



## POLICY DIRECTIVE

# OFF-SITE VISITS AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION

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## Summary of Changes from Previous Versions

Version no/Date	Change	Comment	Section/ Page
V2.0	General update.	Additional accountabilities added for OEA, EVC and Visit Leader.	1.5
		Additional information and contact details added to record keeping section.	6.0
		Updated terminology.	General
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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1. Policy Statement

Children and young people in the Bailiwick of Guernsey are entitled to, and regularly participate in educational visits and off-site learning opportunities (including adventurous activities) as part of their learning, educational experience and personal development. These opportunities are integral to a rounded educational experience which excites, challenges, motivates and stimulates learners. Staff also benefit from visits and outdoor education. The experiences can improve relationships between staff, and staff and young people, increase the variety and interest in their work, and gain the professional development inherent in organising and leading visits and managing teams.

The Education Office recognises the important role that educational visits, off-site opportunities, adventurous activities and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) plays in providing a rich and rewarding education for children and young people whatever their age, ability or circumstances.

The Education Office actively supports and encourages such opportunities. In so doing, it recognises that this may involve exposing participants to challenges and risks with which they may not be familiar. The Education Office has arrangements and procedures in place to help identify and manage risks, reducing them to an acceptable or tolerable level, ensuring a balancing of the risks against the benefits of the activity.

All opportunities falling within the scope of this policy must:

- Comply with recognised sector best practice guidance with respect to issues falling within the scope of this policy. For the purposes of this policy, this means compliance with the guidance issued in the current [Off-Site Visit Procedures](#) and by the [Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel \(OEAP\)](#) National Guidance unless this guidance is specifically over-ridden by a requirement within this or any other Education Office Policy. Where this Policy and guidance is overridden by another policy the reasons for this must be documented. In some instances, Guernsey Education Office Policy and Procedures differs from National Guidance or is more specific. This can be due to different legislation, regulation, and variations on how schools in Guernsey are managed compared to those in the UK. If there is any doubt contact the Outdoor Education Advisor (OEA).
- Be allocated sufficient resources (time, planning, staff, budget) to enable activities and opportunities to be undertaken safely
- Be subject to a risk management process that is informed by Risk Benefit Assessment, where the benefits of the proposed activity are balanced against the risks with details on how the risks will be effectively managed or controlled. The outdoor learning environment provides contact with a broad spectrum of controlled

risk. Outdoor learning must provide appropriate levels of control whilst delivering safe risk saturation that cannot easily be achieved within the 'educational facility'. Learning outcomes provides safe exposure to appropriate risk levels helping learners to identify, contextualise and manage risk, to gain confidence in control mechanisms and risk mitigation. Part of the curriculum and learning for young people is to learn how to identify and manage appropriate risk. Where risks to participants are viewed as high or unacceptable, then the activity must not be carried out until further advice has been sought from the OEA at The Education Office. Specific risk assessment guidance can be found on the OEAP National Guidance web site and this must form the basis of the management of any activities

- Be monitored to satisfy The Education Office that the requirements of this policy (and associated Off-Site Visits procedures) are being met

### 1.2 Policy Objectives

This policy sets out a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of off-site visits and outdoor education in order to manage and minimise risk, promoting the safety, health and welfare of all staff and pupils at all times. It is in place so that young people can safely discover the world beyond their classrooms and settings.

The aims and objectives of high quality off-site visits and Outdoor Education include:

- Enhancing curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils
- Enabling a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone
- Promoting the independence of our children as learners and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments

This policy must be read in conjunction with the current [Off-Site Visits Procedures](#).

### 1.3 Definitions

**Adventure Activities:** Activities that take place in challenging environments or other areas that can present technical or environmental complexity in the organisation or delivery of the activity. Many adventure activities have well established National Governing Bodies that train, assess and validate the competency of staff to lead in the activity. Alternatively, competence statements are another way of demonstrating a person has the necessary skills, knowledge, aptitude, training and experience to supervise an adventure activity.

