

**Devon Curriculum Services
Model Policy for the Management of Outdoor Education,
Visits and Off-Site Activities**

This model policy is provided to schools to help implement arrangements for the management of off-site activities outlined in the Devon County Council health and safety policy "Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities", 2003.

The model policy should be adapted to describe the particular arrangements in place in individual schools.

Under the heading "The Governing Body (Schools and Colleges)" page 6 of the above booklet states:

"Governors should agree a policy for the management of off-site activities. This may be done by endorsing the County Council policy and should include additional reference to school based or local procedures for:

- approving off-site activities*
- the provision of training and information*
- the management of any significant provision which is particular to the school (e.g. residential centre or mini-bus)*
- action in the case of an emergency*
- reporting accidents and incidents*
- monitoring and reviewing policy and practice."*

For additional advice or comment on the development and application of the attached model policy please contact: Bryan Smith, Adviser for Outdoor Education, Devon Curriculum Services, Great Moor House, Bittern Road, Sowton, Exeter, EX2 7NL. Tel 01392 385238 or email brsmith@devon.gov.uk

NB. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places overall responsibility for health and safety with the employer. Who this is varies with the type of school.

- For community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units the employer is the Local Education Authority (LEA).
- For foundation schools, foundation special schools and voluntary-aided schools, the employer is usually the governing body.

(From DfES: Health and Safety, Responsibilities and Powers, December 2001)

Nonetheless, foundation and voluntary aided schools may decide to make use of the DCC policy and guidance as necessary.

I Policy for the Management of Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities (Draft 2003)

Bow Community Primary School

1. Introduction

This policy covers all off-site visits and activities organised through the school and for which the Governing Body and headteacher are responsible.

The Governing Body endorses the Devon County Council policy document “Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities” as the basis for the school’s health and safety policy for the management of visits and off-site activities.

The Governing Body seeks to ensure that every pupil has access to a wide range of educational experiences as an entitlement. As part of this entitlement the Governing Body recognises the significant educational value of visits and activities which take place away from the immediate school environment.

The Governing Body aims to enable this school to become an educational environment in which all members of the school community can thrive, regardless of race, religion, culture, gender or individual need. We intend to apply this aim to the planning and management of all visits and off-site activities.

Visits and off-site activities support, enrich and extend the curriculum in many subject areas, encourage co-operation, team work and the application of problem solving skills and develop independence and self confidence.

Residential opportunities, physical challenge and adventure can have a particular part to play in the development of personal and social qualities for all young people. Outdoor education helps young people to be physically active and to understand how to assess and manage risk.

The management of visits and off-site activities places particular responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of all participants on the Governing Body, headteacher, the party leader, members of staff and volunteers, pupils and parents. The school also has responsibilities to other members of the public and to third parties. This policy on visits and off-site activities therefore complements the wider school health and safety policy.

It is a priority of this school that all visits and off-site activities are safe, well-managed and educationally beneficial.

2. Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The headteacher will:

- ensure all visits and off-site activities have specific and appropriate educational objectives
- approve all visits and activities, based on compliance with the county and school health and safety policy, relevant Devon County Council guidance and recognised good practice;

- 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;
- check that the staffing ratio is suitable for each visit;
- ensure party leaders have access to a planning checklist, based on the DCC policy (pp 10-12), and adapted as necessary to meet the particular needs of the school;
- check that risks have been assessed, significant risks recorded and any appropriate safety measures are in place.

3. Responsibilities of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator

In order to carry out the above responsibilities effectively the headteacher may delegate specified tasks to a suitably experienced and competent Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC). The headteacher will be considered to be the EVC where tasks are not delegated to a named member of staff. The EVC will be responsible for carrying out agreed tasks and attending relevant training provided by the County Council.

4. Approval of off-site activities

The headteacher will be responsible for approving all off-site activities. This includes approving the party leader for each visit or off-site activity.

A summary of the programme for the following categories of programmes, together with a risk assessment, will be sent to the Adviser for Outdoor Education, Devon Curriculum Services, for endorsement:

- hazardous outdoor and adventurous activities (except those taking place at Devon County Council outdoor and residential centres) (Category B activities);
- visits abroad (Category C activities);
- activities where there is significant concern about health, safety and welfare (Category C activities).

The Governing Body should be informed by the headteacher about plans which involve:

- a residential element;
- any visit abroad and
- any visit where there is significant concern about health, safety and welfare.

The headteacher will monitor off-site visits and activities and will provide a regular report to the Governing Body about the off-site activities which have taken place from the school.

5. Responsibilities of the party leader

The party leader will:

- have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit or activity;
- obtain the headteacher's approval before any off-site visit or activity takes place;
- follow policy and procedures of the County Council and the school;

- assess the risks involved and amend as appropriate any previously recorded risk assessment;
- use the school planning checklist to ensure all procedures have been followed;
- ensure form SOE5 from the DCC policy is completed where commercial, charitable or private (non-DCC facilities) are being used for adventurous or residential activities;
- inform parents fully about the visit and gain their consent, where appropriate;
- reassess risks while the visit or activity takes place;
- ensure there is a contingency plan (Plan B) should a significant change to the programme be necessary due to weather etc.

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

Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

- Assist the party leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of young people on the visit;
- Be clear about their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in a visit or activity.

7. Responsibilities of pupils

Whilst taking part in off-site activities pupils also have responsibilities about which they should be made aware by the party leader or other members of staff, for their own health and safety and that of the group. Young people should:

- Avoid unnecessary risks;
- Follow instructions of the party leader and other members of staff;
- Behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct;
- Inform a member of staff of significant hazards.

8. Responsibilities of parents

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:

- support the application of any agreed code of conduct;
- inform the party leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit;
- provide an emergency contact number;
- sign the consent form.

9. The provision of training and information

A copy of this policy and associated school procedures will be made available to all staff within the school who may be responsible for leading off-site visits and activities and to any parent requesting a copy.

The headteacher will make additional information available to staff to help ensure the safe management of off-site activities, including the DCC policy statement "Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities", 2003, access to the DCS website: www.devon.gov.uk/dcs/outdoor

Appropriate training will be made available to leaders and other adults taking part in off-site activities in order to reflect identified school health and safety priorities and educational priorities.

The headteacher will maintain a record of the qualifications held by staff and volunteers involved in outdoor activities including first aid, life-saving, mini-bus driving and specific hazardous activities.

10. Action in the case of emergency

The headteacher will ensure that emergency arrangements are in place, known to staff and in line with DCC policy, to cover the range of activities undertaken from the school and the times at which they take place. This will include emergency contact numbers for designated senior members of staff or the governing body out-of hours. First aid provision and training of staff will be in accordance with DCC expectations.

11. Accidents and incidents

Any accidents and incidents that occur during off-site visits and activities will be reported and recorded in accordance with the school health and safety policy. Devon County Council will be informed of notifiable accidents and incidents. Accidents and incidents will subsequently be reviewed within the school to identify any learning points.

12. Management of specific provision *(This section in particular may be customised to individual school's use or removed.)*

The following arrangements apply to the management of specific provision for off-site visits and activities:

e.g.

- *visits to the village hall*
- *use of school mini-bus*

13. Monitoring and review policy and practice

The Governors will review this policy:

- Every two years
- At such time as there are significant changes to guidance from Devon County Council on the management of Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities
- Should significant issues be brought to the attention of the Governors through the report of the headteacher.

This policy has been agreed by the Governing Body on: