

Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy



Dartmoor
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy covers all off-site visits and activities organised by any academy within the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust.
- 1.2. The Trustees endorse the Devon County Council /Torbay Council policy document “*Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities Health and Safety Policy 2018*” (OEVOSA) as the basis for the Trust’s policy for the management of visits and off-site activities.
- 1.3. This policy explains how the overall OEVOSA policy will be applied in practical terms at a local level, and in particular, the specific roles, responsibilities and arrangements that will apply at each academy.
- 1.4. This policy also complements and should be read in conjunction with the Trust’s Health & Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policy.
- 1.5. This policy is written with due regard for the public sector equality duty that is placed on all schools. The academies within our Trust will make reasonable adjustments for members of the school community with SEND and protected characteristics and guard against discriminatory practices and victimisation to ensure no-one is treated unfairly.
- 1.6. This policy has been written with consideration given to working practices. By adopting this policy, a reduction in workload has been facilitated by reducing the need for individual academies to interpret the policy locally.
- 1.7. Schedule A sets out the roles in each academy within the Trust, including where this has been delegated.
- 1.8. Appendix 1 sets out the provision for access for students with Disabilities and/or Challenging Behaviour.
- 1.9. ‘Headteacher’ refers to Headteachers, Executive Headteachers and Principals.

2. Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- 2.1. The Headteacher or their delegated officer, will:
 - a) ensure all visits and off-site activities have specific and appropriate educational objectives

- b) have overall responsibility for the approval of all visits and activities, based on compliance with the OEVOSA document and recognised good practice, even where this task may have been delegated to another named person
- c) ensure that all off-site visits, and especially residential visits, are carried out with reference to the Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct
- d) ensure that there is a suitably experienced and competent Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) to oversee adherence to the OEVOSA policy and that the tasks associated with this role are clearly outlined in this policy.
- e) ensure off-site programmes are led by competent staff who are appropriately experienced to assess the risks, manage the activity and manage the specific group.
- f) provide relevant induction, training and other Continuous Professional Development opportunities for staff involved in the provision of visits and off-site activities.
- g) ensure that for all off-site visits and activities risks have been assessed, the significant findings of these assessments recorded and any appropriate safety measures implemented accordingly.

3. Responsibilities of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

- 3.1. Although holding the ultimate responsibility, the Headteacher may delegate specified tasks to a suitably experienced and competent EVC.
- 3.2. The EVC is responsible for carrying out the following agreed tasks and attending the relevant training and update training provided by the Local Authority (LA).
- 3.3. The functions delegated to the EVC are:
 - a) to be the principal contact with the LA over planned visits
 - b) to establish monitoring systems to ensure that educational visits are undertaken in accordance with OEVOSA and the academy specific arrangements named in this policy
 - c) to ensure that the management of visits and off-site activities is informed by an appropriate risk assessment
 - d) to review and draw up the Standard Operating Procedures for 'routine and regular' visits and activities for their academy, based on the Devon and Torbay policy generic off-site policy and standard operating procedures (these are available in the document library of the OSHENS website, Inside Devon or on Evolve).
 - e) to ensure that approval and endorsement arrangements for all visits are in accordance with OEVOSA requirements
 - f) to provide staff with support, advice and information that they need to comply with OEVOSA requirements
 - g) to ensure leaders and staff have any relevant qualifications and are competent to lead and support particular visits and activities as outlined in OEVOSA
 - h) to ensure appropriate emergency arrangements are in place for visits and off-site activities
 - i) to ensure the staffing ratio is suitable for each trip/visit.
 - j) to review accident and incident reports relating to visits and off-site activities to ensure that any lessons are learnt
 - k) to ensure trip leaders have access to a planning checklist, based on the current [Devon & Torbay policy \(Appendix, page 89\)](#) and adapted as necessary to meet the particular needs of the academy.
 - l) to ensure that any third party provider / contractor / coach has been vetted for competence in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA.

3.4. School Administrators will:

- a) manage and update the Evolve website, including updating staff lists and training records
- b) ensure that procedures to inform parents and to obtain their consent where necessary are in place.

