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# Belfairs Academy



## Educational Trips Policy

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## **Overview**

The academy acknowledges the great value of Educational Visits in broadening and enhancing both the learning and social experience of students.

Under statutory guidance, which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004, all academies are required to have a named Educational Visits coordinator (EVC), who will ensure that the planning and supervision of all visits and adventurous activities meet the DFE Requirements and LA guidelines.

The academy EVC is the Finance Assistant.

The role of the EVC is to coordinate the visits from this academy, ensuring that each has been planned to take account of: the needs of participants, the stated education aim of the visit, and to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to manage risks. The EVC will also ensure that each visit is properly approved by the Principal and in some cases, the Local Authority and Governors.

All Visit Leaders should read this policy in conjunction with Southend Borough Council (SBC) Guidance on Academy Visits (which can be found at the bottom of the EVOLVE website homepage). Forms referred to in this policy are available from the EVC.

These guidelines are set out by the Local Authority on the EVOLVE website which all academies under their jurisdiction must follow.

## **Approval of Visits**

All matters relating to visits outside of the academy – feasibility, planning, safety, organization etc. – will require the prior approval of the EVC.

Approval of 'normal' day visits is at the discretion of the EVC/Principal. However; visits that involve:

- Travelling overseas
- A residential experience, or
- an adventurous activity (as defined in SBCs Visits Guidance)

will require the additional approval of the LA (online through EVOLVE). The governing body will also need to be informed about these visits prior to a commitment being made.

If an external provider or tour operator is being used, it may be useful to use the "External Provider Form" (in the Form section of the website) to obtain essential information from them, at the time of the provisional booking. Providers used regularly by Southend academies will have already completed a provider form via the LA. It's worth checking, through your EVC, before sending your own form. It is the job of the EVC to fill out on EVOLVE.

## Competence to Lead

Any member of staff leading a visit must be assessed as 'competent to lead' before approval for the visit is given. For the majority of visits the EVC/Principal is authorised to grant permission.

If a member of staff will lead an activity which requires specialist skills (e.g.: skiing or canoeing) it is essential that they hold suitable qualifications and have an appropriate level of experience. Additional guidance on this is given in the SBC Guidance for Academy Visits document.

## Reasons for Visits

It is essential that all visits have sound and clearly stated educational aims. Trips 'for the sake of it' will not receive approval.

## Assessment of Risk

'Risk assessment' is a careful examination of what could cause harm to students, staff or others, together with an identification of the control measures necessary in order to reduce risks to a level which, in the professional judgement of the assessor, is deemed to be acceptable (i.e. low).

In considering risk, there are 3 levels of which visit leaders should be mindful:

- Generic Risks – normal risks attached to any activity out of the academy. Any external activities are covered (risk assessed) by the event organizer/travel company
- Event Specific Risk – any significant hazard or risk relating to the specific activity and outside the scope of item 1 above.
- Ongoing Risk – the monitoring of risks throughout the actual visit as circumstances change.

Further detail on risk assessment will be found in SBCs Guidance on Academy Visits [here](#).

## Plan B

Despite the most detailed and diligent pre-visit planning, things can go wrong on the day, e.g. parent helper is unavailable, member of staff is ill, transport fails to arrive, museum have lost booking, etc. To avoid having to make important decisions under pressure, it is important that some advanced thinking is done to cater for any foreseeable eventuality. This takes the form of a **Plan B**.

## Staffing Ratios

A professional judgement must be made by the Visit Leader, CEO or Principal as to the appropriate ratio for each visit.

This will be determined by:

- type, duration and level of activity

- needs of individuals within the group (SEND)
- experience and competence of staff and accompanying adults
- nature of the venue
- weather conditions at the time of year
- nature of transport involved
- Travel arrangements
- Age of students

Minimum staffing levels are identified in SBCs Visit Guidance – page 12

## **Supervision**

Students must be supervised throughout all visits. However, there are circumstances when they might be unaccompanied by an adult (remote supervision). The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on risk assessment and must take into account factors such as:

- prior experience of students
- age of students
- responsibility of students
- competence/experience of staff
- environment/venue

## **First Aid**

The level of first aid provision should be based on risk assessment. Where applicable, on all visits there should be a member of staff who has a good working knowledge of first aid.

First aid kits are available from (reception); if the visit involves the party splitting up by any distance, a kit should be taken for each group.

## **Medication**

No medication is to be taken from reception. Students must bring all medication with them on trips and hand to the group leader. For example – if your child is on any medication i.e. an epipen, please ensure they have it with them for the trip.

## **Transport**

Travel arrangements should be included in the risk assessment. If public transport is to be used, all students and supervisors must be fully briefed as to procedures on platforms, at bus stops, on busy streets etc.

If travel is by coach or minibus, all students must wear a seat belt. Staff must ensure that students comply with this rule; students may also be asked to check the seat belt of their neighbour. If a minibus is being borrowed or hired, the driver must have passed an appropriate driving test.

## **Water 'Margin' Activities**

Where students might participate in learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along a riverbank or seashore, collecting samples in ponds or streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow water, then the guidance contained in

DfE(DfES was body between 2001 and 2007) 'Group Safety at Water Margins' is relevant and can be viewed [here](#). All staff, should be familiar with the guidance before their visit.

## Seeking Parental Consent

Parents should be made fully aware of any likely risks of the visit and their management, so they may consent or refuse on a fully informed basis (known as 'Acknowledgement of Risk').

The letter to parents should therefore give full detail of the visit, the reason for the visit (educational aims), supervision arrangements and the transport arrangements. Ensure that detail of other incidental activities is included, together with Plan B if appropriate. The letter should also state the cost of the visit per child.

The reply slip should read:

"I give permission for my child to attend the \_\_\_\_\_ trip on \_\_\_\_\_ and I have paid via Parent Pay or have enclosed payment."

In the case of sports fixtures, the reply slip should read: -

"I give permission for my child to represent Belfair's Academy at the \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_".

## Before the Visit

1. For local, low risk visits (e.g. a visit to a local park), fill in the academy's "local visits" form as soon as possible before the visit. Copies should go to the office and EVC.
2. For visits which take place outside of the Southend area AND residential, overseas, or adventurous activities need details completed and entered onto the EVOLVE system by the EVC.

If approved:

- Book Visit
- Book Transport
- Send letter home

Ensure paperwork and EVOLVE forms have been completed fully taking into account any last minute changes.

## On the Day of the Visit

Be sure to:

- Check students have all necessary medication as per their care plan (i.e. epipens, asthma inhalers etc.)
- Collect first aid kit(s)
- Ensure that a minimum of one mobile phone is working, and that the office has the number(s). If the visit is on EVOLVE this should be number given regarding leader details.

- Perform an initial head count before departing

During the course of the visit, students should be counted regularly as appropriate, and always when changing locations. Always 'double-count'.

The mobile phone(s) should be switched on during the entire trip.

### **After the Visit**

It is important that after each visit a proper debrief takes place. This should take place within a week of the visit date, and should involve the Visit Leader, accompanying staff and, if appropriate, the supervising parents. The purpose of the debrief is to identify what went well and what could have been done better, in order to inform future planning.

(date)

(signature)

**NAME IN BOLD**