



Dame Alice Owen's School
The Dame Alice Owen Foundation - 1613

OFFSITE VISITS AND LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM (LOTTC) ACTIVITIES POLICY

Agreed by the Governing Body Curriculum Committee
To be reviewed
(*reviewed every 2 years*)

Spring 2026
Spring 2028

To be monitored by the Headteacher, the Educational Visits Coordinator and Governing Body Curriculum Committee

The Staff and Governing Body of Dame Alice Owen's School acknowledge the immense value of offsite visits and related activities to young people, and fully support and encourage those that are well planned and managed. All visits and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTTC) activities will be planned in such a way as to ensure that the benefits and intended learning outcomes are clearly identified and understood by the supervising adults beforehand and can form the basis for objective evaluation afterwards. This policy relates to Hertfordshire's "Guidance for the Management of LOTTC and Offsite Visits" (Herts Guidance) and the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) 'National Guidance' (NG). This guidance can be found on the following websites:

- <http://oeapng.info>
- <https://thegrid.org.uk/health-and-safety-offsite-visits-premises/offsite-visits/learning-outside-the-classroom-and-offsite-visits-guidance>

This policy applies to all members of staff, and other adults associated with Dame Alice Owen's School, who take responsibility for children and young people participating in learning and recreational activities off the Dame Alice Owen's School site. It should be implemented when using places such as:

- local facilities and open spaces
- places further afield e.g. visits to local libraries, theatres and museums etc.
- residential venues
- learning ventures abroad

and involves one of the following:

- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences off the school site;
- deploying staff who will supervise or facilitate experiences for young people off the school site
- Staff must ensure young people are supervised in accordance with the contents of this policy, regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

Roles and Responsibilities

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), health and safety responsibilities lie with the employer (the Governing Body). The employer has the legal responsibility to carry out the duties imposed by the Act. However, employers can delegate the tasks necessary to discharge these duties, even though the overall responsibility for health and safety rests with the employer.

Headteacher (see NG docs 3.4g, 3.3b)

The Headteacher (or their nominated delegate) will ensure that:

- All offsite visits and LOTC activities comply with employer guidance and are notified or submitted for formal approval as required;
- There is a clearly designated person as the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) and that the designated person meets employer requirements, including undertaking EVC Training as recommended, every 5 years, or as required by the employer;
- There is access to expert advice, such as from a competent outdoor education advisor, when needed;
- If the Headteacher is taking part in the visit or activity as either an Assistant Leader or as a group member, their role is clear and that they should follow the instructions of the designated Visit Leader (who will have sole charge of the visit);
- Suitable safeguarding procedures are in place, including vetting at an appropriate level of all voluntary helpers. Where access to young people is regular or significant, DBS checks must be in place as required;
- There is assurance that the EVC, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained and competent to carry out such tasks as they are allocated;
- Sufficient time is assigned for staff to organise visits properly;
- A culture of succession planning, to ensure sustainable visits and the development of competent visit leaders and EVCs, is supported within the establishment;
- The EVC is supported in ensuring that visits are effectively and appropriately supervised;
- The EVC is supported in ensuring that visit information has been shared with parents and that consent has been sought where necessary;
- Arrangements are made, as far as reasonably possible, for the medical needs and special educational needs of all young people and staff. Arrangements are also made, as far as reasonably possible, for dietary needs;
- Inclusion issues are addressed;
- Suitable transport arrangements are in place and meet any regulatory requirements;
- Insurance arrangements are appropriate;
- Details related to the visit (including personal details of both participants and staff) are accessible at all times to a designated 24/7 emergency contact(s) in case of a serious incident;

- That there are contingency plans in place for trips where it is possible that the visit may need to be significantly changed or cancelled (Plan B);
- Arrangements are in place for the governing body to be informed of such visits as required by this policy;
- Staff are aware of the need to obtain best value. Appropriate consideration must be given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships. Appropriate procedures are in place to account for the visit finances;
- Formal risk assessments are carried out and formally recorded. Risk assessments are proportional, suitable and sufficient and based on the 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management'. Where the activities or visits involve a third party provider, appropriate assurances have been sought; national schemes e.g. LOTC Quality Badge, AALS licence, Adventuremark, or a clear management Statement of Competence, are recognised in keeping with Hertfordshire's recommendations and make further seeking of provider assurances unnecessary. A clear contract is in place setting out what the contractor is to provide, and the provider holds sufficient indemnity insurance;
- Identifies the types of visits that require a preliminary visit by staff;
- All visits are evaluated with regard to best value, teaching and learning, quality experiences, addressing issues raised by any serious incident and to inform the operation of future visits;
- Appropriate emergency procedures are in place in case of a major incident; (Procedurally, our school emergency plan will follow the Herts guidance covering emergency events);
- Procedures are in place to ensure that parents are appropriately informed in the event of a serious incident;
- Serious incidents are reported to the employer as required by employer guidance, meeting the requirements of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations).

