



**Off-site Activities and
Educational Visits Policy**

Reviewed Date:	Reviewed By	List of changes	Next Review
August 2021	Luke Collins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-written by Andy Howard and Luke Collins in August 2021 	August 2022
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1. Aims

New Direction School recognises that educational visits, outdoor learning, community-based learning and off-site activities can make a valuable contribution to students' personal development, curriculum access, independence, social development and preparation for adulthood.

The aims of this policy are to:

- ensure educational visits are planned, approved, supervised and reviewed in a safe and proportionate way;
- support staff to provide meaningful learning opportunities beyond the school site while managing foreseeable risks;
- ensure safeguarding, behaviour, medical, SEND and individual risk information is considered before and during visits;
- make clear the responsibilities of the Proprietor, Directors, Head of Education, Head of Equine Provision, visit leaders and accompanying staff;
- ensure emergency arrangements are clear and that staff know how to respond to accidents, incidents, safeguarding concerns or changes of plan;
- support compliance with health and safety legislation, DfE expectations, safeguarding duties and the Independent School Standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all educational visits and off-site activities organised by, or on behalf of, New Direction School. This includes local walks, community visits, sporting activities, curriculum visits, work-related learning, transport to activities, visits involving external providers, adventurous activities, residential visits and equine or animal-related activities away from the usual school base.

The policy applies to all staff, agency staff, volunteers, contractors and other adults involved in planning, approving, leading or supporting educational visits.

Routine activities that form part of the normal school day may be covered by existing generic risk assessments, local area procedures and individual student risk assessments. Higher risk, unusual, residential, adventurous or distant activities require additional planning and approval.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy has been written with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013;
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981;
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- DfE Health and Safety: responsibilities and duties for schools;
- DfE First aid in schools, early years and further education;
- HSE guidance on school trips and sensible risk management;
- OEAP National Guidance for outdoor learning, educational visits and adventurous activities;
- UKHSA health protection guidance for children and young people settings, where infection control is relevant;

- Derbyshire local arrangements and any commissioning or local authority requirements relevant to individual students.

Where statutory guidance or local procedures change, the school will follow the most current guidance and update this policy as necessary.

4. Definitions and visit types

An educational visit is any planned activity that takes students away from the usual supervised school site or usual teaching base. Educational visits may be routine, local, occasional, residential, adventurous or delivered through an external provider.

Visit type	Examples	Approval expectation
Routine/local visits	Short local walks, local community access, regular local curriculum activities, short supervised visits using existing procedures.	Approved by the Head of Education or delegated senior leader using local operating procedures and relevant risk assessments.
Occasional curriculum visits	Museums, careers visits, sports fixtures, college visits, farms, theatres, workplace visits.	Visit proposal, specific risk assessment where required, staffing plan and approval before booking/attendance.
Higher risk or specialist activities	Water margins, adventurous activities, activities involving animals, remote locations, high-risk practical activities.	Senior approval, provider checks, activity-specific risk assessment and evidence of staff competence.
Residential visits	Any visit involving overnight accommodation.	Proprietor/Directors and Head of Education approval, parent/carer information, emergency plan, medical plan, safeguarding review and residential risk assessment.
External provider-led activities	Activities delivered by another organisation, venue, instructor or specialist provider.	Provider assurance checks, clear handover of responsibilities and confirmation of safeguarding, insurance and risk management arrangements.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Proprietor

The Proprietor, Yvonne Evans, has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school has suitable policies and procedures in place to manage health, safety, welfare and safeguarding risks arising from educational visits.

The Proprietor will ensure that appropriate oversight, insurance, resources and monitoring arrangements are in place.

5.2 Directors

The Directors, Luke Collins and Hannah Oliver, are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented effectively and that visits are planned, staffed and risk assessed appropriately. They may approve visits directly or delegate approval in line with this policy.

