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# Off Sites Visits and Risk Assessment Policy



June 2023

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## **Aims**

Southgate School is a school for pupils with complex needs. We are committed to providing a variety of outdoor and experiential learning opportunities for our pupils, strongly believing in the positive impact on wellbeing and development.

Our aim is to enhance understanding across the curriculum with experiential learning. Pupils will have opportunities to engage in life-skills learning in the community, they will visit places of interest, sporting and leisure venues, places of work and post 16 provisions to support social and emotional development and subject knowledge.

All off-site visits will be carefully planned and the visits policy and procedures will be followed. All visits will be linked to specific and appropriate learning for all pupils involved. All visits out of school require a personalized risk assessment. Visits will not proceed without the approval of the relevant Assistant Head or Deputy Head.

## **Planning an Off-Site Visit**

The teacher or the group leader is responsible for planning the visit and completing all relevant risk assessments. Visits to unfamiliar sites must not proceed without first visiting the site without pupils to assess risk and inform planning.

At least 2 weeks before the visit (6 weeks for residential and high-risk visits), the group leader should:

- ☐ Discuss and agree the visit with the relevant senior leader
- ☐ Plan the date, considering:
  - the availability of an appropriate minibus and driver
  - any other organised school events
  - timetabling / staffing implications
  - staffing to meet the complex needs of the group
- ☐ Calculate the cost of the visit and agree any financial implications with the senior leader
- ☐ Complete and submit all Risk Assessments for approval to the relevant Assistant Head or Deputy Head (**see Risk Assessment Guidance below**)
- ☐ Liaise with all staff for whom the visit may have implications e.g. enrichment, therapy

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- ☐ Book the minibus and enter the visit in the school diary
  - ☐ Inform the kitchen of any changes to the normal school meals e.g. to cancel school meals/ ordering packed lunches
  - ☐ Inform parents and carers of the visit
    - Advise parents or carers of appropriate clothing, etc, to be taken/worn and of any money that may be taken to spend on the visit
    - Where appropriate, requests for voluntary contributions to be sent to parents and carers
    - Where appropriate, send out Contact / Emergency / Medical forms for parents and carers to complete
    - Discuss with parents or carers any planned or the possibility of an unplanned return to school after 3pm and agree how the pupil will get home safely;

### The week of the visit:

- ☐ Inform the Office of any pupils not using School Transport to get home (who would normally go home this way)
- ☐ Follow up correspondence with parents or carers with a telephone call to clarify any misunderstandings and check for any last-minute alterations;
- ☐ Ensure that all staff involved in the are fully informed and have **read, understood and signed** the Risk Assessments for the visit and all relevant additional information e.g. Positive Management Plans, Individual Health Care Plans, Intimate Care Plans, Individual Pupil Risk Assessments.
- ☐ The group leader should retain a central copy of all documentation relating to the visit e.g. risk assessments and documentation signed by staff, consent letters signed by parents and carers etc.

### Before setting off on the visit

- ☐ Ensure a copy of the Risk Assessments, any other documentation and contact numbers are taken on the visit
- ☐ Collect all medication and Individual Health Care Plans associated with the pupils attending. Medication should be signed out of the Medical Room in the signing out book
- ☐ Fill in the Southgate School Visits and Outings form, accounting for everyone in the class, listing all staff and pupils going off-site and any pupils remaining in school including a named member of staff who will take responsibility for those pupils. There is also a space to enter all medication that is being taken.
- ☐ Collect packed lunches if necessary
- ☐ Collect a school mobile phone, sign it out and ensure it is switched on
- ☐ If travelling on the minibus the driver must ensure he/she has a license to drive that specific bus and conduct all the necessary vehicle checks
- ☐ Sign out all people leaving the site

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### **Public Toilets**

When pupils need to use the toilet when off-site they should be taken to a disabled toilet and a member of staff to stand outside. Each school minibus has a radar key to gain access to locked disabled toilets.

### **Risk Assessments for Off-site Visits**

The risk assessment template must be completed for all off-site visits. This can be found in Staff Share/Health and Safety/ Trips and Visits. A selection of generic risk assessment templates can be found on the shared area. These may be adapted and personalised for the specific group of pupils going on the visit.

