

“Ensuring our students have the education and character to go on to live happy, fulfilled lives as the drivers of their own destinies.”

Ark Soane Academy Off Site Visits Policy 2021-22

Purpose

This policy sets out the Ark Soane procedures for offsite trips and visits. It is a working document, providing guidance and information on all aspects of trips and visits and aims to provide a secure framework within which staff can safely provide trips and visits as part of the Curriculum and Character offer.

Date of last review:	-	Author:	Principal
Date of next review:	July 20212	Owner:	Principal
Type of policy:	<input type="checkbox"/> Network-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tailored by school	Approval:	Project Board
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ARK MODEL

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input type="checkbox"/> Our People	Curriculum

Introduction

Ark Soane Academy believes that adventurous and challenging school visits are a vital part of a pupil's education and form a major part of our Character and Values education.

Our values are:

Work hard – we know that effort, not intelligence, leads to exceptional results

Be kind – we treat others how we want to be treated.

Aim high – we all have the potential for greatness: we always strive for it

Our values are underpinned by responsibility - we remember that each of us is responsible for how we live and can influence our destinies. We are honest with ourselves and each other, and we take pride in ourselves and how we are seen.

Our trips and visits underpin these values and also supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. Off-site activities will always serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our pupils learning experiences.

The purpose of this policy document is to ensure that all off-site visits are correctly planned, managed and supervised so that pupils can safely participate in the opportunities that are offered.

This document lays out Ark Soane Academy's and Ark Schools' scheme of delegation and guidelines for trip planning and management of learning outside the classroom.

Section 1: Decision making

1. This section defines the scheme of delegation for approving off-site visits within Ark Schools.
2. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) Ark Schools is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of its employees. Ark Schools is also under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. In addition to this
 - a. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 requires an employer to assess the risks of activities (see Risk Assessment in Section 2); introduce measures to control those risks; tell their employees about these measures.
 - b. Under Health and Safety legislation employees must: take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety; co-operate with their employers over safety matters; carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions; inform their employers of any serious risks.
3. **Responsibility for Health and Safety is delegated via the Ark Schools policy to the school Principals.** Ark Schools retains responsibility for advice, guidance, monitoring and review.
4. There are two underpinning principles for the scheme.
 - a. The Principal is appointed to provide overall leadership for each school. Every off-site visit takes place because they believe that it enhances learning and offers an experience for young people attending the activity. The scheme of delegation is consistent with this principle and with the principles underpinning the delegation of H&S tasks. Curriculum and safety advice is available from Ark Schools, but it is the task of Principal to manage this scheme within their schools
 - b. The safe conduct of all visits depends fundamentally upon the competence of the team that oversees and leads each venture. Whilst Ark Schools, through guidance, can set minimum standards of training, qualifications and experience to lead certain activities, the only person uniquely placed to judge a leader's competence is the Principal.

Section 2: Roles and responsibilities

1. Ark Schools will provide the following:
 - a. **This guidance document**, which is supplemented by the comprehensive and regularly updated materials on the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) website (<http://oeapng.info>). ARK Schools has adopted these OEAP National Guidelines for off-site visits.
 - b. **An adviser for general Health and Safety Advice:** contact the Ark Schools Health and Safety Adviser
 - c. **An appointed adviser for outdoor education** to give specialist advice on off-site visits and outdoor visits.
 - d. **Generic risk assessments** to schools: These assessments aim to provide guidance of the common risks associated with off-site visits, and can be found in the appendices.
 - e. **Monitoring:** Ark Schools will monitor school policies, procedures and practices in the following ways:
 - i. A register of EVCs will be maintained and annually updated. New EVCs will be required to attend an accredited EVC training course
 - ii. As part of the annual update, EVCs will complete and return a self-evaluation review
 - iii. H&S monitoring by Ark Schools either by self evaluation questionnaire, periodic mini audits or by full H&S audit
 - iv. A section for Principals to report on trips in the Principal's report
 - f. **Compliance:** Principals must nominate an Assistant/Vice-Principal as the EVC, or assume the role themselves. EVCs must receive training delivered by an accredited Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel trainer. The Director of Ark Schools may withdraw permission to educate children outside of school premises for non-compliance.
2. Beyond the requirements listed above, decisions are delegated to the Principal, who in turn will work with their EVC, the visit/activity leader of a given trip, and in some cases assistant leaders, volunteer helpers, parents and pupils, to ensure visits are well and safely managed.
3. There are excellent resources for each of these roles, which can be found on-line at www.oeapng.info (including checklists, training and advice). These are easy to navigate, regularly updated by the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel and Ark Schools has adopted these National Guidelines for its off-site visits and learning outside the classroom. A summary of the key responsibilities for the Ark Schools network lies below and has been adapted from this website.
4. The Principal should:
 - a. ensure that off-site activities comply with the procedures in this guidance document
 - b. appoint, or undertake the functions of, an Educational Visits Coordinator and inform Ark Schools. If appointing, the EVC should be an Assistant/ Vice-Principal, who in the view of the Principal is competent to undertake delegated tasks. The role of EVC brings some administrative duties and we would suggest allocating some administrative support to the EVC for these matters.

