



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

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Group: LVC Standards Committee
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Introduction

Safely managed educational visits and outdoor learning with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of a broad and balanced curriculum and a vital part of this school. Visits give the opportunity to extend student's learning, enrich their appreciation and extend the understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. Visits can be the catalyst for contextual learning, improved engagement with learning, increasing academic performance and a lifetime interest. Outdoor learning and visits are to be encouraged.

[High Quality Outdoor Learning](#) is the source document supporting this rationale.

Purpose

- To ensure that every student has the opportunity to benefit from outdoor learning and educational visits
- To ensure that all visits are safe, well planned, purposeful and appropriate to meet the educational needs of those taking part.
- To ensure that the school identifies roles, responsibilities, training, monitoring and support for those from the school working in this area.
- To ensure that DfE Health and Safety Advice is met.
- To ensure that when further advice is sought it comes from technically competent people.

Scope and Remit

The NG document "Basic Essentials MUST Read - Status and Remit" 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 Educational visits and LOTC (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.

Provision of Employer Guidance

Linton Village College has formally adopted “*National Guidance*” (NG) as “*LVC Employer Guidance*”.

This Educational visit guidance can be found on the following web site: www.oeapng.info – updated annually.

It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements of their employer’s guidance; therefore, Linton Village College employees must follow the requirements of National Guidance, as well as the requirements of this Policy Statement. Linton Village College employees should also follow NG recommendations.

Where a Linton Village College employee commissions activity, they must ensure that such commissioned agent has systems and procedures in place where the standards are not less than those required by National Guidance.

Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements

As an employer, Linton Village College is required to ensure that its employees are provided with

- appropriate guidance relating to visits and LOtC activity;
- 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 an appointed Adviser that has proven expertise and professional understanding of the guidance, the training and expectations set by current good practice.

The relevant training courses for Linton Village College:

1. Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) Training; Linton Village College is required to have a current, trained EVC in post.
2. Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) Revalidation; Linton Village College’s EVC is required to undertake a formal revalidation from time to time. Currently this requirement is every three years.
3. Visit Leader Training; this course is strongly recommended for all those who lead visits and off-site activities, this is run internally by EVC & visits co-ordinator

For the purposes of day-to-day updating of information, Linton Village College’s EVC and Visit/Activity Leaders are directed to the posting of “*Information Updates*” from Cambridgeshire County Council on Evolve.

Where an employee experiences problem with finding the material they are looking for, or requires clarification or further help and guidance, they should use the EVC as the first point of contact. The College has a service level agreement for specialist advice from the Outdoor Education Adviser who can also be used for advice and guidance.

The Outdoor Education Adviser for the Academy is: Stephen Brown

Contact Details: stephen.brown@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Office phone: 01480 372677 Office Email: outdoor.education@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Clarification of Roles

Role-specific Requirements and Recommendations

National Guidance sets out clear and detailed responsibilities and functions of specific roles that relate to roles to be found the establishment. Staff taking on a specific role should read and understand the advice contained within defined documents associated with the role. These are:

- Members of Board of Governors or Management Board (Employers)
- Principal (Helena Marsh)
- EVC (Carey Mayzes)
- Duke of Edinburgh Leader
- Visit or Activity Leader (as part of checklist you will be issued relevant documents)
- Assistant Visit leader (as part of checklist you will be issued relevant documents)
- Parents/ Volunteer Adult Helper

Assessment of Leader Competence

National Guidance provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competence. It is an expectation of Linton Village College policy that all leaders and assistants have been trained and assessed as competent to undertake such responsibilities as they have been assigned in line with the National Guidance. This assessment may include a review of previous visits, leadership experience from other areas and for certain activities a formal qualification. The EVC will lead on this process but may involve other senior staff. For Duke of Edinburgh leaders there are clear and established standards for leading expeditions, and these are published on Evolve. Staff should maintain their training and qualifications on their own profile within Evolve.

The EVC should view the original documents and certificates when verifying leader's qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.

Advice can be sought from the Adviser when required.

Good Practice Requirements

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

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

National Guidance sets a clear standard to which Linton Village College 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.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of establishment procedures supported by a structured induction process specified by the establishment.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of the staff, the activity, the group and the venue.*
- *Appropriate experience*

- *In some circumstances (e.g. first aid, adventurous activities) a formally accredited qualification.”*

Staff participating in off-site 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. The EVC should view the original documents and certificates when verifying leaders qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.