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) - see NG docs 3.4j, 3.3a

Dame Alice Owen's EVC is Dr Matt James. There is considerable overlap between the role of the Headteacher and EVC, and many of the considerations mentioned above will also be employed by the EVC.

More specifically, the EVC will:

- Be competent, with practical experience or training in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment. Participate in training, and update training, as required by national and local regulations, re-validating every 5 years;
- Be a champion for all aspects of visits and learning outside of the classroom;
- Challenge colleagues across all curriculum areas to use visits and outdoor learning effectively in order to provide a wide range of outcomes for children and young people and contribute towards establishment effectiveness;
- Ensure competent staff are assigned to lead and accompany visits and with approval and other decisions;
- Ensure that a policy is in place for offsite visits and LOTC activities, that it is updated as necessary, and is readily available to staff and that procedures should aim to minimise bureaucracy, taking full advantage of any national schemes that provide assurances

regarding safety and quality of provision (e.g. there should be no need to seek assurances from adventure activity providers who hold the LOTC Quality Badge, or a current AALS Licence, or Adventuremark);

- Ensure Offsite and LOTC activities meet employer guidance requirements;
- Ensure the Headteacher, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers understand that all staff involved in visits require access to training at an appropriate level to ensure that employers' guidance and establishment procedures are properly understood;
- Ensure Offsite activities are led by competent leaders and that assistant supervisors are competent to carry out the tasks to which they are assigned;
- Ensure that if the establishment is leading an adventurous activity, as defined in the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 (climbing, caving, remote trekking, waterborne activities), and other activities that present hazards over and above those in everyday life, that the group leader and/or other supervisors are suitably competent to lead or instruct the young people in the activity. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) award where it exists;
- Organise the training of leaders and assistant leaders, including voluntary helpers;
- Monitor visit planning and arrange for sample monitoring in the field as appropriate;
- Ensure DBS checks are in place where required;
- Provide sufficient guidance to visit and activity leaders regarding information for parents and parental consent;
- Ensure there is a 24/7 emergency contact(s) for each and every visit and that emergency arrangements are in place;
- Ensure that medical and first aid issues are addressed by having pertinent conversations with Matron and being explicit in risk assessments as appropriate;
- Ensure that emergency arrangements include emergency contact access to all relevant visit records, including medical and next of kin information for all members of the party and including staff;
- Ensure that visits and LOTC activities are reviewed and evaluated; this process will require the reporting of accidents and incidents;
- Ensure that visit policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis and immediately following any serious incident or systems failure;
- Keep up to date via EVC training events, at least every 5 years or as required by the employer, as well as employer information updates;
- Ensure good practice is shared;

Visit Leaders (see NG docs 3.4k, 3.3e)

The Visit/Activity Leader will:

- Have the overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of the visit. This includes the learning, development and supervision of the participants and the safety of all, including any other leaders and helpers. They must be an employee and not a volunteer;
- Be competent to take on such responsibilities and tasks as may be allocated or required for the duration of the visit/activity and be formally approved to do so;
- Plan and prepare for the visit, taking a lead on risk management, considering Staffing Activity Group Environment considerations. Define the roles and responsibilities of other

staff (and young people) to ensure effective supervision, and appoint a deputy wherever possible;

