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# Learning Outside the Classroom Educational Visits Policy

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**COGNITA**  
TEACHING EXCELLENCE

## Learning Outside the Classroom/Educational Visits Policy

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<b>Contact names</b>	
Headteacher	Mrs Rhian Ferriman
Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)	Miss Sue Barguss
Cognita Assistant Director of Education	Mr Robin Davies
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Miss Carol Garner/Mrs Tracey Slee
Head of Education Compliance	Mr Simon Camby

<b>Third Party contacts</b>	
	<Third Party Name>
	<Insert Name> <Telephone number>

<b>Source of information on educational visits</b>	
Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel: National Guidance	<a href="http://oeapng.info/">http://oeapng.info/</a>

### KEY FACTS:

- ✦ School visits are an integral part of learning.
- ✦ Schools must follow this policy.
- ✦ The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for learning outside the classroom including educational visits.
- ✦ Category A and Category B visits are approved by the Head.
- ✦ Category C visits must be approved by Cognita Head Office at least one month before the visit takes place.
- ✦ Thorough planning is essential for a successful and safe off-site learning experience.
- ✦ The Visit Leader must share risk assessments and safety information with all adults accompanying the visit.
- ✦ The Head must ensure that all adults accompanying a visit are appropriately vetted.

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1. This policy applies to all schools which are part of Cognita in UK and Spain.
- 1.2. This policy applies to situations where Cognita schools have responsibility for children and young people who are taking part in learning activities in an environment that is outside of the school site. It supports the principle of inclusion.
- 1.3. The law places a duty on Cognita and schools as employers to supply our employees with the information necessary for them to carry out their duties safely.
- 1.4. All staff in Cognita in schools are required to:
  - take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts and omissions at work (including pupils);
  - cooperate with their employer;
  - carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions; and
  - follow Cognita/the school's policy and guidance.
- 1.5. This policy formally adopts the website [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info) as its source guidance about Educational Visits, but some local guidance may exist within this policy.
- 1.6. Learning Outside the Classroom and School Visits are an integral part of school life, furthering the education of the pupils. When outdoor learning and visits are arranged for pupils, they support the social and academic needs of the pupils. The learning experience should be well organised and stimulating for pupils.
- 1.7. Visits are not arranged in isolation and should be part of the curriculum planning for the school. The pupils are well prepared for the visit and, subsequently, put the experience to good effect. The visit is well planned by the Visit leader with the safety and welfare of the children of paramount importance.
- 1.8. It is not permissible for any visit to proceed unless:
  - the correct procedure has been followed as outlined in this document;

- the correct risk assessments are in place and have been shared with all adults accompanying the visit;
- the details of the visit have been logged (where required) on the Evolve system;
- the Head and/or Head Office representative has given documented permission for the visit to take place; and
- the Visit leader takes the appropriate paperwork and records with them on the visit.

1.9 Visit leaders should ensure they know and understand Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One, and Annex A, as well as their local authority child protection procedures. All staff accompanying children on school visits have a duty to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

## 2 Underpinning Principles

- 2.1. Teachers who plan a trip or visit are classed as the 'Visit Leader' and, as such, have responsibility to make sure the visit is properly organised to ensure the well-being and safety of the group. Visit Leaders will ensure that staff who supervise trips will be effectively deployed to ensure their own safety as well as the safety and welfare of pupils. They are responsible for submitting the information about the visit on Evolve.
- 2.2. There is an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) to support planning and execution of trips – see Appendix 1 for details of the EVC role. The EVC is suitably trained and keeps up to date with changing policy, guidance and practice nationally and locally. In the absence of an EVC, the Head is the EVC. Cognita provides a toolkit to support EVCs.
- 2.3. The Head holds ultimate responsibility for learning outside the classroom. All staff must liaise with the Head concerning the arrangements for the visit and adhere to this policy, taking account of relevant guidance.
- 2.4. We ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and volunteers as well as our children and young people.
- 2.5. Staff receive adequate training, including the provision of suitably certificated first aid training. A risk assessment is carried out prior to any school visit, in part to determine the levels of first aid provision that may be required. At least one first aider must accompany each visit. They will be trained in, have a good working knowledge of, and be responsible for, first aid.
- 2.6. All activities will be undertaken in accordance with a thorough risk assessment prepared by the Visit Leader, authorised by the EVC, and approved by the Head. These may incorporate formal externally produced generic risk assessments where these are made available by external providers. The risk assessment for a residential visit must include effective supervision arrangements for the entire duration of the period of absence from school; including safe handover of care to parent/carer(s).
- 2.7. Risk assessments should focus on identifying and managing the risks safely rather than producing paperwork. The Visit Leader and all staff should continue to monitor risk whilst

on the trip and if necessary, change plans to accommodate any additional or differing risk (for example posed by the weather).

