



Freegrounds Infant School Off-Site Activities Policy

1. General principles

At Freegrounds Infant School, we believe that off-site activities complement and enhance the curriculum by offering experiences to the children that are not so readily available in school. They may include local visits as part of geographical or scientific study or day trips out e.g. to museums, study centres, contrasting locations, theatres and concerts. All such activities serve an educational purpose related to the school curriculum and to our commitment to providing a broad and balanced education that caters for the *whole* child.

2. Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

This is an inclusive school and everyone concerned needs to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to include all children and young people. Wherever possible, activities will be made available and accessible in some form to all who wish to participate or are required to take part. This would be irrespective of their special educational or medical needs, disability, ethnic origin, age, sex, religion or financial circumstances.

This needs to be done whilst maintaining the safety of all those concerned, the integrity of the activity and the ability to manage the visit or venture. These are significant factors to be managed, which may over-ride other considerations.

For any activity provided as part of the National Curriculum or a formal course, which are quite rare and are usually funded by the school or course fee, inclusion of all is required. Ventures where comprehensive coverage is desirable but not possible suitable alternatives will be made available at school providing the National Curriculum and similar entitlement is not lost.

Where activities are for enhancement or enrichment, inclusion in these circumstances is desired for all but not required. There may be a choice or other factors that mean not all can attend.

It is also important to distinguish between these curriculum-focused discussions and those of the health and safety of the child or young person concerned and their effect on the other children or young people, as well as staff. Any decision on inclusion when such factors are included must, as normal, take 'every reasonable step' to include that young person. However, if those reasonable steps cannot ensure their safety and / or that of others, then that may be the reason they cannot attend that particular venture. For further guidance, please refer to the *OEAP National Guidance*. Further clarification can be requested from the Outdoor Education, PE and DofE Service.

3. Organising and management of an off-site visit

All staff involved with the organisation of, and participation in, such activities must make themselves aware of and follow the regulations and procedures laid down by *OEAP National Guidance*, Hampshire County Council Supplementary Advice and Guidance and our school policy. An Education Visits Co-ordinator is always in post and must keep up to date with the Outdoor Education, PE and DofE Service. The current holder of this position is the Headteacher. Off-site and Education visits are fully integrated into the ethos and culture of the school and all key policies are considered for their relevance and adaptations or agreements made as required.

A preliminary visit will be made by a staff member in order to make a risk assessment and ensure the venue and activities are suitable for the age of the children, (the cost of which is reclaimed from school and is part of the overall cost of the activity).

In the event that this may be impossible, or the visit is one undertaken regularly to a well-known and previously vetted venue, then a dialogue by phone must take place between school and venue organisers to ensure that there are no new risks or revised procedures. A record of this and all other assessments must be kept, evaluated and updated regularly.

Approval for any visit *must* be given by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. Before this approval can be given, the party leader will complete 2 Risk Benefit Assessment Forms (Appendix Item 3), "and an, "approval of an off site

school activity," form, (Appendix Item 2). Once in possession of these documents, the Headteacher will assess the possible risks and the risk management procedures put in place and give permission if the activity is deemed safe and suitable.

The Headteacher will assess whether any leaders or additional adults require training and will organise relevant courses for them to attend e.g. the Open Country Award. Once approval has been given by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, the off-site visit needs to be added on to the Evolve system.

On the day of the trip, the trip packs which are given to all adults who are helping on the trip, including members of staff and volunteers, need to be numbered and then signed out to the given adult. Once the trip is completed, the trip pack will be signed in using the original signing out sheet. All trip packs will then be shredded and the date of shredding will be recorded on the signing in/ out sheet.

4. Communicating with parents

Parents are informed at the start of the term of the programme of activities, especially the use of the grounds or local areas for learning outside the classroom. Parents will consequently be asked to complete a return slip including a consent form to confirm that they have seen and agreed the details of the activities. This form will also include specific medical information for their child as well as emergency contact details. Only residential overseas or long-distance ventures require visit-specific forms to be completed.

5. Supervision

Sufficient adult supervision will be provided and group ratios will be set out in accordance with Hampshire County Council Supplementary advice and guidance. (P38-39).

