

Blackley Trips & Visits Policy

This policy was approved by Trustees as follows –

Board/Committee: Audit & Risk Committee

Date: 31 August 2017

Frequency of review: Every 2 year(s)

Next review date: July 2019

ELT Owner: Directors of Education and Finance &
Resources

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Summary of changes at last review:

- Clarified statement of purpose.
- Removal of general H&S terms not specific to trips, replaced with clear references to trip specific national guidance documentation, for example guidance developed by the Outdoor Education Advisor's Panel.
- Section 4 now contains clear statements re the training requirements for different roles.
- Section 10 now states how trip leader competence will be assessed, based on national guidance.
- Incorporation of the RED role into the policy.
- Addition of supporting tools and forms in the appendices.

Blackley Trips and Visits Policy

1. Purpose of policy

- 1.1 This Policy supports, develops and promotes the achievement of learning through purposeful and planned extra-curricular experiences. It believes in the value of cultural challenge and/or adventure in outdoor settings. Such activities experienced and reflected upon not only enhance the quality of life of anyone of any age or ability but additionally develop: self-awareness; understanding and tolerance of others; and an appreciation and understanding of and responsibility for the diversity of the environment. Through offering these experiences, which may encompass: physical; intellectual; social; spiritual; and emotional aspects of personal development our students are encouraged to extend themselves and to build values about: inter-personal relationships and their relationship with and responsibilities towards their community and the wider world in which they live and play a part. These experiences will always be offered by trained staff acting in full accordance with the need to keep all those involved safe at all times.
- 1.2 This Policy relates to the following E-ACT policies: Safeguarding Policy; Behaviour Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Safer Recruitment Policy and Critical Incident Policy

2. Provision of employer guidance

- 2.1 E-ACT has formally adopted the “National Guidance” developed by the Outdoor Education Advisers’ Panel (OEAP). This Educational visits guidance can be found on the following web site: www.oeapng.info . The DfE Guidance for Health and Safety in Schools is here: [DfE advice on Health and Safety](#)
- 2.2 It is a legal expectation that E-ACT employees must work within the requirements of their employer's guidance. E-ACT employees should also follow OEAP National Guidance (NG) recommendations and Local Authority guidance. Where there is any variance of policy between the national guidance, LA guidance and E-ACT policy the E-ACT policy requirements take precedence over any guidance.
- 2.3 Where any E-ACT Blackley employee commissions a Learning Outside the Classroom (LotC) activity, they must ensure that such commissioned agent has either:
 - a) adopted OEAP National Guidance
 - or
 - b) has systems and procedures in place where the standards are not less than those required by OEAP National Guidance.

3. Scope and remit

- 3.1 The NG document "Basic Essentials MUST Read - Status and Remit" clarifies the range of employees whose work requires them to use the guidance. In summary, it applies to employees whose work involves any one of the following:
 - direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base

- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of Educational visits and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC);
 - facilitating experiences for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base
 - deploying staff who will supervise or facilitate experiences of or for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base
- 3.2 This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.
- 3.3 For a more expansive explanation of legal expectations, all users of the guidance are strongly recommended to read the NG document: "Underpinning Legal Framework"

4. Ensuring understanding of basic requirements

- 4.1 As employers, E-ACT and all its academies are required to ensure that its employees are provided with
- appropriate guidance relating to visits and LOtC activity;
 - employer-led training courses to support the guidance to ensure that it is understood;
 - suitable systems and processes to ensure that those trained are kept updated;
 - access to advice, support and further training from an appointed Adviser that has proven expertise and professional understanding of the guidance, the training and expectations set by current good practice.
- 4.2 The appropriate guidance for the management of outdoor learning and LOtC at EGS is the Employer Guidance web site OEAPNG
- 4.3 The relevant training courses for Blackley are:
1. Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) Training – Blackley Blackley is required to have a current, trained EVC in post. Sharon Croke/or named Deputy EVC should also offer advice and guidance to staff if the EVC is unavailable.
 2. Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) Revalidation – all Blackley EVCs are required to undertake a formal revalidation from time to time (3-5 years suggested)
 3. Visit Leader Training - all visit leaders have training and support from the EVC/Deputy EVC and an 'apprenticeship' system is operated with experienced staff mentoring staff with less trip experience. All new staff to be offered 'visit leader training' as part of their induction programme.
- 4.4 Where an employee experiences problems with finding the material they are looking for, or require clarification or further help and guidance, they should consult the EVC or Deputy EVC.

