School Visits Policy

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1. Introduction

St Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust (SFCMAT) recognises the value of educational visits and learning outside the classroom and fully supports and encourages those activities and experiences that are well planned and effectively managed. St Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust has formally adopted the ***'Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, off-site Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom'***. This guidance can be found on the following web site: https://oeapng.info. Links to OEAP National Guidance are to be found in this document. The OEAP National Guidance is the current best practice documentation to be followed when planning off-site visits.

The safety, welfare and duty of care of all those involved in off-site visits is of paramount importance as outlined in 'The Health and Safety at Work Act etc.1974'. The following OEAP National Guidance document outlines the legal framework that applies with respect to off-site visits and can be found at: Underpinning legal framework and duty of care OEAP National Guidance documents.

This policy sets out what St Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust will do to enable staff to plan, manage and undertake educational visits in a safe, appropriate, and meaningful manner. This policy will apply when considering visit submissions from SFCMAT partner schools. The Trust uses City of Doncaster Council (CDC) for consultative advice, guidance, training and monitoring in respect to educational visits. To facilitate this, City of Doncaster Council (CDC) will:

- Have a designated Educational Visits Adviser who will offer advice and guidance on the planning, management and delivery of educational visits.
- Enable the Educational Visits Adviser to be a member of the Outdoor Education Advisers' Network (OEAN) attending network meetings and undertake continuing professional development (CPD).
- Have in place a plan for dealing and assisting with emergencies.
- Provide guidance and advice for all staff, leaders, Board Members and managers to follow when planning and leading an educational visit.
- Provide access for establishments to use the Exeant visit planning and management system.
- Provide advice and updates to establishments regarding best practice.
- Offer and deliver training to staff including Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) training, EVC update/refresher, Managing School Visit Emergencies training, visit leader training, governor training and other associated training for establishment staff in relation to off-site visits and the use of the Exeant visit management system.

2. Provision of Guidance

The following procedures are to be followed in respect to SFCMAT partner schools. The following OEAP National Guidance document outlines these principles and can be found at: Foundations OEAP National Guidance documents.

- For Category **A** visits – those routine in nature, regularly undertaken in the local area of the establishment (e.g. curriculum swimming, weekly visits to the local library, sporting fixtures etc.). The details of the visit and associated risk management documentation must be added on to the SFCMAT recording system (Exeant) **or** if the establishment has implemented a 'Regular and Routine, Local Visit Policy' that covers the specific venue and activity in question, the visit can be approved and managed using an 'Educational Visit Record' form (further details regarding a Regular and Routine, Local Visit Policy' and 'Educational Visits Record' form can be found on the resources page). The head teacher will have delegated powers to approve these visits. Where appropriate, this approval may be further delegated to the EVC within the establishment. Both SFCMAT and CDC will have an overview of low-risk visits entered onto the Exeant system and may comment/make recommendations (where appropriate) to head teachers/EVCs regarding the planning of the visit.
- For Category **B** visits – those of a one-off nature (e.g. a visit to a museum/activity provider etc.). The details of the visit and associated risk management documentation must be added on to the SFCMAT recording system (Exeant). The head teacher will have delegated powers to approve these visits. Where appropriate this approval may be further delegated to the EVC within the establishment. Both SFCMAT and CDC will have an overview of these visits and may comment/make recommendations (where appropriate) to head teachers/EVCs regarding the planning of the visit.

- For Category **C** visits – those involving challenging environments (e.g. in close proximity to rivers/large bodies of water, coastal areas etc.), visits to London, adventurous activities (including Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions), residential and overseas visits etc. The details of the visit, associated risk management documentation and itinerary etc. must be added on to the SFCMAT recording system (Exeant). The CDC Educational Visits Adviser will be responsible for approving these visits which require an enhanced level of planning, in conjunction with the visit being approved by the EVC and head teacher of the establishment.
- It is a legal requirement that employees follow their employer's guidance. The Governing Board/Management Committee will be provided with a copy of the 'Educational Visits Guidance' for adoption and implementation. Overall responsibility remains with SFCMAT.

- The establishment is to have their own educational visits policy which outlines the establishment specific points regarding the planning and management of visits in conjunction with the SFCMAT policy and guidance document. A template for an establishment policy can be found on the resources page.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of those Involved

Everyone involved in an off-site visit must be fully aware of their responsibilities and their role in all aspects of the visit.

