

Ascend Learning Trust

Educational Visits and Academy Trips Policy

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Version Control

Version	Details	Author	Date
1.0	Policy formation	Primary Education Director	June 2025

Policy Statement

Ascend Learning Trust supports and encourages educational visits to enhance the overall student experience by supporting the acquisition of powerful knowledge and development of cultural capital.

Our mission is to challenge social and educational disadvantage and well-planned curriculum visits and cultural experiences are key to us achieving this. The academy takes its duty to safeguard our children seriously (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025) and the safety of all, is paramount. We take reasonable steps, as stated in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to ensure the well-being of our employees is of equal importance to the safeguarding of our children.

Scope and Purpose

The policy is written for all stakeholders and explains our approach to all aspects of managing educational visits, both in terms of risk assessment, compliance with Health and Safety legislation and our approach to charging.

This policy has been designed in line with the Department for Education and Health and Safety Executive guidance and details our responsibilities for students and staff while out on educational visits. The policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

Ascend Learning Trust Policies:

- Charging and Remissions
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Critical Incident
- Health and Safety

Other documents:

- Charging for Academy Activities DfE 2014
- Health and Safety on Educational Visits – DfE 2018
- Health and Safety: Advice on Legal Duties and Powers DfE 2014
- Academy Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities HSE (2011)

Evolve software:

- Driving Academy minibuses 'DfE (2013)'
- OEAP Website (eg guidance on ratios and supervision)
- DfE (Nov 2018) Health and safety on educational visits

Definitions

'In loco parentis' means that the group leader of any academy trip or educational visit has a duty of care over the young people in place of a parent.

'Academy trip' means any educational visit, foreign trip, away-day or residential holiday organised by Ascend Learning Trust which takes students and staff members off-site.

'Residential' means any academy trip which includes an overnight stay.

Activities of an **'adventurous nature'** include, but are not limited to, the following:

- trekking
- caving
- skiing
- water sports
- Climbing
- Camping

Key Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust is responsible for:

- the overall implementation of this policy ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to ethnicity / national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Academy's Complaints Procedure Policy

The Governors and Headteachers are responsible for:

- the authorisation of all adventurous, residential and overseas visit

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy
- liaising with the academy's Educational Visits Coordinator and communicating information regarding any planned trips to parents
- ensuring the trip organiser has completed the necessary documentation and risk assessments and has had it checked by the Operation and Business Manager and Educational Visits Coordinator

The Educational Visits Coordinator has overall responsibility for:

- quality assuring all risk assessments for trips
- advising trip leaders on health and safety
- advising the Headteacher on risk mitigation
- ensuring an itinerary is created prior to an educational visit and ensuring parents are informed
- agreeing a communication and emergency response plan
- agreeing to an appropriate member of staff to be the designated leader of the trip evaluating residential trips with the leader, students and parents on return

The designated leader in charge of the trip is 'in loco parentis' and has a duty of care to all young people on the trip as well as:

Staff are responsible for:

- following this policy, and for ensuring all students do
- ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently

Students are responsible for:

- following instructions from staff while on academy trips
- behaving in a manner which matches the high expectations of Ascend Learning Trust, and for following the rules set out in the Behaviour Policy

Training of Staff

- Staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction
- Staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their Continuing Professional Development

Planning Academy Trips

Prior to planning an academy trip, the following guidance should be read by organisers:

- DfE (2014) Health and Safety: Advice on Legal Duties and Powers
- HSE (2011) Academy Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities

A thorough risk assessment will be conducted by the trip lead and approved by Educational Visits Coordinator or Operations Manager, during the planning of the trip, to ensure student and staff safety.

The academy will do everything in its power to ensure that all students are given an opportunity to participate in trips, such as organising two trips with a smaller group size, or finding a venue which can cater for all students.

Where there is a maximum capacity of students for a trip, places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. This will be clearly communicated to parents in the trip communication.

Risk Assessment Process

Our risk assessment process is designed to manage risks when planning trips, while ensuring that learning opportunities are fully experienced by all.

The process is as follows:

- identify the significant / foreseeable hazards
- decide who might be harmed and how
- evaluate the risks and decide on control measure
- record findings and implement them
- review assessment and update if necessary

Parental Consent

Parental consent is not generally required for off-site activities that take place during academy hours, however, the academy will always inform parents of any visit.

Written consent is required for:

- activities of an adventurous nature
- residential trips
- foreign trips
- trips outside of academy hours

If preferable and appropriate, parents may complete an annual or per visit consent form at the start of any academic year which gives consent for their child to be involved in any and all activities, both on and off-site. Separate consent will be sought for trips which require payment.

Staffing Ratios

There will be sufficient staff to cope with every visit / activity, this is based on a framework used for assessing requirements for each visit / activity for staffing ratios and supervision this called SAGED:

- Staffing
- Activities
- Group
- Environment
- Distance

Recommended ratios:

Reception and Foundation Stage: May require a higher ratio than 1:6, potentially 1:3 or 1:4, especially when water is involved.

