



LEARNING PROVISION

Off-Site Visits Policy

Date Produced: November 2024

Reviewed Date: August 2025

Next Review Date: August 2026

Policy Statement

At REACH Learning Provision, we are committed to providing high-quality, safe, and educational off-site visits designed to enrich the curriculum, promote personal development, and support the diverse needs of our students. Off-site visits offer valuable opportunities for students to experience real-world learning, develop social and life skills, and engage in new environments that foster growth and confidence. This policy outlines the procedures, responsibilities, and safeguarding measures required for all off-site visits, with a primary focus on day trips.

1. Scope

This policy covers all off-site visits organised by REACH Learning Provision, including day trips that are educational, recreational, or skill-based in nature. These visits aim to enhance the learning experience by complementing classroom activities, building social interaction skills, and providing exposure to practical, real-world situations.

Off-site visits may include:

- Visits to cultural, historical, or educational sites, such as museums and landmarks, to support academic learning and broaden students' cultural awareness.
 - Outdoor activities or nature-based excursions, including field trips or team-building activities, to promote physical health and environmental appreciation.
 - Vocational or life-skills trips, such as workplace visits or participation in community service projects, prepare students for future independence and career aspirations.
 - Recreational outings to parks, sports centres, or zoos to encourage social bonding, physical activity, and enjoyment.
-

2. Planning and Approval

Pre-Trip Planning

All off-site visits must be carefully planned to align with the curriculum's learning objectives and the student's developmental needs. To ensure safety and successful execution:

- **Risk Assessment:** Staff must complete a detailed risk assessment to identify potential hazards and implement appropriate mitigation strategies.
- **Defined Roles:** Staff roles will be clearly outlined before the trip. These include assigning:

- A **Trip Leader**: to oversee all aspects of the visit.
- A **First Aid Provider**: to handle medical needs
- A **Safeguarding Contact**: to address any safeguarding concerns.

Consultation with the Commissioning School

Before finalising plans for any off-site visits, the trip leader must consult with the commissioning school to:

- Share the planned itinerary, risk assessments for the students, the venue, and any other relevant details for approval.
- Confirm that the commissioning school is aware of and in agreement with the visit's purpose, timing and logistics.

Parental Consent

Securing written parental or guardian consent for all off-site visits is essential. Consent forms will include detailed information about the trip's purpose, planned itinerary, transportation arrangements, and emergency contact procedures. Parents must also disclose any relevant medical conditions, allergies, or additional needs their child may have to ensure appropriate planning and accommodations.

Communication

Parents will receive comprehensive pre-trip information, including emergency contact numbers, safety protocols, and behaviour expectations. If significant changes occur to the itinerary or schedule, parents will be promptly notified to ensure transparency and trust.

3. Risk Assessments

Purpose of Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are fundamental to ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants during off-site visits. They identify potential hazards, evaluate associated risks, and detail measures to reduce or eliminate risks.

When to Conduct Risk Assessments

Regardless of its nature or location, a specific risk assessment must be completed for every off-site visit. The existing risk assessment will be thoroughly reviewed and updated for repeat visits to familiar destinations to reflect current circumstances.

Steps in Conducting a Risk Assessment

- **Identify potential hazards:** Consider risks specific to the location, such as crowded spaces, water bodies, or uneven terrain, as well as risks related to transportation or the planned activities.
- **Assess who might be at risk:** Pay special attention to students with vulnerabilities, including medical needs, disabilities, or behavioural challenges, as well as the safety of staff and volunteers.
- **Evaluate risks and develop mitigation measures:** Assign risk levels (low, medium, or high) and detail strategies such as staff-to-student ratios, frequent headcounts, and ensuring the availability of first aid resources.
- **Implement safeguards:** Train staff on their responsibilities and ensure all necessary resources, such as emergency contacts and medical kits, are prepared.
- **Review and approve:** The Head of Provision will review and approve the risk assessment with the assistance of the DSL.

Sharing Risk Assessments with the Commissioning School

To ensure a collaborative approach and meet all safeguarding requirements:

- Copies of the completed risk assessments for students and the venue will be shared before the visit with the commissioning school.
- The commissioning school will be able to review, provide input, and approve these assessments before the trip proceeds.
- Any feedback from the commissioning school will be incorporated into the final planning to address all concerns effectively.

Special Considerations

The risk assessment must account for specific challenges, such as managing disruptive or absconding behaviour, accommodating medical or accessibility needs, and planning for environmental factors like weather and terrain.

4. Safeguarding Measures

Pre-Trip Safeguarding Checklist

Before the trip, individual student needs will be assessed to identify vulnerabilities such as medical conditions, behavioural challenges, or risks related to child sexual exploitation (CSE). All staff will be trained in safeguarding procedures and provided with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) contact details and emergency protocols.

During the Trip

Appropriate staff-to-student ratios will be maintained to ensure supervision and safety. Staff will monitor students' emotional and physical well-being throughout the trip and intervene as necessary to provide support.

Managing Absconding or Missing Students

If a student absconds or is reported missing, an immediate search of the area will be conducted while the remaining group is supervised. Parents or guardians will be informed immediately by phone; if required, the police will be contacted with a detailed description of the student.

Responding to Safeguarding Disclosures

Staff must respond calmly and sensitively to any safeguarding disclosures made during the trip, documenting and reporting the information to the DSL immediately. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

5. Transport and Accessibility

Transportation

All transportation must be provided by reliable providers and equipped with necessary safety features, such as seatbelts. Additional supervision will be arranged during travel to ensure students' safety and comfort, particularly for students with additional needs.

Accessibility

Staff will pre-visit locations to identify barriers and determine appropriate accommodations for students with mobility needs.

6. Behavioral Expectations

Before the trip begins, students will be clearly briefed on behaviour expectations in an age-appropriate and student-friendly manner. Positive reinforcement will encourage appropriate behaviour, and de-escalation strategies will be employed to manage disruptions.

7. Contingency Planning

Emergency Situations

The trip leader will carry a detailed emergency action plan, along with first aid kits and contact lists. Procedures will be in place for handling medical emergencies, transport delays, and other unexpected incidents.

Adverse Weather

If weather conditions become unsuitable, alternative indoor activities or locations will be identified. Parents will be promptly notified of significant changes to the trip itinerary.

Communication with Families

During emergencies, parents will receive regular updates about the situation. After the trip, feedback will be provided to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

Consultation with the Commissioning School

The trip leader must consult with the commissioning school when developing contingency plans. This includes sharing emergency procedures, adverse weather plans, and communication strategies to confirm they meet the school's expectations. The commissioning school's feedback will be incorporated into the plans to ensure alignment and comprehensive coverage.

8. Post-Trip Review

After each off-site visit, staff and students will participate in a debriefing session to evaluate the trip's successes and challenges. Any safeguarding or behavioural incidents will be documented, and feedback will be collected to refine the planning process for future trips.

This policy is subject to annual review and must be followed by all staff and volunteers involved in organising or supervising off-site visits. Please contact the DSL or Head of Provision for further guidance or questions.