Educational Visits Co-Ordinator (EVC)

All establishments must appoint an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) who will support the Head of Establishment and help to fulfil the health and safety obligations for Off-Site Visits and Adventurous Activities. In small establishments the EVC may also be the Headteacher or manager. The EVC is to have completed training and undertake a refresher every three years.

The EVC should:

- Liaise with the CDC Educational Visits Adviser to ensure compliance with the current policy & procedures.
- Be involved in the approval and quality assurance of visits on the Exeant system
- Be competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment. Commonly, but not exclusively, such competence will be identified in a person from the senior management of the establishment.
- Support the head of establishment in ensuring that competent staff are assigned to lead and accompany visits, as providing support for approvals and other decisions.
- Oversee the management of the Exeant website for the establishment and ensure that all staff leading or accompanying visits have their own Exeant account.
- Ensure that staff leading and accompanying visits receive appropriate training and support.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use to the EVC and can be found at: EVC OEAP National Guidance documents.

Visit Leader

It is essential that Visit/Activity Leaders possess the necessary competence and confidence to plan and lead the visit/activity as they will have overall responsibility for the group. The Visit Leader should have prior experience of the type of visit being arranged and be able to apply their professional judgement to any situation that may arise on the visit. Other adult supervisors should be fully involved from the planning stage, detailing their roles and responsibilities. The visit leader

& support staff will be required to complete 'ongoing' risk assessments for the duration of the visit.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use to the Visit Leader and can be found at: Visit Leader OEAP National Guidance documents.

Assistant Leader/Supporting Staff

Assistant leader/supporting staff is the term used to describe those members of the establishment's employed staff whose post normally involves the supervision of young people.

Support staff should be involved at the planning stage & be competent/ confident to take over should the visit leader be unable to continue leading the visit. As such, staff accompanying the visit also need to possess appropriate levels of competence and confidence.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use to any Assistant Leaders/Supporting Staff and can be found: Assistant Leader OEAP National Guidance documents.

Head Teacher / Manager

Head teachers/managers should ensure their establishment follows the requirements and recommendations of their employer's guidance. Head teachers/ Managers should appoint a named EVC or they may choose to designate themselves as the EVC and Head of establishment. The Head teacher/Manager is responsible for approval of all Category A and Category B visits unless this has been delegated to the EVC. Head teachers/ Managers should also ensure that there is an establishment policy that outlines expectations of how various visits and activities will be managed for their establishment.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use to any Head teachers/Managers and can be found: Head teacher/Manager OEAP National Guidance documents.

Management Board / Trust Board

Members of a management board or Trust Board should view their main role as being that of a 'critical friend' whilst having regard to their duty of care towards members of any off-site visit group. They should have an overarching view of educational visits; ensuring that arrangements are in place with regards to the planning and management of visits.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use to any Management Board / Trust Board member and can be found: Governors OEAP National Guidance documents.

Employers

Employers are responsible for health and safety under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. An employer must ensure that its employees are provided with appropriate guidance and training to fulfil their role.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use to any employer and can be found: Employer OEAP National Guidance documents.

Parents / Volunteers

If a parent or volunteer takes part in a visit as a member of the supporting staff, they need to a reliable and trustworthy adult. Care must be taken to ensure that the role of parent does not conflict with the role of being a volunteer on the visit.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use to any parent / volunteer and can be found: Parents OEAP National Guidance documents.

4. Competence and Leadership

The competence of the visit leader and supporting staff is one the key areas in keeping groups safe on off-site visits. All staff and helpers must be competent to carry out their defined roles and responsibilities. Staff participating in offsite visits must be aware of the extent of their duty of care and should only be given such responsibilities as are in keeping with this guidance. It is essential that careful consideration of competence is applied to both newly appointed and recently qualified staff. When assessing the suitability of a visit leader and other supporting staff, it is useful to ask if they possess the '2Cs and a P' – the appropriate levels of **C**ompetence, **C**onfidence and **P**rofessional judgement

Where staff hold appropriate qualifications for a particular activity, including first aid, details and a copy of the certificate should be recorded within the establishment. In the case of National Trust Board (NGB) qualifications with respect to outdoor leadership and instruction, the CDC Educational Visits Adviser will need to be made aware of any specific qualification held by a member of staff whereby they are leading the actual activity.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to the assessment of competence and can be found: Assessment of competence OEAP National Guidance documents.