The group leader is responsible for completing the risk assessment, obtaining approval of the risk assessment from SLT, sharing the risk assessment with the staff attending the visit and keeping a record of staff signatures to confirm they have read and understood the risk assessment.

- Local visits must be approved two weeks in advance and risk assessments submitted and signed off by the relevant Assistant Head or Deputy Head.
- Any visits involving higher risk, including where water is involved, must be submitted to the relevant Assistant Head or Deputy Head six weeks in advance and the EVOLVE forms must be completed. (Marvin Cox is Southgate School EVC and is available for advice and support)
- Longer, whole day visits or those out of the authority must also be approved six weeks in advance as the risk assessments must be uploaded to EVOLVE.

EVOLVE is the system used to submit risk assessments for whole day, residential and high-risk activities to the local authority. Local authority clearance for these activities are a requirement. The process involves having approval from the Assistant Head/ Deputy Head prior to submission of the EVOLVE request, then approval of the EVOLVE request from the EVC (Marvin Cox) then approval from the Headteacher before being submitted to the local authority.

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This process can take up to two weeks to complete and longer if any queries or issues arise before it is submitted to the LA. This is why we ask for this type of visit to be planned six weeks in advance.

Off Site Visit Risk Assessments must contain:

- The group/class; the name of the group leader and deputy leader and other staff supporting the group; signature of SLT; the venue/location; times and dates; age range of pupils; number of pupils; staff:pupil ratio.
- How risk is reduced by grouping - pupils to be grouped, or 1:1 with a specific adult who has a good knowledge and good relationship with those pupils; identify pupils with PMPs or specific personal risk assessments.
- Identify potential medical risks and the medication taken and who it belongs to and if there is a care plan in place.
- How the risks will be reduced during travelling (minibus/public transport/walking).
- Identify the procedure in place in case a pupil is separated from the group.
- Identify the procedure in place for an incident causing minor injuries.
- Identify potential choking hazards and actions to reduce risk.
- Identify the items that can be taken to the activity and who will take responsibility for them.
- Identify procedure for dealing with a major incident.

### Additional Risk Assessments for Off Site Visits

Some pupils will need additional, personalised risk assessments. This might include additional risks and control measure for medical, physical needs, communication or social and emotional needs. These personalised risk assessments should be attached to the main risk assessment for the visit and signed by all staff in addition to the main risk assessment. This should be written alongside all relevant additional information e.g. Positive Management Plans, Individual Health Care Plans, Intimate Care Plans, Individual Pupil in-school Risk Assessments.

Risk Assessment for visits should be written in conjunction with whole school risk assessments. These might include environmental risk assessments (e.g. Hot Weather Risk Assessment, Cold Weather Risk Assessment) or risk assessments for particular activities (e.g. forest school, cycling etc.). This will depend on the activities to be undertaken whilst on the visit. Activities and other risk factors should be discussed with senior leaders when planning the visit as this list is not exhaustive.

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Some staff may have their own personal risk assessments and these staff should share relevant information with the group leader during the planning stage.

### **Regular Off-Site Visits**

Some Off-Site Visits become a regular part of the provision or curriculum for a class, group or individual. It is appropriate for regular visits that involve the same pupils and staff to re-use a risk assessment, however, the risk assessment must be edited in the event of any changes to location, pupil group or staff, and approved by the appropriate Assistant Head or Deputy Head.

The guidance above must be followed before the first Off-Site Visit and the documentation must make it clear that this is a regular visit. Parents and carers must be aware that it is a regular visit when they are informed of the initial visit. All staff who go on any occurrence of the visit must have read and signed all relevant documentation and a central copy of this must be retained by the group leader.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers can be a valuable asset in school and on visits, however, it is important that a volunteer is never given responsibility. They are there to support a member of staff and not to replace a member of staff. Volunteers should not have access to pupil information. Pupil information is confidential and it is important that it is not put down carelessly or given to non-staff members to read.

### **Equality**

Group Leaders have a duty to ensure that all pupils in the group can be included in the trip. Reasonable adjustments must be made to include all pupils.

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Written by: Sue Coates, Dec 2019

Reviewed by: Charlotte Gaffigan, December 2022

Reviewed and Amended by: Ruth Perfitt, June 2023

Next Review Date: June 2024

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils or staff with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.