Offsite Activities and Visits

Approved by:	Last reviewed on:	Next review due by:
Governing Body	February 2025	February 2027

1 Provision of Employer Guidance

CE Academy has adopted the Outdoor Education Adviser's Panel (OEAP) National Guidance. It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements of their employer's guidance; therefore CE Academy employees must follow the requirements of OEAP National Guidance, as well as the requirements of this Policy Statement.

The CE Academy subscribes to an educational visits advisory service with Longtown Outdoor Learning Trust (LOLT) to ensure off-site educational activities are executed safely.

2 Scope and Remit

The OEAP National Guidance (NG) *"Status Remit and Rationale"* clarifies the range of employees whose work requires them to use the guidance. In summary, it applies to employees whose work involves any one of the following:

- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of Learning Outside the Classroom;
- facilitating experiences for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- deploying staff who will supervise or facilitate experiences of or for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base.

This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

For a more expansive explanation of legal expectations, all users of the guidance are strongly recommended to read the **OEAP NG section**: **"Legal Framework & Employer systems".**

3 Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements

As an employer, The CE Academy is required to ensure that its employees are provided with:

- appropriate guidance relating to offsite visits:
- employer led training courses to support the guidance to ensure that it is understood;
- suitable systems and processes to ensure that those trained are kept updated;
- access to advice, support and further training from appointed Advisers that have proven expertise and professional understanding of the guidance, the training and expectations set by current good practice.

The appropriate guidance for the management of outdoor learning is available on OEAP National Guidance website. https://oeapng.info/guidance-documents/

CE Academy provides training for staff to the following standards:

1. Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) training – The CE Academy has 4 trained EVCs in post;
2. EVC Revalidation – The CE Academy's EVCs undertake revalidation as required;
3. Visit Leader Training – All staff who lead offsite activities complete this training;
4. Induction Training for new staff.

For the purpose of day to day updating of information, EVCs and Visit/Activity Leaders are directed to the CE Academy website.

Where an employee experiences problems with finding the material they are looking for, or require clarification or further help and guidance, they should contact the EVC.

If SLT or EVC's require further information or guidance regarding offsite educational visits they should contact the LOLT Outdoor Education Advisor Mike Fawcett by emailing mike@longtownoutdoorlearning.co.uk. If the enquiry is urgent mark the message subject box.

4 Approval and Notification of Activities and Visits

Employees/Visit leaders will gain authorisation for offsite activities and visits through the eVisits system, operated by LOLT.

The Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher (EVC) have the responsibility for formally approving Category A and B visits. It is a requirement of this policy that the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher carry out this function in accordance with OEAP National Guidance.

For activities falling within the scope of Category C, these will be reviewed and approved by the LOLT Outdoor Education Advisor. Category C activities:-

- involves a visit overseas or ferry crossing;
- involves a residential or overnight stay;
- involves provision of an adventurous activity;
- involves activities using natural watercourses, lakes or sea.

Further guidance and advice for specific types of visits, venues and hazards can be found on the OEAP NG website. Specific Types of Visit, Activity and Hazard

5 Risk Management

As an employer, The CE Academy has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed by requiring them to be reduced to an "acceptable" or "tolerable" level as elimination of risks may not be practicable. This requires that proportional (suitable and sufficient) risk management systems are in place, requiring The CE Academy to provide such support, training and resources to its employees as is necessary to implement this policy.

The risk management of an activity should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating. The CE Academy strongly recommends a "Risk-Benefit Assessment" approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes. This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any

residual risk (ie the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is “acceptable”. HSE endorse this approach through their “Principles of Sensible Risk Management” and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risks for themselves.

There is no legal requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format; but there is a legal requirement for the process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual, or harm several people. However, the Academy has sample risk assessments on the school’s intranet.

6 Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an offsite activity has:

- either suffered a life threatening injury or fatality;
- is at serious risk;
- or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

Visit leaders should follow the Visit Leader Emergency Checklist.

The West and North Northamptonshire Council’s joint Emergency Planning Team is committed to providing 24hour emergency planning procedures to support The CE Academy in the event of a critical incident.

