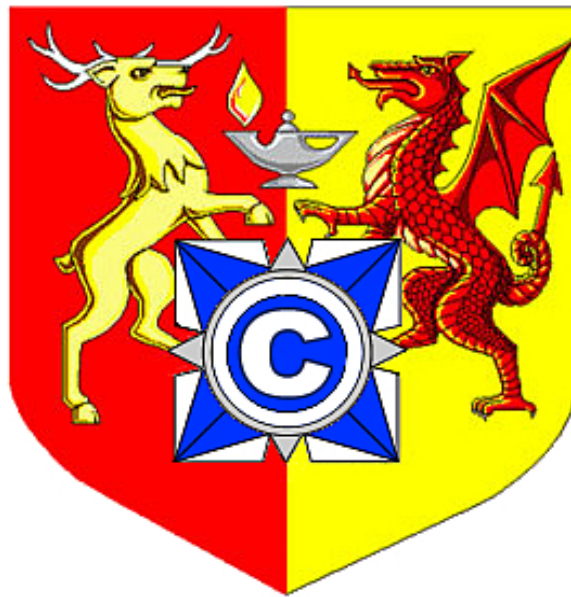


Cantonian High School Ysgol Uwchradd Cantonian



Educational Visits Policy for all off-site activities

September 2009

"Cantonian celebrates diversity and is committed to working towards equality regardless of race, age, gender, faith, sexual orientation, language or disability. It strives to create an inclusive culture in which every individual, regardless of ability and background, is enabled to participate and is valued as a member of the school community. We therefore promote positive approaches to difference and foster respect for people of all cultural backgrounds. The school complies with the Equalities Act 2010 and references to older legislation in school policies will be amended to reflect this as and when they are renewed"

All policies are available on request in large print format or translated into Welsh or community language

This policy was adopted by Governors on 18 November 2009

Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities provide children and young people with life-enhancing experiences which can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;
- promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

The school's educational visits co-ordinator will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school, with an appropriate level of experience and training.

The school's educational visits co-ordinator, will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits. S/he will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed by competent trained staff;
- support the Headteacher and governing body in their decisions;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example a swimming facility).

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LEA (and available from the school's educational visits co-ordinator). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LEA's instructions.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the school's educational visits co-ordinator and Headteacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.

Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the school's educational visits co-ordinator will inform the LEA at least 28 days before the visit takes place and the Headteacher will notify the governing body.

It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

Competent trained staff (usually the group leader) must carry out a comprehensive risk assessment, before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks that might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations and follow LEA procedures:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?
- Alternative arrangements or “Plan B” if the risks change and activities cannot be completed

If appropriate, staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments should be considered to ascertain if they are of an appropriate standard and can be adopted.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

- For local visits 1 : 15-20
- For residential visits 1 : 10-15
- For visits abroad 1 : 10

Male and female staff is desirable if a mixed group of pupils. Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are *minimum* requirements, and may *not* provide adequate supervision in all cases. In normal circumstances at least 50% of the adult numbers should be employees of the school. The balance could be made up of parent or governor volunteers approved by the school’s educational visits co-ordinator or Headteacher.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- CRB checks of the driver;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures.

The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to police checks, necessary if adult helper is to be with a group of children out of sight of a member of staff.

A copy of the completed risk assessment should be given to the school’s educational visits coordinator and all adults supervising the trip.

A copy of the Risk Assessment form for Off-Site Activities and School Visits is available in Appendix 1. A more detailed risk assessment, following LEA procedures, is required if the trip is residential, abroad or involves high-risk activities, e.g. climbing or canoeing. Generic risk assessments are available for cross-reference for many activities. Control measures must always be put in place to reduce the risks to the lowest practicable. Should any Assessment fall into the Category of high risk or above then the trip must not take place unless risks can be further reduced. Any combined water / rock activities must be assumed “high risk”.

It is important that the risk assessment is communicated and understood by everyone involved in the trip before it takes place. This includes risks, control measures, emergency arrangements and contingency plans.

Dynamic risk assessments may be required during the visit if changes occur e.g. weather, illness or an unforeseen hazard.

On completion of the visit the risk assessment must be reviewed and any learning points and recommendations for improved control measures documented and communicated to relevant staff.

Any accidents that occur to employees, volunteers or pupils during the visit must be investigated and recorded following normal school and LEA Accident Reporting procedures.

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs for supply cover
- further costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for.

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy to insist that seatbelts be worn by all those participating in the visit.

Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks (see 5.2).

We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts.

The school makes a charge to parents. The charge covers the expenses of the journey only; we do not make any profit from this.