- Ensure that where any accompanying staff includes someone with a close relationship to a member of the group, there are adequate safeguards to ensure that this will not compromise group safety or management;
- Ensure that child protection issues are addressed. e.g. enhanced DBS checks;
- Collate, make available and disseminate relevant information to supporting staff, parents and young people as appropriate;
- Make sure there is access to first aid at an appropriate level;
- Arrange pre-visit information meetings, for staff and parents/carers, where appropriate;
- Evaluate all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event;
- Ensure that staff and other supervisors have been appropriately briefed on:
 1. young people making up the group, including age, health characteristics, capabilities, special educational needs, behaviour and any other information that seems relevant in the context of the planned activities.
 2. the nature, location and duration of the activity;
- Ensure the visit is effectively supervised; the overarching duty of care remains with the accompanying establishment staff, even when partial responsibility is shared with a provider. Should the provider run the activity in a way that causes concern, the accompanying staff should consider stopping the activity at the first appropriate moment. Such an intervention will need to be used with great sensitivity and discretion to ensure that it does not result in young people being put at greater risk;
- Ensure that all staff and any third party providers have access to emergency contact and emergency procedure details, and that a backup leader is available in an emergency;
- Have attended specific training such as HCC's 'Visit Leader Awareness' or Visit Leader training provided in house.

See also NG docs 3.4l, 3.4m, 3.4n, 3.3f

Member of Governing Body (see NG docs 3.4f, 3.3c)

There will be a member of the School's Governing Body who is designated as specifically responsible for Offsite Visits and LOTC activities. This is currently the Chair of the Curriculum Committee. This person's role is to "enable and ensure" by acting as a "critical friend".

They will ensure that:

- A policy exists for offsite visits and outdoor learning and that this policy covers charging for visits and activities;
- There is a plan for emergencies;
- There is an understanding of how outdoor learning supports a wide range of learning outcomes;
- They have access to employer guidance as well as school policy, and a training package to support it;
- The school policy clarifies their involvement in the visit approval process;
- There is an EVC in place that meets with employer requirements;
- There are formal notification and approval procedures in place that meet with employer recommendations and requirements;

- The establishment visit policy supports the principles of inclusion;
- There are monitoring procedures in place which include the safety and effectiveness of offsite visits and outdoor learning.

Planning (see NG docs 3.3e, 4.3a)

The extent of planning required is related to the complexity of the visit, based on the level of the visit (See Appendix A) and takes into account Staffing, Activity, Group, Environment considerations along with a common sense and proportionate approach. Risks are expected to be reduced to an acceptable or tolerable level, and not necessarily eliminated. Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

Staffing and Supervision (see NG docs 4.2a, 3.2g)

The Governing Body requires that the school has an appropriate level of supervision at all times for all visits and that such supervision is 'effective'. This must have been approved by the EVC in accordance with the Governing Body policy. The Visit Leader and EVC will make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of staffing on an individual visit basis after consideration of the following factors:

- the age (including developmental age) of the group
- the type, level, and duration of activity;
- the nature and requirements of individuals within the group, including those with additional needs;
- the experience and competence of staff and other adults;
- the venue, time of year and prevailing/predicted conditions;
- the contingency or 'Plan B' options.

A visit must not go ahead where either the Visit Leader, EVC, or Headteacher is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision exists. A useful 'starting point for consideration' is 1 adult:10 young people.

Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group. Particular consideration should be given to the additional implications that may arise if staff are to be accompanied by family members (or partners) on visits.

The use of parents and other adults with a clear association with the school, as helpers or supervisors on offsite visits or LOTC activities, is seen as a valuable means of encouraging or maintaining closer links with the local community and accessing a wider set of skills and experience than may exist amongst the school's staff. Such volunteers will need to understand and consent to the fact that they will be answerable to the visit/activity leader. It is a fact that a volunteer will not be accountable through a legalistic audit trail (as would exist were their involvement based on a contractual relationship) and is therefore the case that a volunteer helper cannot be appointed as a Visit Leader.

It is good practice that all adult helpers and volunteers are subject to enhanced DBS checking; however, this may not be required where there is no possibility for unsupervised

direct contact exists. Clear DBS checks must have been returned before a volunteer adult helper may participate in a residential visit or activity.

Emergency Procedures

Staff involved in a visit must be aware of, be able to access, and adhere to, the school's risk assessment on emergency procedures as well as the completed trip OV1 form and the emergency contacts for students and other staff. A critical incident is an incident where any member of an offsite activity has:

- either suffered a life-threatening injury or fatality
- is at serious risk
- or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

The trip leader must follow the instructions on the emergency procedures document.