Activity	Qualifications/staffing	Maximum ratios	Notes
Local visits - in the local area, close to support at the base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an experienced group leader (recommended) other qualified leader(s) (numbers as required) At least one Outdoor Leader certificated leader recommended other responsible adult(s) in support a minimum of two leaders required, unless exceptional circumstances are agreed 	Reception 1:6 Key stage 1: 1:8	A minimum of one qualified leader is needed for every group or class. They can then be supported by other qualified leaders or responsible adults. Minimum ratios are not recommended ratios. Small working groups of 6-12 remain the target. Leaders should reflect the gender of the group if applicable.
Day visits - more than 60 miles or one hour from base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an experienced group leader (recommended) At least one Outdoor Leader certificated leader recommended other qualified leader(s) (numbers as required) other responsible adult(s) in support a minimum of two leaders required 	Reception 1:6 Key stage 1: 1:8	It is recommended that any off-site visit should include at least one certificated Outdoor Leader trained member of staff where possible
Open Country * working by water * away from a road or building In environments containing significant hazards (e.g. steep ground, canals, beaches) Working in 'remote' areas at distance from immediate support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified and experienced leaders, minimum Outdoor leader Certificated other qualified leaders volunteer(s) and other responsible adult(s) 	Reception 1:6 Key stage 1: 1:8	Overall group sizes above 20 are not recommended at any one location at the same time, (supervision & sustainability issues). Similarly large groups should not be moving together or in convoy. The number of qualified Open Country leaders will depend on the risk assessment. By water, each group must have someone Open Country/throw bag trained and competent.
Specific activities	Qualifications and ratios are set out in the document <i>Safety in Adventurous Activities</i>		

If it is found that the site presents particular issues: visibility/observation, access by others, physical hazards etc. then ratios should be reduced. If it is known that a group's or individual's behaviour may be an issue, then extra leaders may be needed to work directly with them and to isolate/work with individuals. The behaviour management system needs to be transferable to the off-site context. Clearly this could mean 1:1 in some circumstances or extra staff not tied into the agreed supervision ratios. A worst case scenario must be considered. This would need to be recorded on the "Risk Assessment".

6. Costs

The cost of the activity will be calculated to include:

- transport to and from the venue,
- entrance fees,
- insurance,
- provision of specialised resources,
- allowance for pupils whose parents are unable to make the full contribution,
- the costs of all adult helpers (including supply cover and travel expenses as necessary),

We are unable to charge for off-site activities but parents are asked for a voluntary contribution towards the cost, without which it would be impossible to provide the range that we do. No child will be excluded from an activity because of the inability or unwillingness of the parents to make a contribution. Please see the charging policy for further information.

Other activities organised by the school, not directly curriculum such as trips to the ballet, ice rink, bowling etc. will depend on the parents' ability to pay the full cost. (It is possible to assist parents who have difficulty meeting the full cost due to extenuating circumstances.

The school appreciates that school trips can be costly and as such will take into consideration the number of trips that take place in any academic year.

7. Transportation

A variety of transport could be used following Council guidance. It is school policy to use coaches with seatbelts through recognised suppliers. When private cars are used all drivers must provide school with evidence of permission from their insurance company - possible parent helpers will be asked to organise this at the beginning of the school year and an updated list of eligible staff will be kept in the school office.

All staff who incur mileage costs will be offered reimbursement in line with County allowances. The Headteacher will appoint a party leader, (usually a staff member from school), who is responsible for running the activity and assisting the Headteacher and Admin Officer in its organisation. Should the Headteacher be part of the supporting adults he/she will adhere to the designated party leader's arrangements.

8. Crossing Roads

This is undoubtedly one of the more dangerous activities leaders and groups will undertake. It should not be assumed that motorists understand or are aware of the needs of the group or of common practices. Technically, only the police, traffic wardens and officially designated school crossing patrols have the right under law to control traffic. When leaders find themselves in this position, having established that there is not a suitable alternative, it is important to have an agreed and understood procedure which you can apply as well as circumstances allow, as would a responsible person, to the best of their ability. The following control measures may be helpful:

- Pre visit the location. Choose a crossing site where visibility is good in both directions. A minimum of 100 metres is recommended where possible.
- Choose a location where there is a suitable collection point on both sides of the road, an area off the road and pavement being preferable.
- The group leader will decide on a manageable number that can cross in a controlled line, parallel with the kerb, walking together.