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary except in the case of residential visits). This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Bursar to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

Before a party leaves school the school attendance office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the school's educational visits co-ordinator or Headteacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements can be obtained from the *All Wales Guidance on Education Visits* document held by the school's Visits Co-ordinator.

Children whose medical/health complaints cause particular concern will be referred to the LEA for advice.

Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:

- *All Wales Guidance on Education Visits*
- *LA Planning and approval procedures for Educational Visits*

They must consult LEA documentation detailing procedures and requirements, including guidance on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation, and must draw up a Visit Plan which records in writing (including standard forms where appropriate) the arrangements that have been made. A school pack is available from the school's Educational Visits Co-ordinator

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

- risk assessment;
- applications for approval of visit;
- general information;
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- travel schedule;
- accommodation plan (if applicable);
- full plan of activities;
- contingency plan details
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;
- guidance for party leaders;
- guidance for the emergency contact and Headteacher;
- medical questionnaire returns;
- first-aid provision;
- accident report forms.

This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every two years or before if necessary.

Appendix 2: Definition of demanding environments

Important note: classification of locations is subjective. Visit leaders who are unsure of whether or not a location requires LA approval can seek clarification from their Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

Location	Definition	Level of approval required
Normal countryside	<p>Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • which are close to vehicle access (i.e. less than 30 minutes walking time for any group member to the nearest road from which the group could be evacuated by vehicle) and • where the environment does not have any of the features of a ‘demanding environment’ listed below. 	Visits here do not require LA approval
Demanding environments	<p>Areas where there is significant risk to the group from one or more of the following factors;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hazardous terrain (e.g. cliffs, very steep slopes etc.); • remoteness (i.e. more than 30 minutes walking time from the nearest normal vehicle access point from which the group could be evacuated); • difficult escape (i.e. places where the group could be trapped and/or where they would need specialist help to escape); • exposure to severe weather (i.e. open to the weather and no easily accessible shelter within 30 minutes walking time for any of the group); • open areas without clear boundaries where the group might stray into hazardous or remote terrain in poor visibility; • fast flowing water, deep water, or water with strong currents (including tidal flow) where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> the group will be close to the water and there is a significant risk of someone falling in; <input type="checkbox"/> the group will be entering the water. 	Visits here do require LA approval (except activities run by the LA’s Outdoor Education Centres – The Storey Arms OEC, Llanishen Sailing Centre, Cardiff Bay Water Activity Centre, Learning Outdoors, Cardiff Outdoor Activity Team).

Appendix 3: Adventure activities

Important note: This list is not exhaustive. Any visit leader unsure of whether or not an activity should be classified as an adventure activity should seek the advice of their Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

Land Based Activities	Water Based Activities
Rock climbing/abseiling including climbing walls	Kayaking and canoeing
Mountaineering	Sailing and windsurfing
Hill walking	White water rafting
Ice climbing	Waterskiing
Gorge or coastal scrambling/sea cliff traversing/coasteering	Snorkel and aqualung diving
Underground exploration – cave or mine	All forms of boating (excluding commercial transport)
Skiing (snow/dry slope)	Improvised rafting
Air activities (except commercial flights)	Kite surfing
Horse riding and pony trekking	Surfing and body boarding
High ropes courses	Dragon boating
Quad biking/ATV's	Wave skiing
Orienteering	Jet skiing/personal water craft
Mountain biking	
Any activity (including camping, fieldwork and non-adventure activities) taking place in demanding environments as defined in Table 2 above	

Appendix 4: Procedures and Protocols

1 Internal approval – all visits

Visit leaders should seek approval from their EVC for any off-site visit.

Routine visits will be given blanket approval by the EVC on a termly, annual or other periodic basis (see 2 below).

One-off or occasional visits or visits that require LA approval or notification require EVC approval for each visit (unless blanket LA approval has been given). Visit leaders should submit trips pack A to the EVC for these visits.

2 Blanket approval

Blanket approval may be given:

- by Headteacher/EVC for routine visits that do not require LA approval;
- by the LEA for those staff who have gained LA leader approval (see 3 below).

For visits that have been given blanket approval, the visit leader should fill in relevant sections of *Routine visits and visits given blanket approval: record sheet* prior to any visit in order to seek approval from the EVC and leave a copy of it with the school/centre emergency contact(s) with details of the venue, activity, group and start/finish times for **each** visit.

3 LEA leader approval

Who needs LEA leader approval?

LEA or school employees who wish to lead in any of the environments or activities for which LEA approval is required must first be confirmed as technically competent to lead by the Outdoor Education Adviser.

Visit leaders seeking LEA leader approval must complete relevant sections of Form 6 and submit it to their EVC. If the EVC supports the application, they will sign it and send the completed form to the Outdoor Education Adviser for LEA approval.

