



Educational experiences and Off-site activities

Primary and Secondary Academies

September 2026

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Introduction

Off-site activities are those activities arranged by or on behalf of the Academy but which take place outside the boundaries of it.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the evaluation and planning of off-site visits and to ensure any risks are both managed and kept to a minimum for the safety and health of pupils at all times in line with DfE guidance 'Health and safety on educational visits'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>

We seek to make our visits available to all students and, wherever possible, to make them accessible to those with disabilities

Visits will usually take place during the academy day. However, they may occasionally take place outside normal academy hours and may include routine local visits, day visits, residential visits, overseas visits and adventurous activities.

All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose which is clearly related to the curriculum or the academy's wider personal development, enrichment, careers, sporting or community programme.

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must ensure all off-site activities take place under the terms of this policy, the Educational Visit Emergency Pack, approved risk-assessment arrangements and the Trust's safeguarding requirements.

Aims and objectives

North Star Community Trust believes that off-site activities should: -

- complement and enhance both curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils
- provide a wider range of experiences than could be provided on the Academy site alone
- promote the independence of our pupils as learners and enable them to both grow and develop in new learning environments
- be planned inclusively so that pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical needs, protected characteristics or financial disadvantage are not placed at an avoidable disadvantage and reasonable adjustments are considered at the earliest stage
- be managed through a proportionate and sensible approach which focuses on significant, genuine risks rather than unnecessary paperwork

Roles and responsibilities

The Trust, as employer, retains overall responsibility for health and safety. The Trust's executive leadership is responsible for ensuring that suitable arrangements are implemented consistently across all academies and that the policy is reviewed when required.

The Chief Executive Officer is the executive owner of this policy. The Trust's executive leadership approves operational revisions. The Board of Trustees does not approve this policy but receives appropriate assurance through safeguarding, health and safety and risk-reporting arrangements.

Each Headteacher must ensure that the academy has access to a suitably competent Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), that visit leaders are competent for the visit they lead, and that approval, monitoring and review arrangements are effective.

The EVC supports the Headteacher by providing advice, checking that visit plans are proportionate and complete, maintaining records, identifying training needs and monitoring practice. The EVC does not remove the responsibilities of the Headteacher or visit leader.

The EVC will complete an annual assurance review of a proportionate sample of visit files, including routine, higher-risk and residential visits where applicable. The review will consider approval, staff competence and training, safeguarding and DBS decisions, provider checks, medical and allergy arrangements, participation and reasonable adjustments, incidents and near misses, emergency readiness and post-visit learning. Significant themes and required actions will be reported to the Headteacher and Trust executive leadership.

Authorisation

Where a member of staff is proposing to arrange an off-site activity, the appropriate approval must be obtained **before** any commitment is made on behalf of the academy.

Planning and approving the visit or trip

A list of key documents and checks, collectively known as a visit plan, are usually prepared prior to any visits or trips. A summary of the visit plan can be found at the conclusion of this section.

The Headteacher will appoint a leader responsible for running the activity who must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety is of utmost importance, including an awareness of any medical conditions party members may have. This will normally be a teacher employed at the academy (although it could be a teacher from one of the other academies within North Star Community Trust).

The visit leader must have the skills, status, experience and competence needed for the role, understand the risks involved and be familiar with the activity.

Planning and approval must be proportionate to the nature, location and complexity of the visit. Routine local visits involving everyday risks may be covered by an approved local-visit procedure, generic risk controls and standing parental consent. Higher-risk, residential, overseas or adventurous activities require visit-specific planning and formal approval by the Headteacher and Chief Executive Officer.

Preliminary visits

Wherever possible, staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue in order to familiarise themselves and make a proper assessment, taking into consideration the: -

- age of the children
- size of the group
- time of the year (and probable weather conditions)
- suitability of the facilities
- venue's own approach to security and health and safety

Where a preliminary visit is not reasonably practicable, the visit leader must obtain equivalent current information through reliable sources, such as the provider, EVC, venue documentation, virtual briefings, previous visit evaluations or recognised quality-assurance schemes.

