



Ministry  
of Defence

## DCS Directive 3.2.11

### DCS Schools and Settings Outdoor Learning and School Visits

December 24 v4.0

## General

<b>Authorisation</b>	Head DCS
<b>Senior Responsible Owner</b>	DCS AH EducStand DP
<b>Point of Contact</b>	POLRA
<b>Review Date</b>	July 2025
<b>Related Policy/Guidance</b>	The Outdoors Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) National Guidance
	Going Out There: Scottish Framework for Safe Practice in Off-Site Visits
	JSP 375 Management of Health and Safety in Defence
	JSP 800 Defence Movements and Transport policy
	JSP 834 Safeguarding
	2024DIN01-005 Support Available for current and former Staff involved in Legal Proceedings
	DCS Policy Directive 3.2.4: Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
	DCS Policy Directive 3.2.1: Safeguarding

## Introduction

1. Defence Children Services (DCS) Schools and Settings are committed to the benefits of outdoor learning and educational visits. The knowledge and experience gained beyond the classroom can consolidate, enrich, and extend the taught curriculum, particularly in the unique overseas context, providing excellent opportunities to inspire lifelong learning.

## Aim

2. This Policy Directive<sup>1</sup> provides the direction on outdoor learning and School or Setting visits.

## Scope

3. This Policy Directive applies to all DCS Schools and Settings overseas, The Queen Victoria School (QVS) Dunblane will follow Scottish guidance<sup>2</sup> and may make use of this Policy Directive and its associated guidance where it is complementary to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> An EQIA has been conducted and is available on request.

<sup>2</sup> [Going Out There](#), Scottish Framework for safe practice in off-site visits.

## Context

4. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees and non-employees, so far as is reasonably practical. This Act also places duties on individuals to take care for the health and safety of themselves and others. DCS Schools and Settings are to follow the MOD and DCS health and safety policies, to which this Policy Directive is subservient.
5. DCS Schools and Settings should follow the guidance in the OEAP<sup>3</sup> 'Management of Outdoor Learning, Off-site Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom' alongside this Policy Directive.

## Types of outdoor education

6. Outdoor education can take place in several ways such as:
  - a. educational visits (including travel off-site to another location). This can take place wholly or partly during the school day and may extend beyond school hours. This does not include work experience or activity in schools on split sites.
  - b. adventure activities which take place in challenging environments such as orienteering.
  - c. off-site activities which take place away from the School or Setting grounds such as swimming lessons.
  - d. Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) activities that takes place on the School or Setting grounds such as Forest School.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Defence Children Services

7. DCS is responsible for setting overall policy on visits and for monitoring DCS Schools and Settings to ensure they have enough trained staff. DCS also provides support to the Visit Leadership Team, Head Teacher or Setting Manager in the event of a critical incident. Authority for approvals of all categories of visits is delegated to DCS Head Teachers and Settings Managers. In addition, visits to Zone 3 or high-risk places are subject to endorsement by the OEA and DCS AH Cyprus or Rest of World (ROW), Head Teachers and Setting Managers.
8. Head Teachers and Setting Managers are responsible for ensuring that practice in their School or Setting follows the requirements and recommendations of this Policy Directive. They should also have a Visit Policy that makes a formal statement linking their policy to this Policy Directive, as well as setting out any procedures or requirements particular to their School or Setting. Draft guidance and templates for creating a visit policy can be found on the OEAP website.
9. Head Teachers and Setting Managers should be aware that the appointment of an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is critical. All Schools and Settings that undertake

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<sup>3</sup> [Link](#)

educational visits must have a currently validated EVC who meets the criteria set out below. In some cases, it may be more effective for an EVC to be shared between DCS Schools and Settings in close proximity. Proposals to share an EVC require DCS approval by AH Cyprus or AH ROW.

10. For DCS Settings, it is the Setting Manager's responsibility to ensure that any outdoor activity or visit is compliant with 0-3 years standards in DfE Safeguarding policy. They must ensure that adequate and appropriate ratios, health and safety and evaluate the educational value and benefits for children of this age group, ensuring it is age appropriate.
11. Head Teachers and Setting Managers should designate a named person (or themselves) to fulfil the role of EVC. If it is another person, then the Head Teacher or Setting Manager should ensure that enough time is given to them to fulfil the role. The functions of the EVC will default to the Head Teacher or Setting Manager in the absence of any other appointee.
12. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager is responsible for the approval of all categories of visits involving children from their establishment, including medium and high-risk activities as well as residential visits. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager may delegate responsibility for the approval of low-risk visits to a trained EVC.
13. Further detail on roles and responsibilities is available on the OEAP website. Schools and Settings should ensure that they name the persons responsible for each role as detailed below. Volunteers are managed under the school volunteer policy including relevant Disclosure and Barring Service and barred list checks.
  - a. VL
  - b. Assistant Leader
  - c. Volunteers
  - d. EVC
  - e. Head Teacher or Setting Manager
  - f. Governing Body (School Governance Committee)
  - g. Employer

### **Outdoor Education Advisors**

14. DCS employs an external party who acts as OEA to all DCS Schools and Settings. The OEA is responsible for providing advice, guidance, and support for all types of outdoor learning undertaken by DCS Schools and Settings, as well as endorsing all Zone 3 or high-risk activities on behalf of DCS.