Depending on depth of experience and technical skill, leaders may be given written approval to lead either:

- the activity/activities at specific, named venue(s) at any time for the duration of the approval period;
- or:
- the activity/activities at all venues that are within the remit of their competence at any time for the duration of the approval period.

LEA approval will be given if the following conditions are met:

- The Head/EVC supports the employee's LEA leader approval application and verifies that the employee is generally competent (other than technical competence) to manage a group of young people involved in this type of activity;
- There is evidence of appropriate induction and personal experience of the activity;

Plus, for activities that fall under the remit of a National Governing Body leadership award, the leader must hold either:

- the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) leadership award (NGB leadership awards for activities are set out in Annex 3 of the *All Wales guidance for Educational Visits*);

Or:

- a written and signed statement of competence by an appropriate technical adviser verifying that the leader has the relevant technical and group management skills in the activity.

To arrange technical adviser approval the EVC must identify an appropriate technical adviser who is willing to make a signed statement of competence for the visit leader.

Technical adviser approval is normally given only if the following conditions are met:

- The leader has completed a training course in the relevant NGB leadership award where one exists (or has undergone other appropriate training)
- The technical adviser has made a practical assessment of the leader and can confirm that they are operating at the standard of the relevant NGB leadership award or at a suitable level for a site-specific approval to be given.

Appropriate levels of technical adviser for different activities and levels of activity are given in Annex 3 of the *All Wales guidance for Educational Visits*. If the intended activity is not listed in Annex 3, the Outdoor Education Adviser may be able to advise on appropriate level of technical adviser.

4 Visits that require LEA approval/notification other than Duke of Edinburgh's Award expedition groups

Following approval by the Head/EVC, LA approval/notification must be arranged by the EVC for any visit that requires LA approval or notification. LA approval/notification can be arranged by completing and sending:

- Completed trips pack;
- LEA approval / notification form
- any other required supporting documents as detailed in trips pack

to arrive with the Outdoor Education Adviser 2 **at least 28 days before** the visit/visits.

5 LEA approval: Duke of Edinburgh's Award expedition groups only

Following approval by the Head/EVC, LA approval/notification must be arranged by completing and sending:

- Completed trips pack;
- LA approval form
- any other required supporting documents as detailed in trips pack;

to arrive with the LEA Duke of Edinburgh Award Officer at the address given on form 2 **at least 28 days before** the expedition.

6 Overseas expeditions organised through an independent provider

Approval procedures for overseas expeditions organised through an independent provider are set out in Annex 10 of the all Wales guidance for Educational Visits. These must be applied in full by any school/centre wishing to arrange such a visit. Please note that outline approval must be sought from the LEA **at least 12 months before** the visit using Form OE1.

7 LEA approval decisions

Confirmation of approval decision will be sent to the EVC/Head by e-mail, fax or letter. **Visits that require LEA approval must not proceed until this approval has been given.**

Where further information or elements of the *All Wales guidance for Educational Visits* have not been met, approval will be withheld until these conditions are met. Confirmation of this decision will be sent to the EVC/Head by e-mail.

8 Record keeping

Schools/centres should retain:

- Trips packs (and any attachments required in this form) for one-off or occasional visits or
- Record sheets for regular or blanket-approved visits.

In addition, schools/centres should archive in the school/centre records a copy of their:

- Educational visits policy – dated so that the version current at the time of any visit can be traced;
- standard risk management procedures dated as current at the time of the visit;
- records of staff competence and training (perhaps as part of the appraisal /performance management records).

This information should be kept for 5 years after which it may be destroyed.

If there has been an accident/incident on a visit, schools/centres must ensure that the EA is notified according to LA procedures and that the LA is sent the relevant planning form for the visit along with the completed incident forms. The LEA will keep accident/incident records until the young person reaches age 21 (or for 3 years in the case of an adult). Schools/centres therefore **do not** need to retain records of accident/incidents reported to the LEA unless they wish to do so for their own purposes.

If a visit leader or school/centre receives notification of a claim they should not respond directly but should pass the details to the LEA claims manager/insurance section.

9 Monitoring

Internal monitoring by the Head/EVC

The Head/EVC must monitor, from time to time, for compliance with LA guidance by visit leaders within the school/centre.

Monitoring by the Head/EVC should include:

- scrutiny of standards of visit planning and organisation as part of the visit approval process;
- occasional observation of visit leadership.

Following any observation of visit leadership it is good practice to provide the visit leader with verbal and written feedback and recommendations for further training if necessary. A copy of the observation report should be given to the visit leader and another copy kept on file by the school/centre.