5. Approval and notification of activities and visits

- 5.1 Employer guidance must provide clarity on issues where responsibilities and functions are delegated. This is particularly critical in establishing requirements regarding formal notification and formal approval of activities.
- 5.2 Blackley will use an internal online system for notification and approval from September 2017. Cover diary has to be agreed before final approval can be given. When a visit is approved cover, diary, finance, catering, selected member of SLT and any other relevant staff will be informed.

6. Approval

- 6.1 All visits should be approved at Head and EVC Level before a visit is advertised to parents/guardians. New ventures for the Blackley can be put to the RED at the discretion of the EVC.
- 6.2 The approval process and procedures for day, adventurous and residential visits are set out in detail in the Appendices to this Policy. They should be shared with all Staff who are approved as Trip Leaders in each Blackley.
- 6.3 Sport fixtures and trips are approved by the Head plus the person responsible for cover if they take place during the school day.
- 6.4 The competence of the visit leader is the key component in ensuring the safety of the participants. Assessment, training and support of visit leaders are a priority of the EVC.
- 6.5 All School trips have a named leader who must be a serving teacher at Blackley The approval paperwork is to be completed by the Trip Leader.

7. Risk management

- 7.1 Refer to NG document: "Risk Management"
- 7.2 As an employer, Blackley has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed - requiring them to be reduced to an "acceptable" or "tolerable" level - and not to eliminate risks, as would be a reasonable expectation when risk assessing a piece of machinery, work shop or manufacturing process. This requires that proportional (suitable and sufficient) risk management systems are in place, requiring [Blackley] to provide such support, training and resources to its employees as is necessary to implement this policy.
- 7.3 The risk management of an activity should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating Blackley promotes a "Risk-Benefit Assessment" approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes. This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is "acceptable". Health and Safety Executive {HSE} endorse this approach through their "Principles of Sensible Risk Management" and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.
- 7.4 There is no legal or Blackley requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format; but there is a legal requirement for the process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual, or harm several people. HSE case study

examples of sensible school trip risk management are available here:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/case-studies.htm>

- 7.5 Generic Blackley risk management plans will exist for a wide range of trips and components of trips - accommodation, transport, theatre trips etc. These will be available to all Trip Leaders as all Trip Leaders will share their paperwork.
- 7.6 All Risk Assessments for residential and overseas trips must be checked at least 4 weeks prior to departure and signed off by the EVC.

8. Emergency planning and critical incident support

- 8.1 A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has:
 - either suffered a life threatening injury or fatality;
 - is at serious risk;
 - or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.
- 8.2 As an employer, Blackley is committed to providing emergency planning procedures to support establishments in the event of a critical incident.
- 8.3 Refer to NG document: "Critical Incident Management for Visits" and the Blackley Critical Incident Policy
- 8.4 All Blackley trip leaders are provided with a Critical Incident card detailing our emergency procedures and contact details for the Blackley Critical Incident team. (See Appendix 1).
- 8.5 All residential trips have a nominated Critical Incident base contact who has trip details and is 'on call' at all times. At this Blackley will always be a nominated member of SLT.

9. Monitoring

- 9.1 As an employer, Blackley ensures that there is monitoring of the visits and LOTC activities undertaken by its staff. Such monitoring should be in keeping with the recommendations of Employer Guidance. There is a clear expectation that the monitoring function is a delegated task put in place by the EVC and principally carried out by experienced staff acting as mentors/advisors for colleagues.
- 9.2 Refer to NG document: "Monitoring"

10. Assessment of leader competence

- 10.1 Employer Guidance provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competence. It is an expectation of the [Blackley] Policy that all leaders and assistants have been assessed as competent to undertake such responsibilities as they have been assigned in line with national guidance.
- 10.2 From September 2017 all staff involved in off-site activities complete a 'Certification of Competence' form where experienced staff comment on their role in previous trips and based on their experience the EVC decides which of four levels (assist, lead day, lead residential, lead residential overseas) the member of staff can operate at. (See Appendix 2).

11. Other areas

11.1 Staff competence in first aid, minibus driving, life-saving etc may also be needed, depending on the activity. Volunteers will also require induction training prior to a specific visit. Training requirements in these areas should be identified as part of the risk assessment process.

11.2 Refer to NG document: "Assessment of Competence"

12. Role-specific requirements and recommendations

12.1 Employer Guidance sets out clear and detailed responsibilities and functions of specific roles that relate to roles to be found within Blackley management structures. These are:

- E-Act (Employers)
- Head
- EVC
- Refer to individual NG documents headed as above.