Approval of Visits

Approval is delegated to the Headteacher for all residential visits, including those with adventurous activities run by accredited centres. The EVC will approve all day visits. However, the following types of visit require further approval:

- Overseas (anywhere that involves crossing a substantial area of open sea, including Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Hebrides and the Channel Islands) trips considered to be routine will require approval from the Headteacher and Chair of Governors;
- Those involving one or more adventurous activities to be led by a member of the school staff will require approval from the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. An adventurous activity is defined in the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 as being climbing, caving, remote trekking, waterborne activities, and other activities that present hazards over and above those in everyday life;
- Trips to countries or areas where either the Foreign Office advice indicates a significant risk, or national news highlights significant recent concerns, will be referred to the Curriculum Committee for approval. This will also apply in cases where the Foreign Office advice or national news indicates heightened concern once a trip is organised. Where trips become high risk at short notice they are to be referred to the Chair of Governors (or the Chair of the Curriculum Committee in their absence) for approval on behalf of the Governing Body.

Regardless of whether a visit should be notified to the Governing Body or not, there should be a clear, unambiguous audit trail for arrangements with clear evidence of approval. Such evidence will usually be recorded on the visit documentation. An offsite visit or LOTC activity should not proceed without clear evidence of approval.

Insurance (see NG doc 4.4c)

Insurance is covered under the school's RPA. For medical purposes, individuals are covered, regardless of pre-existing medical conditions, providing the individual is not travelling against medical advice. For travel within the European Union all participants must hold a valid GHIC (Global Health Insurance Card).

Inclusion (see NG docs 3.2e, 4.4i, 6e, 6l)

This policy endorses the following principles:

- An entitlement to participate
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- Integration through participation with peers.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled participants because of their disability, without material or substantial justification. Visit Leaders are required to make reasonable adjustments to avoid participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage. However, the Disability Discrimination Act does not require responsible bodies to place employees or participants at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises. It is also the case that the adjustments made to include a disabled young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity. Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them (to include a given young person) is within their competence and normal work practices.

In addition, we run an enhanced golden ticket scheme to aid inclusion on trips for disadvantaged students (see Appendix C).

Charges for Offsite Activities and visits

Please see the [Charges and Remissions Policy](#) for details on charging for Offsite Activities and visits.

Staff Expectations

Staff expectations are made clear in a number of policies available on the school website. These are:

- [Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling at Work Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Staff policy](#)

In the case of residential visits, the Visit Leader may nominate staff who are officially on duty. Alcohol must not be consumed by these members of staff during the course of their duty. Other staff, who are not deemed to be on duty, may consume alcohol in moderation.

Appendix A Educational Visit and LOTC Levels

LEVEL	Type of visit (examples)	Authorisation	Training required: Visit leader	Further checks/ monitoring
1	Activities that would not expose those taking part to greater risk than that experienced on a day to day basis. Regular visits of one day or less duration (swimming, theatre trips, environmental studies, etc)	EVC Each visit.	Visit Leader Awareness training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessments to be reviewed annually by EVC
2	Non-routine activities and residential stays. Adventurous and hazardous activities run by licenced/accredited centres.	Headteacher Each visit	Visit Leader Awareness training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessment to be reviewed each visit by EVC
3	Routine overseas visits and adventurous activities, except those covered by level 2. High Risk Overseas Visits New overseas destinations. Short notice high risk overseas trips	Headteacher and Chair of Governors Each visit Curriculum Committee Each Visit Chair of Governors, or the Chair of the Curriculum Committee in their absence. Each visit	Visit Leader Awareness training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessment to be reviewed each visit by EVC • Risk assessments for adventurous activities <u>must</u> have been assessed by a Technical adviser. • Providers must be licensed for adventurous activities and/or accredited under non-statutory schemes. • Audit Checklists and approval forms must be forwarded to the Offsite Visits Adviser for monitoring purposes.

Appendix B Example of a Behaviour Code for an Educational Visit which would be sent out as a Google form where students/parents or carers tick to agree and abide by.

Dear Parents/Carers

Below is a Code of Conduct that aims to ensure the smooth and enjoyable running of the trip. It is very important that all students are fully aware of these rules which are essential to the safety and welfare of all of us whilst we are on the trip. I would be grateful if you could go through these carefully with your child, as we have done at school, and submit your response by xxxxxx indicating that you and your child understand and agree to them. We expect the same very high standards of behaviour on the trip as we have in school.