Monitoring by the LEA

The LEA will monitor schools/centres on a 5 year cycle for compliance with LA guidance by all educational establishments. The LEA will contact EVCs to notify them of an upcoming monitoring visit.

10 Review

Feedback from monitoring will be used to review procedures in order to ensure that they meet the standards expected for off site visit organisation and leadership and to identify further training needs for visit leaders and/or EVCs.

Appendix 7: Visit Planning Checklist

This checklist is intended for use as an aide-mémoire for the main elements of visit organisation as set out in the *All Wales guidance for Educational Visits*.

Purpose of visit

- What are the aims of the visit?

Where and when do you intend to go?

- Are venue, activities and time of year appropriate to aims and age/ability of group?
- Have you planned alternative activities (plan B) in case you need to abandon your planned programme for any reason?
- Does the visit involve the use of an independent provider?
- If yes, has this provider satisfactorily completed and returned the Independent Provider Questionnaire (Form 5) before you make any booking?

Have you gained approval from your EVC prior to making any financial commitment?

Risk management

- Have you carried out an exploratory visit?
- What are the main hazards (including for any plan B)?
- Are the main hazards covered by the school/centre risk management procedures for this type of activity/visit?
- If there are additional hazards and safety measures above and beyond the risk management procedures, have you recorded these?
- Have you made other leaders and young people aware of hazards and safety measures?

Overseas visits

- Have you notified the LEA at least 28 days before the visit

Does your visit involve:

- Adventure activities?
- Visits to demanding environments?
- If so, have you gained LEA approval?

Staffing

- Are adequate staffing numbers available, taking into account any special needs?
- Have you checked the advice on typical young person: staff ratios in Annex 2 of the *All Wales guidance for Educational Visits*?
- Have other staff/helpers been briefed on their roles on the visit?
- If school staff are planning to lead activities which require LEA approval, have they obtained LEA leader approval?
- Are voluntary helpers being used? Are they appropriate? Are they insured, by being entered on the school/centre list of voluntary helpers? Are they aware of their responsibilities?
- Is a police check necessary for your helpers under the Child Protection Act?

Finance

- Is a charge or voluntary contribution involved? If so, have you made sure that this conforms to the Education Reform Act charging regulations?
- Are you using a commercial operator or company? Is there financial security e.g. ABTA/ATOL?
- If relevant, does the visit conform to Package Travel regulations?

Insurance

- Is personal insurance cover for young people/staff provided?
- Have you checked any cover automatically provided by, say, a tour company?
- Are parents aware of the level of insurance provided?

Parent/carer information and consent

- Have you provided parents/carers with full information regarding the visit and all planned activities (including plan B activities) and levels of supervision?
- Have you met with parents/carers?
- Have they given appropriate written consent?
- Have you agreed a code of conduct for the visit with young people and parents/guardians?
- Are they aware of the consequences of any misbehaviour by their child?

Special Needs

- Have you taken account of any special needs of young people/staff?
- Have you made all staff (including independent providers) aware of these special needs if relevant?

Programme

- Does your programme include alternatives (plan B) in case the original programme needs to be abandoned for any reason?
- Have you planned 'Down-time' arrangements?
- Have you arranged adequate supervision at all times? Duty rota for staff?

Clothing and Equipment

- Are clothing and equipment appropriate to the activities and location?
- Has young peoples' essential clothing been checked?

Medical arrangements

- Do you have a record of relevant medical information of all the young people and staff?
- Have you made appropriate medical arrangements, including first aid?
- Are there any special potential health hazards associated with the site?
- Are all staff involved aware of the above?

Accommodation

- Suitability? Pre-visit check?
- Fire precautions and certification? Fire drill?
- Young people security?
- Exclusive use or shared? Compatibility of other groups if present?

Transport

- Driver suitability?
- Drivers' hours?
- LEA minibus regulations?
- Insurance?
- Adequate stops, eating and care arrangements en route?

Visits Overseas

- Passports?
- Health/medical arrangements in place?
- Cultural issues?

Emergency procedures, contacts and communication

- Have you planned what to do in the event of an emergency during the visit?
- Have you established appropriate emergency contacts (24 hrs) with your base establishment and parents/carers?
- Do you know how to contact the LEA emergency contact if you need to?
- Are you aware of establishment/LEA emergency procedures?

Mobile phones

- Have you agreed a mobile phone use policy with parents and young people?

Post-visit arrangements

- Complete evaluation of the visit
- Review risk management procedures and update if necessary – involve EVC.
- Outstanding invoices paid
- Borrowed equipment returned
- Displays
- Report to Governors
- Thank you letters
- Article with photographs to the local media
- Article with photographs for the school magazine