It is important to assess any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit as this helps form the risk assessment which must state both the extent of any risks involved and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them.

Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is made as to whether the visit should proceed.

Venues providing activity-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand (or if they are unable to make informed judgements about the risk it may involve).

The academy must not approve the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

Where an outside organisation is used, the academy must check appropriate safety standards and public liability insurance. A current Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge may be accepted as evidence of nationally recognised standards. Where no badge is held, appropriate checks must cover legal compliance, insurance, safeguarding, staff competence, emergency procedures, risk controls, vehicles, accommodation, subcontracting and any required adventure-activity licence.

Provider due diligence must also confirm the scope and limit of insurance, arrangements for safeguarding and reporting concerns, the identity and competence of instructors, incident-notification arrangements, data handling, accommodation and rooming arrangements, and any use of subcontractors. The academy must have a clear written agreement setting out the responsibilities of the provider and the academy, particularly where the provider will take over direct supervision. On arrival, the visit leader must verify the identity of the provider's lead staff and confirm that material arrangements have not changed.

The cost of a preliminary visit will be borne by the academy and should be built into the overall cost of the visit / activity itself.

Risk assessment(s)

Before undertaking any off-site activity, the named lead person will complete a written risk assessment to assess the specific / individual risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them such as: -

- what are the specifics of the trip and the potential risk of harm?
- what are the hazards and who might be affected by them?
- what safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group leader ensure safety measures are in place?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- Are there any specific individual needs of children including any known medical conditions or (with advice from the parents and / or the academy's welfare assistants) where the child has an individual healthcare plan?
- have safeguarding and DBS requirements been assessed according to each adult's role, frequency, supervision and whether the visit is overnight?

Risk management must be proportionate and focus on significant risks. Existing generic assessments may be used where suitable, but must be reviewed for the particular group, activity, conditions and location. Visit leaders must also be prepared to make and record dynamic decisions where circumstances change.

The risk assessment will be signed by the Headteacher

Generic or venue risk assessments should not contain unnecessary personal data. Where a pupil or adult has individual needs that create additional risks, a separate confidential individual risk-management plan should be prepared, shared only with those who need it, and stored securely. Where a venue / attraction provides a risk assessment, this can be attached before submission to the Headteacher.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the academy, the party leader should discuss with the Headteacher the possibility of an individual plan to enable safe participation.

Any decision not to permit participation must be exceptional, evidence-based, proportionate, consistent with safeguarding and behaviour policies, and must take account of SEND, disability, medical needs, the Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments. The decision must not be used as a punishment and should be recorded with the educational alternative offered.

Where a pupil has SEND, a disability, a medical condition, an identified safeguarding vulnerability or another additional need, planning must record appropriate consultation with the pupil, parents or carers, the SENCo, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and relevant medical or other professionals as required. The visit plan must identify reasonable adjustments, additional staffing, equipment, funding or other support considered, together with the reasons for any decision that the pupil cannot safely participate.

Medical, allergy and medication arrangements

Before departure, the visit leader must confirm that current Individual Healthcare Plans, Allergy Action Plans, Asthma Action Plans, medication instructions, parental consents and emergency arrangements have been reviewed for every relevant pupil. Medication must be in date, correctly labelled, securely carried, immediately accessible when needed and accompanied by a suitable record of administration.

The visit plan must identify trained and competent adults, first-aid provision, storage arrangements and contingencies if a pupil or responsible adult becomes unwell or is separated from the group.

A trip-specific risk assessment must be completed for every pupil at risk of anaphylaxis. The pupil must have immediate access to their prescribed adrenaline device or devices throughout the journey and visit, and at least one accompanying adult must be trained and competent to administer adrenaline in an emergency. The risk assessment must address food provision, allergen exposure, cross-contamination, transport, accommodation and planned activities. The academy must consider whether spare adrenaline devices should accompany the group, without leaving the academy inadequately supplied.

