

1. Introduction

1.1 The value of outdoor education

Outdoor educational visits and off-site activities have great potential for enhancing the education and development of young people. This policy is designed to help ensure that such programmes are safe, enjoyable and well managed.

Outdoor education helps young people to:

- Promote a positive and knowledgeable response towards personal health and wellbeing;
- Extend their personal horizons through greater appreciation and understanding of the world and the people around them;
- Understand the need for sustainable relationships between people and their environment;
- Develop self-esteem, take personal responsibility, co-operate with and respect the needs of others;
- Enhance practical problem solving and team work skills.

Outdoor education is particularly effective when young people engage in well planned, first hand experiences in small groups, with opportunities to reflect and build upon those experiences.

A very broad range of experiences is provided for pupils, from short visits in the locality of the school to residential visits involving specific activities, which develop talents and skills in a unique manner.

The purpose of this policy document is not to restrict or constrain these activities but to support them by means of a planning framework, which clarifies and endorses the concerns for the safety and welfare of pupils, held by all in the education service.

1.2 Equal Opportunities

Outdoor educational visits and off-site activities should be available and accessible to all who wish to participate irrespective of gender, religion, ethnic origin, social background, medical need or physical ability.

Trip leaders need to ascertain the suitability of venues for disabled access:

- Is wheelchair access limited and would this affect the overall experience?
- Are there suitable toilet facilities?
- Is specialist transport required?

It is important that information about venues is accurate to ensure the safety of pupils on the trip. If in doubt it may be necessary to do a pre-trip visit to check the facilities. Leaders MUST make all possible reasonable adjustments to make all visits inclusive.

All young people should be encouraged to participate in as wide a variety of educational visits and activities as possible. However, there may be some trips (such as skiing, expedition etc.) where some pupils are unable to participate due to physical barriers.

2. Procedures

2.1 Planning

- Discuss the trip with NAB, ensure the date is in the school diary and that staff are covered who will be attending the trip.
- Work to a ratio of 1:20 for day trips and 1:10 for hazardous activities, foreign and residential trips
- Complete an Educational Visit Trip Form
- Think carefully about the risk assessment. Write a full RA considering all possible hazards.
- If you are unsure; get advice from Malcolm Dean (MCD) who is the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) or form colleagues who have experience of leading similar trips
- Inform parents and arrange information meetings if required. Parental consent is required for pupils to attend trips.
- Sue Davies will collect money for the trip and handle administrative arrangements. She also has green forms for medical information needed for residential trips.
- Government policy on charging applies to all educational trips. Payments are voluntary but should there be insufficient contributions to make the trip viable, the school reserves the right to cancel the trip.
- Ensure a copy of the trip form is signed by MCD. A copy is needed in the office and the trip organiser has a copy. Electronic copies are fine.
- The authority website educational visits system needs to be used for foreign, residential or hazardous activities. Details of how to use this are in the U drive trips folder. Pass to MCD electronically for checking who will then send it to shire hall for approval twenty days in advance of the trip departing.
- Trips using the school minibus must book a bus using the charts in the staffroom. The bus must be used in accordance with the guidelines set out in the staff handbook (available on the U drive)

More detailed advice is available on the U: drive (u:\Educational Visits) or on the Gloucestershire Education Authority website under "Educational Visits and School Journeys". Balcarras is committed to upholding the recommendations within the County guidelines.

2.2 Medical

Before any trip departs it is vital that the medical needs of all pupils on the trip are assessed by the trip organiser. Any medication needed by a pupil must be collected and taken on the trip. Trip organisers must ensure they fully understand what medication is to be admitted, the times for admission and how to act should a medical emergency occur.

It is the trip organiser job to ensure all medication is sorted out well before the trip departs, (usually 2 days before departure).

