

DOVE HOUSE SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST

OFF SITE ACTIVITIES POLICY

Policy issued October 2015
Approved by Tom Pegler, Headteacher, Annie Benton, Chair of Governors
SignedTom Pegler & Annie Benton.....
Approved by Governing Body on 1 st October 2015 Next Review to be October 2017

Introduction

As part of the broad balance of curriculum and learning arrangements of the school, opportunities are frequently taken to enrich and enhance this through outdoor learning, outdoor education and educational visits and ventures. These guidelines outline our policies and operational procedures in these contexts.

The school’s policy and procedures are formulated in conjunction with the advice, guidance and training provided by the Hampshire County Council Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service (EVOLVE) and their documentation and guidance.

The overall ethos of the school (“making a difference”) is encapsulated in this policy by challenging students within their individual levels of ability to achieve new goals and gain the skills and confidence to fulfil their potential. It is also a critical part of their curriculum for life skills to prepare them for greater independence when they leave full-time education.

Description of Off-Site Activities and Procedures

The types of visits and ventures planned and covered by this policy are typically but not exclusively.

- Short trips to local shops/nursing homes as part of classroom based life skills education.
- Swimming as part of PE.
- Multi-activity & residential trips (e.g. Privett Centre, sailing etc.).
- Theatre/show trips.
- Overseas trips (e.g. Ypres).

The school follows the guidelines set by EVOLVE principally using the web-based Approval System and on-line documents including general and specific activity/safety guidance notes.

These generic policies are used and translated into our specific context. Copies are kept for reference in the Off-Site Activities folder held in the School Admin Office as well as being available to all staff online via Teacher Resources: Admin Dept Resources: Health & Safety.

The Head Teacher is responsible for updating and monitoring policy and keeps up to date with the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service.

Governors are responsible for approving policy and are kept informed and given feedback on specific activities or trips which are significant (for any reason good or bad).

Off-site visits and educational visits are fully integrated into the activities of the school and all key policies and procedures are considered for their relevance and adaptations or agreements as required for any off-site activity, in particular:

- Curriculum Activities
- First Aid & Administration of Medicines Policies
- Midas Trained Drivers within Health and Safety Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Child Protection Policy

Communication.

Many straightforward visits are managed entirely in accordance with these policies and, apart from simple additional considerations regarding the site and transportation of students, they are managed as they would be in the school context. We aim to take the ethos, culture and challenge to learning in school into all our outdoor learning and off-site contexts. Parents (or persons with parental responsibility) are informed at the start of the term of the programme of activities. Parents will be asked to complete a return slip to confirm that they have seen and agreed these details. Parents (or persons with parental responsibility) that have pupils participating subjects that require regular weekly off-site visits throughout the academic year (ie, Lifeskills) will be informed at the start of the academic year and asked to complete a return slip to confirm that they have seen and agreed to these details. A medical form is collected at the start of the academic year with a request to parents to keep us updated with any changes.

Adventurous activities require visit-specific forms to be completed.

“Adventurous” is defined by EVOLVE on the website and includes any visit overseas, residential, in open country, by rivers or beaches and a list of specific activities such as abseiling, rock climbing etc.

For ventures away from school or adventurous activities, detailed information will be sent to parents on transport, residential and overseas issues and their specific consent requested.

Charging

Charging policy: the school charging policy is agreed and includes all aspects of off-site activity or educational visits.

Insurance

Off-site insurance details are available on request from the School Admin Office plus these are sent out, on request, to parents in synopsis form with day, residential and similar ventures.

Registration of Pupils on an Offsite Activity

To ensure pupils are registered as being off-site the activity leader must ensure the 'Offsite List' is fully completed with the following information; vehicle details, driver and escort details, emergency contact name and number of responsible adult attending offsite activity, names of all passengers, time out and estimated return time, plus details of all emergency medical information. Information regarding pupils must be checked on SIMS for updates prior to the activity. Refer to Administration of Medicines Policy.

Transport & Supervision

Transport: a variety of transport is used including:-

- School mini-buses (where appropriate for smaller groups, shorter distances e.g. PE trips, Privett). Only authorised MIDAS trained drivers are able to drive a school mini-bus. MIDAS trained drivers are responsible for ensuring they drive the correct weight mini-bus. Full details are available from M Bowyer the school MIDAS Trainer/Assessor and outlined on the school calendar.
- Public buses (local, non-motorway travel).
- Coaches (through HCC approved suppliers).
- Trains (where appropriate or part of Life Skills).
- Private cars (where appropriate, private car insurance MUST include business use in addition to social and domestic).

Supervision strategies are taken from EVOLVE's Offsite Activities and Educational Visits. Ratios and appropriate strategies for direct, indirect and remote supervision are dependent on typical risk factors of the group, the site or location, the leaders present and other factors such as transport or weather etc. These are agreed as part of the risk assessment process for every activity or trip.

Inclusion/Safeguarding

Dove House is by its very nature an inclusive school and embraces the policies contained in EVOLVE's chapter on Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Strategies in the Off-site Activity Educational Visits document. Without compromising risk assessment it is the school's aim to take every reasonable

step to include all students in any activity which is appropriate to their education or in which they have accepted an invitation to participate. Only if all reasonable steps cannot ensure the safety of an individual student and/or that of others will that be the reason they cannot attend that particular venture.

The school's Child Protection Policy includes off-site activity, including residential activity. In particular:

- guidance on acceptable behaviour and avoiding unnecessary contact.
- suitable 'employment' checks are made on volunteers and other responsible adults who support these ventures in line with DfE guidance.
- external providers or outdoor centres are drawn from the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service's vetted database, which confirms that safety management checks are in place. Should any other instructor or provider be recommended or found, reference would first be made to the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service to ensure that suitable steps are taken.

Risk Assessment

As part of planning any off-site activity, a risk assessment will be carried out via the EVOLVE website by the visit lead. This will include:

- a summary of purpose and intended outcomes.
- a risk assessment and risk management record.
- a pre-visit whenever the site is new to the staff or has not been visited for more than 2 years unless risk assessment (by use of EVOLVE, web-based information etc.) can demonstrate that risk is low and unchanged.
- all our regular off site locations are managed by a site specific agreement with the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service detailing management procedures.

Incidents, Accidents & Emergencies

The school's incident and accident reporting procedures will always be followed. Guidance contained in the EVOLVE documentation, in particular their incident management checklist and emergency procedures, have also been included in the procedures for managing off-site activities. This is also a significant part of the school's Disaster Recovery Procedures.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher reports to the Board of Governors every term on all school activities and this includes outdoor learning/off-site and educational visits. Also as part of the Annual Report the Headteacher reports to the Governors on the effectiveness of the overall programme.

Individual staff reviews contribute to the feedback on the quality of ventures and recommendations for the future.

A new adventurous activity should include a retrospective risk assessment, with omissions or “lessons learned” included in subsequent risk assessments or procedures.

This policy is reviewed every two years or earlier if regulations, guidance or circumstances change.