

Mountjoy School

Offsite Events and Adventurous Activities Policy

December 2023



This is a Dorset Council Policy
Reviewed by: Senior Leadership Team

Date: December 2023
Date of next review: December 2024



CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Policy of Safety and Guidance -

Offsite Events and Adventurous Activities

1. Scope of the Policy

- 1.1 Adherence to the content of this policy is a requirement for all who are working with children and young people where the LA is the employer. Where schools have bought in to the Outdoor Education Advisory Service it is advised that schools adhere to this policy.
- 1.2 Others, e.g. foundation and voluntary aided schools are strongly advised to adhere to the content of this policy but the LA can accept no liability for its use outside its statutory areas of responsibility. Responsibility for use rests with the employer.

2. Guidance

- 2.1 This policy, all national guidance, supplementary DC guidance and planning forms issued by DC can be accessed via the Outdoor Education Advisory Service or through the school's Evolve account.

Comprehensive employer guidance on organising offsite events and adventurous activities is provided by the national organisation; The Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP). This is accessed at www.oeapng.info

Other valuable guidance can be accessed at www.hse.gov.uk/education and www.lotc.org.uk

Although most content and wording is specific to schools the organisational principles are relevant to all who work with children and young people and must be adopted.

- 2.2 Organisers will also need to make reference to:

- Any organisational unit policies that may apply
- Any local site instructions and advice relevant to sites being used
- National Governing Body guidelines
- Other sources of good practice

3. Organisational Unit

- 3.1 Children's Services is made up of a range of organisational units. These will vary in size but **must** include a trained visit coordinator (see paragraph 7) who may be the unit head or a member of staff acting on behalf of the head.
- 3.2 A school would typically operate as an organisational unit.

4. Organisational Unit Policies

- 4.1 Every organisational unit **must** have a policy for the effective planning and execution of offsite events and adventurous activities. This policy must clearly state the responsibilities of all who play a role within the system, the preparations that must be undertaken before an event and expectations during and after any event. Operating procedures must ensure that organisation will be in compliance with the employer's guidance.
- 4.2 An example policy can be accessed via the Outdoor Education Advisory Service or through the school's Evolve account.

5. Approval

- 5.1 All offsite events and adventurous activities **must** receive approval from the head teacher before commencement. This task may be delegated to a suitably competent person, the visit coordinator, but responsibility for approval remains with the head teacher.

An organisational unit has responsibility for approval of events and activities.

6. The role of the Local Authority (LA) / Outdoor Education Adviser

- 6.1 It is the role of the LA / Outdoor Education Adviser to provide guidance, assess proposals, advise and to monitor practice.

- 6.2 Monitoring will be undertaken as follows;

- Through the 3 yearly formal audit of procedures. (currently for all secondary, middle and special schools on request)
- Through the general programme of health and safety audits
- Requests for evidence of planning following LA notification
- Field monitoring of DC employee led adventurous activity

7. Visit Coordinator

- 7.1 All units **must** have a member of staff who acts as the knowledgeable person with regards to the organisation of offsite events and adventurous activities - the visit coordinator.

More detail on the role of the visit coordinator can be accessed at www.oeapng.info

This person may be the unit head or a person acting on behalf of the unit head.

The person appointed should be specifically competent. The level of competence required will relate to the size of the unit and the type and number of events undertaken.

- 7.2 The appointed person **must** attend the DC Educational Visit Coordinator training, details of which can be obtained from the Outdoor Education Adviser or <http://www.dorsetnexus.org.uk/> and log in, click on Training and scroll down to Quick Course Search and search for EVC. This person **must** demonstrate relevant CPD by attending an EVC Refresher course every 3 years.

- 7.3 All correspondence from the LA will be sent to the unit head and visit coordinator unless an alternative contact has been requested.

8. Using an External Provider

- 8.1 An external provider is any individual or organisation that contracts to provide services to an organisational unit.

Organisers have a responsibility to make suitable and sufficient checks on a provider to establish that required standards of safety and quality are met.

Checks should be made through use of;

Form 4 – External Provider Check.

However, Form 4 does not need to be used if the provider has other verifications of safety and quality that provide the same assurances. These are;

- Holders of the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge Visit www.lotc.org.uk for further information
- Dorset CC Outdoor Education Service
Visit www.dorsetforyou.com/outdoored for further information

8.2 If doubt exists as to whether the checks made are sufficient or the responses received through use of Form 4 are adequate advice must be sought from the LA.

9. The Planning Process

9.1 The Planning Process is coordinated via the Evolve software system and all schools must buy in to the Outdoor Education Advisory Service in order to access the system. **School should submit trips to the LA at least 28 days before departure where appropriate.**

Schools **may** choose to use the following forms as part of their in school procedures these are available via the Resources tab on Evolve. However, the Evolve system is structured in such a way that schools can use it for preliminary approvals if they choose.

- **Form 4.** External Provider Check

Organisational units may adapt forms 1,2,3 and 6 or make use of their own if they provide the same level of information.

9.2 However, the following **must** be used, when applicable, in the provided format;

- **FORM 4** – External Provider Check (The link to Form 4 will appear on Evolve)

9.3 Planning must be sufficient and evidence of planning and any agreed operational procedures is essential for all events and activities. The Evolve system will automatically determine the level of planning and approval required for different types of trips. All trips which are overnight, oversea or those involving adventurous activities will be submitted to the LA. Trips which fall outside of these categories should be recorded on Evolve but will be authorised at school level rather than LA. **School should submit trips to the LA at least 28 days before departure.**

Appendix 1

The following information is accessible at www.dorsetforyou.com/outdoored

- 10 Tors challenge guidance
- Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions guidance
- South west mountain and moorland leader training scheme
- DC Notes and Guidance on the Use of Minibuses

If organisers cannot find advice specific to their plans contact should be made with the Outdoor Education Adviser

Appendix 2

Useful Dorset Council Contacts

- Outdoor Education Adviser
Tel: 01929 552265
e mail: paul.burrows@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Health and Safety – Senior Adviser
Tel: 01305 221515 - 224092
e mail: paul.downton@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Manager

e mail: patricia.walker@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Insurance and Risk Management – Technical Officer
Tel: 01305 224075
e mail: daphne.samways@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Minibus guidance / Driver training
Tel: 01305 221591
E mail: timothy.woolford@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Questions regarding the content or implementation of this policy should be addressed to;

Paul Burrows, Outdoor Education Adviser

E mail: paul.burrows@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Tel: 01929 552265