

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
ECONOMY & SKILLS: EDUCATION

ESTABLISHMENT EXCURSIONS AND EDUCATIONAL VISITS

1. Purpose

This document lays out the circumstances in which a visit or excursion can take place and makes clear to all parties involved in that visit or excursion the responsibilities that each will have, thereby ensuring that the visit or excursion, regardless of complexity, will take place safely and will be as well organised as reasonably possible.

2. Related References

- (a) Master Health & Safety File.
- (b) Standard Circular 57 – Child Protection
- (c) Standard Circular 33 – Outdoor Code of Practice.
- (d) Health and Safety File Standard B1 – Incident & Near Miss Reporting
- (e) Health and Safety File Standard B2 – First Aid
- (f) Standard Circular 31 - Insurance for Participants Teachers and Other Adults Taking Part in Educational Excursion Activities

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Visits, trips, excursions and off-site activities have always formed a vital part of Scottish education and of the children's and social services required to be provided by a Local Authority.
- 3.2 East Ayrshire Council values the contribution such activities make to developing the children, young people and adults that we serve. The vision and rationale for learning outdoors and visiting off-site is made clear in the Education Service's Curriculum Outdoors Strategy.
- 3.3 The code of practice that follows aims to clarify the procedures to be followed when planning and taking part in all off-site activities, within and beyond East Ayrshire. Such a code of practice will provide a framework within which staff, managers, parents/carers and participants can operate on visits and excursions, while safeguarding the health and well-being of all and meeting the requirements of health and safety legislation and the laws that apply to all who are responsible for others on such excursions/visits. Approval for any excursion to go ahead will only be given on condition that the procedures are fully complied with.

Approved by:
Linda McAulay-Griffiths, Head of Education
May 2019

Authorised by:
Alex McPhee, Depute Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer
May 2019

1 **Guidance**

This document adopts the national framework “Going Out There” 2013 for the safety management of off-site visits managed by East Ayrshire Council Education Service and other Council Services organising similar ventures.

“Going Out There” is web based and accessible at www.goingoutthere.co.uk . It was written and produced by Scottish Government, The Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education SAPOE, Health and Safety Executive, The Association of Directors of Education and Education Scotland.

The national guidance embraces the Health and Safety Executive’s principles of sensible risk management by seeking a balanced view that considers both the benefits and risks associated with visits and activities. East Ayrshire Council will work in partnership with the national agencies through SAPOE membership to keep this guidance up to date with new practices and lessons learned from incidents – in Scotland or beyond.

Establishments should adopt this guidance in full and review and update local procedures to ensure that they reflect the guidance in this document. The Council has chosen to use the electronic data management system Evolve rather than any paper tools appended in “Going Out There”. Establishments should strive to avoid placing any additional requirements for visit planning and approval on their staff or visit leaders. They can do so confident in the knowledge that they are following good practice that is shared across the whole of Scotland.

This document incorporates and supersedes all previous local and national guidance. Whilst professional member organisation’s guidance may be informative, staff are expected to comply with this document. “Going Out There” should be regarded as an integral part of this Standard Circular.

The remainder of this Standard Circular supplements “Going Out There” with East Ayrshire Council specific context. It fulfils the employer guidance referred to where national guidance defers to the local authority and identifies the processes, tools and advisory staff that EAC expects establishments to use.

2 **Scope of the combined guidance (Going Out There and SC48) in EAC**

The combined guidance is relevant to any occasion in which children; young people or clients (where East Ayrshire Council is deemed to have a duty of care) leave the establishment site or similar establishment/facility for any activity or visit whilst legally in the care of an Educational establishment. Some Social Work, work experience and attendance at alternative education establishment exemptions exist where other suitable safety management arrangements are in place. In these circumstances clarification should be sought from the Education Officer; Outdoor and Sustainable Development; and Corporate Risk Manager.

3 **Technical Advice**

Further advice and support for establishments is available:

Insurance/Risk Management	David Hunter, Principal Risk and Insurance Adviser, 01563 553722
Adventure /Evolve tool	Willie White, Education Officer/Adventure Technical Expert, 01563 551457
Health and Safety	David Doran, Health and Safety Manager (acting), 01563 576095
Transport	George Corbett, FM Contracts Manager/Transport, 01563576386
Child Protection	Dougie Robertson, Child Protection Lead Officer, 01563 576935
Emergency	EAC 24hr Emergency Centre, 01563 553950

4 **Data management tool (Evolve)**

The Evolve data management tool has been made available for all staff www.east-ayrshire-excursions.org.uk . It is expected all off-site visits (with a few exceptions) will be recorded on the Evolve system.

