



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Health and Safety on Educational Visits

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Table of Contents

1. Policy Overview	3
2. Legal Framework	4
3. Duty of Care.....	4
4. Provision of OEAP National Guidance	4
5. Approval for Visits	5
6. Process of Approval and Notification.....	6
7. Roles and Responsibilities	8
8. Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements	100
9. Planning the Visit	111
10. Parent / Carer Consent.....	111
11. Risk Assessments	122
12. Charges for Off-site Activities and Visits	133
13. Vetting and DBS Checks	133
14. Initial Visit	14
15. Using external providers and facilities	144
16. Adventure Activities and Licensing Regulations.....	166
17. First Aid.....	177
18. Competence to Lead	177
19. Requirement to Ensure Effective Supervision.....	19
20. Pupils with Medical Needs.....	20
21. Inclusion	200
22. Travel and Transport	21
23. Travel by Coach, Minibus and Private Car.....	21
24. On Foot	21
25. Briefing for Pupils Prior to the Visit	211
26. Medication.....	22
27. Accidents and Incidents.....	22
28. Emergency Procedures	22

Associated documents:

- EVOLVE – GAT Off-site Visits Planning and Management System

1. Policy Overview

The Greenwood Academies Trust (GAT) acknowledges the immense educational value of off-site visits, outdoor learning and related activities to young people, and requires all such events to be properly planned, managed and approved.

'When planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards and improving pupils' personal, social and emotional development.'

(Ofsted – 'Learning Outside the Classroom: How far should you go?', 2008, <http://www.lotc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Ofsted-Report-Oct-2008.pdf>)

'HSE believes strongly in the educational value of well-planned visits and is a firm supporter of outdoor education'

(HSE website, 2017, <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/>)

'I want Ofsted to make sure that schools are properly focusing on pupil safety, but that it doesn't come at the expense of opportunities to broaden and enrich young minds.'

Ofsted – Amanda Spielmann, Sunday Telegraph, 6th August, 2017.

'Education in its broadest sense is not just about delivering a curriculum. It is about giving children the chance to extend their lifeskills. It is about developing their confidence. It is about fostering their resilience and sense of responsibility. And – let us not forget- it is about the enjoyment, engagement and excitement about venturing out into the real world, with all its capacity for uncertainty, surprise, stimulation and delight.'

Tim Gill, Nothing ventured...Balancing risks and benefits in the outdoors, 2010, English Outdoor Council, p22.

There are a huge number of benefits to learning outside of the classroom. For example, following a four-year research programme based in the SW of England involving 125 schools, Natural England found that:

- 95% of young people enjoyed participating in outdoor activities/learning
- 92% of young people said it helped with their engagement with learning
- 93% of young people reported that it helped develop their social skills
- 85% of young people felt that there was a positive impact on their behaviour

The research also highlighted that learning outdoors:

- Had a positive impact on both pupil and staff health and wellbeing
- Encouraged the development of a number of features of character education such as:
 1. Confidence and self-esteem
 2. Social Skills
 3. Engagement with learning
 4. Behaviour
- Impacted on attainment by encouraging the four foundations for learning outlined above

'Natural Connections Demonstration Project: Final Report', 2016, produced by Natural England, <http://tinyurl.com/h8vwznz>

As can be seen from the Natural Connections project, outdoor learning activities can have a direct impact on the personal development of young people and, as such, will play a key element in the implementation of the GAT strategy: Your Character Counts.

There are enormous benefits to be gained from broadening pupils' horizons and raising aspirations through a wide range of educational visits that directly support the school curriculum such as fieldwork, visits to historical and cultural sites, visits abroad and sporting activities / tours. Many of these activities form a core element of the wider Enrichment Programme offered by GAT. This programme is aimed at ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential in terms of employment, further education and becoming a successful member of society.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the duty of care and the safeguarding of pupils from all GAT Academies are fulfilled at all times whilst they are undertaking such activities. This responsibility also extends to the members of staff and volunteers involved in supervising outdoor activities.

2. Legal Framework

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 made under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 require employers to:

- assess the risks of activities
- introduce measures to control those risks
- inform their employees about the measures

In addition, employees must:

- take responsibility for their own and others' safety
- co-operate with their employers over safety matters
- carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
- inform the employer of any serious risks

These responsibilities apply to all GAT Academy visits.

3. Duty of Care

Where a non-specialist or non-professional adult takes on responsibility for the supervision of young people, the legal expectation of the standard of care is described as that of a 'reasonable person'. Originally, the standard of care expected of school staff was described as being in loco parentis: in place of a prudent parent.

When the adult taking on the duty of care has a particular expertise or specialist knowledge, then the law may expect a higher standard of care – that of the 'reasonable professional'.

For an employer the standard is somewhat higher, as they are required to have safety management systems in place to ensure 'as far as is reasonably practicable' that people are not harmed by their activities. Those establishments which undertake the care, supervision or control of vulnerable people (including children) have, in certain circumstances, a non-delegable duty of care and so are not merely required to 'take reasonable care' of those in their charge but to ensure **'that reasonable care is taken'**.

4. Provision of OEAP National Guidance

The national online guidance resource [Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel \(OEAP\) National Guidance](http://oeapng.info/) (**Guidance for the Management of Off-site visits and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) activities**) is an invaluable reference document, that should be read alongside this policy. It is available from:

<http://oeapng.info/>

If information in this policy is at variance to the advice in OEAP National Guidance (NG), the advice in this policy should be followed. If Principals or visit leaders require further information or

advice they should contact the Outdoor Adviser, details can be found on the Home page of EVOLVE.