- 2.8. While there is no specific legal requirement as to the ratio of supervising adults to pupils on educational visits from Year 1 upwards, Cognita schools must follow the guidance note which was developed with schools and based on OEAPNG guidance about ratios.
- 2.9. Educational visits for children in the Early Years advice about outings and staffing must be as outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'. There are no separate prescribed ratios for outings in Early Years but staffing levels should be reflected as a result of a risk assessment process, particularly with regard to adequate supervision of very young children.
- 2.10. It is advisable that all off-site visits should have two adults in attendance. Where this is not feasible, the Head should risk assess and provide authorisation for alternative arrangements. It is advisable to have male and female adult supervision. This may not be possible in all schools providing for primary aged pupils, and therefore must be subject to further detailed planning. All Category C visits must have a minimum of two adults in attendance. It is strongly recommended that if a mixed group, then there should be mixed staffing.
- 2.11. It is the ultimate responsibility of the Head to ensure that the ratio of adults (of each gender) to children is appropriate for the visit. When considering this the Head should take account of:-

The SAGED Model: **S**taff – **A**ctivity – **G**roup - **E**nvironment - **D**istance

To aid this, the following aspects may form useful prompts:

- sex, age and ability of the group;
  - pupils with special educational needs and/or medical conditions;
  - nature of activities;
  - experience of adults accompanying the visit in off-site supervision;
  - duration and nature of journey;
  - type of any accommodation;
  - competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;
  - requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
  - competence and behaviour of pupils;
  - first aid cover;
  - whether the visit includes water based or other adventure activities.
- 2.12. In the event that pupils stay in residential accommodation, particular care is taken to ensure that there are appropriate supervision arrangements and safe facilities for sleeping.
  - 2.13. All accompanying adults have a duty of care in relation to the pupils they are supervising. Teachers should remember that they have a responsibility for effective supervision at all times on the visit and thus are therefore responsible for the well-being and safety of pupils until such time as the pupils are handed over safely to their parent(s) or carer(s).

2.14. Whilst on educational visits, all school policies apply – both in relation to children and adults, including the Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct. This includes no alcohol consumption while working and supervising children.

### 3 Categories of Visit

Category	Description	Authorisation	Notice period
<b>Category A</b>	Daytime visits in the locality	By Head	Authorisation should be granted at least 10 school days before visit.
<b>Category B</b>	Daytime activities outside the local area but within the country	By Head	Authorisation should be granted at least 10 school days before visit.
<b>Category C</b>	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits abroad</li> <li>• Residential trips, and/or</li> <li>• Adventure activities</li> </ul>	Authorised by Head with final approval from Cognita Head Office	Approval from Head Office will not be granted if less than one month's notice before planned departure date is given. Failure to do so will be considered as a breach of policy and may result in disciplinary action.

3.1. Early planning is essential for any visit. Plans for residential visits should ideally be formulated at least six months in advance and at least one month ahead for day visits (see box at section C above). It is accepted that there are times when it is not possible to plan with a clear month for some events, e.g. qualifying for finals of a sporting event. In these instances, the same detail of planning is required, despite the shorter period available for planning.

3.2. There is a formal procedure in place for schools to use Evolve (online logging of visits) to seek approval for Category C visits from Head Office. In order that applications for visits may be considered thoroughly, at least one month's notice to Head Office is required before the visit is due to take place. Schools are also required to use Evolve to record and manage Category B visits [with effect from September 1 2015], although authority to approve remains with the Head.

3.3. Where a group visits any outdoor activity centre, or uses an Outdoor Activity Provider in England, Scotland and Wales, it must be carefully considered. The centre must hold one or both of the following Approval Systems, The LOTCQB (Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge) or be licensed under adventure licensing regulations, AALA. This applies in England and Wales. In Scotland only the AALA system operates. The inspection system does not apply in Ireland or mainland Europe and the Visit Leader should look for other approval systems and complete a provider form where the activities involve caving,

climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports. Any outdoor/adventure activity should be within the ability of the children participating and the accompanying staff.