Whilst we do not envisage it happening, any student breaking these expectations will be dealt with appropriately whilst on the trip and the situation referred back to the Headteacher for further action if necessary. In serious cases, breaches of this code of conduct may result in the student(s) concerned being sent back to the UK via the next available mode of transport or collected by their parents/carers at their own expense. Whilst we hope that this will not be necessary, it is important to make you fully aware that if we warrant that your child's behaviour requires it, this will be an expectation.

1. Excellent behaviour is expected at all times demonstrating thoughtful respect towards others, including the coach drivers and members of the public.
2. Listen carefully to and follow instructions from staff in the multiple places we will visit. Remember, these are for the safety of all and the smooth running of the tour.
3. Students must take care when crossing any roads to prevent accidents in unfamiliar road systems.
4. In the accommodation, look after your rooms, and the general environment, and maintain standards of tidiness and cleanliness.
5. You must observe lights-out times and be punctual for meet-up times. Not doing so could impact the whole group.
6. In the accommodation, there should be **no swapping of rooms nor leaving rooms after lights out.** Under no circumstances should any student ever go into the room of someone not from DAOS.
7. No alcohol is to be consumed by students at any time on the trip.
8. No sexual relations.
9. No smoking or vaping at any time on the trip.
10. No drugs (except for prescribed medication which need to be brought to the attention of the trip leader before the trip).
11. When we are out and about, you should always be in groups of at least 4. Do not go anywhere alone. Always inform a member of staff if you wish to leave the group - even if it is a trip to the toilet.
12. You are to remain with the group and follow the group's itinerary at all times. You are not allowed to deviate from, or add to this programme without the consent of the trip leader.
13. No racial, sexist or homophobic abuse, bullying or expression of xenophobic sentiments will be tolerated.
14. No purchase of inappropriate materials: such as, but not limited to, matches / lighters, fireworks, smoking paraphernalia including cigarettes, tobacco, papers, or vapes, illicit drugs, pornography and replica guns.
15. Take due care of all of your belongings/equipment.

16. Coaches, venues and accommodation must be left tidy and as we found them.
17. We are guests in another country and are representing the school at all times; we must respect their culture and way of life.
18. Phones and electronic devices are brought at your own risk and should be used appropriately.

This list is not exhaustive. Anything else that is antisocial, dangerous, disrespectful or brings the name of the school into disrepute will not be tolerated.

The student agrees to follow this code of conduct at all times on the trip.

Parents/Carers:

I have read and explained the importance of the XXX trip Code of Conduct. My child has agreed to abide by it at all times and is fully aware of the consequences which would result from not behaving appropriately abroad. I am aware that I may have to collect my child at my own expense should this code of conduct be seriously breached by them.

Parents/Carers:

I understand that in periods of free time or remote supervision, my child will be unsupervised by staff (although advised of where staff can be found, regular check in points/times & contact details), but advised to remain in a group of at least 4 students and not to go anywhere alone.

Add in any question regarding if students are being collected from school/airport on return if applicable.

Appendix C - Selection of students for an oversubscribed visit (Golden Ticket)

When available, students in KS3 and KS4 will need to indicate on their application for a trip that they wish to use their golden ticket. The use of a golden ticket is only to gain, or attempt to gain, priority acceptance onto a trip. Whenever a student has successfully secured a place on a trip, whether through the use of a golden ticket or otherwise, the standard costs will be payable and the usual paperwork will be required.

When a visit is likely to be oversubscribed, students who are most keen to participate can choose to play their 'Golden Ticket'. If more Golden Tickets are played than available places on the trip, a ballot of Golden Tickets will take place. Anyone who played their Golden Ticket but did not get a place on the trip will have their ticket returned to use another time.

Students are given one Golden Ticket to use at any time in KS3 or KS4 which will allow them priority consideration for a visit. Golden Tickets can be used for things such as the ski trip, Somme trip, Iceland trip and theatre visits and alike where they run. For safeguarding reasons, we do not allow Golden Tickets to be used for language exchanges.

In order to encourage and ensure greater participation in these visits, our disadvantaged students will be awarded one Golden Ticket to use per year to increase possible access to those visits they wish to attend. Additionally, Looked After Children (LAC) who play their Golden Ticket will be assured a place on the trip. If they do not use their Golden Ticket in one year, this will expire at the end of that year, these will not increment.

For the most expensive opportunities which sit outside of the curriculum, attendance will only be assured for LAC if families or the Virtual School can meet the costs of the visit.

The Golden Ticket can only be used in line with the published participation criteria for that visit.