**Children, Young People, Pupils, Students, Learners:** All young people under the care of The States of Guernsey Education Office schools, establishments and services.

**Educational Visits:** Any visits with one or more young people that leave a school site, to journey to another location, either during the school day, or for extended periods beyond the school day. This usually does not include work experience or activity in schools on split sites or other school site. The activity is planned and organised by the school. It may be a visit to a nearby museum, a residential overnight stay, or a more adventurous visit for an extended time to a developing country, etc.

**Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC):** Activity that takes place on the school site and/or beyond. Some of this will be covered by Educational Visits.

**Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP):** supports Local Authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It provides a forum for sharing and developing good practice for off-site visits, Outdoor Learning and Learning Outside the Classroom. It produces National Guidance which is the best practice comprehensive guidance for managing adventure activities, off-site and residential opportunities including school visits. National Guidance is endorsed by the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the UK.

**Outdoor Education Advisor (OEA):** the designated member of staff responsible for monitoring and advising on this policy and its associated procedures.

**Off-site Activities:** Activities or opportunities that occur away from the base of regular work with children or young people organised by staff who work within schools and services.

**Staff:** A representative of The Education Office or any agency worker or volunteer/responsible adult working for The Education Office, its schools or services.

### 1.4 Policy Application

This policy applies to the following opportunities when undertaken by children and young people under the supervision or control (whether pastoral or direct) of The Education Office representative or which are facilitated by The Education Office or its schools:

- Off-site opportunities, visits, trips or excursions
- Residential visits
- Activities that fall within the remit of Learning Outside the Classroom
- Adventure activities

This policy applies regardless of whether or not the opportunities take place within or outside of curriculum time, normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

The Education Office uses National Guidance provided by the OEAP (<http://oeapng.info/>) as the main source for guidance to inform its offsite visit policy and procedures. Some of the

information from this source is evaluated, interpreted and applied within the Guernsey context to inform a set of more specific Off-Site Visits Procedures. Where this is not the case National Guidance must be used to inform the management of schools visits and residential stays.

The Education Office representatives must work within the requirements of Education policies and procedures and therefore staff must follow the requirements of this policy, the accompanying procedures, and OEAP National Guidance, as directed by this policy.

Throughout this policy directive, 'Headteacher' refers to Heads of Service, the Principals of the secondary schools and the College of Further Education Principal, and 'school' refers to any education establishment.

The terminology describing responsibility for some of the services delivered centrally has changed. For clarity the Education Resources and Estates Management is responsible for functions relating to the Education estate, Health and Safety, Risk Management etc. The Education Office is responsible for providing governance, support and challenge to settings.

### 1.5 Accountabilities

In addition to the overall responsibilities for managing health & safety matters that are described in the [Health and Safety Policy](#), some specific responsibilities apply in relation to the activities covered by this policy.

#### 1.5.1 Head of Resources

The Head of Resources is responsible for:

- Allocating sufficient resources to ensure that adequate competent advice is available to provide advice, guidance support and training to Education establishments providing off-site visits, residential opportunities and activities falling within the scope of this policy. The Education Office achieves this requirement in part by appointing an OEA
- Ensuring that the requirements of this policy are adequately monitored and that corrective actions are taken, as necessary, to obtain compliance with the requirements of this policy and procedure
- Reporting significant failings in this policy and associated procedures to the Chair of Education, Sport and Culture Health and Safety Committee so that they can maintain effective oversight health and safety compliance

#### 1.5.2 Outdoor Education Advisor (OEA)

The OEA can provide advice and guidance to duty holders identified within this policy so that they can discharge their duties under this policy effectively.

