

includEd Learning

Independent Specialist Education Provider



OFF-SITE EDUCATION POLICY

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→ 1. Aims

This policy aims to clearly outline IncludEd's policies for the planning and organisation of off-site activities such as school trips. This policy is designed to help staff to ensure that pupils stay safe and healthy on all off-site activities. It should be read in conjunction with the the DfE guidance ['Health and Safety for students on education visits'](#). All school policies apply and should be adhered to and followed as normal during any off-site visit. All off-site activities should have clear curricular or developmental relevance. A statement to this effect should be prepared to support the activity.

→ 2. Responsibilities

All IncludEd Learning staff have a responsibility:

- To take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety.
- To cooperate with their employers.
- To carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions.
- To inform the Assistant Head of any serious risk.

→ 3. Required Planning and Procedures

The following guidelines must be followed by any member of staff wishing to plan and lead an educational visit or trip. Failure to follow the procedures outlined will result in the planned visit or trip, being unapproved and therefore cancelled. Where staff are concerned or have issues regarding these procedures they must firstly contact the Principal, in order to gain guidance and advice.

Organising an Educational Visit

There are 3 broad types of Educational Visit. Depending on the type of visit, the procedure to gain approval is different. The first thing a prospective group leader must determine is which category this.

Visit	Activity	Examples
Type A	Routine local visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Use of local library → Sports fixtures with local schools → Performing Arts visits, theatres, cinema → Places of worship
Type B (School approval process)	Non-routine visits not involving an overnight stay, travel to foreign countries, or Adventurous Activity (unless provided by LA approved providers).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Activities week visits (e.g. Alton Towers) → Museum visits → Theatre trips
Type c (LA approval process)	Non-routine visits involving Adventurous Activities and/or overnight stays, and/or foreign travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → MFL trips to France → DofE → Expeditions → Water sports → Residential stays

Type A Visits

Type A Visits are routine visits that run two or more times a year. They generally involve only short journeys and involve no greater risk to students than they would encounter in a normal day-to-day activity. Each visit follows the same format, often using the same venue. In order for Type A Visits to leave school, group leaders must ensure:

- That they are satisfied that the risk posed to staff and students is no greater than the risks they encounter in day-to-day life.
- Procedures for the visit have been agreed and recorded (a copy should be given to the Principal in advance).
- Appropriate parental consent has been established.
- During school hours, the Main School Reception has: a list of the students and staff involved, details of the activity; and an estimated time of return.
- If not during school hours, a designated member of staff who would act as the contact in the event of an emergency should be identified. This person should be well informed about the visit and have sufficient information to be able to act appropriately in the event of an incident.

Type B & C Visits

Type B & C Visits are non-routine, and carry an increased level of risk. These types of visits require full approval of the Head of Centre and for Type C Visits the partner schools. The stages highlighted over the page must be followed for these types of visits to be formally approved.

It is advised to plan well in advance of any intended visit or trip.

Stage 1 – Initial Approval (EV 1 Form Completion)

The prospective group leader produces a proposal document for consideration by the Principal prior to any detailed planning. Initial approval is only gained through the signed and returned EV 1 Form.

*** NO FORMAL BOOKINGS OR LETTERS TO PARENTS SHOULD BE DONE WITHOUT AN EV 1 APPROVAL!**

Stage 2 – Planning, Risk Assessments & Finance

Once initial approval has been gained, the group leader can then embark on the detailed planning. At this stage the group leader makes the necessary provisional bookings, gains parental consent, and plans the details of the visit in accordance with DfES guidance contained in Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (1998), any additional DfES guidance updates, and the guidance provided by Manchester Local Authority in Educational Visits – Policy and Guidance (2004).

It is important that the group leader at this stage consults with the Finance Team regarding planned bookings of transport, activities, and charging of students. The Finance Team will be able to give guidance on appropriate costs (including any supply cover / costs required), and methods of payment collection. The Finance Team will require the following information from the group leader in order to assist:

- Number of students going on the visit
- Number of staff members who are going on the visit
- Number of Supply Teachers/Volunteers needed to cover staff on the visit
- Destination details
- Date/s of intended visit
- Cost of accommodation, entrance fee etc
- Number of coaches / minibuses required (Finance will negotiate costs with suppliers)

Stage 3 – School Approval (EV 2 Form Completion)

Once the visit has been planned in detail an EV 2 Form has been completed and submitted with any other documentation for the visit to the EVC Coordinator. The EVC Co-ordinator will then arrange for approval by the necessary individuals and/or bodies. Other documentation should include:

- The risk assessments for the journey
- The risk assessments of the activities in which the students will participate
- Safety documentation from the transport providers/tour operators
- A detailed itinerary for the visit that includes each activity.