Plans must also address infection or illness, including when a pupil or adult should not travel, isolation and collection arrangements, access to medical advice, the safe management of bodily fluids, and any public-health advice relevant to the visit.

Educational trip

The visit leader must submit the required visit plan through the academy's approved process and obtain Headteacher approval before bookings or financial commitments are confirmed. Routine local visits may operate under a previously approved local-visits procedure.

Parents and carers must be informed about each visit. Written consent must always be obtained for nursery-age children. For pupils over nursery age, written consent is not normally required for curriculum visits during normal academy hours unless the visit requires a higher level of risk assessment; standing consent obtained at admission may be used where appropriate. Parents must still be given relevant information and an opportunity to withdraw their child.

With regard to one-day educational visits, any parent / adult volunteers will be asked to sign an agreement form so that both we and they are aware of the responsibilities and expected behaviours.

Residential, overseas and higher-risk visits

Where an activity involves an overnight stay, travel overseas, travel by sea or air, or an adventurous or otherwise higher-risk activity, approval must be obtained **from** both the Headteacher **and** the Chief Executive Officer before any booking or commitment is made. The EVC must confirm that the planning and provider checks are complete.

Additional requirements for overseas visits

For an overseas visit, the visit leader and EVC must check current Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice before approval, before departure and while the group is abroad. Planning must cover passports, visas and other travel documents; comprehensive travel, medical and repatriation insurance; local healthcare; emergency funds and payment arrangements; local laws and customs; safeguarding standards at accommodation and activity venues; consular and insurer contact details; communication across time zones; and arrangements if a pupil or adult cannot return with the group. Parents and carers must be told about any material travel risks and changes.

Cost calculation, charging and remissions

The costing of off-site activities should include any costs associated with the visit which would normally fall on the academy for example: -

- preliminary visits
- transport

- entrance fees
- insurance
- provision of any resources or equipment specific to the activity
- refreshments the academy has opted to pay for
- costs related to adult helpers

Funding for off-site activities which take place during the academy school day is sometimes supported by voluntary parental contributions. However, no child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution.

Charges may only be made where permitted by law and in line with our **Charging and remissions policy** (available on the policies page of the school website) including for certain optional extras and board and lodging on residential visits. Any statutory remission entitlement must be applied, and the academy should consider additional support for disadvantaged pupils so that cost does not create avoidable exclusion.

The following requirements apply to educational visits and must be read alongside the **Charging and remissions policy**: -

- No charge will be made for education provided during academy hours, including required materials or equipment, or for education outside academy hours where it forms part of the national curriculum, a prescribed public examination syllabus for which the pupil is being prepared, or religious education.
- Voluntary contributions may be requested for activities for which charging is not permitted. Requests must state clearly that payment is voluntary, must not place pressure on families and must confirm that a pupil will not be treated differently or excluded because a parent or carer is unwilling or unable to contribute. The activity may be cancelled where insufficient contributions are received and the academy cannot lawfully or reasonably meet the shortfall.
- A charge may be made for a permitted optional extra only where participation is by parental choice and agreement. The charge for each pupil must not exceed the actual cost attributable to that pupil and must not include an amount to subsidise another pupil.
- For residential visits, a charge may be made for board and lodging only and must not exceed the actual cost. Where the statutory remission criteria apply, eligible parents or carers must be informed of the right to full remission of the board and lodging charge and how to claim it.
- The academy will consider additional remission or financial assistance for pupils experiencing financial disadvantage, in accordance with the Trust's Charging and Remissions Policy and available resources, so that cost does not create avoidable exclusion.
- Any deposit, instalment, cancellation or refund arrangements must be explained in advance, be fair and transparent, and reflect actual costs and unavoidable non-recoverable commitments. Charges, contributions and financial assistance must be approved and recorded through the academy's normal finance procedures.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Headteacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

Supervision and adult-to-pupil ratios

The table below should be used as an NSCT example of the minimum level of adult supervision normally expected. It is a starting point only and does not replace the visit-specific risk assessment. The Headteacher, Educational Visits Coordinator and visit leader may require additional adults where the needs of the pupils, the activity, travel arrangements, venue requirements or other identified risks make this necessary.