- 3.4. Travel Operators and Companies. Schools should use reputable companies who may hold national accreditation standards, e.g. LOTC QB, Coach Marque or be members of Professional Industry Bodies.
- 3.5. If Companies hold an LOTC QB or AALA there is no requirement to check the company further as they have been accepted as a suitable company. If they do not hold these standards then a provider's questionnaire must be completed to verify the individual standards, for the UK schools only. Please note: this means that for providers which hold the LOTC, or who have supplied a provider's questionnaire, you should not request or upload the provider's generic risk assessment to Evolve.

#### **4 Preliminary Planning**

- 4.1. For all Category A and B visits the school is responsible for setting its own planning schedule but that must allow sufficient time for all the associated planning and risk assessments to be put in place.
- 4.2. For all educational visits, visit leaders must have attended a one day certified Cognita training course for visit leaders before leading any visit off site. Where for any reason this has not yet been completed, the Headteacher should indicate this on the risk assessment and specify alternative arrangements to ensure the visit leader has sufficient knowledge to lead the visit, on an exceptional basis.
- 4.3. For Category C trips, a pre-visit is compulsory for the Visit Leader; except where the same trip has been carried out by the same Leader within the last three years, a travel company conducts an inspection visit or where there is a tour guide or outdoor activity centre involved.

Preliminary visits enable the group leader to acquire knowledge at first hand:

- that the venue and any accommodation are suitable;
- that the venue can cater for the needs of pupils and staff;
- to assess potential areas and levels of risk and ways in which any risks might be managed (which must be included in the Risk Assessment to be given to the Head);
- to become familiar with the area before taking the children;
- to obtain information concerning any external staff qualifications, vetting and licenses; and
- to ensure any activity centre is licensed in accordance with LOTC QB or AALA.

#### **5 Effective Supervision**

- 5.1. The Visit Leader will ensure that it is always clear who is responsible for what and when; there must be no 'grey areas'. For example, there are clear handover arrangements between the Visit Leader and specialist instructors.
- 5.2. Should the visiting school staff supervise pupils alongside the specialist instructors, there will always be clarity about who has responsibility for which aspects of the session and for which pupils.
- 5.3. On trips overseas, each child carries a *help me please* identity card in the language of the visiting country, or suitable equivalent alternative, with details of their name, address, any medical needs, the school address and contact numbers, the group's temporary residence address, and staff mobile telephone number(s). Consideration should be given to whether pupils should carry mobile phones.
- 5.4. Lists of pupils' names, parents' names and contact numbers, medical needs and any other necessary information are prepared of the groups for all staff and helpers. These lists are held by each adult on the trip and available at all times when on the visit. Copies are given to the office staff and Head before the visit.
- 5.5. Pupils are never on their own but always remain in a group or otherwise supervised, for example by host families. Group leaders must put systems in place to enable them regularly to check pupils' whereabouts.
- 5.6. Close supervision of the pupils in any hostel, centre or hotel during the night on residential visits is maintained. Adults sleep in close proximity to the children's rooms but do not sleep in the same room as children. Staff retain access to pupils' rooms in case of an emergency. Pupils and staff occupy separate rooms/tents on residential visits, according to gender. On camping expeditions, staff tents are sited appropriately to pupils' tents.
- 5.7. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Any member of staff who evaluates the visit and/or wishes to report a potential safeguarding matter during or subsequent to the visit, should contact the school's DSL (or Headteacher if the concern is about an adult). In the cases of child protection concerns, this may also involve the member of staff contacting directly the relevant statutory agency such as the police or social care services, particularly in the case of immediate danger or is a child is at risk of harm; in full accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.

## 6 Suitability Checks

- 6.1. All school staff are subject to appropriate vetting checks (including for criminal records and entries on the barred list) when they are recruited. The Head must arrange for the school's single central register to be checked to ensure that appropriate vetting is in place before a staff member accompanies a visit.
- 6.2. On a Category A or B visit, where volunteers are helping with an activity in a group under staff supervision, we no longer carry out a criminal record check routinely and we are not permitted to carry out barred list checks for such supervised volunteers.

