



**Orion**  
Academy

## Orion Academy Educational Visits Policy

<b>Written</b>	<b>March 2025</b>
<b>Review date</b>	<b>July 2026</b>

Educational Visits Coordinators (EVC)	Hannah Shuker: Co Head teacher
	Luke Franklin: School business manager
Overall Responsibility	Jess Shakespeare: Co Head teacher

## Introduction

At Orion Academy the Rapid Improvement Board (RIB) and staff believe that well planned educational visits are an essential part of the school's ethos, values, and core curriculum. Visits provide students with rich learning experiences that enhance their personal, social, and academic development. They support the development of essential life skills and promote well-being, resilience, and self-confidence.

The Orion Academy has a trained Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) who advises the Head Teacher and Group Leaders. Our EVC's are Hannah Shuker, Co. Head teacher and Luke Franklin, School Business Manager. .

## Safeguarding

All staff must follow the school's **Safeguarding Policy** during educational visits, ensuring the safety and well-being of all students at all times. Staff must be aware of safeguarding procedures, including the use of mobile phones, appropriate conduct, and dealing with emergencies.

## Rationale

Educational visits at Orion Academy are designed to:

- Enrich and extend the curriculum by providing first-hand learning experiences.
- Support the development of skills such as teamwork, independence, and problem-solving.
- Encourage the exploration and understanding of the wider community.
- Inspire a love for learning and foster curiosity about the world around us.
- Reinforce our school values of happiness, positivity, nurture, high expectations, understanding, and consistency.

## Types of Educational Visits

There are three types of visits offered at Orion Academy

### 1. Routine Visits

- These are visits within a **15-mile radius** of the school and include local but are not limited to
  - Local museums, parks and libraries
  - Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

- Youlbury
  - Hill End
  - Oxford City Football Club
  - Careers Fairs
  - Ernest Cook
- These visits are considered part of the core curriculum offer and are integral to delivering high-quality learning experiences.
  - Parental consent for these routine visits is obtained when a student joins the school and is updated and consent sought at the beginning of each academic year.
  - Risk assessments for these visits will be completed and signed by the EVC, Headteacher, the specific trip lead and all staff on the trip.
  - Routine visits all take place during the school day.

## **2. Adventurous Visits**

- These visits involve activities that are considered higher risk, such as rock climbing, sailing, or hiking.
- Additional parental consent will be sought for each visit, and a detailed risk assessment will be completed and signed by the EVC, Headteacher, and staff on the trip.

## **3. Residential Visits**

- These visits provide opportunities for students to experience extended stays away from home, promoting personal growth, independence, and team-building skills.
- Specific parental consent will be obtained for all residential visits, and a comprehensive risk assessment will be completed and signed by the EVC, Headteacher, and staff on the trip.

## **Planning and Preparation**

Whatever the nature of the visit, it is essential that careful planning takes place well in advance of the trip. The responsibility for planning and preparation lies with the Group Leader, who should consult the EVC at an early stage. The EVC will consider the details, make recommendations to the Group Leader if adjustments are required, and will advise the Head Teacher as to whether permission for the visit should be granted.

The Group Leader may need to undertake an exploratory visit to check that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the visit, and to assess potential areas of risk. The Group Leader also needs to be satisfied that the facilities and equipment at the venue are of a high standard, and that the educational objectives can be achieved. If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, then the Group Leader should contact the venue to discuss the visit.

It is the Group Leader's responsibility to ensure that the venue is able to cater for the special needs of the participating pupils, and that host staff are aware of any special arrangements that may need to be made.

If appropriate, the Group Leader should meet with staff in advance of the visit to discuss and sign risk assessments and to agree pupil transport arrangements.

The following aspects **must** be considered:

- Risk assessment
- Parent/carer communication
- First Aid
- Medical Needs
- Supervision
- If special arrangements need to be made – e.g. if the visit is high risk or residential
- Preparation of pupils
- Plan B/contingency plan
- Health and safety
- Funding
- Equal Opportunities

### **Risk Assessment**

Group Leaders must complete a generic Risk Assessment form (that should include risks associated with students with social, emotional and mental health needs accessing the activity) for every visit, regardless of its nature, unless the visit is a repeated and regular activity. In the case of regular visits, the Risk Assessment form can be used for each occasion, but must be revised should any new information need to be considered or any details change. The Generic Risk Assessment should be provided 10 working days before the trip (20 working days for residential/overseas visits). Information about local hazards and how these associated risks should be controlled (e.g. specified road crossing places) should be outlined in the generic risk assessment.

The aim of the Risk Assessment form is to ensure that measures are in place so that any risks are low or negligible. Individual pupil Risk Assessments will be completed for students who require additional mitigating factors to support them in taking part in the activity including but not limited to, new to the school, high level behaviours and medical needs.. The Individual Risk Assessment will ensure that staff ratios and other measures are considered to reduce any risks posed by the specific needs of pupils. Individual Risk Assessments should be provided 7 working days before the trip (15 working days for residential/overseas visits).