- Great emphasis must be placed on crossing roads and understanding traffic direction.
- Crossing as a "wave," of children or young people in controlled numbers is recommended over the crocodile approach. It is faster and more efficient in terms of actually getting across the road. This method works as follows:
 - Gather the group on the inside of the pavement at least 1 metre from the kerb or road edge.
 - Line the group up parallel to the kerb, (in one long line, or, if sufficient room, banked into their crossing groups).
 - The leader in charge of the crossing will be at the end facing oncoming traffic. A second leader will be at the other end and responsible for opposing traffic. This is where fluorescent clothing is useful if daylight and reflective clothing if darkness.
 - The group approaches the roadside on a suitable signal or command. The leaders confer and agree when the crossing is possible before signalling to the group and walking across. The actual crossing therefore only takes the same time as for one person walking alone.
 - Where only two leaders are present and the group is split into more than one "wave," each needs to have a priority for looking after the group on one side of the road. If needed adults may meet in the middle in order to bring the second group across.

9. Child Protection and Safeguarding

All children and young people have the right to be protected from harm. Educational visits, off site and residential activities provide both a stimulating learning environment and, in many cases, a different and more relaxed or interactive environment. It is an environment where the child or young people and leaders need to feel comfortable with the enhanced or personal communications that may result. In addition they need to understand where and how physical contact is realistic, due to the nature of many of the activities undertaken.

It is important that all concerned feel confident that their professional judgements are correct and that by putting simple and straightforward principles into practice, they will be taking appropriate action.

Good practice during educational visits and venture:

All members of staff should be aware of the following principles and protocol:

- Avoid being on their own and should work with a colleague, preferably reflecting the gender of the group. This means mixed gender leaders where necessary.
- Listen sensitively to any comments or discussions made to them.
- Explain what they are going to do! Communicate and ensure that whatever action(s) they are about to take are clearly understood.
- Report any incidents of concern to line managers or the Headteacher.
- Keep a clear written record of any incident or communication.
- Be ready to take appropriate action.
- Understand what action to take in the event of an incident or emergency.

9.1 First Aid

Where possible, members of staff should never be alone with a child or young person. If clothing has to be removed an adult of the same sex as the child or young person should be present. Nominated adults must carry any relevant medication for individual children as well as a first aid kit.

9.2 Activity

If members of staff have to hold or have physical contact with a child or young person for safety reasons they should be open and clear about it and explain clearly, in advance, what they are going to do. They should not be alone. If physical contact was different to that which was explained in advance, for example because of an emergency, then the adult should explain why it was different.

9.3 Travel

Members of staff should try to avoid lone travel with children or young people. However, if in the case of an emergency this is unavoidable, it is advised that the member of staff makes a record of their decision-making process that clearly outlines their reasoning.

All concerned need to accept that there may be physical contact in teaching, coaching and instructing contexts. Where this is current and accepted good practice it is both acceptable and indeed often necessary for safety or improvement. This contact should clearly be part of the explained professional style adopted.

All party leaders and volunteers are DBS checked before the trip takes place. If a child volunteers information about abuse to a member of staff, the school's Safeguarding Arrangements should be adhered to. All helpers on school trips will be informed of these principles and protocol.

10. Risk and Benefit Assessment

As part of the planning involved for an off-site activity, an analysis of the benefits of the activity need to be translated into clear objectives and expectations. An assessment of the risk of harm and its likelihood is made, followed by putting clear control measures in place so that they can be satisfactorily managed. A pre-visit by key staff is considered an essential part of reviewing the location and its ability to realise the benefits and be managed. All regular off-site locations are managed by site-specific agreement with the Outdoor Education, PE and DofE Service detailing our management procedures.