- **Years 1-3:** 1 adult for every 6 pupils.
- **Years 4-6:** 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils.
- **Year 7 and above:** 1 adult for every 15-20 pupils.
- **Residential trips (UK and abroad):** 1 adult for every 10 pupils.
- **Trips outside the country:** Minimum 1 adult for every 10 pupils.
- **Minimum two adults:** There must always be at least two adults accompanying the group.

For all residential trips, both within the UK and abroad, that include mixed-gender pupils, schools must ensure that both male and female staff are present in appropriate ratios.

The level of first aid provision required must be risk assessed. This means that the Trip Leader must ensure that adequate first aid arrangements are made, bearing in mind the location and nature of the activity. In a situation where expert medical help is not readily available at least one member of staff should be a competent first aider. An adequate level of first aid is determined by the nature and venue of the visit.

A qualified first aider: (a minimum of Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW), First Aid for Teachers and Support Staff or Paediatric First Aid, relevant to the Early Years) for Schools must accompany all visit and must take a first aid bag.

Insurance and Licensing

When planning activities of an adventurous nature in the UK, the Educational Visits Coordinator will check that the provider of the activity holds a current licence.

Insurance will be organised for every trip, no matter how short, to ensure adequate protection and medical cover.

Where a crime is committed against a member of the party, it will be reported to local police as soon as possible.

Medical expenses will be recorded and stored in Student Services by the Primary First Aider.

The school has Risk Protection Arrangement (RPS) membership. The Department for Education's RPA is a voluntary arrangement for academies, free schools and local authority maintained schools. It is an alternative to insurance through which the cost of risks that materialise will be covered by government funds.

Accidents and Incidents

In the case of accidents and injuries while on an academy trip in the UK, the academy's accident reporting process will begin, as detailed in the Health and Safety Policy.

In the case of accidents and injuries while on an academy trip abroad:

- organisers will cooperate fully with the emergency services at the location and understand that any injury or death of a member of staff or student outside of Great Britain may be subject to the law of the land where the accident occurred
- the first point of contact within the UK will be the academy's Headteacher who will contact the family of the injured person
- students will be asked not to contact friends or parents in the UK until the family of the injured person can be contacted
- the British Embassy / Consulate will be informed
- the insurer will be notified
- the academy will keep written records of any incident.
- media enquiries will be referred to the Headteacher or Trust CEO if they are not available.

Staff will use guidance as set out in the Critical Incident Policy, in particular the 'after a critical incident' section, to ensure the safety of students and staff should anything happen, e.g. a terrorist attack.

Staff will be briefed on how to react and respond should an emergency situation occur, e.g. a terrorist attack.

Relevant risk assessments will be undertaken before the trip, including for points of interests, such as museum and hotel risk assessments.

Students and staff are informed of an evacuation plan before entering trip venues; this should include an agreed rendezvous point, to ensure everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

Missing Person Procedure

The academy places student and staff safety as its top priority when participating in academy trips, either domestically or abroad

Before embarking on the trip, extensive risk assessments are undertaken in accordance with section six of this policy.

The trip leader will communicate with the venues of the academy trips to ensure the correct group sizes are planned for each setting.

When travelling with a student with SEND, if appropriate the lead will ensure an adult is with them at all times and that the visit is adequately modified to suit the student's needs.

In accordance with this policy, all people on the trip will be provided with a contact sheet for all members of staff, in the event they are unable to locate their group.

All staff members will carry a mobile phone with them at all times.

Upon arriving at every venue, the trip leader will identify a rendezvous point, where students and adults should go if they become separated from the rest of the group.

Regular head counts of all students and staff will take place throughout the day to ensure all persons are present at all times.

In the event someone goes missing whilst on an academy trip domestically or abroad:

- the trip leader will ensure the safety of the remaining students and staff by taking a register to identify who is missing
- the trip leader will immediately identify at least one adult to start looking for the person and another adult to contact them via phone, these people will look for the person until, where necessary, the police arrive
- where possible, the venue will be notified of the missing person to help ensure the person is found quickly
- if the person cannot be contacted or located within 10 minutes, the local police or relevant authorities, e.g. British Embassy, should be contacted
- if the police are called, the trip leader should contact the Headteacher or school office at the academy and inform them of what has happened

If a member of the party has gone missing and is subsequently found, the trip leader will:

- review the group sizes and staffing ratios to ensure no one becomes separated from their group

- review whether more registers should be conducted throughout the day
- assess which venues they attend to ensure they are suitable for the group
- make recommendations to the Educational Visits Co-ordinator to ensure similar incidents can be avoided in the future

If the police, or another authority, is called to an incident where someone is missing, they will oversee locating the person and will advise on factors including, but not limited to, when to contact next of kin.