### **Dynamic Risk Assessments**

Staff must conduct **ongoing dynamic risk assessments** throughout the visit to respond to **unexpected hazards or changing conditions**. This includes:

- Regularly reviewing **weather conditions, site safety, and individual student needs**.
- Assessing risks **before each new activity** (e.g., checking terrain before a hike).
- Implementing immediate **safeguarding responses** if student behaviour or medical needs change.

- Logging any **significant incidents** and reporting them to the EVC upon return.
- Having **alternative plans** in case an activity becomes unsafe.

Changes can also occur during a visit, which can put pressure upon the Group Leader to modify or change the activities involved. Group Leaders must be aware that health and safety remains the paramount factor throughout all visits, and should be careful not to make decisions based on peer or pupil pressure.

Group Leaders are authorised to curtail the visit or stop the activity should risk to health and safety to any participant reach a High level.

Equally, if the behaviour of a student is such that it poses an unacceptable risk, the Group Leader should withdraw the student from the activity. On a residential visit, the Group Leader should consult the Head Teacher if he/she believes that the student should be sent home early.

All our generic trip risk assessment forms detail a plan B.

### **Inclusion and SEND Support**

Orion Academy is committed to ensuring inclusivity, enabling all of our students, including those with medical conditions, to participate in educational visits.

- Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate mobility, sensory, communication, behavioural or medical needs.
- Alternative transport, adapted equipment, or additional staff support will be provided where required.
- Risk assessments will be completed for individual students, including medical care plans, behaviour plans, and emergency medication protocols.
- The EVC will review all proposed visits to ensure accessibility and inclusivity.
- Parents will be consulted where significant adjustments are required.

### **Parent/carer communication**

Clear communication with parents and carers is a vital aspect of educational visit planning. Before pupils can be taken off the school site, parents and carers must be informed by the Group Leader of the details of the visit(s) in a letter, which if classed as a category two or three visits will be accompanied by an additional online parental consent form.

The letter (and form if required) should be issued to parents prior to when the visit is scheduled to take place, to allow time for parents to consider the details, contact the school with queries if necessary, and if required return the authorised form.

The letter to parents **must** include the following details:

- Venue
- Date
- Time of departure and return

- Itinerary
- Method of transport
- Proposed activities
- Charging arrangements
- Lunch arrangements – pupils entitled to a free school meal should receive a packed lunch from the school canteen
- Required clothing and equipment
- If any spending money can be taken
- Whether uniform should be worn
- Other requirements such as water bottles, sunscreen, hand sanitizer

If the visit is a regular component of the school curriculum and the logistical arrangements do not change (e.g. a weekly swimming lesson), then parental consent for every visit within the current academic year can be obtained on one consent form.

Pupils cannot participate in visits unless the online consent form has been completed. If unavoidable, parental consent can be accepted in note, letter or email. Verbal consent provided on the telephone is **not** sufficient. The only exception is if the Head Teacher provides the Group Leader with specific permission to take a pupil without a written consent form.

Due to the emphasis placed at The Orion Academy on the acquisition of independence and road safety skills, all parents/carers are asked to give permission on a specific form for their child to participate in local walking visits as and when the opportunity allows. It is the Group Leader's responsibility to check whether pupils have returned this form. This specific form covers walking trips only and does not cover visits involving school transport.

### **Mobile Devices**

Staff will use a school device such as an Iphone or Ipad to capture photographs of the visit. Students will not be allowed to have their mobile device on any school visit.

### **First Aid**

A member of staff with current First Aid training should accompany off site visits where logistically feasible and the First Aider should be accessible and available at all times during the visit. All adults with the group must know how to contact the Emergency Services and have access to a mobile phone. The First Aider should check that there is a fully stocked First Aid box available in the school vehicle before departure.

A First Aid box does not need to be taken on local walking visits, but should be taken on other visits. If any pupil requires emergency medication, this must be taken and a member of staff trained in giving the emergency medication must attend.

All school vehicles should be equipped with First Aid Kits.

### **Medical needs**

The Group Leader must take medical and dietary needs into account when planning a visit. If a pupil is scheduled to take medication during a visit, the medication is the responsibility of the Group Leader whilst off the school. See above section "First Aid" regarding emergency medication.

The Group Leader should brief accompanying adults on pupils' medical needs if appropriate.

All parents are requested to supply information regarding medical and dietary needs on an annual basis. Parents are asked to inform the school if there are any changes to medical or dietary information. The Group Leader should check the medical information held on pupils during the planning and preparatory stage, as this could affect the Risk Assessment.

## **Supervision**

There is no set ratio for staff to pupils, as this varies depending on factors relating to each visit. These include:

- Gender, age and ability of group
- The special needs present within the group
- The nature of the activities to be undertaken
- The location of the visit
- The experience and skills of the adults accompanying the group
- The duration and nature of the journey

However the minimum ratios will be

- Routine visits 3:1
- Adventurous visits 3:1
- Residential visits plus 4:1 a trained first aider

Each visit will be assessed individually.

Accompanying adults must be briefed by the Group Leader regarding their supervisory responsibility and on the need for closer supervision for pupils with particular needs. There should always be sufficient adults on the visit to cope in the event of an emergency. School mobile phones should be taken on each trip. The group leader should ensure that mobile phone numbers are shared to each adult attending the trip.

