



Orbis
education & care

Educational Visits Policy

Updated: January 2023

Updated: March 2023

Updated: September 2023

Reviewed: January 2024

Reviewed: September 2024

Reviewed: December 2024

Reviewed: August 2025

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1. Introduction and Rationale

We are committed to providing valuable learning experiences. We believe that the extended curriculum and educational visits enable us to enrich and ensure all-round provision for all of our pupils. In line with national guidelines and adhering to the national guidance as outlined by the OEAPNG <https://oeapng.info/about-national-guidance/>

All educational visits are planned first and foremost with the health and safety of the pupils in mind alongside the educational objectives as well as the key questions outlined in the Common Inspection Framework. Staff at Orbis understand that carefully planned and well executed educational trips/visits provide extremely valuable experiences and opportunities for our pupils, enhancing the work carried out within all areas of the school curriculum. **All visits which take pupils off the school grounds count as educational visits and as such this policy applies in those instances.**

Anyone organising an off-site visit for young people should also refer to and follow the relevant guidance (relating to the nature of the visit being planned) as set out in the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) National Guidance for Educational www.oeapng.info

Educational Visits such as trips to local areas of interest and leisure facilities further support work during more formal sessions. These visits provide additional stimuli to the pupils as well as showing them practical reasons for some of the subjects or topics they are learning within school. All educational visits are chosen, planned and organised in such a way as to ensure that pupils derive maximum educational benefits from the visit.

As a rule and for reasons of practicality Orbis has given 'general' permission for trips to places such as the local shopping centres, local parks, and the leisure centres, to go ahead with the consent of the class teacher, providing this is detailed on the pupils timetable and one page curriculum and that the school holds a general consent form for the pupils to allow local trips as part of their individualized curriculum plan. Other trips, those that involve travelling further afield are not to proceed without each trip having written permission/clearance from a member of the schools leadership team.

For any educational visit of a residential nature, the group leader must obtain specific written permission from legal guardians and a member of the schools leadership team.

2. Aims and Strategy for Implementation

The planning of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, visits should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils. The following guidelines and procedures are necessary to enable the planning and implementation of educational visits organised by Orbis Education.

The Educational Visits Co-ordinators for the school will be a member of the schools leadership team, this will be the Head of School and or The Executive Head of Education.

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The Educational Visits Co-Ordinator's at each school site will:

- Ensure they partake in relevant additional training to ensure they remain up-to-date with relevant educational trip information and health and safety guidance.
- Ensure they have completed relevant risk assessment training before undertaking this role, for example IOSH
- Identifies the educational purpose of the extra-curricular trip or activity and benefits it can provide to the pupils
- Ensure a suitable group leader/s is appointed for each individual educational visit, in most instances this will be delegated to the class teacher
- Once appointing a group leader, ensuring this member of staff is competent to be a visit leader, the headteacher will consider the following factors: Relevant experience, Previous relevant training, The prospective leader's ability to make dynamic risk management judgements and take charge in the event of an emergency, Knowledge of the pupils, the venue, and the activities to be undertaken.
- Ensure the group/s leader/s has/have experience in supervising and controlling the group/s going on the visit and will organise the group effectively.
- Ensure the group/s leader/s has/have relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity.
- Ensures the group leaders has carried out suitable training for the role in relation to educational visits.
- Suitable risk assessments have been completed and checked
- Trips are planned sufficiently in advance
- Correct planning procedures are followed.
- In collaboration with the Health and Safety policy, appropriate risk assessments are completed and any control measures put in place.
- Child protection measures are in place.
- Assessing whether the group Leader is competent to lead the planned trip and has completed all necessary paperwork.
- The management of risks associated with educational visits and the maintenance.
- Supervision levels are appropriate to the planned activities.
- Ensuring that the planning of all trips complies with the requirements of this policy
- Occasional Monitoring of activities carried out. Included as part of learning walks.