5. Planning

Planning should achieve a balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity – a risk benefit analysis. Clear objectives and reasoning behind the intended outcomes of the visit will help to ensure that the potential benefits can be achieved. Many aspects of planning will already be in place in the form of existing policies and guidance, such as the establishment's own policy, SFCMAT policy, etc.
The Exeant system provides a means of recording planning and enables the EVC and Head teacher / Manager to monitor, contribute and support the activity. It is expected that on the Exeant system, for a particular visit along with general details being entered onto the system itself, additional documents are attached to the visit including a specific risk assessment, itineraries, information sent to parent/carers etc. It is important for all staff associated with the visit to be involved at the planning stage in order to be fully informed on all arrangements including generic, specific and ongoing risk assessments. The degree and complexity of a particular plan will need to reflect the nature of the given activity, the pre-existing needs of the group members, the environment where the visit will be taking place and distance away from the base establishment. Establishments such as special schools and alternative provision will usually require additional planning and preparation including potentially additional preparation for parents.

Alternative arrangements (a 'Plan B') must be included within the planning process for example, where weather conditions or water levels might be critical, or where an overcrowded venue might necessitate an alternative option. It is also during the planning stage that conversations will be had with activity and/or accommodation providers and where necessary pre-visits undertaken for any venues being utilised.

During the planning stage parent/carers will need to be fully informed of the details of the visit, consent obtained as appropriate and designated emergency contact(s) identified that will work on a 24/7 basis for visits that take place outside of normal school hours.

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

ownership of the event. The visit leader should ensure that children and young people understand key information about the visit or activity, including:

- the aims of the visit/activity
- background information about the activities/venue
- basic foreign words and relevant foreign culture where appropriate
- how to avoid specific dangers and expected standards of behaviour
- who is responsible for the group or sub-group
- rendezvous procedures
- what to do if separated from the group and emergency procedures.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to the planning of offsite visits and can be found: Planning OEAP National Guidance documents. Additionally, checklists are available to aid in the planning process. The are available here: checklists to download.

6. Ratios

On all visits there must be effective supervision to fulfil the duty of care owed to all group members (including the visit leader) that has been approved by the EVC and Head of establishment. A visit must not go ahead where either the visit leader, EVC, or Head teacher / Manager is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision exists. For all visits the visit leader, EVC and Head of establishment will make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of staffing on an individual visit basis after consideration of the STAGED principle:

- **S**taffing (including competence, confidence and common sense)
- **T**ransport (how will the group be travelling, on a private coach, a public service etc.)
- **A**ctivity (activities to be undertaken, are they provider or self-led, adventurous etc.)
- **G**roup (pre-existing needs: learning, behaviour, additional needs, medical etc)
- **E**nvironment (what is the venue like, urban or rural, the weather, landscape etc.)
- **D**istance (how far away from base/support, what transport is being used etc.)

Staff that are assigned to support the special needs of an individual, cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group. Particular consideration should be given to the additional implications that may arise if staff are to have their own young person on the visit as a group member or be accompanied by family members (or partners) on visits, as there may be a conflict of responsibility in respect of their young person.

Ratios for Early Years are specified and are classed as the minimum. Further details can be found here: Statutory framework for EYFS.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to determining staffing ratios on a visit: Ratios and effective supervision OEAP National Guidance documents.

7. Safeguarding

It is the responsibility of the visit leader, group leaders, and all other staff and adults involved on a visit, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people during off-site visits. Safeguarding procedures must be followed at all times to ensure that any adult who does not have an enhanced DBS check (and does not fulfil the criteria for 'regulated activity' – see below) cannot have unsupervised access to young people. Employees and adults who work frequently or intensively with or have regular access to children and young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo an enhanced DBS with barred list check as part of their recruitment process. For the purposes of this policy:

- Frequently is defined as 'once a week or more'
- Intensively is defined as 4 days or more in a month or overnight

Adults who are engaged in 'regulated activity' should have an enhanced DBS with barred list check. For the purposes of this policy regulated activity is defined as:

- those who work or volunteer in a supervised role with children for more than three days in a 30-day period or overnight between 2am and 6am.

However, it must be clearly understood that a DBS check (or other vetting procedure) in itself, is no guarantee as to the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people. If you are planning to place an adult, within a situation of professional trust (where children and young people could be vulnerable to physical or mental exploitation or grooming), you should always carry out a common-sense risk-benefit assessment.