It is a legal expectation that employees **must** work within their employer's guidance; therefore, employees must follow the requirements of "OEAP National Guidance", as well as the requirements of the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and this Policy Statement.

Where a GAT employee commissions Outdoor Learning or an Off-site visit activity, they must ensure that the supplier has either:

1. adopted GAT or OEAP National Guidance

or

2. has systems and procedures in place to ensure that the standards are not less than those required by OEAP National Guidance.

5. Approval for Visits

- Categorisation of Off-site Visits/Activities

Every off-site visit or outdoor activity must be either notified or approved by the Principal before the event takes place.

For the purposes of approval, off-site visits are classified into three categories, see figure 1 for a summary:

Category A – Local and regular activities which are defined in this policy in terms of the nature of the activity and their location; for example, sports fixtures, swimming, local parks, places of worship, libraries, theatre, cinema, city centre, museums, allotments etc.

All of these visits MUST be entered on EVOLVE. One application can cover a range of similar visits or a series of activities.

For the purposes of this policy, the establishment defines **Category A** ('regular and routine' visits that take place in the 'local' area as part of a planned programme of activity over a given period of time and within the school day) as follows:

Those activities that take place as part of a planned curriculum. Such activities might include: Visits to Libraries, Art Galleries, Swimming Pools and Leisure Centres, City Schools, Sports Fixtures, and activities on the delivery site of a non-adventurous nature; for example:

That can operate within the following locations:

Within the local neighbourhood or local built-up area, town or city, for example:

Beyond these areas of working, the visit becomes a **Category B** visit. Staff should be trained in the operation of this policy in relation to Category A visits.

Category B – Usually annual visits to attractions or locations beyond the 'local' area; for example, visits to the seaside, major visitor attractions, UK cities etc.

All of these visits MUST be entered on EVOLVE and will require the approval of the OVC and Principal.

Category C – Includes: all residential visits, visits abroad and activities in hazardous environments or involving 'adventurous' activities, see [Figure 2](#) for more detail.

All of these visits MUST be approved using EVOLVE and will require the approval of the OVC, Principal and GAT Outdoor Adviser.

Authorisation

The Chief Executive of the Greenwood Academies Trust delegates authorisation and approval for Category A, B and C visits to the Principal. In addition, the GAT Outdoor Adviser is required to review and authorise all Category C visits.

Off-site Visits Co-ordinators

Each Academy must nominate an Off-site Visits Co-ordinator (OVC) who is responsible for co-ordinating all external events and visits and who has taken part in the OEAP 6-hour training course for OVCs. For further details of the role and responsibility of the OVC, please refer to [Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel National Guidance on EVCs](#).

(When reading OEAP Guidance, the term 'Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)' is used synonymously with the GAT term of 'OVC'.)

The OVC should be carefully selected for the role by the Principal and should have practical experience of leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment. Normally, but not exclusively, such competence will be identified in a person within the senior management team of the establishment. A key role of the OVC is to assess the competence of staff to lead visits. If the OVC does not have the professional background and competence for this task it will be the responsibility of the Principal to fulfil this role.

EVOLVE

To assist in the planning, management, approval and evaluation of visits, GAT employs the EVOLVE web-based management system. As well as being an efficient tool for planning and approving visits, EVOLVE also contains a variety of features including: search and report facilities, downloadable resources and information, staff records and visit history, gateway access for parents, etc. GAT access can be found via this link to [EVOLVE](#)

EVOLVE must be used to plan and approve all visits.

Notification of Visits

For **Category 'A'** this should be two weeks and for **Category 'B'** four weeks. However, it is recognised that some opportunities to work off-site may happen at short notice even in such cases academies must still use the EVOLVE system to approve them.

Category 'C' visits should be submitted (to GAT) at least **six (6) weeks** prior to departure to allow for the form to be returned for clarifications or for arrangements to be amended. However, if the visit is Overseas, **twelve (12) weeks** should be given and if the visit is an Overseas Expedition, **eighteen (18) months** should be given.

6. Process of Approval and notification

Category A Notification of Regular and Routine visits:

All local regular and routine visits both around and local to the site must be entered on EVOLVE as a means of notifying both the OVC and Principal, [see figure 1](#), who will authorize the visit.

Risk assessments uploaded to EVOLVE may include generic school risk assessments for Travel and All Visits.

Category B visits to be approved by:

First stage Approval: OVC

Second Stage Approval: Principal

For **Category B** visits, Visit Leaders should complete the following:

Complete the On-line application on EVOLVE

Risk Assessments that should include:

- Travel
- All Visits
- Any other Risk Assessment appropriate to the activity

Activity programme

Programme planning information, as appropriate.

OV2 (Provider checklist) or use LOtC Quality Badge for checking providers.

Category C Visits, to be approved by:

First Stage Approval: OVC

Second Stage Approval: Principal

Third Stage Approval: GAT Outdoor Adviser – Details can be found on the Home page of EVOLVE

For **Category C** visits, Visit Leaders should complete the following:

Complete the On-line application on EVOLVE

Risk Assessments that should include:

- Travel
- All Visits **or** Visits Abroad, if going overseas
- Accommodation – if staying overnight
- Any other Risk Assessment appropriate to the activity programme or location

Activity programme

Programme planning information, as appropriate

Give minimum 6 weeks' notice

OV2 (Provider checklist) or use LOtC Quality Badge

OV4 form – parental consent form completed

Approval is delegated to the Principal for all visits (Category A and B), except for the following visit types:

- **overseas**
- **residential**
- those involving an **adventurous activity** and **hazardous environments** as defined in Appendix 1

The above three categories (Category C) are 'authorised' within the Academy, but are 'approved' by GAT via EVOLVE. These visits **must** be planned and submitted using EVOLVE.