To activate the 24 hour support from Northamptonshire Emergency Planning Team, the following telephone numbers should be used:

- **Emergency Planning:** normal office hours: - 0300 126 1012
  outside office hours: - 07885 292851 (North Northants) 07442 691327 (West Northants)

These numbers should be carried by leaders at all times during an offsite activity but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.

The CE Academy is a member of The DfE Risk Protection Assurance, which will provide the academy with offsite support in an emergency.

Refer to OEAP NG section ‘Good Practice – Emergencies’

7 Monitoring

Monitoring of offsite activities and visits will be undertaken by the EVC.

Refer to OEAP NG section ‘Legal Framework - Monitoring’.

8 Assessment of Leader Competence

OEAP NG provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competence. All leaders and their assistants will have been formally assessed as competent to undertake such responsibilities as they have been assigned.

Refer to OEAP NG section ‘Legal Framework - Approval of leaders’

9 Role-Specific Requirement to Ensure Effective Supervision

OEAP National Guidance sets out clear and detailed responsibilities and functions of specific roles that relate to roles to be found within Ce Academy. These are:

- Employer
- Governors
- Head / Manager
- EVC
- Visit Leader
- Assistant Leader

Refer to individual OEAP NG documents headed as above.

10 Charges for Off-site Activities and Visits

The CE Academy must take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996.

Refer to TLT 'Charging and Remissions Policy'

Refer to OEAP NG section 'Legal Frameworks - Charging for School Activities'

11 Vetting and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

CE Academy employees who work *frequently or intensively* with, or have *regular access to* young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo an enhanced DBS check as part of their recruitment process.

For the purposes of this guidance:

- *frequently* is defined as "once a week or more";
- *intensively* is defined as 4 days or more in a month or overnight.

However, it must be clearly understood that a DBS check (or other vetting procedure) in itself, is no guarantee as to the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people.

The placement of an adult within a situation of professional trust (where young people could be vulnerable to physical or mental exploitation or grooming) should always be on the understanding that an overview based on a common sense risk-benefit assessment process has been considered.

Refer to OEAP NG section 'Legal Framework - Vetting and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks'

12 Requirement to Ensure Effective Supervision

In general terms, the Law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is "effective".

Effective supervision should be determined by proper consideration of:

- age (including the developmental age) of the group;
- gender issues;
- ability of the group (including special learning needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc);

- nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions;
- staff competence.

However, as an exception to the above, Ofsted and DfE guidance prescribe ratios for Early Years.

Refer to OEAP NG section 'Good practice - Ratios and Effective Supervision'

Refer to OEAP NG section 'Good practice - Group management and Supervision'

13 Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances

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 expectations. Such information is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management.

Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit.

It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of the nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes that are now available, thus reducing bureaucracy.

Examples of such schemes include:

- The LOtC Quality Badge;
- AALS Licensing;
- Adventuremark;
- NGB centre approval schemes.

Refer to OEAP NG section 'Good practice - Using external providers and facilities'

Refer to OEAP NG section 'Good practice - Pre Visiting an Adventure Activity Provider mind map

14 Insurance for Off-site Activities and Visits

Employer's Liability Insurance is a statutory requirement and The CE Academy is a member of the DfE Risk Assurance Protection (RPA). This indemnifies it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person employed by it. Employees (as agents of the employer) are indemnified against all such claims. The indemnity covers activities such as offsite activities and visits organised by all establishments and settings for which the employer is responsible.

Personal Accident cover is provided for all The CE Academy employees and pupils whilst on the business of the academy.

Refer to OEAP NG section 'Good practice – Insurance'

15 Inclusion

Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion. If a visit needs to cater for young people with special needs, every *reasonable* effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

Establishments should take all *reasonably practicable* measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion should be promoted and addressed for all visits and reflected in establishment policy, thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- an entitlement to participate;
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification ;
- integration through participation with peers.

SLT, EVCs and Visit Leaders should be aware of the extent to which Inclusion is or is not a legal issue.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to:

- treat a disabled young person less favourably;
- fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

Refer to OEAP NG section 'Legal Framework – Inclusion'

Refer to CE Academy 'Inclusion Policy SEN Information Report' & 'TLT Equalities policy'

16 Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations

SLT, EVC's and Visit Leaders should have a basic understanding of where and when the provision of adventurous activities is legally regulated.