4. Responsibilities of the Visit Leader

4.1. The Visit Leader will:

- a) have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit or activity
- b) obtain the EVC's approval and, where appropriate, LA endorsement for the visit in line with OEVOSA and the specific arrangements of this policy prior to undertaking the activity
- c) assess the risks to staff, young people and members of the public presented by the visit or activity in order to identify and implement any safety measures. This process will be undertaken in line with the arrangements described in section 8 of this policy.
- d) carry out specific activities in accordance with the detail of OEVOSA
- e) ensure an SOE5 form is completed and attached to Evolve in advance, for all providers (whether commercial, charitable or private) of adventurous or residential activities which are not registered in Evolve as an approved provider.
- f) use the school planning checklist provided in OEVOSA to ensure all procedures have been followed
- g) vet any third party provider / contractor / coach for competence in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA
- h) brief all supervising staff, volunteers and pupils in roles, responsibilities and expectations
- i) inform parents about the visit and gain their consent with reference to the arrangements described in OEVOSA and the Trust's payments and consents platform, SchoolComms.
- j) establish appropriate emergency and contingency arrangements for the planned visit or activity which will include the identification of sufficient First Aid cover
- k) continually re-assess risks during the activity and make adjustments accordingly
- l) ensure there are emergency arrangements and an alternative plan is in place, if a significant change to the programme becomes necessary due to adverse weather etc.

5. Responsibilities of additional members of staff taking part in visits and off-site activities

5.1. Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

- a) Assist the Visit Leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of others including young people on the visit
- b) Take time to understand their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in a visit or activity.

6. Responsibilities of students/pupils

6.1. Any pupil/student taking part in a trip or a visit organised by any academy within Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust must be on roll at the academy or, at the Headteacher's discretion, on roll at another academy within the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust at the time of the trip or visit taking place.

6.2. Whilst taking part in off-site activities, students/pupils will be made aware of their responsibilities for their own health and safety and that of the group by the Visit Leader or other members of staff. Young people should:

- a) Avoid unnecessary risks
- b) Follow instructions of the party leader and other members of staff
- c) Behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct
- d) Inform a member of staff of safety concerns

7. Responsibilities of parents

- 7.1. Parents have an important role in deciding whether any visit or off-site activity is suitable for their child. Subject to their agreement to the activity parents should:
- a) support the academy's Code of Conduct and Behaviour policies
 - b) inform the party leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit
 - c) ensure contact numbers, emergency contact numbers and any medical information is up to date via the parent portal SIMS Parent or by contacting the academy
 - d) ensure that a family member is available in the unlikely event that the trip/visit has to be cancelled or return before the stated return date.
 - e) provide consent in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA
 - f) alert the academy of any relevant recent illness for their child ahead of the visit taking place.
 - g) Ensure their consents regarding emergency medical treatment, and photographs are updated in SIMS parent prior to the visit taking place.

8. Risk Assessment

- 8.1. The Trust is committed to enabling a wide variety of outdoor activities for our students and pupils. Many of these activities will be repeated over each academic year and the risks will be very similar or the same. Therefore, when visits are 'routine and regular' in that they occur repeatedly each academic year, the measures taken to control these risks are listed in the academy Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
- 8.2. These are the control measures that will apply to all such visits and off-site activities and have been drawn up by the EVC and will be brought to the attention of anyone undertaking the role of Visit Leader.
- 8.3. In assessing the risks presented by a planned visit or activity, the Visit Leader must judge if the SOP are adequate for controlling the risks. For each visit/activity, the Visit Leader must *either* confirm these as adequate for the proposed visit/activity or, review and update the SOP document where necessary, identifying all additional control measures needed in the final enhanced risk assessment column. This must be uploaded to the Evolve system.
- 8.4. Any ad hoc visit which is not repeated regularly, plus any activities delivered by school staff falling within the definition of Category B, will have a separate stand-alone risk assessment, as will any overseas Category C visit. This process will be undertaken by the Visit Leader who, whilst being supported by the EVC, will be competent and equipped to complete this task. To meet statutory requirements and to ensure sufficient communication with other staff involved, this risk assessment will be recorded using the risk assessment format in Appendix B of the [Devon and Torbay Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities Health and Safety Policy](#).