- 6.3. On a Category C trip, all accompanying adults must have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks, together with barred from working with children list check. In Spanish schools, local police checks must have been undertaken in line with the most recent Cognita Safer Recruitment policy.
- 6.4. Any adult who accompanies a visit without being vetted must never be given the responsibility of unsupervised access to children in any circumstances.
- 6.5. Where overseas students stay in the UK with host families by arrangement of a Cognita school, a criminal record check with a barred list check on the host family members may be needed. Where Cognita schools' pupils stay with host families in other countries, the school should work with the partner school to seek assurances as to the families' vetting utilising the family home stay form (OEAP NG section 8) and/or contact the embassy or High Commission of the relevant country in this connection. We may on occasions make use of arrangements to use host families where, for short periods, children may be provided with overnight care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related. This is most likely to take place as part of a foreign exchange visit or sports tour, for example. We are fully aware that such arrangements could be deemed private fostering under the Children Act 1989 or the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act. For our children, if payment is made for such an arrangement, or if it is not made privately between families, the private fostering could amount to regulated activity in school or via a third party agency which would mean that a DBS enhanced check and barred list check would be required - *regardless of the duration of the arrangement*. Where parents make such arrangements themselves or take the responsibility for the selection of the host parents themselves, this will be a private matter between the child's parents and the host parents and in these circumstances the school will not be a regulated activity provider (i.e. requiring enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information).

## 7 Liaison with Parents, Pupils & Staff

- 7.1. Parents, students and accompanying adults should be given full written details as appropriate regarding the organisation and administration of a visit to include:
  - itinerary;
  - activities and venues, including any special risk inherent in the activities undertaken;
  - specialist equipment and/or clothing necessary for activities;
  - code of conduct expected of the children;
  - packed meal requirements;
  - providers staff and leaders, their experience and expertise;
  - total costs and methods for payment;
  - insurance cover, including medical cover and exemptions; and
  - any passport and visa requirements.
- 7.2. For all residentials and visits involving adventurous activities, near the date of the visit, a meeting should be held for all parents, their children, the staff, and any voluntary helpers concerned with the visit. The information above is reiterated and the emergency

procedures explained. There is an opportunity for questions and discussion at the meeting. The School will make clear to parents the arrangements made for all vetting of adults accompanying the visit.

- 7.3. Parents should be informed about all off site activity. Additional consent may not be required for Category A and B visits that take place during school hours and which are part of a child's normal education. A written parental consent form must be completed for each pupil to take part in any activity off site which goes beyond the school day or is a category C visit. Parents are told in advance and given the opportunity to withdraw their child from any particular school visit or activity. Schools will ensure that the medical needs of individual children are clearly documented by the visit leader and that parents provide adequate permissions and prescribed medications, suitably labelled. There must be a record kept of all medications administered.

## **8 Emergencies**

- 8.1. In the event of an emergency, while still controlling and supervising the rest of the group, the Visit Leader should contact the appropriate emergency/rescue service immediately. Thereafter, the Visit Leader should contact the designated person (duty manager) at the school or the Head as soon as possible. All staff on the visit must carry a copy of the fold out Cognita Visit Emergency Card.
- 8.2. The designated person, the Head and other staff at the school should follow the Policy for Critical Incidents – Dealing with a Crisis. Any communication with the press/media must be approved in advance with the Marketing Team at Head Office.
- 8.3. The Head is responsible for ensuring that: (i) the Visit Leader is provided with alternative contact details for key staff in the school for the duration of the visit; and (ii) key members of staff have copies of pupil emergency contact details for the duration of the visit.
- 8.4. Advice about visit emergencies and checklists for staff is contained in section 4 of OEAPNG.

## **9 Reporting**

- 9.1. All Visit Leaders must complete a post visit evaluation (including accidents, incidents, near misses, medications dispensed, changes to accommodation or sleeping arrangements and unsupervised access to children by adults) on Evolve. Following residential trips, two additional members of staff must complete and log trip evaluations also using the Cognita Post Trip Evaluation Form. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and School Governance Committee as well as Cognita's Regional Compliance Committee will monitor post-visit evaluation reports.
- 9.2. The standard procedures for reporting accidents and incidents must be followed, as stated in the Accident Reporting Book, including the completion of the relevant accident form. The First Aider on the visit has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate recording and reporting takes place including to the Head as soon as is practicably possible. The School's

policy for first aid will be followed at all times, including during all off-site activities and visits.

- 9.3. Any serious injuries to a member of staff or a child must be recorded and reported in accordance with legal requirements. (See RIDDOR [www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm)).