The OEA is responsible for:

- Providing competent advice and guidance to establishments to enable appropriate activities to be carried out safely
- Monitoring establishments to check that they are complying with relevant conditions set out within this policy and procedures
- Reporting the significant findings of monitoring, including any recommended corrective actions
- Supporting how visits via the online visit management system (currently Evolve) are monitored, the OEA will physically sample monitor a selection of visits via field observation. A small cross section of visits will be selected and onsite monitoring will take place in line with National Guidance. Findings will be reported to the Head of Education Resources and Estates Management and summarised for the Education, Sport and Culture Health and Safety Committee.

### 1.5.3 Headteachers, Principals and Heads of Service

Headteachers play a key role in providing oversight and approval of all activities undertaken by their school. They must satisfy themselves that the school has suitable policies and procedures in place to adequately manage and monitor all opportunities falling within the scope of this policy. The results of any monitoring must be acted on where necessary.

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that any activities falling within the scope of this policy:

- Are adequately resourced (in terms of planning, time, staffing and budget) to secure compliance with the requirements of this policy including the associated off-site visits procedures and any other relevant policies
- Are notified to the OEA where/when required under the terms of this policy and its associated procedures
- Are only led, managed and staffed by competent people
- Have risk management systems in place, using a risk benefit assessment to ensure that adequate risk management measures are implemented. For activities provided and delivered by third parties, reasonable checks of the provider, via the above systems should be used. The Headteacher is not responsible for provider's risk assessments but they can be used to help inform planning and the schools own specific risk assessments to cover the visit
- Are monitored and any significant findings are reported to the OEA so that they can maintain effective oversight of these activities

Headteachers may appoint a member (or members) of their staff to carry out these duties on their behalf. Where such appointments are made, the Headteacher remains responsible for the standard to be achieved and, as such, they must monitor the performance of these

appointed persons (Educational Visits Coordinators or EVCs) to ensure that the required tasks are being carried out correctly and competently. Appointment of EVCs must be in writing setting out clearly what tasks have been delegated to them. Headteachers must ensure the EVC remains current with the appropriate EVC training.

EVCs must have sufficient authority (i.e. it is strongly recommended that they will be a senior member of staff) to enable them to undertake their role and should be provided with the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.

The Headteacher or Head of Establishment/Service has the responsibility to ensure that any changes to their EVC is notified to the OEA so that if required steps can be taken to train their replacement as soon as practicable.

More detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of Headteachers can be found in the current Off-Site Visit Procedures and on the OEAP National Guidance web resource (<http://oeap.info/>)

### 1.5.4 Educational Visits Co-ordinators (EVC)

EVCs are responsible for delivering tasks delegated to them by their Headteacher. Once appointed, EVCs have an additional responsibility to ensure that they bring any significant failings relating to compliance with this policy and its associated procedures to the attention of their Headteacher and the Outdoor Education Advisor.

Due to the nature of the role the EVC must be an experienced member of staff:

- Who is part of, or able to influence, the Senior Management Team
- With sufficient authority to make a judgement call about the competence of any other staff member to lead an off-site visit and to approve or decline visits planned by any staff member
- Have a suitable background in education or youth work
- Have a firm knowledge in the organisation and planning of off-site visits
- Who has received the specific Education Office/OEAP EVC training, which must be revalidated every 3 years (unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed with Education). For more information on the training contact the OEA or the Education Professional Development team.

The EVC is the routine contact for dialogue with the OEA. Unless explicitly delegated to an EVC, these responsibilities would rest with the Headteacher who would need complete EVC training.

The EVC will:

- Ensure that risk assessments are completed and, when appropriate, individual safety plans and safe working practices;
- Ensure that all visits are planned and approved in accordance with this policy and procedure whilst supporting The Education Office in any decision on approval;
- Assign competent and capable staff to lead or otherwise supervise and assist with visits;
- Verify that accompanying adults have been appropriately DBS checked and met current Education safeguarding expectations;
- Make sure that all consent and relevant medical details are obtained for staff, volunteers and learners;
- Ensure emergency arrangements and contacts are in place for each visit;
- Keep records of individual visits including what worked well, what didn't and any accident/incident reports
- Carry out occasional monitoring of visit, this may identify further training needs
- Keep records of visits and attain after-visit evaluations or reviews from pupils and staff to help inform lessons learnt and to aid future visit management and planning
- Ensure that relevant Insurance details are communicated to parents and that the policy is suitable and sufficient

More detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of the EVC can be found in the Off-site visit Procedures and on the National Guidance web resource.