Year group	Ratio
Nursery	One adult for every 4 pupils
Reception	One adult for every 5 pupils
Year 1	One adult for every 6 pupils
Year 2	One adult for every 8 pupils
Years 3 - 6	One adult for every 10 pupils
Years 7 - 9	One adult for every 15 pupils
Year 10 and upwards	One adult for every 20 pupils

Depending on the group / activity, additional supervision may be required (e.g. some venues have additional requirements and primary pupils may need extra supervision on minibus trips).

There are no universal statutory adult-to-pupil ratios for school visits. The visit leader must determine a safe and effective level of supervision through the risk assessment, taking account of the pupils' ages, maturity, behaviour, SEND and medical needs; the activity and environment; travel arrangements; venue rules; staff competence; gender and safeguarding considerations; first-aid needs; and contingency arrangements. Early years statutory staffing requirements continue to apply where relevant.

The plan must identify the overall group leader, named subgroup leaders, arrangements for headcounts and transitions, and how supervision will be maintained if an adult or pupil becomes ill or has to leave the group.

Safeguarding and volunteers

All visits are school activities and the Trust's safeguarding and child-protection policies apply throughout. Staff and volunteers must receive a clear briefing on professional boundaries, one-to-one situations, use of toilets and changing areas, photographs and social media, reporting concerns, missing pupils and emergency action.

The visit leader must consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy where a pupil has an identified safeguarding vulnerability, including a child protection plan, child-in-need plan, allocated social worker, known exploitation risk, harmful sexual behaviour concern or another relevant risk. The visit plan must identify how a DSL or deputy can be contacted throughout the visit, including outside normal academy hours. Only information necessary to safeguard the pupil should be shared with accompanying adults.

Residential arrangements must address room allocation, toilets, showers and changing areas, night supervision, privacy, gender and individual needs, one-to-one situations, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour, allegations or low-level concerns about adults, and any required separation or safety plan. Staff must know how to report concerns immediately and how to preserve evidence where an incident may have occurred.

Any safeguarding concern, allegation or low-level concern arising during a visit must be managed under the Trust's safeguarding procedures without delay. The immediate safety of children must be secured, the DSL or deputy and Headteacher contacted, and emergency services or children's social care contacted where required.

DBS decisions must be role-based and lawful. Occasional supervised parent or carer helpers on day visits will not automatically require an enhanced DBS check.

However, from 1 September 2026, all volunteers helping on an overnight school trip are in regulated activity and require an enhanced DBS check with children's barred-list information. Other regular volunteer roles must be assessed against the current regulated-activity criteria. No volunteer may be left in sole charge of pupils unless specifically authorised and appropriately checked. The academy must record the role, frequency, supervision arrangements, level of check considered, the decision reached and confirmation that required checks were completed before the visit is approved.

Transport

Transport arrangements should provide a seat for each member of the party. Only coaches with seat / lap belts should be used and they must be worn by all those participating in the visit.

Where used, Trust minibuses are acceptable as per the trust's minibus policy

However, where private cars / minibuses are used for transport, the party leader is responsible for ensuring that: -

- the insurance of each driver covers such journeys,
- the driver is appropriately licensed, authorised and fit to drive (and that DBS requirements must be determined separately according to the individual's role and contact with pupils)
- the vehicle is roadworthy, taxed, insured, has a valid MOT where required, that suitable seat belts and child restraints are used, that all appropriate transport checks are followed; and
- any applicable Trust or insurer requirements are followed.
- private minibuses must only be driven by persons with the correct license entitlement and in accordance with any applicable Section 19 permit, insurance conditions, vehicle-weight restrictions and any driver assessment required by the Trust or insurer.