### **Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)**

14. The EVC is responsible for:
  - a. ensuring that all activities and visits meet the requirements of this Policy, OEAP guidance and the relevant School or Setting visit policy
  - b. supporting the Head Teacher or Setting Manager with approval of visits and other decisions
  - c. the approval of low-risk visits if delegated by the Head Teacher or Setting Manager

d. supporting the Head Teacher or Setting Manager in ensuring that all members of Visit Leadership Teams are competent, and that all appropriate Visit Leader (VL) training has been successfully undertaken, recorded, and retained on file in accordance with DCS Policy Directive 7.1.2 Records Management

e. ensuring that emergency arrangements are in place

f. ensuring that activities and visits are reviewed and evaluated with a record held on file as Lessons Learned and/or continuous improvement

## Visit Leader

15. The VL has overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of a visit. To ensure accountability and to avoid potential confusion, a single VL should be appointed for each visit. The VL retains a duty of care for the group at all times, unless the responsibility for providing care and supervision has been formally handed over to an appropriately selected third party provider for a specific period. The VL must have good knowledge of the employer and establishment policies and procedures.

16. To ensure a clear audit trail of responsibility allocation, there must be only one designated VL for each visit.

## Other Staff

17. DCS School teachers and Setting staff accompanying educational visits must act in their capacity of DCS employees, whether the visit takes place within or outside normal hours. A second DCS School or Setting employee must be appointed as the Deputy Visit Leader (DVL) and be able to take full responsibility for the VL's role if necessary. The DVL must be familiar with the relevant employer and establishment policies and procedures.

18. Teaching Assistants (TA), Learning Support Assistant (LSA), Keyworkers, wider support staff, parents and volunteers can play an important role in providing appropriate supervision. The VL must ensure that they are competent to undertake their responsibilities and brief them to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities.

## Planning Visits

DCS Schools and Settings are responsible for conducting reasonable checks of all learning activities outside the classroom, including outside the overseas location. Schools and Settings should check current travel advice and ensure that the country and context is relevant to the proposed trip learning outcomes. Advice and support for all visits (including low risk) may be sought by phoning the OEA Stephen Brown on 01480 379677 or via e-mail on [Stephen.brown@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.brown@cambridgeshire.gov.uk). If Stephen Brown is unavailable, Wiltshire's OEA may be contacted, details for whom are on the OEAP's webpage<sup>4</sup>.

19. A timeline for contacting the OEA (as determined by the type of outdoor learning experience being planned for) is outlined below.

20. For significant overseas adventure visits such as ski trips and other expeditions, email the OEA at the exploration stage advising the type of visit that is being considered. This

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<sup>4</sup> [Link](#)

provides the OEA time to assist with finding quotations from companies and providers. Once the visit has been booked, email the OEA to confirm visit has been booked advising them of the company or provider for the trip. Continue to maintain contact with the OEA over the planning period to enable them to add further details and/or required amendments. Finally, email the visit programme and VL profiles to the OEA at least eight weeks prior to departure.

21. For standard visits in location including residential trips, email the OEA to confirm the visit has been booked including the name of the company or provider. Maintain contact with the OEA over the planning period to enable them to add further details and/or any required amendments to the trip. Finally, email the details of visit programme and the VL profiles to the OEA at least four weeks prior to departure.

22. Schools and Settings must undertake reasonable checks on external organisations for both on and off-site activities, including ensuring that they meet all their legal requirements, that they hold valid Public Liability insurance and that they have a valid licence, where applicable. The School or Setting must obtain evidence in a form satisfactory to the MOD which must be obtained prior to any activity taking place. Should the activities be recurring, evidence of insurance must be provided annually. Other reasonable checks include:

- a. health and safety policies.
- b. risk assessments.
- c. control measures.
- d. staff competence.
- e. safeguarding.
- f. accommodation.
- g. sub-contract arrangement where applicable.
- h. reviewing the accessibility of the site, along with identifying any individual reasonable adjustments that may be needed to support attendees' full participation. This should also consider any specific medical or physical requirements ahead of the visit.

