activities licensing scheme is to give assurance that good safety management practice is being followed so that young people can have opportunities to experience exciting and stimulating activities outdoors while not being exposed to avoidable risks of death or disabling injury.

The Health and Safety Executive was designated, by Parliament, as the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) in April 2007. HSE operates the administration of AALA and contracts the inspection services to Adventure Risk Management Services (Adv-RMS), who employ qualified and experienced outdoor professionals to assess applicants' safety management systems.

Staff: pupil ratios

A 1:15
B 1:10 (dependent upon the activity and numbers of experienced instructors)
C 1:10

Supervision

A coach may act as a group leader and work at some distance from the teacher. The teacher has overall responsibility for the group but may delegate responsibility for the specialist technical instruction during the activity.

Young people must be supervised throughout all visits, even though at times and for short periods, they may be unaccompanied by a member of staff or other responsible adult. This is known as remote or indirect supervision. The aim is to encourage pupils to gain confidence in their own abilities and to work with others.

However, greater care is needed in managing activities which can be demanding and must be based on risk assessment. The group leader must take account of factors such as prior knowledge of the individuals (including their maturity and levels of responsibility), the venue, the environmental conditions, the actual activity, preparatory training, the competence of the supervising staff and emergency systems in place.

The issue of personal security for young people is important and consideration should be given to the need for appropriate supervision.

First Aid should form part of the risk assessment for off-site activities. This will help to determine First Aid qualified staffing and equipment. The School Nurses at Sutton Valence School will provide equipment and give advice. Our guidelines are clear.

Medical information for each child and staff member must accompany the group leaders on all visits. This includes information relating to allergies and required procedures. At Sutton Valence School data capture forms are used and for each visit, parents are given the opportunity to supply additional details.

Miscellaneous medical hazards, such as Weil's disease must be safeguarded against by wearing suitable footwear in water and covering cuts etc. See HSE Guidance on Weil's Disease and Leptospirosis.

Protection from sun exposure should be considered for all off-site activities. This may include head, neck, arm and leg coverings, high factor (SPF 15 or higher) sunscreen, sunglasses and shade. Loose fitting, tightly woven clothing is suitable, as are wide brimmed hats which may need to cover the ears and back of the neck. Drinking plenty of water is important to avoid dehydration.

Insurance

The insurance policy used by Sutton Valence School provides an indemnity against specified risks associated with cancellation, limited personal accident cover, medical expenses, loss of personal effects and legal liability. Each and every member of a school journey party who is either a person involved in full-time education or a teacher or other adult not over 65 years of age is insured. We acknowledge that parents can take out their own personal insurance in addition to this if they so wish.

We recommend all pupils get a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) (or a UK EHIC if they have rights under the withdrawal agreement). Details of these schemes can be found here: https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/

Transport

The vehicle and driver must be correctly licensed, including PCV or Section 19 where required, at all times or cover may be invalidated.

Pupils may be taken on School activities or business in cars owned and driven by teachers. Staff are covered under the Schools Occasional Business Use Insurance for School trips. Parents **must** agree in writing to this arrangement.

Solo journeys must be recorded with DSL/CPC in advance of the journey. These will be audited by them.

The exception is in an emergency when recording should take place within the 24-hour period after the event. See the Minibus Policy for required standards of safety such as MOT.

Seat belts must be worn and good standards of behaviour must be observed during all minibus journeys.

If a vehicle needs to stop in an emergency, the occupants of the vehicle should remain together under the direct supervision of a responsible adult until assistance arrives. The group leader should normally evacuate the vehicle and move the group to a position behind the safety barrier on a motorway or well away from moving traffic.

Before each minibus journey, basic safety items should be checked, including; tyres, lights, and windscreen wipers. Vehicle log books must be completed

The driver is responsible for any load carried. There must be uninterrupted access to all doors; luggage and equipment must not block gangways or doors or access to them. Doors must be left unlocked when the vehicle is carrying passengers.

Coaches should only be booked from a company that Sutton Valence School uses regularly whose drivers and safety standards meet our requirements and whose management agrees with our policies.

Teaching staff should observe the following priorities in the event of an accident:

- Assess the situation;
- Safeguard the rest of the party;
- Attend to the casualties;
- Inform the emergency services by calling 999 or 112.

An emergency is difficult to define. It may be a fracture, food poisoning or a fatality, or an illness requiring immediate medical treatment. It may on the other hand be missing children who are soon found or a coach crash in which no serious injuries are sustained.

All SVS trip leaders are provided with a Critical Incident card detailing our emergency procedures and contact details for the SVS base contact.

These notes are for guidance and the procedures listed will not all apply to all emergencies:

1. Assess the nature and extent of the emergency;
2. Devolve responsibility as agreed before departure;
3. Make sure all other group members are safe from danger and are looked after;
4. Give first aid and attend to any casualties;
5. Call the emergency services as needed. You might be asked:

    - your precise location;
    - description of the incident;
    - the time of the incident;
    - the number of casualties;
    - the nature of any injuries;
    - the total number in the party;
    - your telephone number;

6. An adult from the party should accompany any casualties to hospital;
7. Supervise and support the rest of the group and arrange for their return to base;

8. Prevent pupils from using mobile phones in the short term. Attempt to manage the risk of inadvertent 'sensationalism';
9. Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to help or liaise with the emergency services;
10. If the party is abroad, contact the local British Consulate or Embassy for their support;
11. Contact the EVC, (or other designated member of SMT who is the number one contact for that specific visit). The EVC in association with the Headmaster or Head of Senior School will contact parents, the local safeguarding board (if appropriate) and deal with media interest;
12. Keep one agreed contact phone number clear from the time you first report the incident or accident to the School;
13. Write down all details as soon as you can. Include timings;
14. Legal liability should not be discussed;
15. With the help of the EVC or base contact, contact the insurers, especially the medical insurers;
16. Complete and send all required accident forms and reports.

For serious accidents, professional counselling support will be organised by Sutton Valence School

The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme (DofE) have their own specific controls relating to various activities. They are, however, also bound to comply with the requirements of the School as set by the Headmaster and the EVC. This includes the submission of paperwork, regard to the Health and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Policy and staff competency, training and ratios.

Specific adventurous activities, such as skiing, rock climbing, trekking and water-based activities will require highly detailed risk assessment and specialist and licensed providers must be used. The EVC can provide specialized help. Recourse to higher authority may be sought to enable informed and detailed input.

We are living in exceptional times and the risk of terror attack should also be taken into consideration when planning a visit. To that end we have adopted the **Run, Hide, Tell Protocol** as advised by the Government.