All journey planning must include driver hours, rest breaks, weather, safe stopping points, accessibility and emergency arrangements.

Communication, notification and consent

The parents / carers of children taking part in an off-site activity should always be provided with appropriate information about the activity and intended visit.

For routine curriculum visits during normal academy hours involving pupils over nursery age, the academy will normally notify parents and rely on standing consent where it has been obtained. Parents must be told the nature, date, location, travel arrangements, expected return time, clothing or equipment, costs, contact arrangements and any significant risks or special arrangements.

Written consent will be obtained for nursery-age children and for visits outside normal academy hours, residential visits, overseas visits and activities requiring a higher level of risk assessment. Consent does not transfer the academy's duty of care. Current emergency, medical, dietary and accessibility information must be checked before departure.

Further health, safety and emergency considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply to the activity / visit.

Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the academy number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal academy day, a designated Trust or academy emergency contact number must be provided. **Personal home telephone numbers should not be shared unless this has been specifically agreed and is necessary.**

Before a party leaves, the academy office must be provided with a list of everyone travelling with the party (pupils and adults) along with a programme / timetable for the activity and a copy of emergency contact numbers.

The visit leader must carry an accessible emergency pack containing essential participant, medical and contact information, while ensuring confidentiality. Plans must cover first aid, medication, infection or illness, serious incidents, delay, transport failure, adverse weather, missing pupils, communications with families and media, and escalation to senior leaders and emergency services.

The emergency pack must contain only the information necessary for the safe management of the visit. A paper pack must be sealed or securely held under the control of the visit leader; digital information must be held on an approved, access-controlled and encrypted Trust system or device. It must not be stored on an unapproved personal device. Access must be limited to those who need the information for the visit or emergency response.

If a pupil is missing, the visit leader must immediately stop and secure the group, complete an accurate headcount, establish the last confirmed sighting, alert the venue or provider, and organise only searches that can be undertaken safely without reducing supervision of other pupils. The academy emergency contact and DSL must be informed immediately and the police contacted promptly according to the level of risk. A contemporaneous incident and decision log must be maintained.

Communication with parents, carers or the media following a serious incident must be coordinated through the Headteacher, Chief Executive Officer or another nominated senior leader. Staff and volunteers must not make public statements, post on social media or contact families other than as directed, except where immediate communication is necessary to protect life or safety.

Any loss, unauthorised access or disclosure of information from the emergency pack must be reported immediately as a potential personal-data breach. Information may be shared with emergency services or other relevant agencies where this is necessary and proportionate to protect a child or save life; the disclosure and the reason for it must be recorded as soon as practicable. At the end of the visit, the pack must be returned securely and duplicate information securely deleted or destroyed in accordance with Trust data-protection and records-management requirements.

Serious injuries, dangerous occurrences or specified incidents must be reported immediately through the Trust's accident and serious-incident arrangements and investigated appropriately. The Trust's competent health and safety lead or other designated responsible person will determine whether a statutory RIDDOR report is required and will ensure that any report is made by the appropriate responsible person. Most school-trip incidents are not automatically

reportable. Safeguarding concerns must be referred immediately under the Trust's safeguarding procedures.

Record keeping and review

Risk assessments and local-visit procedures must be reviewed after incidents or near misses, when the group, route, venue, provider or conditions change, and at suitable planned intervals. The visit leader should complete a proportionate evaluation so that learning informs future visits.

Visit leaders must ensure that incident, accident, near-miss, safeguarding, medical and allergy records are completed promptly and shared with the appropriate academy or Trust lead. Serious incidents and allergy-related near misses must trigger a review of the pupil's plan, relevant risk assessments and the effectiveness of this policy. Records connected with an accident, safeguarding concern, complaint, insurance claim or potential litigation must be retained for the longer applicable period and must not be routinely destroyed.

Visit plan

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following and it is safer to assume that all apply unless the nature of the visit / location dictates that they do not.