23. A provider visit checklist can be found on the OEAP website<sup>5</sup>. Further information and guidance should be sought from the OEA. Visit records must be kept for a minimum of 12 months after the event.

## Planning a Visit

24. When planning any visit, the first consideration for the VL is to identify the intended learning outcomes.

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<sup>5</sup> Section 8, Checklists, Model Forms, Mind Maps and Training Resources.

25. All visits should be thoroughly researched to check the suitability of the venue and that facilities and third-party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for risk management and effective supervision of young people. Pre-visit research for new venues will often include a preliminary visit from the VL.
26. For visits to adventure activity providers the VL will need to check that the provider's setting, accommodation, facilities, activities, staffing, and ethos meet the needs and values of the group as well as the intended learning outcomes. UK providers may be accredited under various schemes including:
  - a. The Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC)<sup>6</sup> Quality Badge<sup>6</sup>.
  - b. Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme.
  - c. Adventuremark.
  - d. National Governing Body centre approval scheme.
27. DCS considers that where a provider holds any of the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances. However, the School or Setting must obtain a copy of the provider's risk assessment and conduct their own visit risk assessment, ensuring both are retained in accordance with the DCS Policy Directive 7.1.2. Records Management. These schemes do not apply to adventure activity providers outside the UK. For providers not covered by any of the listed accreditation schemes, the VL should check that equivalent standards are met.
28. Staff should research the suitability of any visit venue and be sure that the provision will meet the intended learning outcomes with groups needs being met. If the provider does not have a UK LOTC Quality badge, then the provider forms provided in section 8 Checklists, Model Forms, Mind Maps and Training Resources on the OEAP website must be used.
29. If an adventure provider, does not hold an LOTC QB, or AALA License, the OEA may wish additional checks to be carried out. Therefore, bookings should not be made before the OEA has been notified and any additional checks completed.
30. All staff on a visit should carry a list of all emergency contacts, including for the provider, the School or Setting, and all pupil emergency contact details.
31. A checklist for planning visits should be completed and retained for all visits. A template is attached at **Annex A**.

## Inclusion

32. DCS is committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with additional needs, or other protected characteristics, can fully participate in educational visits. Inclusion must be central to

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<sup>6</sup> [LOTCTC](#)

planning to provide equal opportunities and meet our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

All educational visits must be made accessible where possible by:

- a. Conducting detailed pre-visit assessments to identify potential barriers
- b. Choosing venues and activities that cater to diverse needs, including physical accessibility, sensory considerations, and suitability for different learning styles.
- c. Liaising with activity providers to confirm that their facilities, equipment, and staff training support inclusion.
- d. Consulting with parents/carers, pupils, and staff to identify individual requirements.

33. Reasonable adjustments in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 must be made where necessary (and possible) and must be tailored to the needs of individual pupils. These may include:

- a. **Physical Access:** Arranging alternative transport, accessible pathways, or adaptive equipment.
- b. **Learning Support:** Providing additional staff or modifying activities to suit different learning or behavioural needs.
- c. **Sensory Needs:** Allowing for quiet spaces or offering sensory-friendly versions of activities.
- d. **Medical Support:** Ensuring appropriate healthcare plans are in place and that staff are trained to administer medication or respond to emergencies.
- e. **Religious Considerations:** for example, opportunities to pray.

34. The following must be involved in the planning process:

- a. **Parents/Carers:** To gain insight into the child's specific needs.
- b. **Pupils:** Where appropriate, to understand their preferences and concerns.
- c. **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo):** To advise on adjustments and ensure compliance with individual education plans (IEPs) or healthcare plans.

35. Decisions regarding a pupil's participation must be made collaboratively and inclusively, considering:

- a. The pupil's individual needs and any reasonable adjustments that can be made.
- b. Risk assessments that account for the pupil's safety and the safety of others.
- c. Input from parents/carers, the SENCo, and other relevant professionals (e.g., healthcare providers).

- d. Advice from the OEA for specialist support or guidance.
36. Every reasonable option must be explored to ensure participation. However, in rare cases where the safety of the pupil or others cannot be guaranteed despite adjustments, alternative arrangements must be made in consultation with parents/carers.

## Planning Documentation

37. The VL should first present an outline application for visit approval to the EVC and Head Teacher or Setting Manager, (and the AH Cyprus or AH ROW as well as the OEA if the visit is in Zone 3 or high-risk area). If initial approval is given in writing, the VL should gather full information, including details of any preliminary visits, and obtain approval as above. This may be done using the form at **Annex B**. Schools and Settings may alternatively use an IT system for visit approval, however it must capture all the information on the form at **Annex B**.
38. All visit documentation, including approvals (initial and formal), planning documentation etc. should be retained and filed in accordance with MOD records management policy.