12.2 Employer Guidance sets out clear and detailed responsibilities and functions of specific roles that relate to roles to be found in each the establishment. These are:

1. E-ACT (Employers)
2. Headteacher
3. EVC
4. Visit or Activity Leader
5. Assistant Visit leader
6. Volunteer Adult Helper
7. Parents

12.3 Refer to individual NG documents headed as above.

13. Charges for off-site activities and visits (see E-ACT Blackley Charging & Remissions Policy)

13.1 Blackley has the following 'code' for charging for visits, in accordance with the E-Act Blackley Charging Policy:

- If the trip is essential to the mainline curriculum then the Blackley asks for voluntary contributions to cover the cost and will meet the full cost (apart from board and lodging) for pupils whose parents/guardians are unable to contribute.
- If the trip is optional or out of curriculum time then the cost of the trip is passed on to parents, where this is not possible the school will endeavour to cover the cost for students from the hardship fund.

14. Vetting and DBS checks (see E-ACT Safer Recruitment Policy)

- 14.1 Blackley employees must undergo a DBS check as part of their recruitment process.
- 14.2 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.

15. Requirement to ensure effective supervision

- 15.1 In general terms, the Law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is "effective".
- 15.2 Effective supervision should be determined by proper consideration of:
 - Staff Competence
 - Activity - nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved)
 - Group - age (including the developmental age) of the group; ability of the group (including special learning needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc);
 - Environment - nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions,
 - Distance away from the base
- 15.3 Refer to NG document: "Ratios and Effective Supervision"
- 15.4 Refer to NG document: "Group management and Supervision"

16. Preliminary visits and provider assurances

- 16.1 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 young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management.
- 16.2 Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit. The EVC will advise on this in each specific case. A pre-visit is usually required for visits where there is a high complexity factor and the visit has not happened previously, or when the visit is adventurous and led by Blackley staff.
- 16.3 Residentials, visits abroad, exchange visits, adventures led by school staff all have aspects of complexity. If the visit is led and managed by a provider, then a variety of approaches can reduce the need to pre visit.
- 16.4 It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of the nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes that are now available, thus reducing bureaucracy.
- 16.5 Examples of such schemes include:

The LOtC Quality Badge

AALS licensing

Adventuremark

School travel forum

16.6 NGB centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

16.7 [Blackley] takes the view that where a provider holds such one of the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances.

16.8 Refer to: NG document "Preliminary Visits and provider Assurances"

17. Insurance for off-site activities and visits

17.1 Employer's Liability Insurance is a statutory requirement and [Blackley] have arranged a policy that will respond and, if appropriate, indemnify against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person with a contract of employment. This cover also extends to those persons who are acting in an authorised voluntary capacity as assistant supervisors. [Blackley] also holds Public Liability insurance, which will indemnify the school against all claims for compensation for bodily injury from persons not in its employ, as well as for the accidental loss of, or damage caused to, third party property where [Blackley] are deemed to have been negligent. Employees (as agents of the employer) are indemnified against all such claims, as are voluntary helpers acting under the direction of the employer's staff if they commit a negligent act. The indemnity includes activities such as off-site activities and outside visits organised by all departments for which [Blackley] may be considered responsible.

17.2 The Blackley also holds comprehensive travel insurance for staff and pupils. Details of the Policy are available to trip leaders and parents on request.

17.3 Refer to NG document: "Insurance"

18. Inclusion

18.1 Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion. If a visit needs to cater for young people with special needs, every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

18.2 Establishments should take all reasonably practicable measures to include all young people. 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

18.3 Employers, Heads/Managers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit Leaders should be aware of the extent to which Inclusion is or is not a Legal issue.

18.4 Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, it is unlawful to:

- treat a disabled young person less favourably;
- fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

18.5 Refer to NG document: "Inclusion"

19. Good practice requirements

19.1 To be deemed competent, a [Blackley] Visit / Activity Leader, or Assistant Leader must be able to demonstrate the ability to operate to the current standards of recognized good practice for that role.

19.2 All staff and helpers must be competent to carry out their defined roles and responsibilities.

19.3 Employer Guidance sets a clear standard to which [Blackley] leaders must work. The guidance states:

- "a competent Visit /Activity Leader (or an Assistant Leader where they may take sole responsibility for a sub-group) requires:
 - Knowledge and understanding of their employer's guidance supported by establishment-led training.
 - Knowledge and understanding of establishment procedures supported by a structured induction process specified by the establishment.
 - Knowledge and understanding of the staff, the activity, the group and the venue.
 - Appropriate experience
 - In some circumstances (e.g. first aid, adventurous activities) a formally accredited qualification."