Some examples of Category 'B' and 'C' visits are given in **Figure 1**, with some further definitions of 'adventurous activities' given in **Figure 2**. See also GAT '**Guidance on Visits, Planning and Adventure Activities**' found in the **Resources section of EVOLVE**.

In approving visits, the Principal and OVC should ensure that the visit leader has been appropriately inducted/trained, and is competent to lead the visit, see **section 18**

A member of staff intending to supervise or instruct an adventurous activity, as defined in **Figure 2** must be specifically approved by GAT to do so, see See also GAT '**Guidance on Visits, Planning and Adventure Activities**' found in the **Resources section of EVOLVE**.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal, on behalf of Greenwood Academies Trust, must:

- satisfy him or herself that all appropriate risk assessments have been carried out, that appropriate safety measures are in place and that training needs have been addressed
- ensure that the visit has a specific and stated objective
- ensure that the visit leader shows how their plans comply with all relevant regulations and guidelines, including the Trust's Health and Safety Policy
- critically assess proposals for certain types of visits, which includes any visits which involve an overnight stay or travel outside the UK
- approve the visit form on EVOLVE once all the above requirements have been met

Action in case of Absence

The approval of all visits on EVOLVE must be made by the Principal or nominated Deputy before departure. The task must not be delegated to another member of staff unless the Deputy Principal has taken responsibility due to the Principal being absent.

In certain circumstances, nominated GAT personnel can be requested by the Principal to process a visit in the absence of the OVC. E-mail permission should be sought from the Principal prior to processing.

The Principal must ensure that:

- the visit leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit
- adequate child protection measures are in place
- all necessary paperwork and actions have been completed before the visit begins
- risk assessments have been completed and authorised and appropriate safety measures are in place. Category C visits must also be authorised by the GAT Outdoor Adviser
- the training needs of staff and pupils have been assessed by a competent member of staff
- the visit leader has experience in supervising the age groups going on the visits and will manage the group effectively
- non-GAT supervisors on the visit have passed the appropriate DBS checks
- the ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate
- where appropriate, parents have signed consent forms and given the necessary medical information
- adequate first aid arrangements are in place

- the mode of travel is appropriate
- travel times are known
- the address and phone number of the venue(s) are known
- an Academy contact has been nominated and notified to the visit leader
- the visit leader and supervisors have copies of the agreed emergency procedures
- the visit leader has details of all the pupils travelling and the emergency contact details

For further details of roles and responsibilities please refer to [OEAP National Guidance](#)

The Off-site Visits Co-ordinator will:

- ensure that the member of staff organising the visit has understood all issues relating to health and safety as outlined in this policy
- guide staff through the EVOLVE process ensuring that all procedures are adhered to
- ensure the competence of the staff and volunteers nominated to lead or supervise the visit
- ensure that all staff accompanying pupils are DBS checked
- ensure that parental consent is obtained, where appropriate
- ensure that emergency arrangements and contact numbers are in place for each visit
- keep records of individual visits including/accident/incident or near miss reports
- following a visit, review systems and monitor practice to ensure that they comply with GAT policies and procedures and are fit for purpose

For further details on roles and responsibilities go to [OEAP National Guidance](#). A useful checklist can be found by following this link – [EVC checklist](#)

The Visit Leader will:

- have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and for the health and safety of the group, including volunteers
- obtain the Principal's formal approval on Evolve before any off-site visit takes place
- clearly define each additional teacher or group supervisor's role
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range
- be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity, or support a qualified externally provided instructor in carrying out this task and be familiar with the location where the activity will take place
- be aware of child protection issues
- ensure that appropriate first aid provision will be available
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation for the visit using the EVOLVE system including, where necessary, the briefing of parents
- undertake comprehensive risk assessments
- review progress regularly and advise the Principal when adjustments need to be made

- ensure additional teachers and supervisors are fully aware of what the purpose of the visit is and what their roles are. For further guidance go to the following links – [Assistant Leaders](#) and [Helper](#)
- ensure the ratio of pupils to teachers is appropriate
- stop the visit if risks to the health and safety of the pupils are unacceptable and have in place procedures for this eventuality
- ensure that the group supervisors have details of the school contact
- ensure the additional teachers and supervisors have a copy of emergency procedures
- ensure that details of pupils' SEN and medical needs are known by all staff supervising the visit
- complete the post visit evaluation on EVOLVE

For further details on roles and responsibilities go to [OEAP National Guidance](#). A useful checklist can be found by following this link – [Visit Leader checklist](#)

Voluntary Help

The Greenwood Academies Trust recognises that many visits for younger children could not take place without the goodwill of voluntary helpers. Volunteers will normally be people well known to the individual Academy as either parents or governors.

Volunteers will be told that they have the responsibility to follow all instructions issued by the visit leader who retains overall responsibility for the event.

The Academy will appoint volunteer helpers as far in advance of the visit as practical and will provide opportunities for those volunteers to meet the pupils for whom they will be responsible before the visit. This is particularly important for younger pupils.

The Academy retains the right to make the final decision on which volunteers will accompany the visit.

The visit leader will ensure that each volunteer knows precisely what their role is and understands that they have a responsibility to carry out that role.

Where children are organised in small groups, a child will not generally be placed in a group for which his/her parent is responsible.