## Training

39. It is recommended that each School and Setting, has more than the minimum number of trained staff to allow for staff turnover. Consideration must be given to the medium to long term requirement for trained staff, especially the EVCs and the VLs.
40. Staff must be competent and confident to lead visits. This is part of the EVC approval process. Training courses are available to develop visit leadership skills<sup>7</sup>. For staff leading adventure activities, national standards must be adhered to. Please consult the OEA for further details.

## Educational Visits Coordinators

41. EVCs must have attended the one-day EVC course accredited by the OEAP. Co-ordination of staff training for EVCs is overseen by the HQ DCS Training, Assessment and Careers Lead. EVCs must undertake formal revalidation training every three years. This is overseen by the HQ DCS Training and Assessment team. However, Schools and Settings must keep staff training records and ensure that they are kept up to date and held in compliance with DCS Policy Directive 7.1.2 Records Management.

## Visit Leader

42. As a minimum, all VLs must have successfully completed all in-house training. This can be provided by the establishment's own trained EVC. For more complex visits and/or those involving medium to high-risk activities, VLs must have successfully completed a one-day OEAP certificated course. For simple visits and low risk activities, external VL training is recommended, but not mandatory.

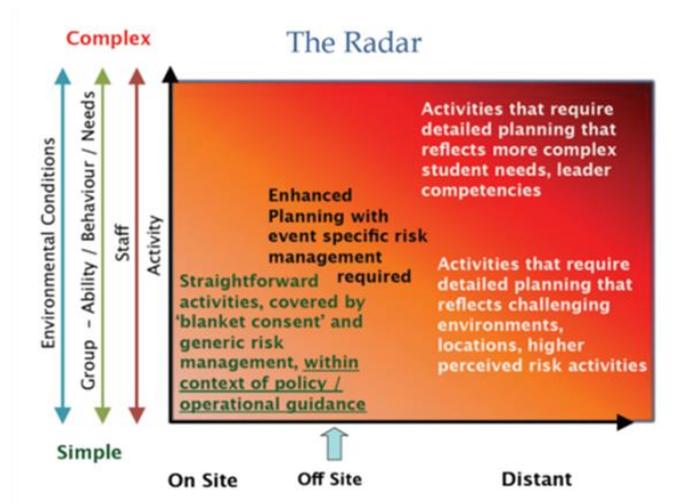
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<sup>7</sup>Please refer to the OEAP website or refer to the HQ DCS Training, Assessment and Careers Lead for further details.

43. There is no revalidation requirement. However, VLs are expected to be current in their knowledge of good practice in outdoor education, refresher training is therefore recommended, at intervals to be determined by the EVC. EVC and VL training are readily available at a range of UK venues. DCS will arrange occasional trainer visits to overseas locations where it is cost effective to do so.
44. Anyone leading an adventure activity should have appropriate skills and qualifications as specified by the OEAP. Any adventurous activity will require the approval of the OEA. Following this, any decisions regarding the running of the activity is delegated to establishment level.

## Visit Zones

45. Visits fall into 1 of 3 zones which are defined below. Further information on zones can be found by contacting the OEA or the OEAP website. If Schools and Settings are unsure which zone their trip falls into, they should contact the OEA for advice.
46. **Zone 1** This is for Head Teacher or Setting Manager and the EVC to determine for their School or Setting and may include activities on or off the School or Setting site and outside the classroom. These activities are regular, not usually complex, and a maximum distance away from the site may assist in defining the zone. Risk Management of Zone 1 should be covered by a range of pre-prepared documents. These documents will define for staff, the procedures they need to follow to enable the activity to take place. (These can be amended by staff of the event if anticipated to be more complex based on the variable factors of Staff, Activity, Group or Environment). Examples of Zone 1 for most Schools and Settings will include activity on site, forest school, PE lessons, local walks, swimming lessons, regular local visits, PE fixtures, travel by (School or Setting) bus or public transport within a defined distance.
47. **Zone 2** Any activity that is a one off or only undertaken yearly falls into this category. All visits and activities approved by the EVC at School or Setting level are included. These visits will involve specific planning and not multiple activities and constitute the majority of School or Setting visits. There may be complex aspects requiring careful planning. All visits are planned by staff and approved by the EVC and Head Teacher or Setting Manager. Advice on these visits will normally come from the EVC and the OEAP website. Approval for visits of greater complexity may require pre-approval before undertaking detailed planning. The EVC should also be consulted.
48. **Zone 3** Activities in this area are more complex in nature and a further distance from the School or Setting. This zone includes all Adventure, residential and overseas visits. These require specific approval at School or Setting level and should be submitted to the DCS AH Cyprus or AH ROW and to the OEA for approval at the initial planning stage.
49. The Radar Diagram should be completed by Schools and Settings to define a range of activities that fall into Zones 1, 2 and 3. Activities in the 3 zones need to be defined by the School or Setting and EVC. Any activity that contains a visit abroad or an adventure element will be Zone 3. Please contact the OEA for further guidance in this area.