11. Incidents and emergencies

Guidance from the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service is used to prepare the leader and base-contact checklists and contact details. The incident management checklist is also available for use. The Children's Services Incident and Emergency 'Establishment Plan' has been used as the basis for all incident and emergency response. Any concerns or 'near-misses' are discussed to consider changing strategies and reports to the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service where necessary or if the information is useful.

12. How will the governors know this policy is effective?

Governors will know this policy is effective through:

Attending annual Sports days
Risk assessments for trips
Governors attendance as voluntary helper on trips
Relevant training via Health and Safety Training Plan (via Headteacher report)

Policy written by Nikki Riches

Approved by Governors : November 2011

Approved by Governors 8/10/12, 10/2/2014 Sep 2015, Sep 2016, January 2022, April 2025

Policy Amended by Nikki Riches

Next Policy review: April 2028

Appendices - to form part of this policy

1. Protocol for arranging an Off-Site Visit
2. Approval for an Off-Site Visit Form
3. Risk assessment forms

All of the Appendices can be found on the school system in the folder 'Off-site visits'.

Version control:	V2 April 2025 Change of date when policy was reviewed and when it will be next reviewed and the date in the header and footer.
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Appendix 1. Day trips/visits

1. Most curriculum - linked trips are planned well in advance of the term they are to occur. However, a form from the office must be completed detailing date, cost and purpose of trip and handed to the Headteacher for authorisation, alongside appropriate risk assessments, in plenty of time to get coaches booked, letters out and reply slips/payments back. This document will also be signed by the Chair of Governors.
2. A letter is sent out to parents detailing the information above and including times of departure and return, mode of transport, clothing and lunch arrangements, permission slip and request for voluntary contributions, signed by the Headteacher or the trip organiser. A master copy will be kept on file.
3. If the trip is planned over a series of dates e.g. field study in the local environment, a blanket letter will suffice. The Head will assess and provide for any training needs of staff that arise from trips that may involve hazards e.g. water or special activities.
4. The correct number of parent/staff helpers are contacted to meet minimum requirements (see policy), and checked to ensure they have DBS clearance.
5. **Please refer to H.C.C.'s "Supplementary advice and guidance" and "Safety in Hazardous Pursuits" in the school office as necessary**
6. Details of the day's activities must be formulated and discussed with children so they can be prepared regarding clothes to be worn - school sweatshirts at least are a good idea as they give whole group easy recognition - equipment needed e.g. clipboards, draft books, waterproofs, plastic bag to sit on, spending money, cameras, and lunch arrangements etc.
7. **Children must have permission from parents before they are permitted to leave school. Permission slips must be received within the requested time.**
8. All envelopes of money and slips are to be sent unopened in the plastic wallet to the office for processing. Permission slips will then be returned to the class teacher.
9. All adults must have agreed procedures for assembling groups together, lost children, first aid carriers and know full details / timings of the visit, carry copies of all groupings and work activities.
10. Expectations of standards of behaviour must be discussed with the children as they are representatives of the school community.
11. The designated trip leader and all adult helpers will carry all pupil/staff contact information, special needs provision and school and coach company phone numbers. A mobile phone must accompany the party, (a school mobile if available). Although all contact with parents is to take place via the school office there may be unforeseen problems which prevent this. Parent helpers must respect confidentiality when having access to such information.
12. If a child requires a specific medication, the school must be in receipt of the relevant medication. If the school is not in receipt of the relevant medication, then the child cannot travel.
13. Any emergencies or significant changes to the plan *must* be dealt with via school as far as sensibly possible. Details of the trip *must* be left in school office before departure - including itinerary, coach name and number, adult helpers, list of children present.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual might compromise the safety or enjoyment of others or cause disrepute to the school then the Head teacher will discuss the possibility of excluding the child from that activity.

14. Teachers act *in loco parentis* and must take reasonable care for the safety and well being of all pupils.
15. Let school know if return is going to be delayed, (keep mobile on and make sure school has the number too!)
16. Should pupils return earlier than planned they must remain in school until the normal end of the school day.