The Group leader is the person leading the visit. The Group Leader will ensure that:

- They have undertaken any relevant training or courses which are arranged by the educational visits coordinator. For example, basic first training and health & safety training via the organisations online e learning platform.
- Staff are conversant with the school's policies and procedures relevant to the visit.

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- Risk assessments are completed (including assessing the competence of staff) signed and submitted to the educational visits co-ordinator, no later than 24 hours prior to the visit.
- The educational visits coordinator has approved the visit if necessary.
- Parents have signed consent forms first allowing for their child to attend any education visit and then for more specific trips if necessary.
- Individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans are adhered to.
- Arrangements have been made for all of the medical needs of all the pupils.
- The mode of travel is appropriate and meets the needs of all pupils.
- Educational Visits planners are completed and signed (available at the school)
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- That they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the traveling group
- They have the address and phone number of the visits venue and have a contact name
- That copies of travel documents remain behind in school with the Emergency Contact
- The visit is evaluated on return and inappropriate aspects are listed to inform future visits
- A suitable method of communication is with the group leader e.g. company mobile phone allocated to all staff
- Ensure pupils are wearing appropriate clothing and footwear that is suitable for any activities that will be carried out

One person, the group leader, has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit. In cases of large groups, the schools leadership team will appoint two staff to act jointly as 'group leader'.

Group leaders should:

- Have visited the proposed venue (if this is at all possible) prior to the visit
- Be able to control and lead pupils known abilities/difficulties
- Be suitably qualified if instructing a specialist activity
- Undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents, letters requesting permission, etc.
- Provide information on the trip to the pupils (in a group briefing session, especially for visits of a residential nature – if applicable)
- Undertake, complete and sign a comprehensive risk assessment/s
- Have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times
- Know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess the suitability
- Have a first aid qualified member within their team
- Ensure the staff have a first aid kit on them
- Appropriate first aid equipment is carried at all times
- Ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities and the behaviour expected of them;
- On residential visits, contact the school immediately or as soon as possible after arrival at the venue and when the school group sets off on their return journey at the end of the visit
- Evaluate the visit at the end and submit any changes that may be needed for the future.
- Be a permanent member of Orbis staff and not agency/supply staff

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Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. Likewise any pupils for whom it is felt would not access or be able to 'cope' with the visit will not be taken on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for those pupils will be fulfilled in other ways.

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties, which may arise, and making plans to avoid them.

The Head of School/Executive Head of Education has overall responsibility for any offsite activity. This responsibility is delegated in turn by degrees to the group leader/s to carry out the detailed planning required. The Head of School/ Executive Head of Education still retains the responsibility of ensuring that the group leader/s are qualified to plan and lead the visits they are intending to and have the necessary experience.

The group leader must agree all plans with the Head of School.

3. Risk Assessments

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using Orbis and Priority Childcare Risk Assessment Form. Where applicable, risk assessments should be received from providers, professional visit organisers and/or the venues to be stayed at. These risk assessments should be evaluated to ensure they meet the levels of safety required for the pupils. The group leader/s has responsibility for producing the 'final' risk assessment and this will support the schools leadership team in determining the staff: student ratios for each visit. At Orbis Education and Care and Priority Childcare (Orbis), the preference is to have extremely high staff; student ratios as far as possible.

The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- What are the risks?
- Whom do they affect?
- What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader/s guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?
- What are the acceptable ratio of staff to students for this visit?

The group leader/s and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The group leader/s should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- The type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- The location;
- The competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
- The group members' competence, fitness and temperament;
- Pupils with medical needs and or physical needs;
- The quality and suitability of available equipment;
- Seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

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As part of the risk assessment measures, pupils will be made more aware of emergency procedures, using communication strategies to meet individual needs prior to the visit, without attention necessarily being drawn to 'potential hazards' on the site of the visit; for example, a 'general' discussion on how to behave near water, talk about life belts, recognising a life guard etc, rather than saying "there is a deep pool of water on the visit site and if you see anyone in it, call for a life guard or run for the life belt", with the emphasis on making them 'risk aware' rather than 'risk averse'.