## Visits to High-Risk Countries

50. Visits to some countries are governed by MOD policy<sup>8</sup>. This sets out special approval and training requirements for visits to high-risk countries. These may be high risk due to the conduct of military operations or because of risks posed by crime, terrorism or poor infrastructure. For proposed visits to high-risk countries, approval must be sought from DCS at the earliest planning stage and before any commitments are made. The list of high-risk countries is accessible on MODNET<sup>9</sup>. For staff leading and accompanying such visits, the Security Awareness in Fragile Environments (SAFE) course, (a three-day residential, held only in the UK) must be successfully completed.

## Notification to DCS

51. DCS must be notified in advance of any proposed trips to high-risk countries. Notification must be sent to the AH Cyprus or AH ROW. They should be consulted on visits categorised as Zone 3<sup>10</sup> at least 3 months in advance, with the exception of residential visits where they should be consulted at least 6 months in advance.

## Risk Management

52. Plans should be proportionate and sensible, focusing on how to manage any reasonably foreseeable risks. The risk assessment and risk management processes are at the heart of effective planning and preparation for successful educational visits. There is no legal requirement to record a risk assessment in a particular format. DCS Schools and Settings are directed to complete the Army Risk Assessment Proforma AF 5010<sup>11</sup>. Support for completing it, can be sought via the Infra-SHE team group mailbox [RC-DCS-HQ-Infra-SHE@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-Infra-SHE@mod.gov.uk). Additional support on safeguarding risk assessments is available from the DCS SAFE team using their group mailbox: [RC-DCS-HQ-SAFE@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-SAFE@mod.gov.uk). AF 5010 captures the following legal requirements of:

<sup>8</sup> [MOD Civilian Overseas Travel Risk Management](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Link](#)

<sup>10</sup> Zone 3 refers to visits that have a residential, located abroad or adventure aspect to it, either delivered by the MOD or an external provider.

<sup>11</sup> [AF 5010](#)

- a. identifying any hazards which present significant risk and how they can be prevented or mitigated to an acceptable level.
- b. recording the results of the risk assessment.

53. The MOD takes a common sense and proportionate approach to risk, recognising that risk assessments and risk management aim to enable activities to be undertaken safely where possible, rather than prevent them from taking place.

## Insurance

54. Staff are entitled to clarity about the extent to which their conduct at work could potentially render them subject to civil or criminal proceedings. The MOD is committed to standing behind its people who act reasonably and in good faith in the course of their employment, duties or work-related activities. When making safety related decisions, the Defence Board has made clear that it expects people to make such decisions based on proper procedures and will support those who do so including in cases where there is an injury or fatality<sup>12</sup>. Volunteers accompanying a visit and acting under the direction of DCS staff would be similarly supported. If the MOD are self-insuring, the MoD's letter of comfort is included on the back of the DIN 2023DIN08-013<sup>13</sup>, which can be utilised if required.
55. The starting principle is that all members of the Armed Forces, including the Reserve Forces and MOD civilians, plus veterans, should expect to be provided with legal support at public expense where they face criminal or civil allegations that relate to actions taken during their employment or service, and where they were performing their duties. This applies regardless of where in the world the alleged offence took place, or when. The Department is committed to supporting its people who act reasonably and in good faith in the course of their duties or work-related activities.
56. Beyond the above commitment for the MOD to act as defendant and take conduct of claims of negligence against staff acting in the course of their duties and following reasonable instructions. Visit planners should note that the MOD does not purchase commercial insurance to cover personal accidents, injuries, health, or medical problems, travel incidents, cancellations or delays, theft, or loss or damage to personal possessions. For example, if a child is injured on a skiing trip and needs to be repatriated, the cost would fall to the School or Setting that arranged the trip. There may also be locations where the MOD's normal repatriation arrangements are not possible. Visit planners should therefore consider the need for travel insurance to cover such eventualities. The need for staff and children to be covered by their own personal accident and belongings insurance should also be considered.
57. DCS Schools and Settings<sup>14</sup> should not take out additional insurance for activities which are essential to the curriculum as these are considered MOD core business, payable through the public purse and therefore covered by MOD self-indemnification. Enrichment activities outside the curriculum and activities that are linked (but not essential) to the

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<sup>12</sup> 2017DIN01-042 Support available for staff facing legal proceedings.