This replaces previous paper forms for the planning, authorisation, monitoring and tracking of off-site visits and provides a robust audit trail of the processes. Parent/carer consent will still be obtained in paper form, if necessary. On completion of the sections of Evolve for a particular visit a Visit Plan is generated which forms the minimum visit plan as referred to throughout “Going Out There”. Additional paper based planning can supplement the Evolve Visit Form if necessary, particularly for more challenging visits, destinations, activity, etc.

All additional material/information should be disseminated using email links to streamline the vetting process whilst generating a permanent record.

5 Approval of visits

The Education Service has adopted the categorisation of visits and the level of approval delegation recommended in “Going Out There” by the national agencies. This will ensure, as far as reasonably possible, that risk management and approval is made by managers who best know the participants and staff involved. The arrangements for approval require satisfactory completion and submission of an Evolve visit form; selecting every visit type that applies to each visit.

Full parental/guardian consent must be granted at all times and it is the Event Leader’s duty to ensure that such consent is “informed consent”, therefore all relevant information must be made available regarding the itinerary, the destination, the planned activities etc. Where the risks to participants may be considered to be higher than normal this must be disclosed. Examples would include competitive ski-ing or visiting countries with an increased risk of terrorism.

For overseas visits, participants should take their European Health Insurance Card (Form E111) where applicable. A hard copy of Royal Sun Alliance’s Emergency Travel Card should be taken on all trips.

Visit Type	Endorsed by	Final Approval by	Notified to
<i>Routine and Expected</i>	Establishment Excursions and Visit Coordinator	Head of Establishment	
<i>Day visits</i>	Establishment Excursions and Visit Coordinator	Head of Establishment	
<i>Residential visits UK</i>	Establishment Excursions and Visit Coordinator	Head of Establishment	Education Officer: Outdoor and Sustainable Development, Corporate Risk Manager
<i>Overseas visits</i>	Establishment Excursions and Visit Coordinator, Head of Establishment, Education Officer: Outdoor and Sustainable Development, Corporate Risk Manager and Head of Service	Depute Chief Executive or Director of Health and Social Care	
<i>Non – Residential Adventure activities</i>	Establishment Excursions and Visit Coordinator and Head of Establishment	Education Officer: Outdoor and Sustainable Development	

For Overseas visits, the Head of Establishment must ensure approval by the Head of Education before any contractual arrangements are made with travel companies.

6 Risk Assessment

The Council has considered the common risks in a range of off site visits, with best practice control measures being identified from across establishments. This information is available to all staff as

Generic Risk Assessments on the Evolve system, which will be revised annually. It is expected staff will consider, adopt and amend these generic assessments as appropriate to their specific visit. Any further specific hazards and control measures identified will be recorded on the Evolve visit plan.

Any participants, staff or pupils/clients, with significant medical or support needs which require additional management arrangements to ensure safety to them or others should have their own specific risk assessment. It is possible this may require medical input and in the case of minors this assessment should be agreed and a copy signed by parent/carers. Consideration should be given as to the need for a Personal Evacuation Plan from accommodation. Participants are not insured and should not travel, if travelling against medical advice.

Cases may require to be referred to the Council's Insurers on an individual basis where unique risks have been identified in order to confirm the efficacy of the Council's insurance covers. It is important that sufficient lead time is allowed during the planning process to allow such consideration to be undertaken.

7 Establishing Ratios

The ratios of Leader:Young Person shown in the table below are for guidance only but are regarded as the minimum level necessary for safe operation in most circumstances. The actual number of staff for each visit must be determined by a process of risk assessment considering all factors, including; age and stage of development of all the young people involved; competence, experience and specific needs of participants and leaders; and the expected environmental conditions. It is accepted that there may be circumstances when a lower Leader:Young Persons ratio can be safely sustained and Heads/managers of establishments are in the best position to make this considered judgement. The decision on the ratio for each visit and the reasons for adopting it should be recorded by the organiser using Evolve.

General off-site visit ratios guidance (leaders : participants)			
Activity	Age of participants	Leader : young person ratios	Visit Leader competence
Day Visits: local easily accessible countryside and non challenging environments , or away from local area at secure venue	Under 5	Max 1:4	Previous experience assisting and approved by establishment Head
	Primary	Max 1: 15	
	Secondary	Max 1: 15	
Residential Visits	Primary	Max 1:10 (Minimum 2 staff)	Previous experience assisting and approved by establishment Head
	Secondary	Max 1:10 (Minimum 2 staff)	
Overseas Visits	Primary	Max 1:10 (Minimum 2 staff)	Previous experience assisting and approved by establishment Head.
	Secondary	Max 1:10 (Minimum 2 staff)	
Adventure and all non secure or challenging environments	All ages	Various, determined by risk assessment, reference Standard Circular 33	Previous experience assisting and approved by establishment Head and Education Officer.
	NB Leadership awards and ratios for specific adventure activities vary and can be found in Standard Circular 33.		