- report on preliminary visit (where possible)
- risk assessment
- application(s) for approval of visit
- confirmation of EVC and Headteacher approval, and CEO approval where required
- general information: names, ages, contact details, consent or permission evidence, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit
- individual risk-management or reasonable-adjustment plans where required, stored confidentially
- travel schedule
- transport and driver checks where relevant
- accommodation plan (if applicable)
- full plan of activities
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures
- intended arrangements for supervision
- intended arrangements for all members of the group
- appropriate DBS checks
- record of the role-based DBS decision for staff and volunteers

- provider, insurance, licence and safeguarding checks
- emergency contacts and procedures
- general communications information
- guidance for party leader, the emergency contact and Headteacher
- medical questionnaire returns
- first aid boxes
- post-visit evaluation and incident or near-miss follow-up
- evidence of consultation and reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, medical, safeguarding or other additional needs
- current Individual Healthcare Plans, Allergy Action Plans, Asthma Action Plans, medication arrangements and confirmation of trained accompanying adults
- DSL consultation and an in-hours and out-of-hours safeguarding contact where required
- residential rooming, privacy, night-supervision and child-on-child safeguarding arrangements where applicable
- overseas travel advice, travel documents, insurance, emergency funds and return contingencies where applicable
- a completed Educational Visit Emergency Pack and arrangements for its secure custody, return and disposal
- missing-pupil procedures, communication arrangements and the nominated senior lead for family and media communications
- charging, voluntary contribution, remission and financial-assistance arrangements, where applicable
- a written provider agreement and arrival identity checks where an outside organisation is used
- internal escalation arrangements for serious incidents and consideration of RIDDOR by the Trust's competent person

Links to other policies

- Safeguarding, child protection and associated procedures
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Allergy policy
- Minibus policy
- Trips financial procedures
- SEND Policy and information report
- Charging and remissions policy
- Behaviour policy

Adult voluntary escort for one day educational visits

Please print clearly: -

Your name:	
Your child's name:	
Name of academy:	
Lead teacher:	
Trip / location of visit:	

Please read the following requirements carefully. The School will only consider and accept adults as volunteers on school educational visits who strictly adhere to the following requirements / expectations.

1. I agree to act as an 'Adult Voluntary Escort' for the purposes of this educational visit and I have been fully briefed as to the arrangements for this visit and the nature of my duties.
2. I understand that the Lead Teacher will be responsible for the overall conduct of the visit. I am willing to undertake any reasonable duties that may be asked of me by the Lead Teacher or any other accompanying teacher.
3. I will support the safety and wellbeing of all the children on the visit, and as such, I agree to be under the supervision of the teaching staff and will follow any given instructions related to this, including any instruction affecting my child / children.
4. I will model and enforce the school's expectations of behaviour at all times whilst on the visit and will ensure that my child is treated in the same manner as others who may be under my direct supervision.
5. I understand that any incidents and/or injuries however minor are dealt with as per the visit briefing and will be reported in full to the lead teacher.
6. I understand the Trust maintains insurance arrangements for authorised activities but this agreement still follows the law and keeps standard legal responsibilities in place. I will immediately report any accident, injury, illness, loss, safeguarding concern or 'near miss' to the Lead Teacher and will not admit liability or make commitments on behalf of the Trust.
7. I understand that I must maintain appropriate professional boundaries, must not take photographs or post information about the visit or pupils on personal devices or social media, and must follow the safeguarding, confidentiality and data-protection instructions given in the briefing.
8. I understand that I must not be left in sole charge of pupils unless specifically authorised and appropriately checked, and that I must immediately report any concern about a child or adult to the Lead Teacher.
9. I understand that I must not retain, copy, photograph or share confidential information about pupils or the visit, and that any paperwork or information provided to me must be returned to the Lead Teacher at the end of the visit.
10. I understand that I must not communicate with parents, carers or the media about an incident, or post information on social media, unless specifically directed by the Lead Teacher or a nominated senior leader.

Signature:		Date:	
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