<sup>13</sup> [Link](#)

<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing, MOD settings do not fall under the remit of "MOD core business" as they are self-funded. DCS has a watching brief on policy changes in this area. MOD settings should contact DCS HQ Upavon regarding this, prior to booking trips to ensure insurance measures are in place.

curriculum should be funded from non-public funds and this includes the purchase of necessary associated insurances.

58. As part of their School or Setting visit checklist at **Annex A**, VLs should confirm whether the trip constitutes part of the curriculum and confirmatory approval given by the AH Cyprus or AH ROW at the informal planning stage. Setting Managers should also discuss the relevance with their Early Years Advisor. It is important that VLs allow enough time for AH Cyprus or AH ROW and OEA approval for activities/visits that fall into Zone 3. VLs should provide visit information to AH Cyprus or AH ROW for all Zone 3 activities, at least 3 months in advance, with the exception of residential activities where they will need visit information at least 6 months in advance.

## Finance

59. Schools and Settings should refer to the DCS Policy Directive 3.1.5 Charging for School Activities to determine if the charge falls to parents.

## Travel

60. All methods of transport should be risk assessed and considered for appropriateness, (including in relation to the age range of children), for example use of commercial flights, Eurostar, non-military coaches.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that non entitled fee earners are not allowed on MOD transport.

## Safeguarding and Child Protection

61. All education staff have a duty to safeguard and protect children in their care. Staff must have successfully completed the appropriate level of safeguarding training. They should be familiar with JSP 834<sup>16</sup>, DCS Policy Directive 3.2.1 Safeguarding. Further support and guidance can be sought from the DCS SAFE team using their group mailbox: [RC-DCS-HQ-SAFE@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-SAFE@mod.gov.uk).
62. The appropriate vetting and Disclosure and Barring Service and barred list (D&BS) checks for staff and volunteers must be in place. DCS staff that work unsupervised, in regulated activity or have opportunity of contact with young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with barred list check as part of their recruitment process. It must be understood that a DBS check (or other vetting procedure) is no guarantee of the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people.
63. The School or Setting visit risk assessment must take into consideration all contextual safeguarding risks including on and off-site activity as well as online. Risk assessments are to be retained for 40 years, in accordance with JSP 375 Vol 1 Chapter 39 Retention of Records.
64. Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all including those with protected characteristics as defined by

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<sup>15</sup> Schools and Settings should refer to [JSP 800 Volume 5](#) on Defence road transport policy.

<sup>16</sup> [JSP 834 Safeguarding](#)

the Equality Act 2010, special educational or medical needs. DCS Schools and Settings should take all reasonably practical measures to include all young people, ensuring that nobody with a protected characteristic is disadvantaged.

## Parental consent

65. Consent from parents must be in writing and retained in accordance with DCS Policy Directive 7.1.1 Data Protection and with DCS Policy Directive 7.1.2 Records Management. It may be either blanket consent or consent for individual trips. Blanket consent is appropriate for routine local visits and activities which are a normal part of the establishment's educational provision. This can include visits and activities beyond the normal day such as after school sports activities. Individual written consent is required for all visits which involve a higher level of risk including but not limited to longer journeys, residential visits and adventurous activities, those which fall outside of normal hours and non-routine activities which are not a normal part of educational provision.
66. It is essential that blanket consent should be turned into informed consent prior to any visit. Parents should therefore be given information about upcoming visits and given the opportunity to withdraw their consent if they do not wish their child to participate. Activities that involve a charge, or that include payment or cancellation terms, will need parental agreement to the financial arrangements.

## Ratios

67. OEAP National Guidance indicates ratios are a risk management issue and should be determined through the process of risk assessment. In considering the number of staff required, it is important to ensure that there are sufficient staff to have effective supervision throughout the visit. In England the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets out the legal minimum ratios for providers working with children up to age five<sup>17</sup>.
68. Factors to be considered include:
- a. **S**taff experience and competence in relation to the visit
  - b. **T**iming of the day, during the School or Setting day or longer
  - c. **A**ctivities being undertaken (including transport to and from the site/s)
  - d. **G**roup age, developmental age and any additional needs and/or disabilities
  - e. **E**nvironments that are being used on the visit
  - f. **R**emoteness considering the impact of travel time on the overall ratio
69. It would be normal for most off-site activity to be managed by two adults. For residential trips, it is good practice to balance the number of male and female staff to reflect the

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<sup>17</sup> [DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#)

number of males and females in the group. Further guidance can be sought, from the DCS SAFE team mailbox: [RC-DCS-HQ-SAFE@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-SAFE@mod.gov.uk)<sup>18</sup>.

