



Off Site Visits Policy

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Governor's Committee Responsibility:

**Curriculum & Student Welfare
Committee**

Date Approved:

Autumn Term 2020

Review Period:

Three yearly

Next Review Date:

Autumn Term 2023

The Limpsfield Grange Values:

At Limpsfield Grange we believe in working together to make a difference.

We are a tolerant community; we accept value and understand others.

We care for all members of our community without judgement.

We are responsible for our own learning, behaviour and actions.

We accept that sometimes things go wrong. We work together to take responsibility for our mistakes and for putting things right.

We are a respectful community and we treat others as we would like to be treated, even if they have different views and opinions to our own.

We understand that good behaviour helps us to prepare for life beyond Limpsfield Grange.

We are positive and resilient. We celebrate difference in everything that we do.

We are all proud to be part of the Limpsfield Grange community.

July 2017

Limpsfield Grange School Policy for Off Site Visits

COVID-19

During the current pandemic, DfE advice to schools, and HMG advice to the wider community, is developing and changing. The Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) National Guidance for Coronavirus is updated as advice changes and the school will refer to this guidance. All risk assessments for all visits have a section that is specific to Covid-19.

Introduction

Limpsfield Grange acknowledges the immense value of off-site visits and related activities to young people, and fully supports and encourages those that are well planned and managed. The value of off-site visits is well recognized by the Governing Body and fully supported throughout the school. It is emphasized that a culture of safety must prevail and there is a need for careful planning and adherence to statutory requirements. This policy has been informed by advice from the Local Authority and appropriate partner agencies and in recognition of statutory regulations, most specifically by the "Surrey County Council Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities (Including COVID-19 & DofE)" and the OEAP National Guidance. An off-site visit is any activity that involves students leaving the school premises to pursue an activity organised through the Limpsfield Grange. This policy applies to all adults who lead, organise or participate in off site visits involving students from Limpsfield Grange School, including staff, parents, Governors or volunteers. This policy applies to all off site visits that occur during the school day, in the residential provision and at weekends and during school holidays, where they are organised and led by Limpsfield Grange staff.

Offsite visits should:

- Enhance curricular, recreational and social opportunities for students
- Have significant educational and/or social value and be related to the school's established aims and curriculum, including our WACI curriculum
- Be suitable for the students involved, having regard to their ages, abilities, needs and aptitudes
- Aim to be inclusive

In order to do this Limpsfield Grange will:

- Regularly monitor and evaluate existing and potential off-site opportunities to sustain and develop a range of activities that benefit the students
- Seek to reflect the associated staffing and/or cover implications in calculating the cost of an off-site visit, where appropriate
- Have appointed an Educational Visits Coordinator with responsibility for the implementation of agreed procedure and risk assessments

Work experience and attendance by students at link courses provided at partner educational institutions during the school day are not defined as off-site visits in the context of this policy.

Under the **Equality Act 2010**, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled participants

because of their disability, without material or substantial justification. We will make reasonable adjustments to avoid participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage. However, the Equality Act does not require employees or participants to be put at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises. It is also the case that the adjustments made to include a disabled young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** places overall responsibility for health and safety on off-site visits with the employer, which is the Local Authority.

The **Governing Body** satisfies itself that the appropriate procedures, risk assessments and control measures are in place and that the documented guidance notes are being followed. All off site visits that are residential, abroad, or adventurous need to be approved by the Governing Body and Local Authority. Approval by the Governing Body is delegated to the Chair of Governors and is recorded in the minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting prior to the activity taking place.

The **Headteacher** is delegated by the Governing Body to approve all off site visits with the exception of overseas visits, residential visits and adventurous activity visits. These require Local Authority approval. When the Headteacher authorises a visit on EVOLVE, she confirms that the visit complies with school and local authority policy, and that in her opinion the visit leader and any accompanying staff are competent to supervise the visit.

The school has appointed an **Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)**. This post is held by the Deputy Headteacher who has practical experience in leading and managing a range of off site visits. She has attended the appropriate EVC training run by the LA. The EVC supports the Headteacher in ensuring that competent staff are assigned to lead and accompany visits and with approval and other decisions. The EVC ensures that a policy is in place for off-site visits, and that this is uploaded to the EVOLVE resources.