All volunteers accompanying a residential visit will be required to obtain DBS clearance.

8. Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements

As an employer, GAT is required to ensure that its employees are provided with:

- appropriate guidance relating to Off-site visits and Outdoor Learning activity
- employer-led training courses to support the guidance to ensure that it is understood
- suitable systems and processes to ensure that those trained are kept updated
- access to advice, support and further training from appointed advisers that have proven expertise and professional understanding of the guidance, the training and expectations set by current good practice.

- a) The **appropriate guidance** for the management of outdoor learning and off-site visits in GAT is this Policy document and the OEAP National Guidance web site.
- b) The **relevant training courses** in support of delivering this policy in GAT are:
 1. **GAT Off-site Visit Coordinator (OVC) Training - all GAT establishments are required to have a current OVC in post who has undertaken the 6-hour OEAP EVC training course.**
 2. **GAT Off-site Visit Coordinator (OVC) Revalidation - all GAT Academies are required to ensure that their OVC undertakes a formal revalidation from time to time, the recommended period being every 3 years. Attendance at the annual OVC Update and Training Day is strongly recommended and is the preferred revalidation option.**
 3. **GAT Visit Leader Training – this course will become compulsory from April 1st 2019 for all those who lead Off-site visits and activities. All such leaders must have attended a course by the end of March 2019. A phased programme of training will be introduced from May 2018.**
- c) or the purposes of day-to-day **updating of information**, GAT OVCs and Visit / Activity Leaders are directed to the posting of “OVC Newsletters” (which include information on how to access the relevant courses) which is e-mailed directly to establishments and is available in the Resources section of EVOLVE.
- d) Where an employee experiences problems with finding the material they are looking for, or requires clarification or further help and guidance, they should contact their establishment’s Off-site Visits Co-ordinator (OVC), or the Outdoor Education Adviser nominated by their employer.

The nominated Outdoor Adviser in GAT is **can be found on the Home page of EVOLVE**

9. Planning the Visit

The processes and procedures to be followed when organising a visit are embedded in the EVOLVE system. An initial dialogue should take place with the Off-site Visits Co-ordinator at the appropriate Academy site.

Whatever the destination, it is of critical importance that formal planning is undertaken to consider the potential dangers and difficulties associated with the visit and that appropriate plans are in place to reduce the risks.

For further guidance on planning refer to:

[Visit Leader checklist](#)
[Basic Planning document](#)

10. Parent / Carer Consent

Both DfE and OEAP (Outdoor Education Advisers’ Panel) National Guidance tell us that:

Schools are not required to obtain consent from parent/carers for pupils to participate in off-site activities that take place during school hours and which are a normal part of a child’s education, such as local studies and visits to a museum or library etc. (Education Act 2002 section 29)

For further information refer to OEAP Guidance on [Parental Consent](#)

Parents/carers should be informed of such activities. This can be done through the Academy website, prospectus, policy, e-mail or letter home.

However, consent *is* required for visits outside normal school hours and for adventure activities. This should be supplemented by more detailed information regarding the visit or activity so that parents/carers can give 'informed consent' for their child to participate.

Consent for such activities can be obtained via a 'blanket consent form', which could be sent home at the start of each year. However, it may also make sense for a further 'consent' form to be sent out to cover residential, visits abroad and adventurous activities as well, as these are slightly higher risk activities. This would be more specific to the event.

As a result, three forms have been designed for schools to use and adapt:

OV4 – General Consent Form, to act as an annual/blanket consent form

This can be used for gaining consent from parents and carers for taking pupils on visits and activities that go beyond the 'normal' school day. This will also cover consent for adventurous activities that take place on and away from the Academy site.

This could be completed annually or at the start of each term.

It would still be a requirement of schools to inform parents, nearer the time, about such visits and activities, giving greater detail of the visit/activity. The OV3 Form highlights the information that might be covered in any communication to parents about a visit. If these visits go beyond the school day then parents and carers have a right to withdraw their children from the activity or visit.

OV4 - Specific, to act as a specific consent form for a particular activity/visit.

This form can be used as both a consent form for a 'specific' activity or visit and also enables schools to update personal details of the child and emergency contacts.

OV3 Form - To inform parents of a visit. This could be used for visits that do not require consent as well as those that do. This covers the type of information that might be required and can be adapted by schools to fit individual requirements and formats.

All forms are available from the **Resources** section of EVOLVE

Taking copies of consent forms on visits

There is no requirement for visit leaders to carry evidence of consent on visits in the UK, although it is recommended for day visits, residential and adventurous activities.

Parental Consent forms **must be taken on any visit abroad**.

11. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments must be undertaken and completed in person by the visit leader.

Pupils and staff must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained then the visit must not take place.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations, which are based on the HSE [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#):

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?

- What safety measures need to be in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level?
- Can the visit leader put the safety measures into place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

The person who conducts the risk assessment must record it and give copies or hold a briefing for all teachers/supervisors on the visit with details of the measures they should take to reduce the risk.

For all pupils with a Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), an individual risk assessment for off-site visits, updated each full term, should be recorded in their personal file. Visit leaders must ensure that the individual risk assessments for pupils with an EHCP have been updated to take account of the planned activities during the proposed visit and that all leaders hold a copy for each pupil in their group.

Frequent visits to local venues such as swimming pools do not have to be assessed each time; however, a generic risk assessment must be completed each term or annually as appropriate.