To fulfil the duty of care owed to all group members on an educational visit, SFCMAT has a policy whereby there is to be no consumption of alcohol or drugs by any group member (staff, volunteers and young people) at any time during the visit.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to safeguarding on a visit: Safeguarding OEAP National Guidance documents.

8. Consent

Where a visit is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time, then parent/carer consent is not necessary although parent/carers are still to be informed*. To help reduce paperwork, comply with

best practice and maintain parental confidence we strongly recommend that establishments adopt the following criteria:

- **Regular, routine, local off-site visits/activities within curriculum time/normal school operating hours** – do not require specific parental consent however, it is strongly suggested that establishments seek yearly/termly consent for these visits. It is recommended that the 'RVC' is used for this purpose.
- **Off-site day visits/activities within curriculum time/normal school operating hours** – do not require specific parental consent however, it is strongly suggested that parent/carers are fully informed and acknowledgement is received by the establishment that parent/carers are fully aware of the visit.
- **Off-site day visits/activities outside of or running beyond normal curriculum time/normal school operating hours** – require specific written consent. It is recommended that the 'DCMI' form is used for this purpose.
- **Off-site day visits/activities involving adventurous type activities, or activities held in a challenging environment** – require specific written consent. It is recommended that the 'DCMI' form is used for this purpose.
- **Residential visits** – require specific written consent. It is recommended that the 'RCMI' form is used for this purpose.
- **Overseas visits** - require specific written consent with original copies of the form carried by the visit leader. It is recommended that the 'ORCMI' form is used for this purpose.

***Nursery schools must obtain specific consent for a child to participate in any off-site visit**.

Copies of the 'RVC', 'DCMI', 'RCMI' forms and explanatory flowchart outlining which consent form to use can be found here: Resource page. Electronic consent may be adopted and used in certain circumstances. If this is the case, it is strongly suggested that the OEAP National Guidance document on consent linked below is referred to. Further guidance regarding consent and parental responsibility can be found on the following DfE guidance: Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to consent on visits: Consent OEAP National Guidance documents.

9. Inclusion

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against participants because of one or more of their protected characteristics (Disability; Gender reassignment; Pregnancy and maternity; Race; Religion or belief; Sex and sexual orientation). There is a duty to make reasonable adjustments. If a visit needs to cater for young people with additional needs, every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue and activities that are both suitable and accessible and that enable the whole group to

participate fully and be actively involved. The principles of inclusion should be promoted and addressed for all visits and reflected in establishment policy, thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- an entitlement to participate
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- integration through participation with peers

No participant will be automatically excluded from a visit or have a parent/carer required to attend simply because they have a pre-existing need, and the school's inclusion policy will be followed However, the Equality Act 2010 does not require responsible bodies to place employees or participants at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises. It is also the case that the adjustments made to include a young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to inclusion visits: Inclusion OEAP National Guidance documents.

10. Medication

Parent/carers should give medical consent, providing authority for their young person to receive emergency treatment, including administration of an anaesthetic or blood transfusion. If a parent/carer chooses to withhold consent for a blood transfusion, the following OEAP National Guidance document should be referred to: Consent OEAP National Guidance documents. The 'DCMI' and 'RCMI' forms include medical consent. Schools need to ensure that any use of proprietary medications and use of emergency salbutamol inhaler or emergency auto-injectors are in line with the establishment medication policy and Department for Education guidance.

A young person on a visit may have pre-existing medical needs that require the administering of medication during the visit. In this case the establishment medication policy must be followed along with seeking advice and guidance from the relevant medical professional.

Before any off-site visit, school will carry out a specific risk assessment for any group member at risk of anaphylaxis or with any other significant allergy. The risk assessment will consider the person's needs in the context of the visit. All allergies will be considered, not just catering and food-related arrangements for the visit. The Schools Allergy Policy is to be followed in this respect.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to medication on visits: Medication OEAP National Guidance documents.

11. First Aid

Head teachers and Managers have a legal duty to make sure that there is adequate and appropriate first aid provision for those in their care at all times, including during off-site visits. This involves ensuring access to a competent adult who has an appropriate level of first aid training and to adequate first aid equipment to enable all reasonable emergency action to be taken in response to any accidents, illnesses, and incidents. Consideration must be given to the fact that there may be group members with pre-existing medical needs whereby first aid trained staff may be required on the visit irrelevant of environment and proximity to other first aid provision.