### 1.5.6 Visit Leader

Under normal circumstances and for most visits the Visit Leader is approved (after consideration of their competence for the specific visit), by the head of the Establishment/Service. A record of the appointment or approval of a Visit Leader by the Headteacher must be kept. The appointment should take into account the National Guidance document 3.2d "[Approval of Leaders](#)". Visit Leader competency and responsibilities are outlined in The Education Office's [Off-Site Visit Procedures](#) with further detailed information available in the National Guidance [web resources](#) (under Visit Leader). The Education Office provides specific training for Visit Leaders which includes a practical half day Coast and Countryside course, this can be complimented by the classroom based Visit Leader course (half day) which includes an element of risk management awareness. These courses are strongly recommended to help demonstrate competence. Visit categories are defined in the Offsite Visit Procedures. Staff leading groups on the cliffs or in the water margins should as a minimum, have attended the Coast and Countryside course (or an Education Office agreed equivalent). These courses do not have an expiry date but staff may wish to refresh their training to stay current and as and when they or their line managers deem appropriate. Bookings can be made via the [Education Professional Development team](#) or enquires to the OEA.

### 1.5.7 Who Needs Further Leader Approval?

The Education Officer or school employees or volunteers who wish to lead in demanding environments or adventurous activities (normally category 'B' visits), e.g. Mountain Leader terrain, must first be confirmed as technically competent to lead by their Headteacher (with the assistance of the OEA if needed). The OEA can provide guidance on relevant technical qualifications and expectations in these situations. The school must keep evidence of staff's competency and ensure it is current.

More detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of Visit Leaders can be found in the [Off-site visit Procedures](#) and on the [National Guidance web resource](#).

### 1.5.8 Members of Staff

Staff are responsible for taking care of themselves and for others (colleagues, learners, etc.) who may be affected by their actions or their omissions. In the context of this policy this means they must:

- Co-operate with line managers and supervisors by implementing the agreed actions of any risk management process and planning, observing agreed management plans wherever and whenever they undertake or are involved in activities falling within the scope of this policy
- Bring to the attention of management any failings, or opportunities for improvement, in the risk management process relating to visits and activities falling within the scope of this policy

More detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of Visit Staff can be found in the [Off-site Visit Procedures](#) and on the [National Guidance web resource](#).

## 2.0 Arrangements for Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award activity

Establishments planning a DofE Award expedition/activity must comply with the DofE Award Expedition Code of Practice. They must contact the DofE Award Manager before starting or planning for the activity to ensure that the all aspects of the activities including the Expedition (training, practice and qualifying) meets the requirements of the DofE Award. The DofE Manager is based at the Youth Commission. Any DofE Award visit, expedition or training undertaken by States schools is subject to the same expectations and management outlined in the current [Off-Site Visit Procedures which must be complied with](#). The Headteacher/EVC is responsible for ensuring this is sent for final approval to both the DofE manager and to The Education Office via 'EVOVLE' to seek final approval.

Expedition supervisors/leaders must obtain the relevant National Governing Body leadership awards (or agreed equivalent Technical Advisor statement of competence) for the terrain in which they wish to supervise before leading groups.