The Activity Centre (Young Persons Safety) Act (1995) established the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations and the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA), initially responsible to the DfES. The scheme is now the direct responsibility of HSE and operated through the Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS).

The intention of the regulations is to provide a regulatory framework to protect children, parents, members of school staff and schools when using providers of defined adventurous activities in closely defined environments. The regulations and supporting inspection regime provide a formal process of professional inspection to accredit that providers have effective safety management systems and processes, meeting a national standard.

The definitive source of advice on the Licensing Regulations is to be found in the Health and Safety Executive publication: "*Guidance to the Licensing Authority on Adventure Activity Licensing Regulations 2004*".

Leaders should be aware that the AALS license is an assurance of safety. It does not accredit educational or activity quality.

Refer to OEAP NG section 'Legal Framework - AALA Licensing'

17 Good Practice Requirements

To be deemed competent, a CE Academy Visit/Activity Leader, or Assistant Leader must be able to demonstrate *the ability to operate to the current standards of recognized good practice for that role*.

All staff must be competent to carry out their defined roles and responsibilities.

OEAP National Guidance sets a clear standard to which The CE Academy leaders **must** work. The guidance states:

"a competent Visit /Activity Leader (or an Assistant Leader where they may take sole responsibility for a sub-group) requires:

- *Knowledge and understanding of their employer's guidance supported by establishment-led training. It is good practice for employers to provide formal and accredited training to support their guidance eg EVC Training, Visit Leader Training and such training may be a requirement prescribed by some employers.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of establishment procedures supported by a structured induction process specified by the establishment.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of the group, the staff, the activity and the venue.*
- *Appropriate experience.*
- *In some circumstances (eg first aid, adventurous activities) a formally accredited qualification."*

Staff participating in offsite activities and visits must be aware of the extent of their duty of care and should only be given such responsibilities as are in keeping with the above guidance. It is particularly important that careful consideration of competence issues is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. Establishments should view the original documents and certificates when verifying leader's qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.

Refer to OEAP NG section 'Good practice - Good Practice Basics'

18 Transport

Careful thought must be given to planning transport to support offsite activities and visits. Statistics demonstrate that it is much more dangerous to travel to an activity than to engage in it. All national and local regulatory requirements **must** be followed.

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.

The Visit Leader should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company.

Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration.

Refer to OEAG NG section 'Good practice - Transport: General Considerations"
Refer to OEAG NG section 'Good practice - Transport in Minibuses"
Refer to OEAG NG section 'Good practice - Transport **in Private Cars"**