4. Exploratory Visit

Wherever possible the group leader/s should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- Ensure that the venue and activities on offer are suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit
- Assess potential areas and levels of risk
- Ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group
- Ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. Many venues now provide general risk assessments. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other professionals who have recently visited the venue. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas or if planning activities involving a seaside trip, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards, for information such as lifeguards, tides etc.

5. First Aid

All school visits will have a basic first aid qualified staff member as part of the supervisory adults.

The minimum first aid provision is:

- A suitably stocked first aid box
- A person to be appointed to be in charge of first aid arrangement
- A key member of the staff group (group leader or deputy leader) to be responsible for student medication kept in a locked box.

First aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first aid cover for the other pupils. The Head of Education should take this into account when assessing what level of first aid facilities will be needed and group leader/s should also take this into consideration when assigning adults to the 'sub-groups'.

Pupils will have a backpack with individual first aid kits, as well as having a central one. Each vehicle will have a suitable first aid kit.

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6. Supervision

There are two forms of supervision commonly used on educational visits: remote and near supervision. Orbis Education and Care and Priority Childcare (Orbis) staff will use near supervision at all times, in that at all times on visits, all pupils will be in clear view of at least one member of school staff in the day time (except when a student is using a 'bathroom' or such facilities, when there will be adults just outside the facilities). At no time will pupils be allowed to 'go off' without a supervising adult. During night time, (on residential visits) pupils will be adjacent to staff bedrooms and all communicating doors will be unlocked.

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visits. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Sex, age and ability of group
- Nature of activities
- Experience of adults in offsite supervision
- Duration and nature of the journey
- Type of any accommodation
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with any emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

All staff must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all group leaders should be aware of any pupils who may require close supervision, such as those with medical needs or those who may exhibit distressing behaviors.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place at regular intervals

– although total reliance should never be placed on 'head counting' alone. Group leaders should not only 'head count' but should also either roll call name (not fixed roll call, but talk to each individual) or make eye contact with each student on a regular basis. Head counts should be every 2 minutes or less when in the 'open' (i.e. not in a room or on a coach, etc). The group leader/s should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

Each pupil backpack will contain missing persons Information to provide suitable contact details and specific needs.

7. Mobile Phone Communication During Visits

From September 2023, all staff working at an Orbis school have been issued with a personal mobile phone. All Orbis handsets are secured using a Mobile Device Management (MDM) product called SOTI MobiControl. This enforces several policies that safeguard access to confidential information, including:

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- Enforced encryption of the device. All handsets are encrypted using Android's built-in device encryption.
- Geofencing. System access, specifically information that relates to a person in Orbis' care, can only be performed when inside Orbis locations. Device functions, specifically the camera, will be disabled when inside certain Orbis locations.
- The applications installed on the device are managed and controlled. The user is prevented from installing any unauthorised applications.
- If a device is lost or stolen, the device will be remotely wiped of all data and all accounts will be removed. This prevents the contents of the device from being accessed by unauthorised parties.

An Orbis mobile phone will be taken on each outing and kept on staff for the entirety of the outing. This phone is not to remain in the vehicle.

Staff should ensure that they are able to communicate with each other during the outing and that they have all phone numbers saved in their Orbis mobile phone.

8. Missing Person Procedure

Should a member of staff/ pupil go missing then staff should call the school to inform a member of the schools leadership team. Should staff need to go in search of missing staff or pupil, it will be approved by the Schools Senior Leadership team and suitable levels of supervision should be in place. Further staff will be deployed from the school in search of the missing pupil. If the pupil cannot be located after 5 minutes, emergency services are to be contacted. This is in line with the schools 'missing policy'. Staff are to use the company mobile phones to remain in constant contact throughout.

9. Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Where appropriate, pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

Prior to the educational visit, pupils will be given all relevant information (see below) as far as possible and in an accessible format.

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10. Participation

Pupils should be 'assessed' to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities. During the visit they should not be coerced into activities they are uncomfortable with participating in.