## First Aid and Medication

70. Schools and Settings should already have a risk assessment in place which determines their first aid provision on site. Off-site provision should simply be an extension of this. First Aid requirements should take into account:
- a. the nature of the activity and group
  - b. the potential injuries associated with the activity.
  - c. the extent to which the group will be isolated from the support of the emergency services.
71. Qualified first aiders may not be necessary for all off-site activities and visits. However, a basic level of First Aid support must be available at all times, and ideally a staff member with a Paediatric First Aid (PFA) qualification should also attend. This will require that one or more of the staff leading the activity:
- a. carries a first aid kit to accompany them on all off-site visits
  - b. has a working knowledge of simple first aid and is competent to use the first aid materials carried with the group.
  - c. knows how to access, and can access, qualified first aid support
  - d. knows how to contact emergency services if required
72. For children in the EYFS, there is a mandatory requirement that at least one person who has a current paediatric First Aid certificate must accompany children on outings. VLS should be aware of the medical needs of any children taking part in the visit. Parents should be asked to provide written details of medical conditions and of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times), and for their permission for staff to administer medication, or for their child to administer their own if this is appropriate.
73. Teachers' conditions of employment do not include any obligation to manage or administer medicines. Head Teachers and Settings Managers should ensure they have sufficient staff to accompany a visit who have volunteered to do so. Staff should be trained to manage medicines, but in many cases such training need only involve familiarisation with the employer's policy and reading instructions from a parent or doctor, or perhaps a demonstration of how to use an epinephrine auto-injector (e.g. Epi-pen).

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<sup>18</sup> Full details about Effective Supervision, Group Management, Ratios, effective supervision, medical conditions are all found via the Visit Leader Buttons on the [OEAPNG website](#).

## Emergency Procedures and Incident reporting

74. The majority of incidents that occur on off-site visits will be dealt with by the visit leadership team and the School or Setting. However, some of these may be critical incidents and require support from the DCS. A critical incident is where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has:
- a. is either at serious risk of, or has suffered, a life-threatening injury or fatality.
  - b. has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.
75. If a critical incident should occur, the visit leader should immediately contact the Head of Establishment (HoE). In turn, the HoE must immediately contact the AH Cyprus or AH ROW for DCS Schools and Settings. The Army Reporting Cell (ARC) should also be notified immediately at [ASG-SCen-ARC-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:ASG-SCen-ARC-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk)
76. All personnel should familiarise themselves with the MOD and DCS Accident and Incident reporting procedures<sup>19</sup> for occurrence/incident reporting and investigation. Advice should also be sought from the DCS SHEF Advisor via the Infra-SHE team group mailbox [RC-DCS-HQ-Infra-SHE@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-Infra-SHE@mod.gov.uk). Proper consideration must be given to correct storage of personal information and to its retention in accordance with DCS Policy Directive 7.1.1 Data Protection and DCS Policy Directive 7.1.2 Records Management. In the case of a reportable incident, all documents relating to it must be stored for 25 years from the child's date of birth. A copy of the relevant documents must also be retained on the relevant casework file.

## Evaluation

77. Following the return of a visit, the VL should submit any follow up paperwork to the EVC. This may include an evaluation of the visit and any accident or incident forms. The evaluation should be saved until the next visit to inform those plans. Any lessons learned should be identified and recorded electronically and any actions taken forward by identified action owners. It is the VL's responsibility to ensure that all actions are followed up and that it is shared widely within the School or Setting for the purposes of the planning of future trips.

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<sup>19</sup> [JSP 375 Management of Health and Safety in Defence Chapter 16](#), and [SHEF SOP 001-004](#)

### School Visits Checklist

(Official-Sensitive when complete)

<b>Name of School/Setting</b>		
<b>Visit Title</b>		
<b>Visit Date</b>		
<b>Visit Leader</b>		
<b>Outline Proposals</b>	Aims And Objectives of Visit	
	Curriculum Or Enrichment	
	Which Pupils Will Be Going	
	Which Staff Will Be Going	
	What Is the Activity?	
	Where Will the Activity Take Place?	
	Is The Activity in A High-Risk Country?	
	Which Zone Category Is the Visit In?	
What Is the Cost Estimate?		
<b>Initial Approval in Writing Received</b>	EVC	Y/N
	Head Teacher / Setting Manager	Y/N
	AH Cyprus / AH ROW (If Zone 3 Or High-Risk Country)	Y/N
	OEA (If Zone 3 Or High-Risk Country)	Y/N
<b>For inclusion in the Formal Proposal</b>	Detailed Itinerary	
	Supervision And Safeguarding Information	
	Protected characteristics including SEND Provision Information	
	Medical & Welfare Issues	
	First Aid Provision Information	
	Accommodation Information	
	Provider Assurances	
	Finance – Business Case Approved by DCS HQ	
	Insurance (If Enrichment/Non-Core Activity)	
	Transport Details	
	Familiarisation Visit Details	
	Risk Assessment	
	Appropriate Emergency Plans	
	Emergency Contacts	
	Parental Consent Method	
OEA Advice (If Zone 3 Or High-Risk Country)		
	EVC	
	Head Teacher / Setting Manager	