The EVC will:

- Support the group leader in identifying the purpose for the visit and the selection, training and briefing of appropriate supervising adults and volunteer helpers.
- Ensure that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosures are in place where necessary.
- Arrange Emergency Contact Duty Officer and draw up proper procedures to be followed in such an event. The Duty Officer for all visits is either the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher (who is also the EVC) and both are Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Review and regularly monitor procedures
- Liaise with the LA Outdoor Education Adviser to ensure the proposed visit complies with the LA regulations, and OEAP National Guidance, where appropriate.

The **Group Leader** is responsible for identifying the purpose of the visit and following the policy. A risk assessment is necessary for all off-site visits. Significant risks and their control measures will need to be recorded and filed with the EVC.

This will take account of:

- Generic risks
- Event Specific Risks as identified from a pre-visit or through knowledge or experience of the environment, accommodation, the leader's competence, the group and other factors such as transport.
- On-going risks identified by the staff responding to changing circumstances. The participants and staff will be fully briefed on the purpose and the risk assessment control measures
- The medical needs of the students involved and any emergency treatment plan where appropriate.
- Students are encouraged to consider risks involved in an off-site visit and to assist in the design of appropriate risk management strategies that support their learning.

The school uses the web-based system 'EVOLVE' to facilitate the efficient planning, management, approval, and evaluation of all visits. In approving visits, the Head and EVC should ensure that the visit leader has been appropriately inducted/trained, and is competent to lead the visit.

Risk Assessment and Risk Management

'Risk assessment' is a process, and not a document. HSE legislation dictates that the significant findings of the risk assessment process must be recorded, but it does not state any particular format for this. The 'significant findings' are a combination of the identified issues and what is being done about them. As there is no legal requirement to document the findings of the risk assessment process in any particular format, it is up to the school to decide what format works best and will be most useful for them.

It is not possible to eliminate all risks, but these should be reduced to an *acceptable* or *tolerable* level. Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity. An activity should only take place if, in the professional judgement of the leader, the residual risk following implementation of any control measures is deemed to be acceptable.

It is good practice to involve participants in the planning and organisation of visits, as in doing so they will make more informed decisions, will become more 'risk aware' and hence at less risk. They will also have greater ownership of the event.

Alternative arrangements (a Plan B) should be included within the planning process where appropriate.

To inform future visits, it is good practice to record any significant issues following the visit. Based on the nature of the particular visit, the EVC should make a professional judgement regarding the level of first aid required. General 'life experience', or a 3 hour non-assessed 'Basic Skills' course is suitable for routine urban visits. However the nature of the visit may indicate that a higher level qualification is appropriate, especially in circumstances where it is likely that access by the emergency services may be delayed. A first aid kit appropriate to the visit should be carried.

On all visits there must be an 'effective level of supervision' that has been approved by the EVC and Headteacher. The EVC and Headteacher will make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of staffing on an individual visit basis, after consideration of the following factors:

- The type, level, and duration of activity.
- The requirements of individuals within the group, including those with medical needs.
- The experience of staff and other adults.
- The venue, time of year and predicted conditions
- The contingency, or 'Plan B' options.

Direct supervision is where a member of staff is with a young person/group.

Indirect supervision is where young people are unaccompanied by a member of staff, but where there is a member of staff in the vicinity, for example as might occur in a museum.

Remote supervision is where young people are unaccompanied by a member of staff, and the supervising member of staff is not necessarily in the immediate vicinity.

Parent/Carer Consent

When students join the school, parents give consent for local visits. A local visit is within 30 miles of Limpsfield Grange and does not involve adventurous activities. For day visits, or those that take place during the residential provision, that do not involve adventurous activities and are within 30 miles of Limpsfield Grange, parental consent does not need to be sought. However parents should be informed of the intended visit, usually by email. Parental consent will be sought for residential (overnight) visits, visits to London, visits to places of religious observance, visits that involve adventurous activities and visits that involve travelling a distance over 30 miles.

External Providers

An 'External Provider' is defined as where there is an element of instruction, staffing, or guiding, for example, an activity centre or educational tour operator. The decision about the use of an external provider is the responsibility of the visit leader, EVC, and Headteacher. The LA does not maintain a list of 'approved' external providers or tour operators. To confirm that all aspects of the operation of the provider are satisfactory, the school must ensure that either:

- The Provider holds a LOtC Quality Badge or
- A 'Provider Form' has been satisfactorily completed by the provider

Limpsfield Grange uses the list of adventurous activities that is included in the SCC 'Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities (Including COVID-19 & DofE) with links to OEAP National Guidance & EVOLVE 2020' document.