- c. ensure that the EVC has attended an EVC training course and refresher training every 3 years
 - d. delegate approval of defined visits to the EVC
 - e. with advice from the EVC, approve party leaders and additional staff who are sufficiently experienced and competent to assess and manage the risks with regard to the group and planned activity;
 - f. ensure that risks have been assessed, significant risks recorded and appropriate safety measures are in place and that all parties are aware of the assessments and ensure that all staff understand and comply.
 - g. the final planning checklist is completed and all supporting documents are completed before the journey takes place;
 - h. ensure formal approval is given to each journey or visit before it is communicated to parents;
 - i. comply with Ark Schools monitoring arrangements and agree with the EVC a programme for monitoring off-site visits.
5. The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) should
- a. support the Principal with approval;
 - b. approve delegated visits;
 - c. approve competent people to lead or otherwise supervise a visit;
 - d. support the party leader with advice and guidance on risk assessments;
 - e. review and approve the risk assessment produced by the party leader and team for each visit;
 - f. check the emergency arrangements are adequate and ensure there is an emergency contact for each visit;
 - g. receive, evaluate, action if necessary and archive Group Leader's Evaluation and Trip/ Outing Report and any other significant documentation [e.g. related to an accident];
 - h. review systems and, on occasion, monitor practice.
6. The Party Leader should:
- a. complete a written curriculum plan or planner for the visit and submit a cost breakdown;
 - b. obtain the approval of the Principal or EVC before any off-site visit or activity takes place;
 - c. assess the reasonably foreseeable risks involved and draw up or amend as appropriate any previously recorded risk assessment;
 - d. oversee the safe conduct of each visit, paying particular attention to on going risk assessments and changing circumstances, and arrange a pre-visit if appropriate;
 - e. ensure that all other members of staff and voluntary helpers are made aware of their responsibilities and have the appropriate training and experience to undertake their assigned roles;
 - f. consider the planning checklist to ensure that all procedures have been followed;
 - g. inform parents about the visit and gain their consent, where appropriate
7. Additional members of staff and volunteers on the trip should:
- a. be given written instructions to ensure that they are familiar with procedures/protocols.
 - b. assist the party leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the young people on the visit;

- c. be clear about their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in the visit or activity
8. Pupils/Students should:
- a. be made aware of their responsibilities on the visit by the party leader and other members of staff, for their own health and safety and that of the group.
 - b. not take unnecessary risks;
 - c. follow instructions of the party leader and other members of staff;
 - d. behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct;
 - e. inform members of staff of any significant hazards.
9. Parents/Carers/Guardians should:
- a. have an important role in deciding whether any visit or off-site activity is suitable for their child.
 - b. inform the party leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit;
 - c. provide emergency contact numbers;
 - d. provide the party leader with arrangements to resume care of their child should this be necessary;
 - e. sign the consent form.

Section 3: National and Local Guidelines

1. ARK Schools has adopted the **National Guidelines** for off-site visits and learning outside the classroom which can be found at www.oeapng.info. The site is easy to navigate with excellent resources on risk management and visit planning, including checklists and advice for each of the key roles in school. Some useful links to consult include:
 - a. Legal frameworks and employer systems section, including helpful trip checklists for EVCs, party-leaders, principals and others:
<http://oeapng.info/downloads/legal-framework-and-employer-systems/>
 - b. Good practice section, including supervision ratios, insurance, minibus guidance, critical incident management and emergency protocols:
<http://oeapng.info/downloads/good-practice/>
 - c. Policies and planning section, including advice on how to avoid paperwork, writing a visit policy, planning learning outcomes:
<http://oeapng.info/downloads/policies-planning-and-evaluation/>
 - d. Specialist activities section, including advice on unusual trips like farm visits, home stays, swimming, etc: <http://oeapng.info/downloads/specialist-activities-and-visits/>
 - e. Searchable contents page: <http://oeapng.info/downloads/>
2. Ark Schools has also developed ten key template documents and some example risk assessments, which all can be found in the Ark Library. These documents include a useful flow chart explaining our recommended process for using these templates. The documents include:
 - a. OSA0 - Flowchart for trip organisation
 - b. OSA1 - Proposal to organise an educational offsite visit/activity
 - c. OSA2 - Approval Process for an educational offsite visit/activity
 - d. OSA3 - Completed details of educational offsite visit/activity
 - e. OSA4 - Participant List
 - f. OSA5 - Emergency Information
 - g. OSA6 - Risk Assessment Template
 - h. OSA7 - Parental Consent
 - i. OSA8 - Swimming Consent
 - j. OSA9 - Evaluation sheet
 - k. OSA10 - Pupil Questionnaire
 - l. Example risk assessments