The following is recommended, based upon the level of external medical assistance available, the environment where the visit is taking place and the likely time required to access it:

- For visits where other external first aid provision is available and qualified first aid assistance is available to respond immediately with access by a land-based ambulance, no first aid training may be necessarily required for accompanying visit leaders. However, it is the visit leader's responsibility to ensure that adequate external cover is always available. Consideration should also be given to whether adequate first aid provision is available during any journeys taking into account the length of the journey and any known pre-existing medical needs of any group members.
- For visits where other first aid assistance or professional medical care might not be available immediately or the environment is not accessible by a land-based ambulance, first aid training is recommended for leaders. The visit leader and leaders of subgroups that may operate independently should also be appropriately competent in first aid or have a trained first aider as an assistant.

- For visits with establishment staff led adventurous type activities, it is recommended that the visit leader and any other necessary staff have completed an outdoor related first aid qualification of 16 hours duration in-line with NGB requirements.

For EYFS under the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage it remains a legal requirement for at least one person with a valid paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate to be available at all times.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to first aid on visits: First Aid OEAP National Guidance documents.

12. Risk Management

Employers have a legal duty to manage risk and ensure that proportionate (suitable and sufficient) risk management systems are in place. Staff should have access to appropriate guidance, training and resources specific to the risk management of off-site visits.

An appropriate and robust risk assessment is required which identifies any significant risks and the control measures required to reduce these risks to an acceptable level. All risks do not need to be eliminated; indeed, low level residual risks are to be expected. Exposure to well managed risk helps children and young people learn important life skills including how to manage risk for themselves. This is endorsed by the HSE in 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management'.

Risk assessments must be carried out for all aspects of each visit; these should be comprehensive but not complex. The starting point of any risk assessment should be the consideration of the benefits and learning outcomes of the visit/ activity. It is important to ensure there is a sensible balance between the benefits and any risks involved. There are three types of risk assessment:

- **Generic** these are generic templates which are a starting point for producing a more detailed and specific risk assessment.
- **Specific** these consider any additional significant issues that are not covered by the Generic Risk Assessment such as the pre-existing needs of the group, the venue to be used and the activities to be undertaken.
- **Ongoing** this is what the staff do on a visit to keep the group safe – 'active risk management'. It involves continuously assessing situations as they unfold and adjusting your response to effectively manage any issues/risks that may arise. This is not a written risk assessment, although it may indicate that risk assessments need amending in light of certain events. All staff are responsible for carrying out effective on-going risk assessments based on competence, experience and common sense. Staff teams must be suitably competent and experienced so they are able to effectively manage any foreseeable situation they are likely to encounter on the visit.

The visit leader is responsible (with assistance from other adults on visit if appropriate) to complete the risk assessment procedure and document for elements of the visit that they are responsible for. Prior to the visit taking place, the risk assessment must be shared with other staff on the visit so that they are fully aware of their responsibilities and can undertake the ongoing risk assessment whilst the visit is taking place.

Generic risk assessment templates produced by SFCMAT are available for a wide range of activities on the resources page.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to risk management on visits: Risk Assessment OEAP National Guidance documents.

13. Providers

Where a provider is supplying some form of activity delivered by a member of their staff or third party and/or residential accommodation suitable and sufficient assurances must be obtained from any providers via the Provider Assurance Form (PAF). Providers who hold an LOtC Quality Badge do not need to complete a PAF. The PAF should be sent to the provider to complete and it is recommended that this is completed and checked prior to the establishment becoming financially committed particularly when using a new provider. It is suggested that providers hold a minimum level of public liability insurance of £10 million.

There is no requirement to ask a provider for copies of their risk assessment documentation once they have either completed a PAF or hold a valid LOtC Quality Badge. Holders of LOtC Quality Badges can be checked on the LOtC Quality Badge website.

If a provider requires a waiver type document to be completed prior to participation in the activity it is generally deemed unacceptable for young people to participate in the activity in question and an alternative activity be found which can fulfil the aims and objectives of the planned visit in an alternative manner. For further information on waivers contact the CDC Educational Visits Adviser.

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third-party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of children and young people. It is a vital dimension of risk-benefit management. Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit.

Your establishment offsite visits policy should clarify the circumstances where a preliminary visit is a requirement. Where a preliminary visit is not reasonably practicable, you should consider how you will gather sufficient information to make an adequate assessment of the risk-benefit management issues (telephone discussion; website; contacting previous users etc.).

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to using providers on visits: Using Providers OEAP National Guidance documents.