Adventurous activities include abseiling, boating, camping, canoeing/kayaking, high level ropes courses, horse riding, off road cycling, rock climbing (including indoor climbing walls), sailing, swimming (excluding in publicly lifeguarded pools), archery, trampoline parks. The following activities are not considered adventurous - walking in parks or on non-remote country paths, swimming in publicly lifeguarded pools, theme parks, tourist attractions, go karting, and ice skating.

Related policies and documents:

- Behaviour Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Appendix 1 is the school's guidance for the planning and organizing of off site visits.

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| The Governing Body of Limpsfield Grange School adopted this policy on: | |
| It will be reviewed on: | |
| Signed: | |
| Dated: | |

Appendix 1

Guidance Notes for off-site visits

To ensure proper good practice and compliance with the necessary regulations it is expected that all group leaders will familiarise themselves with the published advice and guidance from SCC '**Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities (Including COVID-19 & DofE) with links to OEAP National Guidance & EVOLVE 2020'** document.

In order to plan an off-site visit the EVC should be involved in discussing plans at an early stage. This discussion needs to take place before students are informed of the visit and must also focus on the staffing requirements for the trip. Routine or local visits need to be planned ahead also. It may be possible to approve a series of regularly occurring and repeating events on a termly basis. No financial commitment should be agreed until all relevant approvals have been achieved.

On return the Group Leader must report to the EVC and, where necessary, an evaluation report should be completed in order to achieve any learning about a 'near miss' or where an incident took place but fortunately did not require the completion of an Accident/Significant Incident report form. Perhaps such a form was completed at the venue, however, this does not remove the need to place such an occurrence on the record at the school. A general evaluation of the visit will inform future visits and may be a useful check on the value of the risk assessments undertaken.

Risk Assessment forms should be completed and lodged with the EVC when risks are perceived as significant. External providers will have their own risk assessment documents that can be used to help in this process. For certain activities an Adventurous Activity Licence is legally required. If this is the case their licence number need only be quoted, instead of actually requiring their documents. External residential providers should also be checked for accreditation through the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge scheme as being recognized as having appropriate safety management systems in place for all activities. A provider that does not participate will be asked to complete a Provider Questionnaire Form as evidence of compliance with key safety and quality provision, and then attached to EVOLVE for onward checking by the Outdoor Education Adviser.

Group Leader Checklist for planning an Off-Site Visit

Initial planning

1. Check the school diary for available dates.
2. Check the availability of the minibus/school car if required.
3. Discuss visit with EVC. The staff and students involved must be agreed at this stage. When deciding whether staff can be released for a visit, the EVC will give consideration to the needs of the students involved, but also the needs of the students that remain in school. When deciding whether students should be involved in a visit, the EVC will give consideration to behaviour and attendance.

4. Put the provisional date and information (i.e. who is involved) on the diary and provisionally book the minibus/car.
5. The group leader completes a visit form on EVOLVE and submits it to the EVC, along with a risk assessment. The risk assessment must contain details of all activities that will be undertaken on the trip, along with the associated risks and appropriate control measures.
6. For any residential or adventurous activity, the group leader must also have considered any physical or medical needs of the staff that will be involved. A staff medical questionnaire must also be completed by all staff participating in a residential visit. It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that this is done. These will be confidential and held with the group leader and in the emergency pack. They will be destroyed after the trip.

Once the visit is approved by the EVC, Head and Governing Body and Local Authority (for adventurous, overseas, residential visits only):

1. Confirm the diary dates and vehicle booking.
2. The group leader informs parents. Parents must be able to give informed consent, which means giving them sufficient information to make a decision about whether they want their daughter involved.
3. The group leader must print a copy of their form and risk assessment from EVOLVE. They must ensure that all students and staff are familiar with the risk assessment prior to the visit.
4. The group leader must ensure that all staff are aware of the medical needs and appropriate treatment plan for students. These can be found on the school network.
5. Inform kitchen if you are out over lunchtime/teatime, either ordering packed lunches or letting the Chef know that a number will be absent for lunch/tea.
6. For all residential visits, an emergency pack must be with the EVC for checking 5 working days before the departure of the visit. Once it has been checked, the EVC will ensure that it is copied to the Headteacher and Head of Care.