19.4 Staff participating in off-site activities and visits must be aware of the extent of their duty of care and should only be given such responsibilities as are in keeping with the above guidance. It is particularly important that careful consideration of competence issues is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. The School should view the original documents and certificates when verifying leader's qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.

19.5 Where a Volunteer Helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship to of a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the Risk-Benefit assessment.

19.6 Refer to NG document: "Good Practice Basics"

20. Medical

20.1 Medical details for students and staff taking part in trips are collected by the trip leader either through a specific medical consent form for residential trips, or by reference to

the medical details section of reply slips for day visits. The [Blackley SENCO/Welfare Officer] is also consulted for residential trips. Any specific student medical issues are to be included in the trip risk management planning.

- 20.2 Trip specific first aid training is provided for [Blackley] trip leading staff by suitably qualified training staff.
- 20.3 It is desirable that all staff supervising students on a school trip have knowledge of appropriate first aid.

21. Transport

- 21.1 Careful thought must be given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits. Statistics demonstrate that it is much more dangerous to travel to an activity than to engage in it. All national and local regulatory requirements must be followed.

22. Minibuses

- 22.1 The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey, giving proper consideration to issues of driver-distraction when considering what supervision is required for the specific group of passengers being transported in a minibus.
- 22.2 The Visit Leader should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a [Blackley]-approved company.
- 22.3 Also see NG document: "Transport in Minibuses"
- 22.4 Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration. Staff cars should only be used to transport students in 'unplanned' or 'emergency' situations, and when the insurance cover includes business use. For example, Journeys to hospital, to prevent students being stranded etc.
- 22.5 Refer NG document: "Transport: General Considerations"

23. Planning

- 23.1 Planning should reflect the consideration of Legal and good practice requirements, ensuring:
 - The plan is based on [Blackley] procedures and employer guidance.
 - All staff (including any adult volunteer helpers) and the young people to be involved, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk management process.
 - Those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained.
 - Proportionate assurances have been obtained from any providers (making full use of national schemes that accredit that assurances have already been obtained by credible inspection regimes).
 - Designated emergency contact(s) have been identified that will work on a 24/7 basis where required.

- All details of the activity provision are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity.
- 23.2 It is strongly recommended that at a very early stage of the planning process, the provisional staffing team carry out a brain storming exercise in order to identify the benefits and learning outcomes that the activity (or range of activities) might achieve. If the outcomes are to be evaluated with any rigor, then it will be essential that these outcomes are prioritised, and appropriately targeted. A record of these outcomes will help keep the plan focussed and also be a vital part of the risk management process in providing some objectivity in a "Risk Benefit Analysis". Once the targeted outcomes have been recorded, it will then be possible to identify appropriate on-going review and evaluation strategies, including indicators.
- 23.3 This supports the move towards developing activity-specific policies at establishment level for regular or routine activities. Such policies should be robust and equate to "operational guidance" that makes it clear how the activity should be planned and delivered, meeting all necessary recommendations and requirements, as well as assuring educational quality.
- 23.4 The degree of complexity of a particular plan or policy (along with its supporting procedures) will need to reflect the nature and complexity of several variables that can impact on any given activity. These variables can be remembered as "SAGED" as explained below.
- Staffing requirements - trained? experienced? competent? ratios?
 - Activity characteristics - specialist? insurance issues? licensable?
 - Group characteristics - prior experience? ability? behaviour? special and medical needs?
 - Environmental conditions - like last time? impact of weather? water levels?
 - Distance from support mechanisms in place at the home base - transport? residential?

24. Consent

- 24.1 When an activity is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time and no parental contributions are requested, then additional formal consent is not necessary as it is already given on the new entrant form.
- 24.2 All other trips require communication with parents as specific information needs to be given on timings, equipment etc. and consent to payment gained. Example trip letters are available.
- 24.3 All trips activities require specific parental consent which can be written or verbal in special circumstances.(Appendix 3)

25. The value and evaluation of LOtC

- 25.1 The Ofsted report "Learning Outside the Classroom - How Far Should You Go?" (October 2008) makes statements in the strongest terms to support the value of LOtC, including the fact that it raises achievement. Refer to NG document: "Ofsted and LOtC Summary"

- 25.2 However, it also highlights the finding that even where LOtC is highly valued and provided to a high standard, it is rarely evaluated with sufficient rigour - i.e. in the way that classroom learning is evaluated - and a methodology to address this is provided within the National Guidance document: 5.1c "Rigorous Evaluation of LOtC: Meeting Ofsted Expectations and Assuring Quality".