14. Transport

The visit leader must give careful thought to planning transport and care should be taken to assess the maturity and the needs of the group, the competence and experience of the staff, as well as the

distance from base. This will ensure that the Visit Leader, EVC and Head teacher /Manager are confident that 'effective supervision' is in place during the transport element of the visit.

Coaches/Minibuses with driver

Establishments should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company and appropriate checks/assurances obtained. The Coach Transport Assurance Form (CTAF) is to be used to seek assurances regarding the suitability of transport providers.

Public Transport

Public transport can reduce the cost of visits. It can also be a learning experience in itself, especially where young people are involved in planning the journey themselves. When planning to use public transport staff should contact the company involved to pre-book tickets or if no tickets are needed (e.g., on a bus) to ensure that the transport provider is happy with the intended arrangements and the numbers traveling in the group. Staff/participant ratios may need considering when using public transport to ensure that effective supervision is always maintained. A higher staff ratio may be required to manage this mode of transport. A pre-visit would normally be expected so that the visit leader is familiar with the route and where to get on and off.

Self-driven minibus It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that all relevant legal requirements are met for the vehicle they are driving and that appropriate supervision is in place. The level of supervision should be considered as part of the risk assessment for the journey; the driver should not normally be responsible for supervising the group. It is also the establishment's responsibility as the operator to ensure that all legal requirements are met. Passengers must not obstruct any entrance, exit or gangway & must not distract the driver. For longer journeys it may be necessary to consider whether a second driver is required. Consideration also needs to be paid to areas such as breakdown cover etc.

SFCMAT requires that all drivers of minibuses in partner schools must have completed a driving assessment (e.g. MiDAS) in a minibus. Completing such an assessment then enables the driver to be classed as an authorised driver. As part of the assessment, driving licences are checked to ensure that the driver has the correct entitlement to drive a minibus. Section 19 permits need to be applied for by each establishment, with one being required per minibus. With regards to driving on a Category B licence the driver must be at least 21 years old and have held a driving licence for two years and be driving the vehicle on a purely not for hire or reward basis, having the right to refuse to drive if necessary.

Before driving a minibus in any country outside the UK, the current specific regulations of that country should be checked.

Private Vehicles by Staff Members

Transporting children and young people in the private vehicles of staff members requires careful consideration. Where this occurs, there should be recorded procedures with the Voluntary Vehicle Use

(VVU) form being used to seek assurances regarding the validity of the vehicle to be used and the conduct of the driver. Additionally, the employer may wish to check the member of staff's driving license via the driving license checking service. Details of transport to be used must be made clear to parents and explicit parental consent obtained to transport pupils in private vehicles and by specified persons.

The LA advises against using parents/ carers to transport other people's children to the visit/activity, unless this is an independent arrangement made between the parent/carers themselves and is not within curriculum time.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to transport on visits: Using Transport OEAP National Guidance documents.

15. Charging

Head teachers, managers, EVCs and visit leaders must take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996. To assist in what charges can be made in respect to a school visit, there is an explanatory flowchart on the resources page.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to charging for visits: Charging for School Visits OEAP National Guidance documents.

16. Insurance

For SFCMAT employees, employers' liability and public liability insurance applies to the same extent as it does to SFCMAT premises.

All overseas visits undertaken by SFCMAT establishments must ensure that they have appropriate and sufficient insurance cover in place.

In the event of there being any query with regards insurance cover e.g. activities being planned to be undertaken, cover for pre-existing medical needs, anxieties, potential/tendency for selfharm etc., it is advised that establishments contact their insurer direct to ensure that their insurance cover is sufficient.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to insurance on visits: Insurance OEAP National Guidance documents.

17. Adventurous Activities and Challenging Environments

Adventurous Activities include activities which are considered to have a higher potential level of risk associated with them and would normally require a specifically competent/ trained/ experienced person to lead the activity. On the Exeant system there is a list of activities which are deemed to be adventurous.

The responsibility for the safety of participants in an adventurous activity will rest with either:

- An external provider **or**
- A member of establishment staff who has been approved by the Educational Visits Adviser and is leading the activity.

For provider led adventurous activities The Activity Centre (Young Persons' Safety) Act established the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations and the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) and made it a legal requirement for certain providers of adventure activities to be licensed by the Authority. Only activities specified in the regulations come under the scheme.
These 'in scope' activities are – caving, climbing (except on climbing walls or abseiling towers), trekking (as defined) and water sports (as defined). An AALA license is an assurance of safety. It does not accredit educational or activity quality which is done via the LOtC Quality Badge scheme.