9. Approval of off-site activities

- 9.1. The Headteacher (or delegated member of staff) will be responsible for approving all off-site activities subject to assurances that arrangements are in line with this policy and risks are adequately controlled. This includes approving the Visit Leader for each visit or off-site activity.
- 9.2. There are 3 categories of visit:

Category A:	Non-adventurous visits i.e. visits to local places of worship, farms, public places etc. Non-adventurous residential visits i.e. cultural visits to towns/cities etc
Category B:	Adventurous visits where activities are <i>delivered</i> by school staff (i.e. Ten Tors, kayaking etc). Adventurous day visits led by external providers (i.e. visits to climbing centres, a pony trekking centre etc). Adventurous residential visits to outdoor centres
Category C:	Visits of all types outside the UK

- 9.3. **The Trust mandates that all visits, whether in Category A, B or C, will be uploaded to the Evolve on-line system** to facilitate the approval by the EVC and Headteacher, ahead of any final endorsement required by the Local Authority Adviser for Outdoor Education.
- 9.4. Each trip will have attached a risk assessment, costing sheet, (electronic) letter to parents/carers and an itinerary.
- 9.5. Once the trip is approved by the Headteacher (or their delegated member of staff) consents and payments will be collected through the Trust's online payments system (SchoolComms). The SOE3 form does not need to be used, as the medical, dietary and contact information for all pupils is held in the Trust Student Information Management System (SIMS) and, in line with the GDPR, would not normally be requested again. Parents are responsible for keeping these details up to date via the parent portal (SIMS Parent) or by contacting the academy. Parents are responsible for alerting the academy of any relevant recent illness ahead of the visit taking place and completing any Administration of Medicines forms as required.
- 9.6. Form SOE3a Parental consent for local off-site activities (annual consent form) should not be issued annually by academies, as this information is held in SIMS.
- 9.7. All schools should publish guidance for parents on their websites regarding visits which includes information and links to useful forms and policies.

10. Safeguarding

- 10.1. The safety and welfare of children is paramount. In the event of a safeguarding issue or concern being identified during the trip or visit, the visit leader should follow the Trust's Safeguarding policy and procedures.
- 10.2. All staff and volunteers on the trip should be made aware of these before the trip or activity takes place.
- 10.3. Arrangements should be in place to enable contact with the academy's Designated Safeguarding Officer outside normal academy hours if necessary. Contact details should be communicated to all staff/volunteers on the trip (as well as the visit leader) in case the safeguarding concern is about the visit leader.

11. The provision of training and information

- 11.1. This policy is made available to all staff within the academy that may be responsible for participating in off-site visits and activities and parents via the Trust website. A link to the Devon OEVOSA document is [here](#).

- 11.2. Access will also be made available to the overarching OEVOSA policy, and additional guidance information, via the Babcock LDP website: www.babcock-education.co.uk/ldp
- 11.3. The Headteacher will ensure that staff leading or participating in visits are competent for the activities involved. When required, specific training will be undertaken and competencies maintained in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA. This process will be overseen by the Headteacher and records of qualifications will be uploaded to the Evolve system.

12. Action in the case of emergency

- 12.1. The Headteacher will ensure that emergency arrangements are in place before approving visits.
- 12.2. The Visit Leader will identify these arrangements via a process of risk assessment as described in section 8 above. Where necessary, this assessment must include the identification of contingency plans. It will also include the identification of sufficient First Aiders, as well as two out of hours emergency contact details of senior leadership staff members or members of the Local Academy Committee.
- 12.3. Any accidents and incidents that occur during off-site visits and activities will be reported and recorded in accordance with the Trust's health and safety policy. Accidents and incidents will subsequently be reviewed within the academy to identify any learning points, which may be shared more widely within the Trust.

13. Foreign Travel

- 13.1. Where staff accompany pupils/students on curriculum based/cultural trips to foreign destinations that require vaccinations they should, in the first instance, seek the advice of their GP and notify the academy of any costs, which the academy will cover.
- 13.2. Where staff accompany students on non-curriculum based trips, which are organised and overseen by a 3rd party (such as Camps International) and travel to foreign destinations that require vaccinations they should, in the first instance, seek the advice of their GP and advise the academy of any costs.
- 13.3. The academy will pay up to £50 to support the vaccination costs of staff.

