

Mountjoy School

Off-site visits and Adventurous Activities Policy

January 2017



Agreed by Governors as Dorset County Council model policy.

Dated:

Date of next review:

January 2018

Mountjoy School

Off-site visits and Adventurous Activities Policy

1. Scope of the Policy

1.1 Adherence to the content of this policy is a requirement for all who are working with children and young people where the LA is the employer.

1.2 Others, e.g. foundation and voluntary aided schools are strongly advised to adhere to the content of this policy but the LA can accept no liability for its use outside its statutory areas of responsibility. Responsibility for use rests with the employer.

2. Guidance

2.1 This policy, all national guidance, supplementary DCC guidance and planning forms issued by DCC can be accessed at; www.dorsetforyou.com/schoolsafety

A full list of supplementary DCC guidance can be found in appendix 1
Comprehensive employer guidance on organising offsite events and adventurous activities is provided by the national organisation; The Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP). This is accessed at www.oeapng.info
Other valuable guidance can be accessed at www.hse.gov.uk/education and www.lotc.org.uk

Although most content and wording is specific to schools the organisational principles are relevant to all who work with children and young people and must be adopted.

2.2 Organisers will also need to make reference to:

- Any organisational unit policies that may apply
- Any local site instructions and advice relevant to sites being used
- National Governing Body guidelines
- Other sources of good practice

3. Organisational Unit

3.1 Children's Services is made up of a range of organisational units. These will vary in size but must include a trained visit coordinator (see paragraph 7) who may be the unit head or a member of staff acting on behalf of the head.

3.2 A school would typically operate as an organisational unit.

4. Organisational Unit Policies

4.1 Every organisational unit must have a policy for the effective planning and execution of offsite events and adventurous activities. This policy must clearly state the responsibilities of all who play a role within the system, the preparations that must be undertaken before an event and expectations during and after any event. Operating procedures must ensure that organisation will be in compliance with the employer's guidance.

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4.2 An example policy can be accessed at www.dorsetforyou.com/schoolsafety

5. Approval

5.1 All offsite events and adventurous activities must receive approval from the unit head before commencement. This task may be delegated to a suitably competent person, the visit coordinator, but responsibility for approval remains with the head.

An organisational unit has responsibility for approval of events and activities.

6. The role of the Local Authority (LA) / Outdoor Education Adviser

6.1 It is the role of the LA / Outdoor Education Adviser to provide guidance, assess proposals, advise and to monitor practice.

6.2 Monitoring will be undertaken as follows;

- Through the 3 yearly formal audit of procedures. (currently for all secondary, middle and special schools)
- Through the general programme of health and safety audits
- Requests for evidence of planning following LA notification
- Field monitoring of DCC employee led adventurous activity

7. Visit Coordinator

7.1 All units must have a member of staff who acts as the knowledgeable person with regards to the organisation of offsite events and adventurous activities - the visit coordinator.

More detail on the role of the visit coordinator can be accessed at www.oeapng.info

This person may be the unit head or a person acting on behalf of the unit head. The person appointed should be specifically competent. The level of competence required will relate to the size of the unit and the type and number of events undertaken.

7.2 The appointed person must attend the DCC visit coordinator training, details of which can be obtained from the Outdoor Education Adviser and/or via CPD Online

7.3 All correspondence from the LA will be sent to the unit head and visit coordinator.

8. Using an External Provider

8.1 An external provider is any individual or organisation that contracts to provide services to an organisational unit.

Organisers have a responsibility to make suitable and sufficient checks on a provider to establish that required standards of safety and quality are met.

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Checks should be made through use of:

Form 4 – External Provider Check.

However Form 4 does not need to be used if the provider has other verifications of safety and quality that provide the same assurances. These are;

- Holders of the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge
Visit www.lotc.org.uk for further information
- Dorset CC Outdoor Education Service
Visit www.dorsetforyou.com/outdoored for further information

8.2 If doubt exists as to whether the checks made are sufficient or the responses received through use of Form 4 are adequate advice must be sought from the LA.

9. The Planning Process

9.1 The process detailed on the following page is recommended. Forms 1-6 and guidance notes on their use are provided at www.dorsetforyou.com/schoolsafety

- **Form 1.** Preliminary Questionnaire
- **Form 2.** Checklist and approval form for offsite events and adventurous Activities
- **Form 3.** Parental Consent pro forma
- **Form 4.** External Provider Check
- **Form 5.** LA Notification
- **Form 6.** Risk Assessment pro forma

Organisational units may adapt forms 1,2,3 and 6 or make use of their own if they provide the same level of information.

9.2 However the following **must** be used, when applicable, in the provided format;

- **FORM 4** – External Provider Check
- **FORM 5** – L.A Notification Form. (This must be e mailed to p.burrows@dorsetcc.gov.uk as required)

9.3 Planning must be sufficient and evidence of planning and any agreed operational procedures is essential for all events and activities. New events and activities will require the full process to be followed whilst repeat events or routine visits may only require a reduced planning process.

Planning the Event

Outline proposal seeking approval in principle.

Make use of **Form 1**

OFFSITE VISITS AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES –PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE

NB Proposals for complex and expensive events may need to be made at least 1 year before the planned departure date

For overseas expeditions contact the LA at this point.

Planning leading to detailed proposal to organisational unit head

Make use of **Form 2**

CHECKLIST AND APPROVAL FORM FOR OFFSITE EVENTS AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES –

Planning and Group Management Details

NB It may not be possible to provide a final programme at this point and detailed communication with parents will still be required for consent. However a commitment dependant on final consent may be obtained to ascertain viability

If approval to proceed is obtained.....

Final Preparations

- Make any required bookings of accommodation, providers, transport etc
- Provide information to and obtain information and consent from parents – **Use Form 3**
- Prepare young people
- Obtain final approval from organisational head – **Use Form 2**

LA Notification

Use Form 5

Notify LA for assessment of proposals for **all visits abroad, all residentials and any adventurous activity.**

E mail to p.burrows@dorsetcc.gov.uk at least 1 month before departure date

- Undertake event – continual monitoring of risks and use of Plan B if necessary. For DCC employee led adventurous activity contact the LA at this point and Make checks on any potential **External Providers Use Form 4** to evaluate visit.

Appendix 1

The following information is accessible at www.dorsetforyou.com/schoolsafety

- DCC Policy of Safety and Guidance – Offsite Events and Adventurous Activities
- Planning forms 1-6 with guidance notes
- Model offsite visits policy for use by organisational units
- 10 Tors challenge guidance
- Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions guidance
- South west mountain and moorland leader training scheme
- DCC Notes and Guidance on the Use of Minibuses
- Generic Risk Assessments

If organisers cannot find advice specific to their plans contact should be made with the Outdoor Education Adviser

Appendix 2

Useful Dorset County Council Contacts

- Service Manager / Adviser Outdoor Education
Tel: 01305 224517
e mail: p.burrows@dorsetcc.gov.uk
- Health and Safety – Senior Adviser
Tel: 01305 224092
e mail: lee.payne@dorsetcc.gov.uk
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Officer
Tel: 01305 224517
e mail: m.harper@dorsetcc.gov.uk
- Insurance and Risk Management – Technical Officer
Tel: 01305 224075
e mail: d.l.samways@dorsetccc.gov.uk
- Minibus guidance / Driver training
Tel: 01305 221591

Questions regarding the content or implementation of this policy should be addressed to;

Paul Burrows, Outdoor Education Adviser
E mail: p.burrows@dorsetcc.gov.uk
Tel: 01305 224517