## **High risk/overseas/residential visits**

Certain categories of visits pose specific risks. For example:

- visits to farms,
- visits to the coast,
- activities which involve deep and running water,
- activities in non controlled environments
- overseas visits
- residential visits

These trips will require particularly careful planning, preparation and risk assessment. Planning must begin well in advance, and permission must be sought through the EVC at least 6 weeks before the visit date.

Group leads for adventurous activities will have relevant qualifications if required

We will ensure that external providers who are delivering the activity will hold nationally recognised certifications(e.g. RYA for sailing <https://www.rya.org.uk/training> )

## **Preparing Pupils**

Providing information to pupils is an important stage in the preparation process. Pupils must have a clear understanding of what the visit will entail and the educational objectives to be gained. Pupils should understand what is expected of them during the visit, and the standards of behaviour required. If there are any identifiable risks, these must be pointed out to pupils and staff by the Group Leader. Pupils should also be informed about the length of journey involved and if any stops are to be made.

If appropriate, pupils should be briefed about what to do if separated from the group and if approached by a stranger.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Educational Visits Coordinator**

The Headteacher will:

- Approve all off site visits

The EVC will:

- Ensure that proposals for educational visits are submitted for Head Teacher approval after the following aspects have been confirmed:
- All proposals for educational visits:
  - have appropriate educational objectives
  - have adequate staff:pupil ratios
  - are adequately staffed, with a first aider and have Team Teach provision if required
  - consider appropriate transport arrangements and ensure that these are booked with the Facilities Manager
  - consider lunch arrangements and ensure that the Receptionist is aware of these
  - comply with Orion Academy's policy on charging for school visits and liaise with the Finance Director if necessary
  - consider the medical, special and welfare needs of pupils and liaise with the Medical Coordinator
  - do not clash with school events and ensure that full details of the visit are entered into the school diary
- Make recommendations regarding authorisation of visits to the Head Teacher accordingly.
- Ensure that Group Leaders are fully competent and qualified to lead and supervise visits
- Support Group Leaders if necessary with parent/carer communication
- Provide inset training to staff on educational visits, policies and procedures
- Keep records of all visits on a centrally stored spreadsheet
- Ensure that all visits comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and that pupils, regardless of disability, have equal access to visits.
- Attend revalidation training as required

- Ensure that Risk Assessments are provided by the Group Leader in a timely manner and in line with guidance.

### **Group Leader**

The group leader must:

- Undertake all aspects of planning and preparation, as detailed above
- Ensure that the visit is authorised by the EVC and Head Teacher
- Provide the school with a registration list of pupils and staff on departure
- Take a copy of consent forms on the visit, so parent contact details are rapidly available if necessary
- Maintain ultimate responsibility for all participants (pupils and staff) on the visit
- Regularly undertake headcounts during visits, and continually re-assess levels of risk
- Assess risks on a continual and dynamic basis
- Work with the EVC to ensure that all deadlines are met

### **Accompanying adults:**

- All school staff have a duty of care to pupils and must undertake the roles and tasks placed upon them.
- Staff must ensure that their actions comply with health and safety and that they do not put themselves or others at risk. Staff must raise any health and safety concerns with the Group Leader immediately.
- Staff must cooperate with the Group Leader and follow instructions accordingly

### **Pupils:**

- must not take unnecessary risks
- must follow the instructions of the Group Leader and accompanying adults
- must dress and behave sensibly and responsibly
- raise any Health and Safety concerns with an adult

### **Emergency Action Plan**

Clear emergency procedures must be followed and detailed on risk assessments:

- Immediate safety measures (first aid, evacuation, vehicle collision)
- Communication process
- Missing students protocol

### **Insurance and External Provider Vetting**

We will ensure that we always have evidence that the appropriate insurance is in place including:

- public liability
- travel insurance

We require all external providers to be pre-approved and provide evidence of;

- qualifications,
- risk assessments,

- insurance,
- safer recruitment processes,
- safeguarding procedures

Where possible we will use accredited providers, eg:

- LOTC, <https://www.lotc.org.uk/providers/lotc-quality-badge-2/>
- AALA <https://aala.hse.gov.uk/aala/>

### **Post-Visit Review and Evaluation**

To ensure continuous improvement, a Post-Visit Review Form must be completed by the Trip Leader within 5 days of the visit. This will include:

- Reflection on safety and risk management: Were any risks underestimated or unexpected issues encountered?
- Student engagement and learning outcomes: Did the visit achieve its intended educational goals?
- Feedback from students, staff, and parents.
- Any incidents or near misses and recommended changes for future trips.  
The EVC will review all post-visit reports to refine future visit planning and risk management.

### **To accompany this policy are the following documents:**

Department for Education's document 'Health and Safety: Advice for Schools':  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilitiesand-duties-for-schools>.

The Health and Safety Executive also sets out expectations in 'Schools Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities':  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf>.

Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) National Guidance  
<https://oeapng.info>