A wide range of generic risk assessments are available in the **Resources** section of EVOLVE. These risk assessments are reviewed every year and, if necessary, during the year. It is **recommended that staff always download these risk assessments** when planning a visit in order that the most up-to-date information is used.

For every visit an **All Visits** and relevant **Transport** risk assessment should be undertaken as a **minimum**. For residential visits, an **Accommodation** risk assessment should also be undertaken. For visits abroad, please complete the **Overseas** visits risk assessment instead of the All Visits risk assessment. Risk assessments will also need to be completed for additional activities that Academy staff are leading. When a third party is leading activities, there is no need to complete risk assessments for the activities they are leading.

The visit leader should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action when necessary.

Further guidance on risk management and visits can be found at the following locations:

[Risk Management – An overview](#)

[Risk Management – Some practical advice](#)

12. Charges for Off-site Activities and Visits

Trust Principals, Curriculum Planners, OVCs and Visit/Activity Leaders must take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: [Charges for Off-site Activity](#)

13. Vetting and DBS Checks

GAT employees who work *frequently* or *intensively* with, or have *regular access to* young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo an enhanced DBS check as part of their recruitment process.

For the purposes of this guidance:

- *frequently* is defined as "once a week or more";
- *intensively* is defined as four (4) days or more in a month or overnight.

However, it must be clearly understood that a DBS check (or other vetting procedure) in itself, is no guarantee as to the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people.

The placement of an adult within a situation of professional trust (where young people could be vulnerable to physical or mental exploitation or grooming) should always be on the understanding that an overview based on a common sense risk-benefit assessment process has been considered.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: [**"Vetting and DBS Checks"**](#)

14. Initial Visit

For a venue which has not been used before, the visit leader is strongly advised to carry out a preparatory visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the educational experience
- assess potential areas and levels of risk
- become familiar with the area before accompanying young people
- assess the category of visit.

Even if a venue has been used before a pre-visit may still be required.

15. Using external providers and facilities

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management and an essential part of fulfilling your 'Duty of Care'.

Wherever reasonably practicable, it is strongly recommended that a preliminary visit is undertaken.

Using an External Provider

An 'External Provider' normally provides one or more elements on an activity or visit such as instruction, staffing, guiding, or accommodation. This may be, for example:

- an Activity Centre
- a Ski Company
- an Educational Tour Operator
- an Overseas Expedition Provider
- a Climbing Wall where instruction is provided by climbing wall staff
- a Freelance Instructor of adventurous activities
- a Youth Hostel (where instruction is provided)
- a Farm
- a Voluntary Organisation (e.g. Scout Association), where instruction is provided

For the purposes of GAT approval, an External Provider is **NOT**:

- a Campsite
- Museums, galleries, etc
- Tourist attractions

- Theme Park
- a Coach, Train, or Airline company
- a Local Authority Swimming Pool staffed by nationally recognised lifeguards
- a Climbing Wall where instruction is provided by a member of your establishment's staff with an approved Leader Approval Form (LAR) / Activity Leader Form (ALF) (**Section 38** applies)

Residential Providers

You must make reasonable checks to ensure that the accommodation is suitable for your group. There should be appropriate security arrangements to prevent unauthorised persons entering the accommodation, separate male and female accommodation and washing facilities with staff accommodation close to participants' accommodation. In the UK, accommodation should be: covered by a current fire certificate and / or advice has been sought from a fire officer and implemented; and a fire risk assessment has been completed. If abroad, the accommodation complies with fire, health and safety regulations which apply in the country concerned.

Refer to **GAT Generic Risk Assessment**: Accommodation, found in the resources and Guidance section on EVOLVE

Some residential providers may hold a LOtC Quality Badge. If not, it may be helpful to use the OV2 Form to gather this information (and retain evidence). Alternatively you could carry out a pre-visit and take a checklist. Indicate on your EVOLVE application how you have checked out the accommodation.

Further advice on Residentials is given in the GAT '**Guidance on Visits, Planning and Adventure Activities**' found in the **Resources section of EVOLVE**

All Providers

The decision about the use of an external provider is the responsibility of the visit leader, OVC, and Principal. GAT does not 'approve' external providers or tour operators. Establishments may find it useful to 'Search by External Provider' on EVOLVE, and liaise with other GAT Academies or schools in the local area that have used a particular provider. Further steps may include:

- Asking for written references from other groups if the provider is not known locally, and contacting the referees directly
- Inviting presentations and quotations from providers offering a similar service to ensure that you are getting good value for money
- Visiting a course being run for another group to observe standards and talk "informally" to staff from that group

To confirm that all aspects of the operation of the provider are satisfactory, the establishment must ensure that either:

- a) The Provider holds an LOtC Quality Badge www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk

or

- b) An 'OV2 Form' has been satisfactorily completed by the provider.

Note: If a Provider holds an [AALA licence](#) (and/or any other accreditation) but not an LOtC Quality Badge, then a Provider Form is still required.

For Providers that hold an LOtC Quality Badge

Check that the provider's Quality Badge will be valid on the date of your visit ([click here](#)). Trust Academies must ensure the provider has at least £5 million public liability (Academy staff should

check their employer requirements). No further action is necessary, other than to check the suitability of the provider/venue in relation to the intended aims or learning outcomes for the particular group. A pre-visit and recommendation from previous users will help you decide on its suitability.

See www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk

For Providers that do not hold an LOfC Quality Badge

- Download an OV2 Form from EVOLVE
- Complete the top section
- Send OV2 Form to the provider (email, fax, post)
- On its return, check that it has been satisfactorily completed
- Keep OV2 Form on file together with all other relevant documentation
- Attach a copy of the Provider Form to EVOLVE

Important: The Provider Form (**OV2**) should be sent to the provider at the time of making a provisional booking and no deposits should be committed prior to its satisfactory completion and return.