<b>Formal Approval as listed on Annex B</b>	Ah Cyprus / Ah Row (If Zone 3 Or High-Risk Country)	
	OEA (If Zone 3 Or High-Risk Country)	
<b>Fully Informed Parents</b>	Full Written Details	
	Opportunity To Withdraw Blanket Consent	
	Specific Consent If Needed	
	Recommendation Of Personal Insurance for Child	
	Protected characteristics, SEND, Medical, Welfare Information Requested	
	Method To Advise Itinerary Change	
	Parents Meeting	
<b>Informed Pupil/s</b>	Full Details of Visit or Activity	
	Involved In Risk Management	
	Behaviour & Conduct Expectations	
	Responsibilities Of Accompanying Adults	
	Emergency Procedures	
	Any reasonable adjustments	
<b>Informed Staff</b>	Full Details of Visit or Activity	
	Risk Management	
	Any Protected Characteristics, SEND, Medical, Welfare Information	
	Defined Responsibilities	
	Emergency Procedures	
	Recommendation To Staff to Obtain Personal Insurance. Any Reasonable Adjustments	
<b>Visit or Activity</b>	Documentation To All Staff on Visit	
	Emergency Contacts	
	Contact Numbers for Pupils	
	First Aid Kits	
	Appropriate Way Home for All	
<b>Review of trip</b>	With Pupils, Staff, Parents	
	Report Sent to EVC & Head Teacher / Setting Manager	
	Identify, Record and Take Appropriate Action on Issues/Lessons Learned for Future Visits	

## Educational Visit Approval Form

(Official-Sensitive when complete)

### **APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF SCHOOL VISIT**

*Not all sections will be relevant to every proposed visit.*

The VL should complete this form once the preparations are complete. The VL should have already received initial written approval for the proposed visit from the Head Teacher or Setting Manager, EVC, and OEA. Approval from AH Cyprus or AH ROW, is required if the visit is to a Zone 3 or high-risk country. The VL should have regularly updated the Head Teacher or Setting Manager and EVC on the progress of the preparations. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager and EVC should be notified of any subsequent changes in planning, organisation, or staffing.

School or Setting	
Visit Leader	
Residential/Day Visit	
Zone Category or high-risk Country)	
Initial approval received in writing	
Do any of the participants have special educational, medical needs or protected?	Yes/No if yes please provide details
Any pupils unable to attend due to risk factors?	Yes/No if yes please provide details
Parental consent forms attached	
School Risk Assessment form attached	
Provider Risk Assessment form	
Purpose of visit and specific educational objectives:	
Date and time of departure:	Date and time of return:
Place of departure:	Place of return:
Transport arrangements:	
Organising company/agency:	

Name:	
Address:	Telephone Number:
Proposed cost and financial arrangements	
Insurance arrangements for all members of the proposed group, including voluntary helpers	
Company Name and Address:	
Policy Number:	Expiry Date:
Accommodation	
Accommodation Name and Address:	Telephone Number:
Name and contact details of Head of Visit Centre/Proprietor	Emergency contact details of provider
Programme of activities (include who is leading each section of the program e.g., staff or event provider):	
Details of any hazardous activity and the associated planning, organisation and staffing:	
Existing knowledge of places to be visited and whether an exploratory visit is intended:	
Date of last staff visit:	
Names, relevant experience, qualifications, and specific responsibilities of staff accompanying the group, including First Aid:	
Names, relevant qualifications, and specific responsibilities of other adults accompanying the group:	

Name, addresses and telephone number of the contact person in the School or Setting area who holds all information about the visit or journey in case of an emergency: (NB person/s with this role will need to be available on a 24-hour contact basis)		
Age range of pupils:		
Number of males:	Number of females:	Number of non-binary:
Number of accompanying adults:	Number of males:	Number of females:
VL/Participant ratio:		
<b>Approvals required:</b>		
EVC name:		
Signature:		
Head Teacher or Setting Manager name:		
Signature:		
<i>(Required if travel is to a Zone 3 or High-Risk Country)</i> AH Cyprus / AH ROW name:		
Signature:		