If the missing person cannot be found, the group will return to the academy; if this is not possible, e.g. when a trip is taking place abroad, the designated lead will make arrangements to ensure the group's safety, e.g. by changing venues or cancelling visits.

Exclusion on the Grounds of Behaviour

It may be reasonable to exclude a young person where their behaviour presents a significant, unmanageable and unacceptable risk to the health, safety and welfare of either themselves, or other members of the group, or the leaders.

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination and harassment based on the 'protected characteristics'. Where a young person has a behaviour difficulty that is not associated with a protected characteristic then it is unlikely that the Equality Act applies.

When a young person is excluded on these grounds, you should consider providing alternative ways of achieving the same learning outcomes.

Where there is some doubt about including or excluding a young person on the grounds of their behaviour, the following points should be considered:

- identifying the issue at the earliest stage of planning
- involving all interested parties
- establishing a behaviour management plan with agreed action points that may enable inclusion on the visit
- establishing behaviour targets and timescales to be met to allow inclusion, or trigger a decision to exclude
- providing an additional adult, such as a parent or support worker, with a specific brief to manage behaviour issues
- ensuring that what is expected of staff is reasonable and within their competence
- recording this process

Students with SEND

Where possible, activities and visits will be adapted to enable students with SEND to take part. Where this is not possible, an alternative activity of equal educational value will be arranged.

Finance

The financial procedures outlined in the Academy's Charging and Remissions Policy will always be followed when arranging trips.

The academy will act in accordance with the DfE's guidance document 'Charging for Academy activities' (2014) and, therefore, will only charge for trips which are classed as an 'optional extra'.

This is education provided outside of academy time which is not:

- part of the national curriculum
- part of a syllabus for an examination that the student is being prepared for at the academy
- part of religious education

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities.

However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the headteacher should make this clear to parents at the outset.

The Headteacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution and that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the academy cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled.

The academy must ensure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

The academy should inform parents upfront about their policy for allocating school trip places. Ascend Learning Trust ensures that disadvantaged pupils are not disproportionately affected if they cannot make a voluntary contribution for school trips.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory.

Money for academy trips will always be paid directly to the academy. Under no circumstances should trip money be processed through personal accounts.

All letters to parents regarding academy trips will include a clause explaining what will happen if the trip is cancelled or a student cancels their place on the trip.

In the event that the trip is cancelled due to unforeseeable circumstances, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

The Headteacher will consult the Executive Board on the matter, considering the cost to the academy, including alternative provision costs.

If a student cancels their place on a trip, it is at the Educational Visits Co-ordinator discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Headteacher will consult the Finance Department on the matter, taking into account the student's reasons for cancelling their place, whether the Academy will be reimbursed for the student's place on the trip, and whether the space on the trip can be offered to someone else.

The Headteacher will take a common-sense approach to refunds and cancellations, ensuring that all students are treated equally.

Any charge made in respect of students will not exceed the actual cost of providing the trip, divided equally by the number of students participating.

Foreign Trips

Validity of passports and visa requirements will be dealt with within 3 months of the initial notification of the trip, to avoid problems when the trip is due to take place.

Staff and students will be taught about the culture and values of the country they are visiting, to ensure they understand and respect the values of the citizens.

Before the trip, staff are trained in spotting suspicious behaviour and remaining vigilant whilst abroad.

Before the trip, students will be taught how to remain vigilant in the country they are visiting, particularly about advances from strangers.

Registers will be taken at the start and end of each day, as well as before, during, and after, events and at regular intervals whilst on days out to ensure the whereabouts of students are always known.

Staff will check advice from the UK government about any possible travel restrictions in the countries visited. Staff should check the different countries town /city's local news at the start of each day of the trip, to ensure their planned activities are safe to go ahead.

A minimum of two members of staff attending the trip will have at least a basic understanding of the destination country's language, using travel guides and translation tools as needed.

At the start of the trip, all students and staff are provided with an emergency contact sheet, this includes the trip leader's mobile phone number, as well as emergency numbers and phrases for the country they are visiting.

Appendix 1 – Annual Consent Form for All Educational Visits and School Trips (via Arbor).

Please sign and date the form below if you are happy to give consent for your child:

1. to take part in school trips and other activities that take place off academy premises; and
2. to be given first aid or urgent medical treatment during any academy trip or activity if necessary. Please note the following important information before signing this form: ·
 - the trips and activities covered by this consent include:
 - all visits, including residential trips, which take place during the holidays or over a weekend
 - adventure activities at any time
 - off-site sporting fixtures outside the school day
 - the school will send you information about each trip or activity before it takes place
 - you can, if you wish, tell the school that you do not want your child to take part in any particular school trip or activity
 - written parental consent will not be requested from you for the majority of off-site activities offered by the school – for example, year group visits to local amenities – as such activities are part of the school's curriculum and usually take place during the normal school day.

Signed..... Date.....