On the day of the trip:

1. Leave visit form and risk assessment in the office.
2. Take any necessary medication and treatment/care plans.
3. Take school mobile from Deputy Head's office.
4. Consider taking first aid kit, if not using a school vehicle.
5. Sign out all students and staff.
6. Ensure all staff know the emergency school contact number (01883 713928 x188) and which member of SLT to contact in an emergency.
7. Take student and staff medical forms (residential visits and those involving adventurous activities only).

Group Leader Guidance Notes

- Accidents do happen, but it is important that we do all we reasonably can to prevent them. Managing risks helps us to achieve our objectives and help prevent things going wrong. Group leaders must show what they have done to manage potential risk. We need to demonstrate that the potential risks have been considered and steps taken to minimise them.

- The group leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit including direct responsibility for students' health, safety and welfare.
- The group leader must plan and prepare for the visit and assess the risks.
- The group leader must define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and students and ensure effective supervision of what they do.

Guidance on Risk Assessments

Legal requirement

In practice, written risk assessments are required for every journey and visit. It is important that establishments build up a portfolio of risk assessments to which they can refer and update when a visit or journey is repeated.

Who should carry out the risk assessments?

It is the group leader's responsibility to complete the risk assessment, although they should be able to receive considerable support from the EVC. It is not necessary for group leaders to undertake the risk assessment of activities run by external providers; however, it is essential that the provider holds a valid AALA license (where the law requires), LoTc Quality Badge.

How to carry out a risk assessment

A risk assessment is a considered evaluation of potential hazards and the level of risk associated with them. The aim is to identify how the hazard and risk can be controlled and reduced so that people do not suffer injury or illness. It is vital that, once identified, the control measures are understood and implemented by those involved.

The key elements of a risk assessment are:

Identifying significant hazards

Consider the activity and look for what could reasonably cause harm. Bear in mind that what is a safe situation for one person may be extremely dangerous for another. Below is a list of points that should be considered when looking for hazards:

- (i) The nature and location of the journey or visit;
- (ii) Transport and route issues;
- (iii) Equipment standards and their suitability;
- (iv) Special educational or medical needs;
- (v) Staff ratios, qualifications, experience and competence;
- (vi) The composition of the group, including age, sex and ability;
- (vii) Weather conditions;
- (viii) How changing circumstances will affect the risk assessment.

A risk assessment should not contain trivial or highly unlikely risks, only those that are reasonably likely to happen and cause harm, and over which you have control. To do this, try to look afresh at the situation and gain the views of both the experienced and inexperienced. Lastly imagine how the hazards may change as circumstances alter.

Establishing who is at risk

Consider who could be affected by the activity:

- (i) Young people;
- (ii) Visitors;
- (iii) Leaders and supervisors;
- (iv) The general public.

Pay particular attention to:

- (i) The very young;
- (ii) The inexperienced;
- (iii) Anyone with a medical condition;
- (iv) People with special needs;
- (v) Those alone or remote;
- (vi) Anyone who might be vulnerable.

Evaluating and implementing control measures

Consider if the hazard is likely to cause harm, The aim is now to decide what control measures can be put in place to reduce the risk as much as possible. Control measures should be considered based on these two questions:

- (i) Can I get rid of the hazard altogether either by removing it or the group from it?
- (ii) How can I control the risks so that harm is either unlikely or reduced to an acceptable degree, given the nature of the activity?

NB: It is important to be honest when answering these questions. For example, an activity such as skiing carries with it certain inherent risks, some of which cannot be removed.

Consider the following control measures:

- Referring to existing guidance.
- Ensuring information is shared and understood.
- Specific training.
- Good active supervision and appropriate ratios.

- Proper emergency procedures.
- Appropriate ethos.
- Suitable first aid provision.
- Site-specific controls.
- Cancelling or cutting short or moving to a 'Plan B'.
- Reducing risk as far as reasonably practicable.

Recording risk assessments

It is a legal requirement to record and keep risk assessments. It needs to be shown that:

- (i) A proper check was made.
- (ii) Those who might be affected were considered.
- (iii) Action was taken to deal with all the significant hazards.
- (iv) The precautions were reasonable and the remaining risk was acceptable

Ultimately this information must be available, as it could be required by a court of law.

Reviewing risk assessments

A risk assessment needs to be a 'living' document, constantly being improved and updated in the light of new experiences and practice. The risk assessment should be reviewed:

- (i) Every time there is a change to the activity, type of group, location, etc.
- (ii) Every time a group returns from a journey or visit. The assessment need not be extensive but should cover any safety aspect of the visit or journey that could be reasonably improved.
- (iii) Every time there is a 'near-accident'. A 'near-accident', can be simply defined as an incident that almost happened and which would have resulted in injury or harm.