GOVERNORS' APPROVAL FOR OFF SITE VISITS

LEADER:

YEAR GROUP/CLASS:

Date of visit:

Accompanying staff:

Number of other adults:

Number of children:

Method of transport:

Risk assessment attached:

Does approval need to be obtained from OEU?

Itinerary, including departure and return times:

Pre-visit undertaken:

Who will brief the accompanying volunteers?

When?

I have read the school policy for offsite visits and checked relevant parts of the off-site activities file

Signed _____ Group Leader Date:

Agreed by Headteacher? Date:

Signed _____ Headteacher

Agreed by Chair of Governors (only if approval from OEU needed)? Date:

Signed _____ Chair of Governors

RISK ASSESSMENT

Answer all the generic questions **highlighting** the most appropriate answer (read down the columns), then complete the specific risk assessment form as needed.

	The activity is...	The participants ...	The activity leader ...	The environment is...	First aid and emergency support are...	Weather changes...
1	Within the everyday experiences of the individuals	Are very experienced with an appropriate level of understanding	Is very experienced in leading this activity and qualified at the appropriate level	A local, well known location – urban or rural with predictable hazards	Available at the activity site. Establishment staff have appropriate in-date qualifications	Will have no effect on the group
2	Outside the everyday experience of the individual but some tasks have familiar aspects	Are regularly exposed to the activity with an adequate level of understanding	Regularly participates in this type of activity but may have minimal qualifications and little leadership experience	Less well known – urban or rural with hazards that could change quickly	Available at the activity site. Establishment staff have minimal or lapsed first aid qualifications	Are appropriate to the activity. Any changes will have minimal effect but will not affect safety
3	Outside the everyday experience of the individual but competency has been achieved in training (Evidence of training will be required by EVC)	Have some exposure to the activity with experience at a recreational level and some understanding	Has had some exposure to the activity as a leader, is a recreational participant and may have only minimal qualifications in this activity	Relatively unfamiliar – potentially complex urban or rural; in the UK, Europe or US; industrial or residential	Available at the activity site. Establishment staff have generic competence	Could lead to problems if the group is not adequately prepared with training and equipment
4	Outside the everyday experience of the individual but training has been given (evidence of training will be required by EVC)	Have very occasional exposure to the activity with some experience at an introductory level and limited understanding	Has had very occasional experience to the activity as a leader, limited experience as a participant and has no qualifications	Within close proximity to water, cliffs, beaches, steep or high ground, or other novel hazardous topographical or environmental features	Not readily available at the activity site. Establishment staff have in-date First Aid qualifications (evidence will be required by EVC)	Could cause serious problems if the group has not achieved a level of competency in the activity or are not adequately equipped
5	Outside the experience of the individual with no training prior to the trip	Are absolute novices with no experience of the activity	Has no experience of the activity in a leadership capacity with some experience as a participant	Outside Europe or the US; wilderness, or an area classed as advanced by NGBs	Not readily available at the activity site. Establishment staff have no first aid qualifications	Could have serious repercussions for the group

Add up the total of your answers – Highlight outcome

6 – 10 LOW RISK	11 – 19 MEDIUM RISK Evidence will be required to show you have recognised the risk and made provision for control of risk	20 – 25 HIGH RISK Further discussion with EVC is required. Changes will need to be made to lower the overall risk	25 – 30 UNACCEPTABLE RISK Further discussion with Head teacher and EVC to establish why risk is unacceptable. Changes will need to be made to lower the risk
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Site / Group / Activity specific Risk Assessment and Risk Management record

Outdoor Education, PE and DofE Service

Establishment

Leader

Location

Other staff

Group size

Ratio

Benefits (aims, objectives, intended outcomes...)

Who might be at risk? (Tick as appropriate)

-
-

Participants Staff Volunteer Adults Others (specify) _____

Identifying the hazards - assessing the risk	Initial Risk rating (H, M, L)	Control measures - reducing the risk	Risk rating Outcome
<p>Site and its environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	
<p>Group / special needs / accommodation / down time/ safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	
<p>Leader and activity arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	
<p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
<p>First aid arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

