

Hill Top Academy Off-Site Educational Visits Policy

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Context

Hill Top Academy believes that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every pupil to an effective and balanced curriculum. Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment, and so form a key part of what makes *Hill Top Academy* a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits to pupils of taking part in visits and learning outside the classroom include, but are not limited to:

- Improvements in their ability to cope with change.
- Increased critical curiosity and resilience.
- Opportunities for meaning making, creativity, developing learning relationships and practicing strategic awareness.
- Increased levels of trust and opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves, them in each other).
- Improved achievement and attainment across a range of curricular subjects. Pupils are active participants not passive consumers, and a wide range of learning styles can flourish.
- Enhanced opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context' and the development of the social and emotional aspects of intelligence.
- Increased risk management skills through opportunities for involvement in practical risk-benefit decisions in a range of contexts. i.e. encouraging pupils to become more risk aware as opposed to risk averse.
- Greater sense of personal responsibility.
- Possibilities for genuine team working including enhanced communication skills.
- Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding of a variety of environments.
- Improved awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability.
- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.

Application

Any visit that leaves the school grounds is covered by this policy, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time, or outside the normal school day.

In addition to this Educational Visits Policy, *Hill Top Academy*

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: 'Educational Off-site Visits and Adventurous Activities Guidance' with reference to OEAP National Guidance.
2. Uses 'Exeant', the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with school policy (i.e. this document), DMBC policy and guidance, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

Types of visit

There are three types of visit:

1. Routine local visits in the [can be covered by an 'Extended Learning Locality Statement' (See Appendix A)] – Cat. A
2. Day visits within the UK (outside of London) that do not involve an adventurous activity – Cat. B
3. Visits to London, and/or that are overseas, and/or residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity, and/or take place in a challenging environment- Cat. C

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on 'Exeant' (where required). Using the 'Exeant' system, they are to obtain initial approval for a visit from the EVC prior to formally planning, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is *Nichola Clark – School Principal*, who will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. The EVC is the first point of contact for advice on visit related matters. Initial approval requests for visits will go through to the EVC via the 'Exeant' system. At the point of initial approval the decision is made by the EVC as to whether the visit requires the approval of the Head. The EVC is the main point of contact between the LA and the establishment with specific reference to the 'Exeant' system and is responsible for the management of the 'Exeant' system with regards granting access to the system for establishment staff.

The Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising all visits via 'Exeant'.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'.

The Local Authority is responsible for the final approval (via 'Exeant') of all visits that are either overseas, residential, take place in a challenging environment (including London) and/or involve an adventurous activity for Local Authority maintained establishments. For establishments outside of Local Authority control, the LA acts in an advisory and consultative role providing guidance for such establishments.

Staff Competence

We recognise that staff competence is the single most important factor in the safe management of visits, and so we support staff in developing their competence in the following ways:

- An apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced visit leaders before taking on a leadership role.
- Supervision by senior staff on some educational visits.
- Support for staff to attend training courses relevant to their role, where necessary.

In deciding whether a member of staff is competent to be a visit leader, the Head Teacher will take into account the following factors:

- Relevant experience.
- Previous relevant training.
- The prospective leader's ability to make dynamic risk management judgements, and take charge in the event of an emergency.
- Knowledge of the pupils, the venue, and the activities to be undertaken.

Approval

The approval process is as follows for each type of visit:

1. Category 'A' - Local visits which involve transport purely by foot within the locality. They are either entered onto the 'Exeant' system or the establishment follows the 'Extending Learning Locality Statement' (Appendix A).
2. Category 'B' - Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity, are not within London and do not take place in a challenging environment. These are entered onto 'Exeant' for initial approval by the EVC/Head and must then be fully submitted to the EVC for checking at least **5** days in advance, and then forwarded to the Head for approval.
3. Category 'C' - Visits that are overseas, residential, within London, take place in a challenging environment and/or involve an adventurous activity (see LA guidance for definition of 'adventurous' and 'challenging environment') are checked by the EVC, approved by the Head along with automatically being sent through to the LA (by virtue of selecting the adventurous and/or residential checkbox on 'Exeant') for approval or consultative guidance.

Emergency procedures

A critical incident is any incident where events go beyond the normal coping mechanisms and experience of the visit leadership team.

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical incident during a visit (see Appendix B). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least bi-annually and following any major staffing changes.

When an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, or where it involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention then assistance will be sought from the local authority.

Educational Visits Checklist

Hill Top Academy Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities. This has been adapted from the LA's generic checklist. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'

Parental Consent

The school obtains blanket consent at the start of each year for regular/routine activities that take place wholly within the 'normal' school day. Category A visits are covered by using the 'Extended Learning Locality Statement' (Appendix A) and parents/carers can be informed of visits via electronic means, newsletters or letter. For Category B visits that are less routine, parents/carers must be fully informed of the arrangements and acknowledgement received from parent/carers that they have received the information regarding the visit via a reply slip.

Specific, (ie. one-off), parental consent must be obtained for all visits that take place either partly or wholly outside of 'normal' school hours. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents (letters, meetings, etc), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis.

Inclusion

Hill Top Academy complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Charging / funding for visits

Please refer to our policy below:

<https://www.hilltopacademy.co.uk/media/documents/Charging-and-Remissions-Policy.pdf>

Transport

Hill Top Academy uses reputable coach companies when considering using a transport provider for an educational visit. Exeant requires that assurances be sought from external providers that suitable and sufficient management systems are in place. All Coach Assurance Forms by external providers are complete, in date and reviewed annually.

Use of staff cars to transport pupils – All documentation for staff using their own cars for transporting children is reviewed and checked annually by the Office Manager

Insurance

Adequate insurance in place with Risk Protection Arrangement Provider via the DfE

Operating Procedure for Extended Learning Locality

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our extended locality:

- Road traffic.
- Other people / members of the public / animals.
- Losing a pupil.
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc).

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Head/EVC must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved. A current list of approved staff is maintained by the EVC and office.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'Extended Learning Locality' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school.
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practiced appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- All remotely supervised work in the extended learning locality is done in 'buddy' pairs/fours as a minimum.
- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- Staff will deposit in the office a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route, and an estimated time of return.
- A school mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, goggles)

Appendix B – Emergency Procedure

The school's emergency response to an incident is based on the following key factors:

1. There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit (during school hours this is the office).
2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager at all times.
3. For activities that take place during normal school hours, the visit leadership team will be aware of any relevant medical information for all participants, including staff.
4. For activities that take place outside normal school hours, the visit leadership team and the emergency contact/s will be aware of and have any relevant medical information and emergency contact information for all participants, including staff.
5. The visit leader/s and the base contact/s know to request support from the local authority in the event that an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention.
 - a) The visit leader will carry a 'Visit Leader Emergency Action Plan - VLEAP' and 'Phone Crib Card'
6. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.