3. Emergency procedures

In the event of an emergency:

- Ascertain the nature and extent of the emergency
- Render first aid and attend to the casualty(ies)
- Make sure all other group members are accounted for, are safe from dangers and are well looked after
- Call the emergency services as required. The police will take statements. An adult in the party should accompany any casualties to hospital
- Collect the remainder of the group and arrange for its return to base
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the accident site to assist or liaise with the search/rescue/emergency services
- Contact the centre where you are staying and inform them
- Contact NAB and designated contact persons. Give them the following information:
 - Your name
 - Nature, date and time of the incident
 - Location of the accident
 - Details of the injuries
 - Names of all involved
 - Actions taken so far
 - Telephone numbers for future communication. For a serious incident try to identify alternative telephone numbers as lines could become jammed
- At the incident site, record all relevant details in writing as soon as possible. Record names and addresses of witnesses and names of emergency services officers

- Restrict telephone calls to the essential and keep emergency numbers as clear as possible
- Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted
- If the press is involved before you have time to contact base make no comment and refer them to Dom Burke or to the local police
- Dom Burke/SMT will make all necessary contacts and follow established incident procedures
- All media contacts will be channelled through Dom Burke
- Dom Burke/SMT will contact the school's insurance and the Chair of Governors
- The Chair of Governors will determine whether an enquiry is required into the organisation of the visit and the conditions preceding the emergency

A copy of the emergency procedure is included in the trip form, completed by every trip organiser.

When this policy was reviewed, an equality impact assessment was conducted to ensure any changes did not have an adverse effect under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. Should you have any comments regarding this policy, please contact the school.

Appendix 1

Trip Procedures: For all Residential Trips

To be completed by the **Trip Organiser**. When organising a trip, please ensure that all of the following requirements are followed.

Tick when completed

1. **SMT Agreement**

Have you received SMT agreement to the trip running? Do not book any trip before agreeing precisely the dates and details of the trip with SMT and the trip being entered into the school calendar.

2. **School Calendar**

Is the trip in the school calendar?

3. **Do dates match?**

Do the dates in the trip letter match the dates in the school calendar? The trip organiser must check carefully on the electronic diary in the staff section of the VLE. If not then please discuss any date changes before booking the trip.

4. **Deposits**

The deposit must be substantial: A minimum of **£200** Is required for any trip over £300.

5. **Hazards**

Does the initial letter make clear all potential hazards? It is important that parents fully understand all of the hazards right from the start, as pulling out of a trip because of the hazards in not acceptable.

6. **Bookings**

Only book a trip when the deposits are paid and in the school bank account. Never book a trip with an organiser based on hoped-for-numbers.

7. **Contingency**

Allow a contingency in all trip payments that will ensure the trip pays for itself, **even if a pupil drops out**. Discuss with the organiser how much it would cost in pupils drop out and factor this amount into the trip cost.

9. **Liaison with Sue Davis**

Speak to Sue regularly. Ensure that the trip leader emails Sue promptly **24hrs after each payment date**, so you are fully aware

of any pupil who has not made a payment. Follow up immediately any non-payments by contacting parents immediately and discussing the reason.

10. **Deposits non refundable**
Make very clear that deposits are **non-refundable under any circumstances**. Deposits cannot be returned even if a pupil falls ill, leaves the school, is excluded from school, is judged not fit to travel or for any other reason. Any pupil that leaves the school for any reason will not be allowed on that trip.
11. **Final payment**
Make sure final payment is **significantly** before trip departs. Ideally at least 4 weeks before departure date, so that monies can be chased by the trip organiser.
12. **Must pay in full**
Don't take any pupil until all payments have been made. Failure to make final payment by a date specified by the school should result in that pupil not being allowed to attend the trip.
13. **Electronic Payment Paragraph**
Make sure that you letter contains the following paragraph:
"Balcarras School has set up an Online Payment System. It would be much appreciated if parents could use this system when paying for this trip, as it will significantly reduce administration time. It is a user friendly system and easily accessible (www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk and click on £payments on the blue bar at the top)*. (Alternatively, if you still want to send a cheque, please write your child's name and tutor group on the reverse)"

(At the bottom of the letter)

**if you need help setting up the online system, please contact Mrs Davis: sed@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk*

If you want advice about the letter, then please speak to MCD with a first copy, to ensure all the necessary details are made clear.

Teacher ratio 1:15 to 1:20