### 10 Transporting Pupils & Practicalities

- 10.1. Where parents or other volunteers transport pupils other than their own children to sports or other events in their cars:
- a letter from the insurance company certifying that such passengers will be covered by their insurance policy is required;
  - only cars that hold a current MOT certificate or are less than three years old may be used;
  - the parents/volunteers must either be directly supervised by a member of staff or have an DBS check and barred list check;
  - the car should carry a first aid kit and mobile phone with the visit leaders phone contact;
  - children should wear seatbelts at all times and booster seats if appropriate; and
  - the school should have written consent from parents.
- 10.2. Where coaches and other types of transport are used, the school should seek assurances from the provider that the vehicle is roadworthy and the driver is qualified. There are industry standards that assist with this process in the UK. Seat belts must always be used, discipline must be maintained and pupils will be supervised at all times.
- 10.3. Where more than one vehicle is being used to transport the party the Visit Leader is responsible for leaving a list with the Head of which adults and pupils will travel on each vehicle, before departing. In the case of, for example, air travel and trains, details of the times and carriers that the group will use must be given to the Head so that the group could be traced in the event of delay or emergency.

### Appendix 1 Roles and responsibilities

#### Visit Leader

- Complete the visit planning and risk assessment process.
- Log all details and risk assessments on the Evolve system.
- Ensure that the visit complies with the requirements of this policy and follows the guidance.
- Only proceed with the visit following express authorisation from the Head and/or Head Office.
- Ensure that adults assisting with the visit are briefed and provided with other relevant information.
- Have responsibility for the effective supervision of pupils for the duration of the visit and handover of pupils to parents/carers.
- Review the visit to advise the Head of learning points for future visits and complete an evaluation form via Evolve.

#### EVC

The EVC should be specifically competent. Evidence of competence may be through qualification, but more usually will be through the experience of practical trip leadership over many years. The EVC should have sufficient status within the school to guide the working practice of colleagues leading visits but may be given additional administrative support.

- Attend EVC training and keep up-to-date with changes to guidance and best practice.
- Ensure that all activities and visits meet policy and guidance requirements.
- Ensure that the Head and Visit Leaders have access to training at an appropriate level in relation to visits and organise it.
- Support the Head with approval of visits and other decisions.
- Support the Head in ensuring that all Visit Leaders are competent and where appropriate that they hold relevant technical qualifications.
- Monitor visit planning.
- Ensuring that medical and first aid issues are addressed both on a general level and for specific needs.
- Ensuring that emergency arrangements are in place and that in an emergency a designated person can access all relevant records, including medical and next of kin information for all members of the group, including staff.
- Ensuring that visits are evaluated and that this process includes recording and reporting of accidents and incidents, where necessary to outside agencies such as the Health and Safety Executive.
- Ensuring that there is procedure for recording “near accidents/near misses”, including medications dispensed, changes to accommodation or sleeping arrangements and unsupervised access to children by adults and any resulting learning points and action.

#### Headteacher

- Responsible for establishment, review and implementation of this policy.
- Authorises all visits including Category C visits, which must also be approved by Head Office.

- Ensures that no visit proceeds without explicit and documented authorisation.
- Responsible for adhering to planning and approval timescales in this policy.
- Responsible for appointing and supervising EVC or performing the EVC role.
- Must check that all adults accompanying a trip are appropriately vetted.

### **Head Office**

- Final approval of all Category C visits.
- Spot checks on compliance with the policy and use of Evolve system.
- Commissioning reviews of school trips, including best practice reviews to identify good practice and lessons learned which should be shared with other schools.

## Learning Outside the Classroom/Educational Visits Policy

Ownership and consultation	
Document sponsor (role)	Director of Education
Document author (name)	Ros Vahey, Head of Education Compliance
External checking	Farrer and Co. (Lawyers) – September 2015

Compliance	
Compliance with	See external docs listed below.

Audience	
Audience	Headteacher EVC School staff Volunteers on educational visits

Document application and publication	
England	Yes
Wales	Yes
Spain	Yes

Version control	
Implementation date	September 2016
Review date	September 2018

Related documentation	
Related Cognita documentation	Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy Accidents and Incidents Recording and Reporting First Aid Policy and guidance Health and Safety Policy Health and Safety Handbook Central Record of Recruitment and Vetting Checks Compliments and Complaints Procedure Statement Transport Policy Post-Trip Evaluation Form (Evolve) Data Protection Policy Administration of Medication Policy
Related external documentation	This policy is written in accordance with: OEAP National Guidance <a href="http://www.oeapng.info">www.oeapng.info</a> The DfE <i>Departmental Advice on Health and Safety for Schools</i> (6 March 2013) and <i>Advice on Legal Duties and Powers</i> (updated 7 February 2012). The latter replaced <i>Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits</i> (HASPEV 1998).