5.3 Head of Education

The Head of Education, Luke Collins, is responsible for ensuring that educational visits support curriculum, welfare and personal development aims, and that risk assessments, staffing arrangements and individual student needs are considered before approval.

5.4 Head of Equine Provision

The Head of Equine Provision, Hannah Oliver, is responsible for advising on visits involving equine provision, yard activities, horses, animal welfare, stable environments, riding or animal-related risks.

5.5 Educational Visits Coordinator / delegated senior lead

The school will identify a senior member of staff to coordinate educational visits. This may be the Head of Education or another delegated competent person. The coordinator will support staff with planning, check documentation, ensure approval is obtained and monitor visit records.

5.6 Visit leader

Each educational visit must have a named visit leader. The visit leader is responsible for:

- planning the visit and seeking approval before confirming arrangements;
- ensuring risks are identified and appropriate controls are in place;
- checking individual student risk assessments, medical information, behaviour support needs and safeguarding considerations;
- briefing accompanying staff, volunteers and students;
- ensuring consent, emergency contacts, first aid and medication arrangements are in place;
- taking dynamic risk assessment decisions during the visit;
- recording and reporting accidents, incidents, near misses and safeguarding concerns.

5.7 Accompanying staff and volunteers

All accompanying adults must follow the visit leader's instructions, maintain active supervision, follow safeguarding expectations, know emergency procedures and report concerns immediately.

5.8 Students and parents/carers

Students are expected to follow staff instructions and behave safely. Parents/carers are expected to provide accurate medical, emergency contact and consent information and to inform the school of any changes before the visit.

6. Approval and planning

No educational visit may take place unless it has been appropriately planned and approved. Planning must be proportionate to the nature, location, duration and risk level of the activity.

Before a visit is approved, the visit leader must ensure that:

- the educational purpose and expected benefits are clear;
- the location, timings, itinerary and transport arrangements are known;
- the visit type and risk level have been identified;
- staffing levels and staff competence are suitable;
- student medical, SEND, behaviour, safeguarding and individual risk information has been reviewed;

- parent/carer information and consent arrangements are completed where required;
- emergency contacts and communication arrangements are confirmed;
- external provider checks have been completed where relevant;
- insurance, first aid, medication and emergency procedures are in place.

Where a planned visit changes significantly, the visit leader must review the risk assessment and seek further approval if required. Staff must not improvise a higher risk activity without authorisation unless immediate action is required to keep students safe.

7. Risk assessment and risk benefit approach

Risk assessment for educational visits must be suitable and sufficient, but proportionate. The school recognises that managed exposure to appropriate risk can support learning, resilience and independence. The purpose of risk assessment is not to remove all risk, but to identify foreseeable risks and put sensible controls in place.

Risk assessments must consider:

- the activity, venue, environment and travel arrangements;
- the individual needs, vulnerabilities, behaviours, medical conditions and supervision needs of students;
- staff competence, staffing levels and contingency arrangements;
- safeguarding and staff conduct expectations;
- first aid, medication and emergency arrangements;
- weather, seasonal factors, infection control and changes to the environment;
- accessibility and reasonable adjustments;
- external provider controls and handover arrangements.

Routine visits may use an approved generic or local area risk assessment, provided the visit leader checks that it remains valid for the students and activity involved. Higher risk, new, unusual, residential or provider-led visits must have a visit-specific risk assessment.

Staff must carry out dynamic risk assessment during visits. If circumstances change, staff must pause, adapt, relocate, increase supervision, contact senior leaders or end the visit where this is necessary to keep students and staff safe.

8. Safeguarding and student welfare

Safeguarding remains the highest priority during educational visits. All staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Before a visit, the visit leader must consider whether any student has safeguarding risks that affect the visit, including vulnerability to exploitation, absconding, harmful behaviour, unsafe contact, online risk, neglect, medical vulnerability or risks linked to home circumstances.