Involving young people in risk assessments

Young people involved in risk assessments are likely to have a safer, more responsible approach to off-site activities and will have improved the risk management skills essential for adult life.

- All risk assessments that young people undertake should be finally checked and agreed by an appropriate adult competent to do so.

- Care must be taken to make parents and carers completely aware of the real risks young people will be involved in.

It is sound practice to involve all young people in risk assessment and risk management to a degree that is appropriate to their age, experience and abilities.

Young people should learn to identify risks and be encouraged to decide on ways to manage those risks. As an example, very young children are taught about the dangers of traffic and crossing the road and learn about the Green Cross Code. Similarly, they learn about germs and hygiene and should be encouraged to apply this knowledge to off-site activities such as farm visits.

Older students involved in off-site activities should identify risks relevant to their situations and be encouraged to develop risk-control measures. Examples of this might include getting lost or separated and being in remote locations with distant supervision (such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme).

In short, risk assessment and risk management is not done *to* participants, but *with* them.

Three levels of risk assessment

A good risk assessment consists of three levels: a generic assessment, a site-/visit-specific assessment and an on-going assessment. These are covered in detail below.

Generic risk assessments

All providers or venues will have risk-assessed a comprehensive list of the activities or amenities it offers and will have produced operating procedures covering the general safety management issues of each. The procedures identified are appropriate to the activities whenever and wherever they take place, and are for group leaders to use as a basis for running or participating in the activity. It is recommended, however, that group leaders do not rely solely on the generic operating procedures: rather they should undertake their own risk assessments to become familiar with the activities' risks as they might affect the staff and young people attending.

Generic risk assessments apply to the particular activity wherever it takes place. For example, there will be some potential risks associated with an urban study such as roads, getting lost or separated, being approached by strangers, etc. that will apply in all cases. A generic risk assessment identifies these and their control measures. Similarly, adventure activities such as rock-climbing involve potential risks that are common to any rock-climbing event.

Event Specific risk assessments

This type of assessment should be undertaken by a person trained and competent to assess risks. This is usually the group leader. By their very nature, generic risk assessments cannot take into account the individual risks and hazards of every situation. Therefore visit/site-specific assessments must be made to ensure that risks peculiar to that journey or visit are at an acceptable level. It is important that these assessments, while informing the school's policies and procedures, should remain consistent with those of the LA.

On-going risk assessments

Throughout the duration of the visit the group leader and the other supervisors should be continually reassessing the risks. This reassessment should be based on the generic and site/visit-specific assessments and should take account of local expertise on factors such as changing weather or tides. The need for on-going risk assessments is outlined in the following examples:

- Emergency situations can be unforeseeable and therefore control measures may not have been definitively formed prior to the incident. It is down to the experience and expertise of the group leader and supervisors to quickly establish the nature of the emergency, who is at risk and what control measures should be put in place to prevent harm to members of the group.
- Changes to the group, such as tiredness, illness or misbehaviour, or a change in the weather, may require an alteration to the programme or a switch to Plan B.

Group leaders should trust their professional judgement and understanding of their young people. Ultimately the group leader is responsible for the group and should be able to use their own judgement to cancel or alter hazardous activities, even if contracted activity leaders are running them.

Significant hazards

Although no attempt is made here to identify the specific problems that have led to high-profile accidents and tragedies, some significant contributing factors are clear.

- Water has been the most common cause of fatal accidents on offsite activities. Particular care must be taken in or near water.
- Activities that have not been thoroughly risk-assessed and prepared for pose significant risks. It is clear, therefore, that spur-of-the-moment, opportunist decisions – for instance, to go swimming – are not acceptable. Ensuring that all potential opportunities have been thoroughly explored beforehand can mitigate any lack of spontaneity that might result. This again is evidence of the need for the preliminary visit.
- Accidents have happened where no contingency plan has been pre-organised. Where a supervisor feels they have no alternative, they are more likely to carry on with an activity, in spite of an increased risk. A vital control measure when reducing the risk of an activity is that of being able to abandon it and take up another more appropriate activity if necessary. Risk assessments must also be done for the contingency programme.
- Local advice and expertise have either not been sought or acted upon.
- The competence or qualification of the leaders has not always been sufficient to recognise and understand the nature of the hazards involved.
- There has been a lack of understanding between ‘real’ and ‘apparent’ danger.