Stage 4 – Local Authority Approval (Only necessary for Type C Visits)

In the case of Type C Visits, the documentation approved by the school is forwarded by the EVC Coordinator to the partner school. If the Local Authority is satisfied that the visit has been appropriately planned and risks to those involved considered accounted for, approval will be granted in writing. All documentation for Type C Visits must be submitted no later than 1 month prior to the proposed date of the visit.

Once the necessary persons and bodies have approved the documentation, the trip is then fully authorised. Any visit that has not been approved through this process must not go-ahead under any circumstances.

→ 4. Safeguarding Educational Visits

Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our pupils enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience.

Purposes

Educational Visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work;

Alternatively staff may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the courses delivered. Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the pupils are maximised.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at Included.

Responsibilities of the Head of Centre

The Head at IncludEd Learning will endeavour to ensure that:

- they have appointed a suitable group leader;
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins. (This applies even when the head is not going on the visit);
- the risk assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit;
- training needs have been met;
- the group leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
- the group leader has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity;

- all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance;
- the governing body has approved the visit if necessary;
- parents have signed consent forms;
- arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the children;
- the mode of travel is appropriate;
- travel times out and back are known;
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover;
- they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name;
- that they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents and the staff and volunteers' next of kin.

Responsibilities of the Group Leader

One teacher, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been appointed by the Head. The Group Leader should:

- appoint a deputy;
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- be suitable qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;
- have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities below).

Responsibilities of pupils

The group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks;
- follow the instructions of the leader and other adults;
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly;
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it;
- should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous.

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

Responsibilities of the Parents / Carers

The group leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits.

The group leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language;

Parents must:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s);
- sign the consent form;
- give the group leader relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.

→ 5. Planning Off-Site Visits

Planning off-site visits

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

The Head of Centre is responsible for planning all off-site visits. In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the group leader, but the Head must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

The organiser / group leader must agree all plans with the Head the Centre.

→ 6. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using Included Learning's Risk Assessment Form. The risk assessment will decide the adult:child ratio for each visit. The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- what are the risks?
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit? (See section on Supervision.)

The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- the location;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

Exploratory visit

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;
- ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards.

→ 7. First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities, visits which involve overnight stays, or visits abroad it is sensible to have at least one trained first-aider in the group. The group leader should have a working knowledge of first aid and all adults in the group should know how to contact emergency services.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first-aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The Head Teacher should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed. The contents of a first-aid kit will depend on what activities are planned.

→ 8. Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group;
- special needs pupils;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation;
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

Where there is more than one adult supervisor a group leader, who has authority over the whole party, should be appointed.

Where a high adult:student ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use IncludEd Learning staff alone. Parents with appropriate clearance may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the student group.

All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a student.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

→ 9. Preparing Pupils

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. The lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

Participation

Pupils should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities. During the visit they should not be coerced into activities they fear.

Pupils whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such pupils will return home early.

Information to pupils

It is for the group leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information. Pupils should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit / activity;
- background information about the place to be visited;
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- why safety precautions are in place;
- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- what standard of behaviour is expected from pupils;
- who is responsible for the group;
- what to do if approached by a stranger;

- what to do if separated from the group
- emergency procedures
- rendezvous procedures.

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

The Head will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

→ 10. Communicating with Parents/Carers

Communicating with Parents / Guardians

The following information on matters that might affect pupils health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included In a letter to parents / guardians prior to a visit:

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- visit's objectives;
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation and medical cover. Any cover to be arranged by the parents, if appropriate, will be requested;
- clothing and equipment to be taken;
- money to be taken;
- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to.

Parental consent

IncludEd Learning will seek consent for:

- visits involving young people;
- adventure activities;
- visits abroad;
- other residential visits.

If parents withhold consent absolutely the student should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the student in some other way, wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent the Head will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not. The School's parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

→ 11. Residential Visits

Hostels and Hotels

IncludEd Learning will bear in mind the following:

- the group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the young people's – we will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance;
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group;
- access by staff to student rooms must be available at all times;
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults;
- ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions / exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key personnel;
- security arrangements – where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors;
- ensure that locks / shutters etc. work on all the rooms used by the group;
- storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables;
- adequate lighting – it is advisable to bring a torch;
- provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs;
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

→ 12. Coastal Visits

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. At Included, the group leader should bear the following points in mind in the risk assessment of a coastal activity:

- tides and sandbanks are potential hazards so timings and exit routes should be checked;
- ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags;
- establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc;
- some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to the path at all times. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.