Procedural requirements

Planning

The College works with the principle that educational visits are both successful and have been risk managed, not solely through risk assessments, but by good planning from the very start of the visit planning process. Planning should reflect the consideration of legal and good practice requirements, ensuring:

- The plan is based on establishment procedures (trip and visit guidance) and national guidance.
- All staff (including any adult volunteer helpers) 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 SLT 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.

It is strongly recommended that at a very early stage of the planning process, the provisional staffing team carry out an exercise in order to identify the benefits and learning outcomes that the activity (or range of activities) might achieve. If the outcomes are to be evaluated with any rigour (an Ofsted expectation), then it will be essential that these outcomes are prioritised and appropriately targeted. A record of these outcomes will help keep the plan focused and also be a vital part of the risk management process in providing some objectivity in a “Risk-Benefit Analysis”. Once the targeted outcomes have been recorded, it will then be possible to identify appropriate on-going review and evaluation strategies, including indicators.

To reduce bureaucracy and encourage activity, the need for formal consent must be considered. 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 need to be fully informed.

This supports the move towards developing establishment activity-specific policies for regular or routine activities. Such policies should be robust and equate to “*operational guidance*” that makes it clear how the activity should be planned and delivered, meeting all necessary recommendations and requirements, as well as assuring educational quality.

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.

- **Staffing requirements** – trained? experienced? competent? ratios?
- **Activity characteristics** – specialist? insurance issues? licensable?
- **Group characteristics** – prior experience? ability? behaviour? special and medical needs?
- **Environmental conditions** – like last time? impact of weather? water levels?
- **Distance from support mechanisms in place at the home base** – transport? residential?

Approval and Notification of Activities and Visits

Linton Village College uses an online system for notification and approval called Evolve. There is a clear process for planning and approval of visits, which involves using Evolve software for Zone 2 and 3 visits. There is a defined process in place for Zone 1 visits (see Appendix 4). Oversight for this system is with the Principal, with the Governing Body/Trust receiving reports when appropriate and requested.

All visits are the responsibility for the College to approve. The Outdoor Education Adviser will review the approved plans for Abroad and Adventure visits, and add a third level approval, confirming that the visit meets the standards expected for planning and appropriate standards for the visit. This runs via the current set up in Evolve. This will include D of E expeditions.

The Evolve system does not need to be used for a Zone 1 activity (see appendix 4) this should be added to the “Zone 1 tracker”

Zone 1 activity is a visit or activity that is part of the planned curriculum, taking place in normal curriculum time for which an approved risk assessment/risk benefit assessment is in place. PE fixtures at local/partner schools can also be subject to alternative approval using the Radar System (see Appendix 3).

Appropriate permission should be sought from the Principal/SLT and further clarity can be provided by the EVC.

All visits will be subject to the Principal’s approval using the College’s approval procedure. All visit leaders will ensure that appropriate permission is sought before undertaking the planning of trips and visits. In addition to Principal’s approval, the EVC must also be informed and staff should seek advice from the Finance team with regards to financial planning/costs.

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 gathering 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. This policy clarifies the circumstances where a preliminary visit is a requirement.

- Pre-visits are required for visits where there is a high complexity factor and the visit has not happened previously.
- Residential visits, visits abroad, exchange visits, adventure visits led by school staff all have aspects of complexity.

- If the visit is led and managed by a provider, then a variety of approaches can reduce the need to pre-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 (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

Linton Village College takes the view that where a provider holds such one of the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances.

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:

- Staff Competence
- Activity - nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved)
- Group - age (including the developmental age) of the group; ability of the group (including special learning needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc)
- Environment - 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)
- Distance away from the base

Further information is provided in the NG document: “Ratios and Effective Supervision” and “Group management and Supervision”.

Risk Management

As an employer, Linton Village College has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed; requiring them to be reduced to an “acceptable” or “tolerable” level. This requires that proportional (suitable and sufficient) risk management systems are in place, requiring Linton Village College 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. Linton Village College 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 (i.e. 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 risk for themselves.

There is no legal or Linton Village College 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. The EVC can provide additional information if needed.

Covid

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are following government advice regarding residential trips and are monitoring the situation regarding day trips.

Volunteer

Where a Volunteer Helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship to a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the Risk-Benefit assessment.

Transport

Linton Village College adopts a minibus policy that reflects the DfE advice. See Appendix 2 for details: Please note that this applies to Minibuses not exceeding 3.5 tonnes. Minibuses over 3.5 tonnes will need to be covered by a transport policy.

Careful thought must be given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits. Statistics demonstrate that it is much more dangerous to travel to an activity than to engage in it and establishments must follow the specialist guidance provided in Linton Village College transport policy. Only Linton Village College staff who hold an appropriate driving licence, have been subject to training and approval may drive the College minibuses and/or vehicles hired on behalf of Linton Village College. 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 and Business insurance within their private vehicle policy. Where this occurs, there should be recorded procedures and the EVC/Finance Director must be consulted.