Any safeguarding concern arising before, during or after a visit must be reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL and recorded on CPOMS as soon as possible. Where there is immediate danger, staff must take urgent action to protect the student and contact emergency services where required.

The DSL is Luke Collins. Deputy DSLs are Hannah Oliver, Emily Smith and Nikki Morris.

Staff must avoid situations where they are alone with a student unless this is unavoidable and risk assessed. Where one-to-one support is necessary, staff must follow the Lone Working Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and agreed supervision arrangements.

9. Supervision and staffing

Staffing must be determined by risk assessment rather than by a fixed ratio alone. The number and competence of staff must be sufficient to supervise the group safely and to respond to emergencies.

When deciding staffing, the visit leader and approving senior leader must consider:

- age, needs, SEND profiles, behaviour risks and medical needs of students;
- number of students and group dynamics;
- type, duration and location of the visit;
- transport arrangements and road safety;
- whether students may need one-to-one support;
- gender, privacy and personal care considerations where relevant;
- staff experience, first aid competence and activity-specific competence;
- the need for a separate emergency/reserve adult where appropriate.

The visit leader must brief all adults on roles, supervision zones, headcounts, agreed boundaries, emergency procedures, student-specific risks and communication arrangements.

Regular headcounts must be taken, including before departure, on arrival, during transitions, after breaks and before return travel.

10. Consent, information and communication

Parents/carers must be given sufficient information about visits to understand the nature of the activity, venue, timings, transport, costs, staffing, clothing/equipment requirements and any significant risks or special arrangements.

Written consent will be obtained for non-routine visits, residential visits, adventurous activities, visits involving external providers where required, and any visit where specific parental agreement is needed. Routine local visits may be covered by annual consent where parents/carers have received clear information about the nature of those activities.

The school will ensure that current emergency contact details are available to staff during the visit. The main school telephone number is 01246 810456.

The visit leader must carry or have secure access to the information needed for the visit, including emergency contacts, medical information, individual student risk assessments, staff contacts and senior leader escalation details.

11. Medical needs, first aid and medication

The visit leader must check student medical needs before the visit and ensure appropriate arrangements are in place. This includes individual healthcare plans, emergency medication, allergies, epilepsy plans, asthma inhalers, adrenaline auto-injectors, diabetes equipment and any other identified needs.

At least one suitably trained first aider must be available on educational visits unless a specific risk assessment demonstrates otherwise for a very low-risk local activity. Higher risk, remote, residential or specialist activities may require additional first aid competence.

First aid kits must be taken on visits. Medication must be stored, transported and administered in line with school procedures. Emergency medication must remain readily accessible and must not be locked away in a way that prevents prompt access.

Accidents, incidents, near misses and administration of first aid or medication must be recorded in line with the Health and Safety Policy and medication procedures. Serious incidents must be escalated to senior leaders immediately.

12. Behaviour, conduct and individual student risk assessments

Students' behaviour support needs must be considered when planning visits. Individual student risk assessments and behaviour plans must be reviewed before the visit and shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.

Where a student presents a known risk of absconding, aggression, unsafe road behaviour, self-injury, substance misuse, unsafe contact, exploitation or other significant risk, the visit leader must ensure that specific controls are in place before the student attends.

Students must be briefed in a way that they can understand. This may include visual supports, clear expectations, social stories, maps, boundaries, check-in points or individualised preparation.

Physical intervention must only be used in line with school policy, training and legal expectations, and only where necessary, reasonable and proportionate to prevent harm. Any use of physical intervention during a visit must be recorded and reported.

13. Transport and travel

Transport arrangements must be suitable for the students, journey, route and activity. Risk assessment must cover walking routes, public transport, taxis, minibuses, school vehicles and staff-owned vehicles where used.