Visits that take place in 'Challenging Environments' such as coastal/river fieldwork, in close proximity to water e.g. a beach visit involving a paddle in the sea or any visit to London will require greater levels of planning and are classed as Category '**C**' type visits.

Separate guidance is available with regards to the expedition section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to adventurous and challenging visits: Adventurous and Challenging Visits OEAP National Guidance documents.

18. Residential and Overseas Visits

SFCMAT acknowledges the immense educational benefits that residential visits can potentially bring to children and young people and fully supports and encourages residential visits that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted. In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken. It is essential that young people know where the duty staff are at all times and that all appropriate safety regulations are observed. Fire and emergency procedures for the location must be discussed with the group shortly after arrival.

Security of the site should be checked wherever possible on a pre-visit so that it can be included in the risk assessment.

For overseas visits, group members must be suitably prepared with regards to language, local customs and traditions, food etc. It is advisable that there is at least one member of staff in the group who is fluent in the local language especially in respect to potential medical incidents. Group members will need to have a valid GHIC card, passport and visa entry requirements need to be carefully checked well in advance of the date of departure. Visit leaders are to carry a copy of the passports and a signed letter on headed paper detailing all the names of party members and that they have permission to travel as part of the group. The visit leader should consider the relevant country information from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website:
www.fco.gov.uk.
The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to residential and overseas visits: Residential and Overseas Visits OEAP National Guidance documents.

19. Monitoring and Evaluation

Establishments should ensure that appropriate systems are in place for the monitoring of off-site visits. Monitoring includes the quality assurance of documentation, observing a group whilst out on an activity and engaging in discussions with group members upon their return from a visit etc.

All visits should be evaluated to enable any lessons to be learned and this to be recorded on the visit record of the Exeant system.

It is extremely valuable if any lessons learned/near misses are shared with the CDC Educational Visits Adviser on the document page there is a form with which to share such information to enable future practice to be developed. The Near Miss Reporting Form can be found on the resources page.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to monitoring visits: Monitoring School Visits OEAP National Guidance documents.

20. Emergencies and Critical Incidents

There is a hierarchy of Emergencies divided into 4 categories dependent on the nature of the visit.
Incident – Dealt with by the visit leadership team.

Emergency – An incident or event that overwhelms the coping mechanisms of the visit leadership team and requires the schools' / academies' emergency plan for offsite visits to be initiated.

Critical Incident – An incident or event that overwhelms the coping mechanism of the visit leadership team as well as the schools' / academies' emergency plan. This requires the councils / employers critical plan in addition to the schools'/ academies' emergency plan to be initiated.

Major Incident – Declared by the Police who would take control with the relevant local authorities. If outside the UK, the relevant authorities will take control.

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an educational visit or learning outside the classroom activity has either:

- Suffered a life-threatening injury or fatality
- Is at serious risk
- Or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

Establishments must have emergency planning procedures in place. Every visit leader and assistant leader must be familiar with emergency planning procedures and reporting mechanism. This forms part of the training delivered to EVCs and visit leaders. All visits must have a designated emergency contact who is contactable for the entire duration of the visit, 24/7 if necessary. The emergency contact must be a competent and senior member of the establishment who has access to all the emergency contact and medical information for all party members (including adults) along with copies of all passports and relevant visa details for overseas visits. It is recommended that senior staff from establishments undertake the Managing School Visit Emergencies training course that is delivered by the CDC.

TheCDC has produced a 'Visit Leader Emergency Action Plan' (VLEAP), a 'Vehicle Breakdown Action Plan' (VBAP) and an 'Establishment Emergency Contact Action Plan' (EECAP). All these documents can be found on the resources page.

Relevant emergency contact telephone numbers should be carried by leaders at all times during an off-site educational visit but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. Under no circumstances should these telephone numbers be given to young people or to their parents/carers.

The following OEAP National Guidance documents are of use with regards to dealing with emergencies and critical incidents on visits: Emergencies and Critical Incidents on Visits OEAP National Guidance documents.

21. Resources

All of the resources provided by the LA can be accessed via either the 'Documents' tab on the toolbar of the Exeant system or on the resources page.

Additionally, further information can be obtained by contacting the CDC Educational Visits Adviser: darren.saxton@doncaster.gov.uk

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