19 Planning

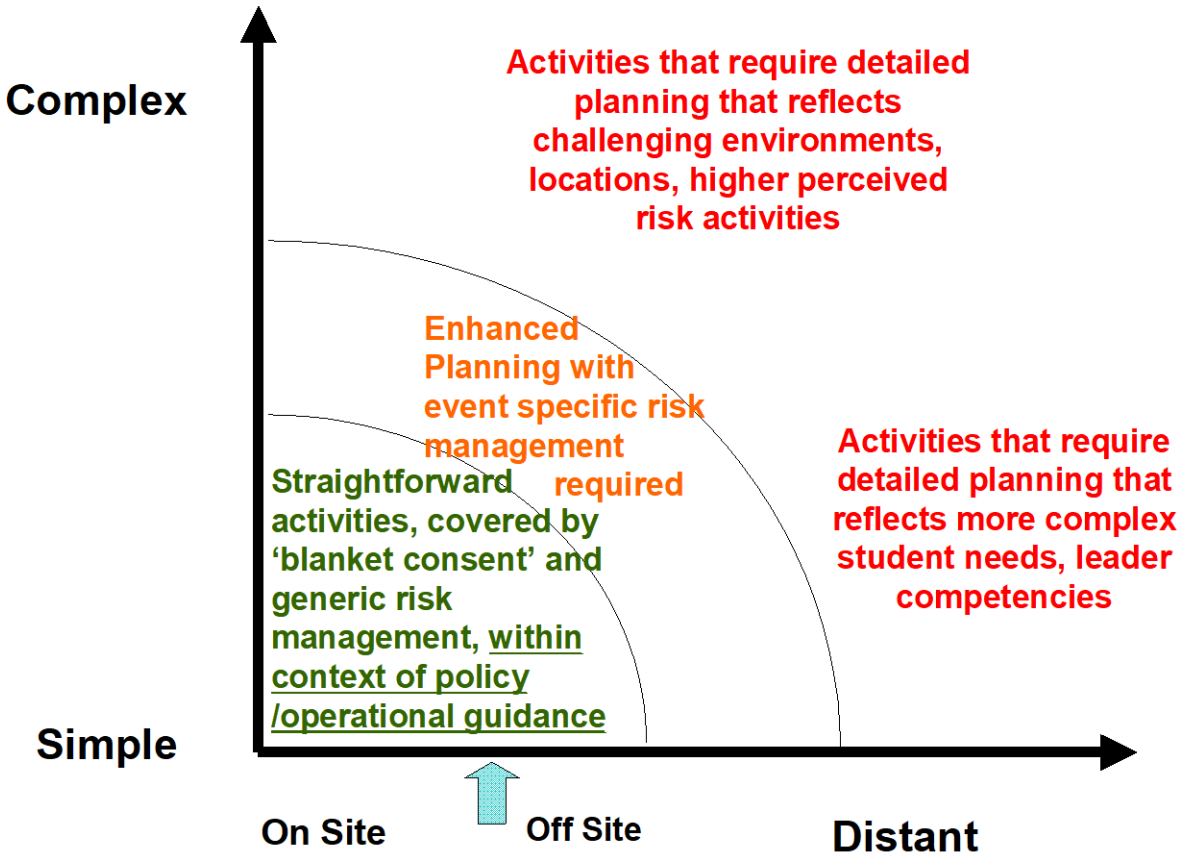
Planning should reflect the consideration of legal and good practice requirements, ensuring:

- The plan is based on establishment procedures and employer guidance.
- All staff and the young people to be involved, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk management process.
- Those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained.
- Proportionate assurances have been obtained from any providers (making full use of national schemes that accredit that assurances have already been obtained by credible inspection regimes).
- Designated emergency contact(s) have been identified that will work on a 24/7 basis where required.
- All details of the activity provision are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity.

To reduce bureaucracy and encourage activity, establishments need to take account of the legalities regarding a requirement for formal consent. When an activity is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time and no parental contributions are requested, then a formal consent is not necessary. However, in the interests of good relations between the establishment and the home, it is good practice to ensure that those in a position of parental responsibility are fully informed.

The degree of complexity of a particular plan or policy (along with its supporting procedures) will need to reflect the nature and complexity of several variables that can impact on any given activity. These variables can be remembered as "**SAGED"** as explained below.

- **S**taffing requirements – trained? experienced? competent? ratios?
- **A**ctivity characteristics – specialist? insurance issues? licensable?
- **G**roup characteristics – prior experience? ability? behaviour? special and medical needs?
- **E**nvironmental conditions – like last time? impact of weather? water levels?
- **D**istance from support mechanisms in place at the home base – transport? residential?



Refer to OEAG NG document: Must Read ***"Good practice"***

17 The Value and Evaluation of LOtC

The Ofsted report **"*Learning Outside the Classroom – How Far Should You Go?*"** (October 2008) makes statements in the strongest terms to support the value of LOtC, including the fact that it raises achievement.

Refer to OEAG NG document: ***"Ofsted and LOtC Summary"***

However, it also highlights the finding that *even where LOtC is highly valued and provided to a high standard, it is rarely evaluated with sufficient rigor* – i.e. in the way that classroom learning is evaluated – and a methodology to address this is provided within the LOtC Employer Guidance document: *"Rigorous Evaluation of LOtC: Meeting Ofsted Expectations".*

Policy Control Sheet

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Version	**Date of review**	**Author**	**Note of revisions**
01	January 2020	HT/SFM	
02	January 2023	SBM	Updated referencing to OEAG national guidance sections. Changed to TLT referencing where applicable.
03	January 2025	SBM	4 – Approval EVC – changed to Assistant Head. 5 – Risk assessments now on intranet. 6 - Emergency planning tel. no.s updated. Links to OEAP website added.