Monitoring

As an employer, Linton Village College ensures that there is sample monitoring of the visits and Learning Outside the Classroom activities undertaken by its staff. Such monitoring should be in keeping with the recommendations of National Guidance. There is a clear expectation that the monitoring function is a delegated task, principally carried out through systems put in place by the EVC.

Vetting Checks

Linton Village College 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. Appropriate vetting of any volunteers will also be carried out.

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.

Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support

The College Critical Incident plan is regularly updated and reviewed. It covers the possibility of having to manage an offsite visit emergency. Senior staff who may have to implement the plan are trained and briefed. The Adviser service provides support and information, linked to the Visit Emergency Support Network, (VESN).

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has:

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

As an employer, Linton Village College is committed to providing emergency procedures to support staff in the event of a critical incident. Cambridgeshire County Council Children's Services Learning offer this support to all Cambridgeshire Academies as a free service, and this should be reflected in school plans.

Refer to NG document: "[Emergencies and critical incidents overview](#)" and the "Linton Village College Critical Incident Plan".

As part of the planning of educational visits at Linton Village College, SLT emergency contacts should be used. This information should be circulated to staff and recorded in Evolve. The SLT mobile number should be used in correspondence with parents/guardians. Emergency contact numbers should be carried by leaders at all times during an off-site activity, but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. Under no circumstances should personal phone numbers be given to parents or guardians.

Charges for Off-site Activities and Visits

Linton Village College SLT, Curriculum Leaders, EVCs and Visit/Activity Leaders 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.

Insurance for Off-site Activities and Visits

Employer's Liability Insurance is a statutory requirement and Linton Village College holds a policy that indemnifies it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person employed by it. This cover should extend to those persons who are acting in a voluntary capacity as assistant supervisors.

Linton Village College also holds Public Liability insurance, indemnifying it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury from persons not in its employment, as well as for the accidental loss of, or damage caused to, property. Employees (as agents of the employer) are indemnified against all such claims, as are voluntary helpers acting under the direction of the employer's staff. The indemnity covers activities such as off-site activities and visits organised by staff for which the employer is responsible.

Specific insurance details and cover for overseas activities and visits can be obtained from the Finance Team. Trip leaders should be aware of the need to establish the specific insurance available when working with providers who include insurance within the cost of the educational visit package.

Some level of Personal Accident Insurance is provided for all Linton Village College employees in the course of their employment, providing pre-determined benefits in the event of an accident. However, Visit/Activity Leaders should be advised that they should consider taking out less limited personal accident cover privately, or obtain cover through a professional association.

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.

Linton Village College takes all *reasonably practicable* measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion should be promoted and addressed for all visits and LOtC thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

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

Employers, Heads/Managers, Curriculum Leaders, 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, (previously the Disability Discrimination Act 1995), 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.

Where there are concerns around a student's behaviour leading up to the trip or visit, a behaviour support plan will be implemented by heads of house in advance of the trip's departure. Students who do not meet the agreed targets about their behaviour will not, for their own safety or safety of others, be included on the visit. Equally, if a child due to behaviour has become a danger to themselves or others during the trip, their continuation within the visit will be considered. If the behaviour has become too bad, they will cease involvement with the visit and the costs of returning home will be covered by the parents.

Appendix 1: D of E Standards for Leadership

Cambridgeshire County Council’s leadership standards for D of E Training and Assessed Expeditions are held on Evolve and need to be followed by D of E groups working under the Cambridgeshire D of E License agreement.

These also can apply to other Academies, in terms of good practice.

The standards are found on the Evolve guidance pages.