8 Deploying Staff

The Health and Safety at Work Act requires employers to make training available for staff to perform their work safely. In addition to professional qualification and general risk management EAC will provide specific training at two levels for both Visit Leaders and those staff overseeing visit safety management across an establishment (Excursions and Visit Coordinators- EVC), for those who require it. Staff competence to lead visits should also form part of mentoring and general professional review discussions with line managers as appropriate.

When using volunteers it is essential that they meet the requirements for the role that they have been assigned (Visit Leader, Visit Assistant Leader, Helper). The engagement of any volunteer must involve an appropriate level of vetting (including PVG) and induction. They must be sufficiently competent and confident to carry out their responsibilities. The level of competence and the thoroughness of the engagement process depend upon the role that the volunteer is to take, and the degree to which they will be working independently or under supervision. Where they are working independently it should be to the same standard as would be expected of an employee or contractor taking on the role. Where no employee accompanies a visit this should be shared with parents. Where non employees are allocated supervision roles the supervisory ratio should be considered. Volunteers deployed in this manner are covered by East Ayrshire insurance arrangements with the exception of the Council's Group Life and Group Personal Accident Benefit covers.

Evolve provides a staff history of all visits lead or assisted and can record relevant training or qualifications which should follow staff across EAC establishments. Management are encouraged to use this visit history when deploying and mentoring staff.

9 Using an External Provider

When using an external provider, such as a residential adventure centre or tour company, please apply the following guidance before signing any booking form or contract.

The Education Service will maintain a list of approved external providers, on the Evolve system. This will be updated annually and provides some assurances of safety management, insurance, etc. Establishments can request new providers be checked and added to the list at any time; allowing sufficient time for the verification process. However, establishments must check that the location and activities offered are suitable for the specific group needs and are commensurate with the aims of the visit.

A check should be made to verify that the provider offers good value for money by comparing with other similar providers. Specialist advice on any concerns arising from the provider's responses should be sought by contacting the appropriate Council Officer.

On arrival at the destination it is important for the leaders to assess if the Provider is meeting the full expectations of the Group in terms of Risk and Health and Safety, generally. Particular attention should be paid where overnight accommodation is provided to ensure that the emergency evacuation procedure has been fully communicated and understood by all attendees. The Provider should be advised verbally and in writing of any identified risks to Health Safety and / or Welfare. A dynamic risk assessment should be carried out in such circumstances.

To ensure that parents/carers/staff are protected and the Council can fund legal action in relation to the contract it is important to ensure that the booking form (contract) is signed on behalf of the establishment and not by parents/carers or individual visit leaders.

10 Emergency procedures

Arrangements need to be made at each establishment which will reflect the nature and the size of the establishment and the nature of the visits planned. The principles outlined provide a format for response and communication for East Ayrshire groups encountering misfortune whilst undertaking off-site visits. Common sense should prevail in the preparation of plans at establishments and other levels.

The effectiveness of all such plans depends on the staff concerned being familiar with their specific duties and responsibilities. Lines of communication must be confirmed or established for each planned excursion. The EAC 24hr emergency centre 01563 553950, Heads of Service, Corporate Risk Manager and Depute/Chief Executive can access all information for every visit recorded on the Evolve system.

Misfortunes, incidents and accidents rarely fit easily into categories. However categories are helpful in predetermining the appropriate level of response, both to deal with the event at the time and in subsequent investigation.

- Level 1 Misfortunes, minor delay, minor accidents requiring some attention/minor first aid by the visit leader. No specialist medical attention required
- Level 2 Minor events. Significantly delayed, minor injuries requiring specialist medical attention. External assistance not required.
- Level 3 Serious events, significant injuries but not life threatening, external assistance required.
- Level 4 Fatal or near fatal events, significant assistance required.

Suggested response to categories of emergency:

- Level 1 Visit leader responds, assesses and secures situation.
- Level 2 Establishment contact person and/or Head and parents informed.
- Level 3 Help requested, Head advises parents and Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive.
- Level 4 Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive advises Chief Executive, who invokes Emergency Planning arrangements if necessary.

On some visits, the visit planner and Visit Head may consider that exceptional medical, dental and travel expenses incurred on a visit should be covered by a contingency fund drawn on the establishment fund. It should be understood that not all of the emergency expenditure may be refundable by the insurance company. The visit leader should carry the means to generate sufficient funds to cover most eventualities.