### 3.0 Off-Site Visits Procedures

To secure the above policy objectives, The Education Office has arrangements in place outlined in the Off-site Visits Procedures to:

- Establish and maintain procedures to help schools and establishments comply with the requirements of this policy and its procedures
- Provide competent advice to enable staff with responsibilities for any aspect of this policy and its procedures to help meet requirements placed on them
- Provide written guidance and procedures for staff to help enable them to fulfil their responsibilities within the scope of this policy and its procedures
- Provide access to suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training (if appropriate) for staff organising, facilitating, leading and advising on such approved opportunities
- Comply with reasonable directions and instructions issued by external organisations providing such opportunities / activities where these are issued in order to secure the health and safety of other persons
- Establish structures to enable the reporting of any significant findings of monitoring activity (e.g. incident reports) to the Head of Resources

The [Off-Site visit Procedure](#) outlines this process more fully and details other necessary endorsements and routes to approval.

### 4.0 Emergency Planning, Critical Incident Support and Incident Reporting

The Education Office is committed to providing emergency planning procedures to support establishments in the event of a critical incident. The Critical Incident Policy should be engaged if necessary. Please refer to the [Critical Incident Policy - Management and Support](#) for further information.

All health and safety related incidents, including any “near-misses”, arising from activities covered by this policy must be reported to the Health and Safety Manager at The Education Office (EVOLVE accident book is the usual way to achieve this.)

### 5.0 Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy and the accompanying Off-Site Visits Procedures will be monitored and reviewed.

### 5.1 Internal Monitoring by the Headteacher/EVC

The Headteacher/EVC must monitor visits annually on a sample basis to ensure compliance with this policy.

Monitoring by the Headteacher/EVC should include:

- Scrutiny of standards of visit planning and organisation as part of the visit approval process
- Occasional observation of visit leadership and visit management

Following observation of visit leadership, the visit leader must be provided with verbal and written feedback and recommendations for further training if necessary. A copy of the observation report should be given to the Visit Leader and another copy kept on file by the school/establishment. Evidence of this internal monitoring may be required to demonstrate that the school is fulfilling its requirements under this policy.

### 5.2 Monitoring By The Education Office

The Education Office will monitor schools/establishments off-site visits to ensure compliance with policy and procedures. The Education Office may contact EVCs to notify them of an upcoming monitoring visit or monitoring may be unannounced. Monitoring by The Education Office will be on a sample basis. Significant findings from visit monitoring may be reported to Education, Sport and Culture Health and Safety Committee.

### 5.3 Review

Feedback from monitoring, evaluation, accident/incident and near miss information will be used to review procedures in order to ensure that they meet the standards expected for off-site visit organisation and leadership and to identify further training needs for Visit Leaders and/or EVCs.

Data will be captured to drive improvement metrics. Analysis of visit management will take place to gain continuous improvement in managing visits by capturing relevant key performance indicators.

## 6.0 Record Keeping

Schools/establishments need to retain the following details for any particular visit:

- A copy of the approved visit details should be kept on file for five years for each routine visit (either on the OA1 form or on the online visit approval system).  
Electronic file storage or hard copy are both acceptable.
- List of participants (including staff, volunteers and learners)

- Informed parental consent (NOTE: this can be destroyed three months after the visit if no accidents or incidents have been reported)
- Where an accident or incident has been reported the school/establishment should retain the parental consent form for the pupil(s)/young person(s) involved
- If there has been an accident/incident on a visit, schools/establishments must ensure that The Education Office is notified.

In addition, schools/establishments should archive in the school/establishment records a copy of their:

- Educational Visits Policy (for Category A visits and associated risk assessments) – this should be dated so that the version current at the time of any visit can be traced
- standard risk management procedures dated as current at the time of the visit
- records of staff competence and training (perhaps as part of the appraisal/performance management records)

This information should be kept in line with the fair processing notice for the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture available via [gov.gg](http://gov.gg) in addition to any other relevant policies (including the [data protection retention schedule](#)). Regarding this policy the information must be retained no longer than is necessary after which it can be destroyed.

Any questions or concerns around data protection and information management should be directed to [data.protection@gov.gg](mailto:data.protection@gov.gg).

## 7.0 Further Advice

More information on how to apply this specific policy is can be found in the [Off-site Visit Procedures](#) or from the Outdoor Education Advisor.