Where staff use vehicles to transport students, the school must ensure that:

- the driver is appropriately licensed and authorised;
- the vehicle is roadworthy, taxed, insured and has a valid MOT where required;
- appropriate business use insurance is in place for staff-owned vehicles;
- seatbelts and child restraints, where required, are used;
- student seating arrangements take account of risk assessment and safeguarding considerations;
- drivers are not distracted by mobile phones, behaviour management or navigation tasks;
- there are arrangements for breakdowns, delays, accidents or changes to route.

Students must be supervised appropriately during travel, including boarding, leaving vehicles, crossing roads, using public transport and waiting in public spaces.

14. External providers, venues and adventurous activities

Where an external provider, venue or instructor is used, the visit leader must check that the provider is suitable for the planned activity. The level of checking must be proportionate to the risk level of the activity.

Provider checks may include:

- public liability insurance;
- risk assessments or safety information;
- staff qualifications, instructor competence and supervision arrangements;
- safeguarding arrangements and DBS/supervision expectations where relevant;
- first aid and emergency procedures;
- licences, accreditation or Adventure Activities Licensing Authority coverage where relevant;
- accessibility and reasonable adjustment arrangements;
- clear agreement about which adults are responsible for supervision and behaviour management.

The school remains responsible for its students even where an activity is delivered by an external provider. Staff must continue to supervise welfare, behaviour and safeguarding unless a specific, approved arrangement states otherwise.

15. Equine provision, yard visits and animal-related activities

Visits or activities involving horses, yards, stables, farms or animals require careful planning because animals can be unpredictable and environments may include additional risks such as uneven ground, equipment, vehicles, biosecurity, infection, manual handling and weather exposure.

The Head of Equine Provision must be consulted for activities involving horses, riding, stable work, yard tasks, animal handling or animal-related off-site provision.

Risk assessments must consider:

- student experience, confidence, behaviour and sensory needs around animals;
- staff competence and supervision levels;
- appropriate PPE, including riding hats and footwear where required;
- safe movement around horses, stables, gates, vehicles and equipment;
- manual handling and use of yard equipment;
- infection control, handwashing, animal waste and separation of food/drink from animal areas;
- emergency procedures for injury, escape of an animal or sudden change in animal behaviour.

16. Emergency procedures and critical incidents

Each visit must have clear emergency procedures. The visit leader must ensure staff know what to do in the event of accident, illness, missing student, absconding, safeguarding concern, transport failure, significant delay, severe weather, public disorder, security threat or other critical incident.

In an emergency, staff must:

1. Take immediate action to protect students and staff from further harm.
2. Contact emergency services where required.
3. Administer first aid within competence and seek medical help where needed.
4. Contact the school/senior leader emergency contact as soon as practicable.
5. Maintain supervision of the rest of the group.
6. Follow safeguarding procedures and record concerns on CPOMS where relevant.
7. Preserve information needed for accident/incident reporting.
8. Do not speak to the media or share information publicly; refer enquiries to senior leaders.

If a student is missing or has absconded, staff must follow the agreed missing/absconding procedure, maintain supervision of the rest of the group, search only where safe to do so and escalate to police/senior leaders in line with the student's risk assessment and the circumstances.

17. Visits involving residential stays

Residential visits require enhanced planning and senior approval. Planning must include accommodation checks, sleeping arrangements, safeguarding, gender/privacy considerations, staffing cover, overnight supervision, medication, emergency contacts, behaviour support, fire procedures, transport and contingency arrangements.

Parents/carers must receive clear written information before the visit, including itinerary, accommodation details, emergency contact arrangements, costs, kit list, behaviour expectations, medical arrangements and consent requirements.

Staff must ensure students know who to speak to if they feel unsafe, unwell, worried or need help during the residential visit.

18. Finance, insurance and records

The school will ensure that suitable insurance arrangements are in place for educational visits. Visit leaders must check whether additional insurance is needed for higher risk, residential, overseas or specialist activities.

Charges and voluntary contributions must be managed in line with the school's Charging and Remissions Policy. No student should be treated less favourably because of financial circumstances.