If the Provider has made any alterations to the wording of the Provider Form or is unable to comply, then you must discuss this with the Provider, and if necessary seek advice from the Outdoor Adviser prior to making a commitment with the Provider.

The satisfactory completion of an OV2 Form does not necessarily signify that the service on offer will be appropriate for the young people from your establishment. A pre-visit and recommendation from previous users will help you decide on its suitability.

The above procedure is **not** sufficient for Overseas Expeditions (ie. those which typically take place in remote areas of the world and/or in developing countries), for which separate arrangements are applicable and **must** be complied with, the GAT '**Guidance on Visits, Planning and Adventure Activities**' found in the **Resources section of EVOLVE**.

An additional 'Briefing paper' on the use of third party providers can also be found in the resources section of EVOLVE, in the Policies and Guidance Document folder.

For further guidance on external providers refer to [OEAP NG guidance](#).

16. Adventure Activities and Licensing Regulations

Principals, OVCs and Leaders should have a basic understanding of where and when the provision of adventurous activities is legally regulated. An outline of what constitutes an **Adventurous Activity** is given in **Figure 2**.

The Activity Centre (Young Persons Safety) Act (1995) established the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations and the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA), initially responsible to the DfE. The scheme is now the direct responsibility of HSE and operated through the Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS).

Leaders should be aware that the AALA licence is an assurance of safety. It does not accredit educational or activity quality.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: [AALA Licensing](#)

It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of the nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes that are now available, thus reducing bureaucracy.

Examples of such schemes include:

- The LOtC Quality Badge
- Adventuremark

The Greenwood Academies Trust takes the view that where a provider holds one of the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances, if not establishments should use the OV2 form as part of the checking process.

- Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme – where a provider is delivering activities covered by the scheme they **MUST** hold a license.

For further guidance refer to [Using external providers and facilities](#)

Additional guidance on undertaking ‘Adventurous Activities’ is outlined in GAT ‘Guidance on Visits, Planning and Adventure Activities’, **found in the resources section of EVOLVE, in the Policies and Guidance Document folder.**

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document [Adventure Activities](#)

17. First Aid

For guidance on First Aid refer to Trust guidance on First Aid provision GI 33, found in the GAT Hub Health and Safety section.

Academies should already have in place a risk assessment which determines their first aid provision on site. Off-site provision should simply be an extension of this.

The determination of the appropriate requirements should take into account:

- The nature of the activity.
- The nature of the group e.g. any underlying medical issues with pupils or staff, staff pupils ratio etc
- The likely injuries associated with the activity.
- The extent to which the group will be isolated from the support of the emergency services (both in terms of distance, response time, reliability of mobile phone signal).

Qualified first-aiders may not be necessary for all off-site activities and visits, such as some category A visits, and if this is the case a specific risk assessment **must** be undertaken and attached to the EVOLVE form for that visit. However, a basic level of first aid support must be available at all times, this could be someone who previously held a first aid qualification; someone who is confident and competent to give basic first aid due to experience, or access to nearby first aid support or external first aiders including the emergency services. If suitably qualified first aiders are attending a visit a specific risk assessment will not be necessary and the assessment will be part of the overall generic risk assessment for the visit.

18. Competence to Lead

To be deemed competent, a GAT Visit/Activity Leader, or Assistant Leader must be able to demonstrate *the ability to operate to the current standards of recognised good practice for that role.*

All staff and helpers must be competent to carry out their defined roles and responsibilities. OEAP National Guidance sets a clear standard to which GAT leaders must work. The guidance states:

“a competent Visit /Activity Leader (or an Assistant Leader where they may take sole responsibility for a sub-group) requires:

- Knowledge and understanding of their employer’s guidance supported by establishment-led training. It is good practice for employers to provide formal and accredited training to support their guidance e.g. OVC Training, Visit Leader Training. Such training may be a requirement prescribed by some employers
- Knowledge and understanding of establishment procedures supported by a structured induction process specified by the establishment
- Knowledge and understanding of the group, the staff, the activity and the venue
- Appropriate experience
- In some circumstances (e.g. first aid, adventurous activities) a formally accredited qualification”

Staff participating in off-site activities and visits must be aware of the extent of their duty of care and should only be given such responsibilities as are in keeping with the above guidance. It is particularly important that careful consideration of competence issues is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. Academies should view the original documents and certificates when verifying leader’s qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.

Further guidance on a range of adventurous and higher risk activities such as swimming and the use of pools, Farm visits, DofE etc can be found in the GAT ‘**Guidance on Visits, Planning and Adventure Activities**’ found in the **Resources section of EVOLVE. Particular note of this guidance must be made when GAT staff are leading Adventurous Activities.**

Where a Volunteer Helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship with a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader’s plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the Risk-Benefit assessment.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: “[Good Practice Basics](#)”

Assessment of Competence

OEAP National Guidance provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competence.