Pupils whose behaviour is such that the group leader/s is concerned for their, or others safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader/s should consider whether such pupils would return home early, in which additional school staff may be asked to collect them from the venue.

11. Information

It is for the group leader/s to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information. Where applicable, pupils should understand:

Where applicable, pupils should understand:

- The aims and objectives of the visit/activity
- Background information about the place to be visited
- How to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules
- Why safety precautions are in place
- Why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities
- What standard of behaviour is expected from pupils
- Who is responsible for the group
- What to do if approached by a stranger
- What to do if separated from the group
- Emergency procedures
- Rendezvous procedures

12. Transport and Pupils

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- Arrive on time and wait for the transport in the assigned room or area
- Do not rush towards the transport when it arrives
- Wear your seatbelt and stay seated while traveling on transport
- Make sure your bags do not block aisles on the transport and are stowed appropriately
- Never attempt to get on or off the moving transport
- Never throw things out of the transports vehicle's windows
- Never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic
- Never kneel or stand on seats or otherwise impede the driver's vision
- Never distract the or disturb the driver
- Stay clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport
- After leaving the vehicle, follow the instructions from the school staff on how to safely move away from the vehicle
- If you feel unwell while traveling, tell a staff member

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13. Inclusion

The Head of school will not exclude pupils from any visits unless there are compelling reasons for doing so. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Accessibility for all will be a primary factor in choosing the types of educational visits for pupils. Special attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures, if required, will be addressed at the planning stage.

14. Coastal Visits

Group leaders and other staff should be aware that trips to or by the sea represent a number of dangers quite apart from those incurred in swimming.

The group leader/s should bear the following points in mind in the risk assessment of a coastal activity:

- Choose a beach with lifeguards on duty
- Ideally choose a beach which has won a cleanliness award
- Notify the lifeguards (if possible) of the pupils and give them a general awareness of any needs they may have
- Tides and sandbanks are potential hazards so timings and exit routes should be checked
- Ensure group members (including pupils, as far as they are cognitively able) are aware of warning signs and flags
- Establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated
- Look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc
- Some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds and make this absolutely clear to the pupils

15. Swimming

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a student group. Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit, will **NOT** be allowed for pupils. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas, which have close surveillance.

Pupils should always be in sight of their staff member. One staff member will always stay out of the water for better surveillance and this role will be on a rotational basis of every 15 minutes.

Where paddling is to be allowed on a visit, a high ratio may be required. Adults participating in the paddling activity will stand with their backs to the sea, forming a 'barrier/boundary' that pupils will be informed not to cross, enabling both the staff and member on surveillance duty on the beach and the adults in the water to have the pupils between them at all times.

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16. Farm Visits

Orbis Education and Care and Priority Childcare (Orbis) recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking pupils to a farm will be very carefully planned, and the risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections. The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare; and it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas. An exploratory visit should be carried out.

The basic rules for a farm visit will be that staff will avoid ever letting pupils:

- Place their faces against the animals or their hands in their mouths after feeding them
- Eat until they have washed their hands
- Sample any animal foodstuffs
- Drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities)
- Ride on tractors or other machines
- Play in the farm area

17. Evaluating trips and visits

Following an educational trip and/or visit, the educational visit coordinator will meet with any staff members present on the trip to assess the success of the trip in respect of both educational value and safeguarding effectiveness. Based on this assessment, recommendations will be made to improve future trips and visits.

18. Reportable Events

In the event that a reportable safeguarding incident occurs during an offsite visit, the local authority in which the visit is taking place in must be notified.

19. Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Executive Head of Education. The Director of Education will review this policy annually.

20. Equality Impact Statement

All relevant persons are required to comply with this policy and must demonstrate sensitivity and competence in relation to Age, Disability Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation. If you, or any other groups, believe you are disadvantaged by this policy please contact the Regional Manager for the service.

Policy Review Date: August 2026

Signature:  **(Director of Education)**

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