Appendix 2: Minibus Driving

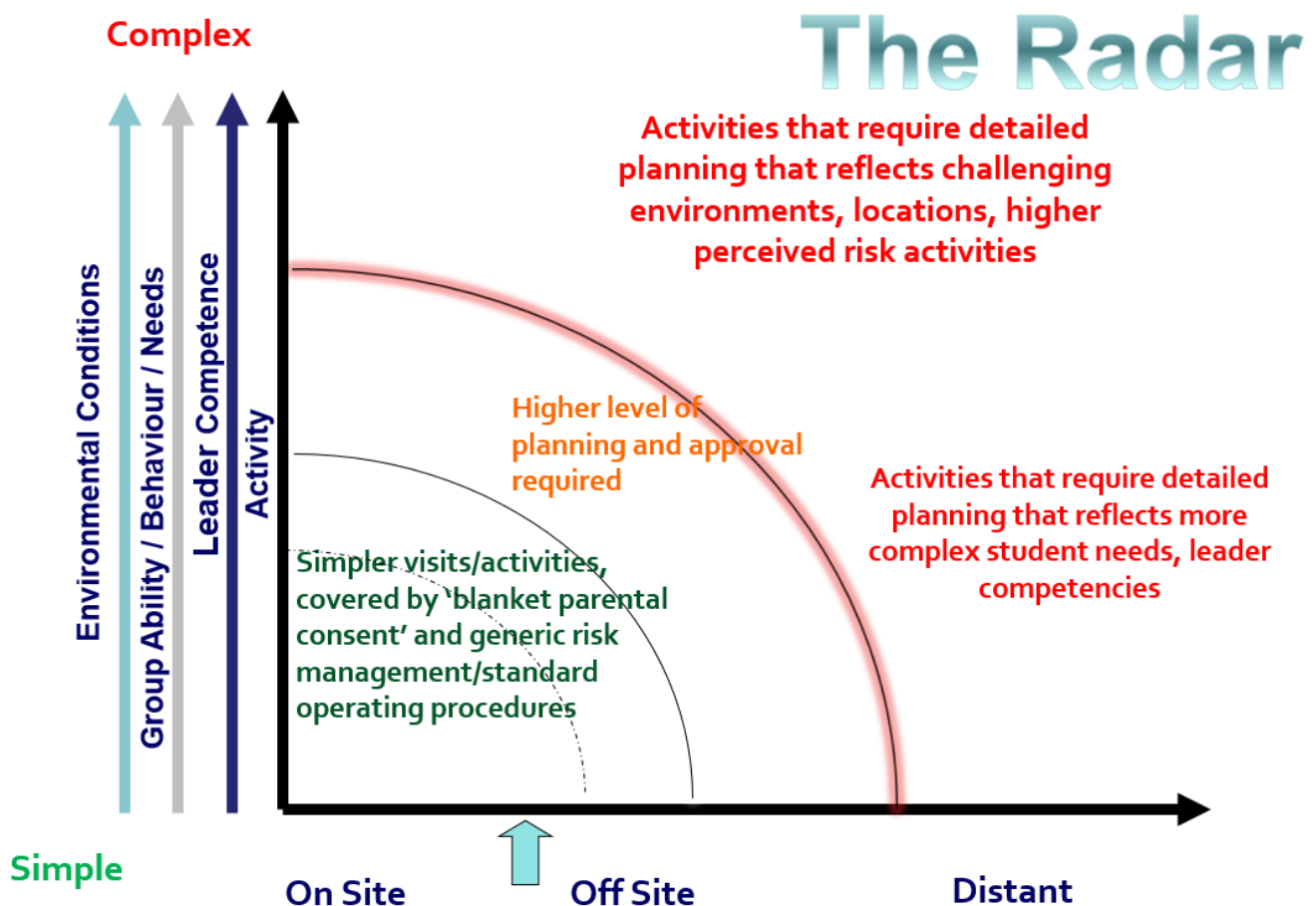
The latest advice from DFE (October 2013) is via this web link: -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/driving-school-minibuses-advice-for-schools-and-local-authorities>

The Guidance above:

This is non-statutory advice jointly produced by the Department for Education (DfE), the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on driving licence entitlement when driving a school minibus.

Appendix 3 The Radar System



Appendix 4: Zone 1 Activity

Zone 1 is defined as activity that is not very complex and close to the College, it will include regular venues and activities. This allows the staff to know the venue and activity well and therefore risks are more easily managed. It is not defined by a geographical distance.

Zone 1 covers the walk around the immediate College area, walks into village, visits to local primary schools and other activity, and covers all the sporting fixtures after College hours, but not sporting festivals at weekends.

Action taken

The EVC is available to meet with the staff and talk about the range of venues and activity that they would see in Zone 1. They also agree the procedures for working within Zone 1.

All details are shared with staff on “zone 1 activity tracker” or “PE zone 1 activity tracker” this can be found in the enrichment folder. Details of the activity should be populated on the tracker sheet 1 week before departure.

All student & staff details need to be entered on to the zone 1 tracker

Enter venue information

Request 1st aid kits if applicable

Risk assessment for Zone 1 needs to be adhered to this can be found in the enrichment folder.

On the Day Procedures

Staff must ensure information is correct on Zone 1 activity sheet

Staff, to sign out at reception

EVC Action

As with all activity – this should be monitored and reviewed to ensure that standards are being maintained.