The OVC and/or Principal must consider the following when assessing the competence of a member of staff to lead a visit:

- a) What experience has the leader in leading or accompanying similar or other visits? (Check Visit History on EVOLVE)
- b) Is the leader competent in planning and managing visits (has s/he completed Visit Leader Training?)
- c) What are the leader’s reasons for undertaking the visit?
- d) Is the leader an employee of the Academy?
- e) Does the leader have the ability to manage the pastoral welfare of participants?
- f) Does the leader exhibit sound decision-making abilities?
- g) What experience has the leader of the participants he/she intends to supervise?
- h) What experience has the leader of the environment and geographical area chosen?
- i) Does the leader possess appropriate qualifications?
- j) If appropriate, what is the leader’s personal level of skill in the activity and fitness level?
- k) If leading adventurous activities, has the leader been ‘approved’ by the GAT?
- l) Is the leader aware of all relevant guidelines and able to act on these?

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: [Assessment of Activity and Visit Leader Competence](#) and [Assessment of Competence](#)

19. Requirement to Ensure Effective Supervision

In general terms, the Law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is “effective”. However, as an exception to the above, Ofsted and DfE guidance prescribe ratios for Early Years, see [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)

Effective supervision should be determined by proper consideration of:

- age (including the developmental age) of the group
- gender issues, such as mix of accompanying staff
- ability of the group (including special learning needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc)
- nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions)
- staff competence

A visit must not go ahead where either the visit leader, OVC, or Principal is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision exists.

Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group.

Particular consideration should be given to the additional implications that may arise if staff are to be accompanied by family members (or partners) on visits.

Children of group leaders and other supervising staff

There are a number of issues of concern if staff propose to take their own children on a visit, for example:

- the child may not be insured
- staff may be distracted by dealing with their own children, particularly if they are tired or unwell and this may compromise their ability to carry out their responsibilities for the rest of the group effectively
- there may be additional costs incurred, which should be met by the staff member
- Is the child physically able and of a similar age to the group if taking part in activities?

Principals and OVCs should review the risk assessment to consider whether the presence of a supervisor’s child will require these assessments to be modified. **Staff taking their own children on a visit should not be included in the calculation of the overall staff ratio i.e. there must be sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced staff to safely manage the group without them if necessary.**

The Principals must specifically check if insurance cover is in place for the child/children concerned.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance documents: [Group Management and Supervision](#) , [Ratios and Effective Supervision](#) , [Vetting and CRB Checks](#)

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, staff must check pupils regularly. All staff must carry lists of pupils at all times. Pupils, particularly in years 1-3, must be identifiable and known to the person supervising them.

20. Pupils with Medical Needs

Additional safety measures will need to be taken during the visit for pupils with pre-existing medical conditions. Arrangements for taking medication and ensuring sufficient supplies for residential visits may be required.

All staff must be fully aware of pupil's and staff medical needs and any procedures to be followed in the event of a medical emergency. Summary sheets must be held by all staff containing details of each pupil's needs.

If a pupil's safety cannot be guaranteed an individual risk assessment should be completed and the pupil may need to be withdrawn from the visit.

The Principal's decision is final in this matter.

Parental information on the following must be obtained:

- current medical conditions
- emergency contact details
- GP's name, address and phone number
- written details of any medication required
- parental permission for pupil self-administration or agreement for staff member to administer
- information on allergies or phobias
- special dietary requirements
- toileting difficulties

If the staff member is concerned about whether they can provide for a pupil's safety, or the safety of other pupils on the visit, they must discuss this with the Principal. The Principal or a delegated representative will discuss this with parents and the school health service or the pupil's GP.

Additional guidance on 'Insurance cover and medical condition, can **be found in the resources section of EVOLVE, in the Policies and Guidance Document folder.**

21. Inclusion

Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion. If a visit needs to cater for young people with special needs, every *reasonable* effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

Establishments should take all *reasonably practicable* measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion should be promoted and addressed for all visits and reflected in establishment policy, thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- an entitlement to participate
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- integration through participation with peers

Principals, Curriculum Planners, OVCs and Visit Leaders should be aware of the extent to which Inclusion is or is not a legal issue.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to:

- treat a disabled young person less favourably
- fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: [Special educational needs and disability](#)

22. Travel and Transport

Parents should be informed as to the mode of transport being provided for an educational visit.

23. Travel by Coach, Minibus and Private Car

Arrangements for booking coaches must be done via the Academy finance team.

Seat belts must be provided and it is GAT policy that these must be worn whilst travelling on a school visit. Staff must check before the vehicle is in motion and during the journey that belts are fastened and remind pupils that these must be worn throughout the journey.

See GAT Generic Risk assessments for Travel by Coach, Minibus and Private Car found in the Resources section of EVOLVE.

24. On Foot

Pupils should walk in controlled groups. One member of staff should be at the front in control of the group, another at the back or aware of any individuals who are lagging behind. The degree of control will depend upon the nature of the group (age, ability) and the location.

For further information please see the GAT Generic risk assessment on Travelling by Foot or Walking found in the Resources section of EVOLVE.

25. Briefing for Pupils Prior to the Visit

It is good practice to involve pupils in the preparation and planning of any visit and take an active part in the risk management process.

As part of their preparation for the visit, pupils should be made aware of the educational benefits of the visit and the risks involved.

Prior to the visit, the pupils will be made aware of the standards expected of them (Code of Conduct), this will be appropriate for the age group attending the visit.

The visit leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks
- follow all instructions given by any staff or supervisor
- be sensitive to people in the local environment
- watch for anything which might hurt or threaten themselves or anyone else in the group and advise the visit leader or teacher.

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or the group may be withdrawn from the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways where possible. The Principal's decision will be final in this matter.

26. Medication

Refer to the **GAT Policy on the Administration of Medicines – GI 90**, found in **GAT Hub Health and Safety** section.