The following records must be retained in line with school record retention procedures:

- visit proposal and approval records;
- risk assessments and provider checks;
- parent/carer information and consent records;
- attendance lists and staffing arrangements;
- medical and first aid records relevant to the visit;
- accident, incident, near miss and post-visit review records.

19. Training and competence

Staff leading or supporting educational visits must be competent for the role they are undertaking. Competence may come from training, experience, qualifications, familiarity with students, knowledge of the venue or activity, and understanding of school procedures.

Visit leaders will receive guidance on planning, risk assessment, supervision, emergency procedures, safeguarding, medical arrangements and use of the school's visit documentation. Additional training will be arranged where visits involve higher risk or specialist activities.

20. Monitoring and review

The Proprietor, Directors and Head of Education will monitor the implementation of this policy through review of visit documentation, accident/incident records, near misses, safeguarding concerns, staff feedback and post-visit evaluations.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where there is a significant incident, change in guidance, change in provision or identified weakness in practice.

Appendix 1. Educational visit proposal and approval form

Item	Details
Visit title / purpose	
Proposed date(s) and times	
Visit leader	
Destination / venue / provider	
Students attending	
Educational aims and expected benefits	
Transport arrangements	
Staff attending and roles	
First aider / medical lead	
Student medical, SEND, safeguarding and behaviour considerations checked?	Yes / No / Details
Risk assessment required?	Yes / No / Existing / Visit-specific
External provider checks required?	Yes / No / Details
Parent/carer information and consent required?	Yes / No / Details
Insurance/finance considerations	
Approved by	
Date approved	

Appendix 2. Educational visit risk assessment template

Hazard / risk	Who may be harmed	Existing controls	Additional controls needed	Person responsible	Review during/after visit
Travel / road safety					
Student behaviour / absconding					
Medical needs / medication					
Safeguarding / public spaces					
Venue/activity risks					
Weather / environmental conditions					

Appendix 3. Visit leader checklist

- Educational purpose agreed and visit approved before arrangements are confirmed.
- Visit type and level of risk identified.
- Risk assessment completed or existing local area assessment checked.
- Individual student risk assessments, medical information and behaviour plans reviewed.
- Safeguarding considerations reviewed with DSL where required.
- Staffing levels and staff competence confirmed.
- First aid and medication arrangements confirmed.
- Transport arrangements checked.
- Parent/carer information and consent completed where required.
- Provider/venue checks completed where relevant.
- Emergency contacts, school contact and communication arrangements confirmed.
- Students and staff briefed before departure.
- Headcounts planned and completed during the visit.
- Post-visit incidents, near misses and learning points recorded.

Appendix 4. Parent/carer information and consent checklist

Information to parents/carers should include, where relevant:

- date, time, destination and purpose of the visit;
- transport and staffing arrangements;
- costs or voluntary contribution information;
- clothing, footwear, food/drink and equipment requirements;
- medical and medication arrangements;
- any significant activity-specific risks and controls;
- emergency contact arrangements;
- behaviour expectations and consequences of unsafe behaviour;
- consent statement and opportunity to update medical/contact information.

Appendix 5. Emergency action card

Step	Action
1	Stop the activity if necessary and move students/staff to a place of safety.
2	Assess immediate danger and call 999 where required.
3	Administer first aid within competence and keep the group supervised.
4	Contact school/senior leader emergency contact. Main telephone: 01246 810456.
5	Follow student-specific risk assessment, medical plan or safeguarding plan.
6	Record key facts, times, names, actions taken and witnesses.
7	Do not share information on social media or speak to the media. Refer enquiries to senior leaders.

Appendix 6. Post-visit review form

Item	Review notes
Visit title/date	
Visit leader	
What went well?	
Were there any accidents, incidents, near misses or safeguarding concerns?	
Were risk controls effective?	
Were staffing/supervision arrangements effective?	
Were transport arrangements effective?	
Actions or changes needed for future visits	
Reported to	
Date completed	