14. Monitoring and review

- 14.1. Ongoing compliance with this policy will be assessed by the operational oversight of both the EVC and the Headteacher, as well as during the annual H&S audits undertaken by the Trust H&S Manager. The audit results will be monitored by the Board of Trustees.
- 14.2. The Trustees will review this policy:
- Every two years
 - After any significant changes to the management of outdoor education locally
 - After any significant changes to the OEVOSA document
 - After a significant incident.

Schedule A: EVCs and Headteachers

Academy	EVC	Headteacher/ Principal/ Executive Headteacher
Bridgerule Primary School	Caroline Tohill	Lisa Paton
Bradford Primary School	Caroline Tohill	Lisa Paton
Black Torrington Primary School	Caroline Tohill	Lisa Paton
Boasley Cross Primary School	Deirdre Petersen	Phil Whittley
Bridestowe Primary School	Adam Hill	Phil Whittley
Exbourne Primary School	Adam Hill	Phil Whittley
Highampton Primary School	Phil Whittley (Acting)	Phil Whittley
Lydford Primary School	Deirdre Petersen	Phil Whittley
Northlew and Ashbury Primary School	Janine Cook	Phil Whittley
Okehampton Primary School	Lisa Barker	Sarah Godbeer
Chagford Primary School	Tara Penny	Elizabeth Underwood
North Tawton Primary School	Sunita Chauhan	Elizabeth Underwood
South Tawton Primary School	Sarah Marvin	Elizabeth Underwood
Holsworthy Community College	Andrew Sweeney	Andrew Sweeney
Okehampton College	Craig Griffiths	Derrick Brett
Tavistock College	Tristan Forster, VP	Sarah Jones

15. Appendix 1: Access for students with Disabilities and/or Challenging Behaviour

- 15.1. Young people with disabilities can gain a great deal from educational trips/visits and off-site activities from opportunities to take part in challenging activities, broaden their horizons, develop friendships and be closely involved in the academy community. Young people who exhibit challenging behaviour can also learn important lessons from the experience of working or staying with their peers away from home. They may also experience a boost to self-esteem from participating in certain activities that helps them address their behavioural issues. Although different considerations apply to these two groups of young people, there are a number of important considerations in common particularly with respect to anti-discriminatory legislation.
- 15.2. Although persistent behavioural problems may result from social or environmental circumstances, some may occur as a result of an underlying physical or mental impairment amounting to a disability. Many cases where there is no pre-existing diagnosis, if tested in a court of law, could be deemed to result from an underlying disability. It is therefore an advisable precaution to generally treat students with behavioural issues as if they were covered by the legislation.
- 15.3. Under The Equality Act 2010 and Special Needs and Disability Act 2001 people with disabilities have the same entitlement to access to education as non-disabled people. It is therefore illegal to discriminate “without justification” against disabled students. The Trust and its employees have two key duties:
 - 15.3.1. not to treat disabled students less favourably for reasons relating to their disability.
 - 15.3.2. to make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage.
- 15.4. These duties are “anticipatory” and therefore educational trips/visits and off-site activities should be organised in the expectation that disabled students might wish to participate.
- 15.5. Discrimination on the basis of ability is permitted by the legislation in certain circumstances e.g. a sporting visit for those who have reached the standard required for selection. The legislation does not require activities to be adjusted for all students so that a disabled student may participate. It is permitted to offer a choice of activities at the same time, some of which may not be accessible to a disabled student, provided that the different activities offered are of comparable educational value and at least one of the options is accessible to all students.
- 15.6. It is important in following the procedures relating to this policy that significant risks associated with particular students are identified and precautions are in place to manage these risks acceptably. In general risk assessments should facilitate planning so that all students may be safely included rather than serve as a barrier to their inclusion.
- 15.7. However in some circumstances, particularly in relation to students exhibiting challenging behaviour, their exclusion may be justified:
- 15.8. Where behaviour is not related to disability, it is lawful, as part of the individual academy’s approach to behaviour management, to deny access to a trip/visit or off-site activity, provided it is not an essential component of the curriculum.
- 15.9. Where a comprehensive risk assessment and substantial evidence indicates it would be unsafe for a disruptive student to participate, they may be excluded for this reason, provided their behaviour is not related to disability.
- 15.10. Such exclusions may only be exercised by the Principal/ Headteacher/ Executive Headteacher or their designated deputy and parent(s)/carer(s) will be informed.