For further advice please refer to OEAP National Guidance: [Medication](#)

27. Accidents and Incidents

All accidents and incidents taking place during school visits and journeys must be reported and recorded in accordance with the Academy Health and Safety Policy. Accidents and incidents will be reviewed to identify learning points which will be shared, as appropriate, with others.

28. Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a visit or an offsite activity. If an accident occurs the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation
- Safeguard the remaining members of the party
- Attend to the casualty(ies)
- Inform the emergency services
- Inform the SLT contact

The Academy's Critical Incident and Continuity Management Plan (the 'Red Book') gives further advice on dealing with accidents and emergencies.

For minor injuries, the visit leader/supervisor should:

- Arrange for the visit first aider/s to give appropriate assistance
- Phone the Principal or SLT member so they can inform the parent/carer of the injury
- Fill in an accident form on return to the Academy

For injuries which could have serious implications the visit leader/supervisor should:

- Arrange for the visit first aider/s to give appropriate assistance
- Call for an ambulance
- If an ambulance is called and you need to go to hospital with the injured pupil try to find out which hospital so that you can inform the SLT contact who will in turn inform the parent/carer (do not call the parent/carer yourself)
- Phone the SLT contact – mobile numbers will be given to the visit leader
- Arrange for a member of staff to remain at the hospital with the pupil until an SLT member arrives
- The visit leader must write a full written account of events ASAP with photographs of the scene etc. if safe and possible to do so
- Complete an accident report form on return to the Academy

The Principal/SLT member will take responsibility for:

- Phoning the parent/carer – the visit leader/supervisor should not make this call
- Going to the hospital to be with the injured pupil and taking over the responsibility from the visit leader/supervisor. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to remain with the pupil at the hospital until the Principal/SLT member arrives

- This information will help if there is an investigation and/or insurance claim

The Value and Evaluation of Outdoor Learning

The Ofsted report “[Learning Outside the Classroom – How Far Should You Go?](#)” (October 2008) makes statements in the strongest terms to support the value of Outdoor Learning, including the fact that it raises achievement. Principals, OVCs and Visit Leaders are strongly recommended to familiarise themselves with the main content of this report.

However, it also highlights the finding that *even where LotC is highly valued and provided to a high standard, it is rarely evaluated with sufficient rigor* – i.e. in the way that classroom learning is evaluated – and a methodology to address this is provided within the OEAP National Guidance document:

OEAP NG document: [Learning outside and off-site visits: self evaluation using the Ofsted framework](#)“

FIGURE 1

CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITY AND LEVELS OF APPROVAL

CATEGORY	LEVEL OF APPROVAL	ACTIVITY	ENVIRONMENT / LOCATION
A	OVC and PRINCIPAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports fixtures, within the city/ county • School Swimming – formal teaching in life-guarded pools • Regular visits to libraries, places of worship, study supp centres, local parks and open spaces, local shops etc • Fieldwork in environments with no technical hazards (Lo nature reserves, woods and parkland) • Visits to local/city museums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local parks, residential areas and shopping areas
B	OVC and PRINCIPAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Day Visits to museums, attractions and parks so distance from the Academy. (Visitor attractions, historic site theatre, cinema, farm visits etc) • Theme Parks and other tourist attractions • Seaside resorts • Zoos • Ice skating • Swimming in public, lifeguarded, pools • Walking in 'normal' country • London and other large cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks in 'non-remote' country Non-remote Country – enclosed farmland, fields, land forest – not moorland, mountain (above 600 and/or where it is possible to be more than 30 mins 2.5km from a road or refuge • 'Water Margin' activity
C	OVC, PRINCIPAL AND GAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any visit/activity involving a Residential (overnight stay) element including Camping and 'school sleep overs' • Any visit abroad • Any visit involving 'adventurous activities', led either by Centre, an outside provider or staff member (See Figure 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits to hazardous environments • Overseas Expeditions • Any water-based activity • Any activity in winter mountain conditions • Open Country/Remote terrain more than 30mins from a road (above 600m) • Near cliffs or steep terrain • Areas subject to extremes of weather or environmental change • Swimming in non-lifeguarded pools or open water

FIGURE 2

DEFINITION OF ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES – ALL REQUIRE GAT APPROVAL ON EVOLVE

Adventurous Activities covered by AALA Licensing

Rock Climbing Abseiling Ice Climbing Gorge Walking Ghyll Scrambling Sea Level Traversing	Canoeing Kayaking Dragon Boating Wave Skiing White-water Rafting Improvised Rafting Sailing Sailboarding Kite surfing Use of powered craft boats Windsurfing	Hillwalking – in ‘open country’ Mountaineering Fell Running Pony Trekking Off Road Cycling Off-piste Skiing	Pot-holing Mine Exploration Caving
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Adventurous Activities NOT covered by AALA Licensing

Quadbiking Go-Karts Horse Riding	Archery Rifle Shooting Fencing	Orienteering in ‘remote terrain’ Expeditions in ‘remote terrain’ Fieldwork in ‘remote terrain and in water.’	Climbing Walls High Ropes Courses Dry Slope Skiing Grass Skiing Water Skiing Snorkeling Scuba Diving
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These are not exhaustive lists. If you are in doubt about the level of activity you are undertaking, contact the GAT Outdoor Education Adviser: Martin Smith, for further advice: martin.smith@greenwoodacademies.org

Please inform the GAT Outdoor Education Adviser if you intend taking part in the following activities:

- **Paint Balling**
- **Air Sports – paragliding, parascending, gliding, parachuting**
- **Inform the Outdoor Adviser if you are planning to undertake activities using high ropes course**

