

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Reviewed by: Sarah Fox, Andor Vince

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Related Policies: Food Hygiene Regulation, School Trip Policy

Endorsement

Full endorsement is given to this policy by: Joel Chalfen

Position: Cambridge Steiner School Trustee

Signed:



Date: April 2020

The Staff and Trustees of the Cambridge Steiner School acknowledge the immense value of outdoor education to young people, and fully support and encourage those that are well planned and managed.

This document provides concise and supportive guidance for the planning and management of outdoor education.

Outdoor education will be planned in such a way as to ensure that the benefits and intended learning outcomes are clearly identified and understood by the supervising adults beforehand and can form the basis for objective evaluation afterwards.

Arrangements and considerations for outdoor education will be recorded as deemed most appropriate by the school manager in order to minimise the associated bureaucracy.

Examples of activities that fall under 'outdoor education' include:

- Experiential lessons carried out outdoors, on the school ground or outside of the school
- Crafts activities practiced outdoors such as green woodworking, blacksmithing, basket making and flint knapping
- Bushcraft
- Activities related to the Rites of Passage programme carried out outdoors
- Adventure activities such as canoeing, mountaineering or rock-climbing
- School trips
- Residential visits
- Community work

Legal Framework

It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements of their employer's guidance. This policy applies to all members of establishment staff, and other adults associated with the Cambridge Steiner School who take responsibility for children and young people participating in learning and recreational activities in environments that are different from where the young people are usually based. It therefore applies when organising and supervising children and young people taking part in off-site activities and visits, as well as when taking part in on-site activities outdoors.

The health and safety procedures in outdoor education are guided by the following legislation and guidelines:

- Health and Safety at Work 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Young Person's Safety Act 1995
- Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004
- Personal and Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- Food Hygiene Regulations 2006
- UK knife Law
- Department of Education – Health and safety: advice on legal duties and powers (February 2014)

Following these regulations in outdoor education the school commits to:

- Carry out risk assessment for outdoor activities, as outlined in Risk Assessment Procedures in Outdoor Education
- Develop measures to control risks, including providing training to staff and volunteers
- Have a system for reporting accidents and incidents
- Develop emergency procedures
- Monitor and review these procedures and practice
- Appoint only people or external organisations that are competent to deliver outdoor activities

Under the same legislation staff and volunteers will:

- Take reasonable care of their own and children's health and safety
- Work with the school over safety matters
- Carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
- Inform the Education Manager of any serious risks in writing

The Young Persons' Safety Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 place a legal requirement on providers of certain adventure activities for young people. Activities in this category include rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, mountaineering and orienteering. While the school understands that it is exempt from licensing, the school will not offer these activities to their pupils unless delivered by a competent teacher with appropriate qualification and experience or where it is delivered by a licensed provider. The school will offer these activities only to their own pupils.

Within reason, the school will provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to staff, volunteers and children taking part in outdoor education according to the Personal and Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992. This includes items such as gloves, eye protection, high visibility clothing, safety footwear and respiratory protective equipment (RPE). If the school offers adventure activities to their pupils that are delivered by the school and not by an external provider, equipment may include other safety equipment such as buoyancy aids, helmets and harnesses, as appropriate for the activity.

Preparing meals outdoors is regulated by Food Hygiene Regulations 2006. The school will have appropriate and safe equipment for outdoor cooking and it will follow the same food safety management system as in the school kitchen. However, the food safety will be assessed separately and controls applied as relevant to an outdoor environment.

All food safety problems will be reported to the management team. Staff undertaking any food handling activity with children will have done the Food Handling training. Any staff suffering from an illness or condition that might affect the safety of food will not perform cooking activities.

In using edge tools in outdoor education, the school works within the UK Knife Law. Teachers delivering - or children taking part in - outdoor education will be using knives, axes, saws and other edge tools only on the school premises. Teachers will transport edge tools to and from work in their personal vehicles and they will not carry or use them in public places without a good reason. Exempted from this law is a knife with a folding blade three-inch-long (7.62 cm) or less.

In planning school visits the following documents are referred to:

- Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: 1998: ref. HSPV2
- Standards for LAs in Overseeing Educational Visits: 2002: ref. 0564/2002
- Standards for Adventure: 2002: ref. 0565/2002
- Handbook for Group Leaders: 2002: ref. 0566/2002
- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders (2002)

Planning Visits and Activities

General Considerations

The majority of outdoor lessons carry no higher risks than conventional teaching in the classroom. However, some outdoor activities will involve a higher level of risk. In planning outdoor activities these will be carefully assessed and decisions made in order to eliminate the risk or reduce it to an acceptable level. The risks and benefits of each lesson or activity that carries a higher risk level will be qualified or quantified and its benefits carefully considered. If after consideration the benefit is deemed not to outweigh the risk, the activity will not be undertaken.

Where appropriate, the children will be actively involved in this process, thus teaching them to develop a healthy attitude towards risk and safekeeping.

In planning outdoor lessons and considering risks and benefits the following will be considered:

- Are the staff members involved in the outdoor lesson/activity appropriately qualified and experienced?
- Is the level of challenge appropriate to the child's age?
- Are the arrangements appropriate for safekeeping children?
- Can the lesson/activity be justified even if it does not go according to the plan?
- Are there any relevant examples of good practice that we can draw on?

Lesson planning should also allow for spontaneous activities. For example, when there is an unexpected opportunity for creative learning and teaching or when weather conditions are favourable for certain activities. Equally the teacher will abandon the planned lesson if the circumstances are such that the activity planned is considered risky or unsafe because of weather conditions, tiredness or other unforeseen circumstances.

Parents and carers must be properly informed of all planned activities taking place outside of school in a timely manner. Good communication with parents is crucial in keeping the children safe, making sure that they are properly prepared for the outings (especially when venturing out of the school grounds) in terms of clothing, food or equipment required. Parents must be informed of any significant risks in the activities planned, and the benefits of these must be clearly presented.

Leadership and staffing ratios

Outdoor education will be delivered by competent leadership based on appropriate skills and experience. The Leader is a person who delivers, coordinates and monitors the outdoor education. This may be a teacher, teaching assistant or volunteer.

The Leader must:

- Have appropriate qualifications and/or experience of delivering an outdoor activity in question
- Be physically and mentally fit to lead
- Have a very good understanding of their responsibilities
- Have the necessary organising ability
- Be competent in risk assessment and risk management

The staff to children ratio must be appropriate to the level of risk involved in the activity. Other factors to be considered include children's gender, age, experience, disability, and behaviour, along with the experience and expertise of the teacher; duration and nature of the journey; and type of accommodation - if travel is involved. All these will be taken into consideration when considering staffing ratios.

Any party leaving the school ground must be accompanied by at least one additional adult, regardless of the size of the group. Staffing may include male and female supervision, as appropriate.

Training and Development of Staff

School staff and volunteers involved in managing outdoor learning or educational activities and visits will receive adequate training, in house or by external providers. Examples include:

- Main lessons undertaken on the patio or in the garden that involve building structures or carrying out experiments that involve some risk to children or staff
- Crafts that carry certain risks such as working with edged tools, fire and working with materials such as stone and lime
- Climbing and other physical activities that involve height or obstacles
- Educational visits outside the school grounds

The training will be carried out in house by staff with the necessary expertise or staff will attend an appropriate course. Courses may include the Educational Visits Coordinator, School Visit Leader Training, Camp Fire Management Award (CFMA) Basic Camping Leaders Award (BCLA) or Bushcraft Competency Certificate (Institute for Outdoor Learning).

Activities that might involve higher risks, such as rock climbing, sailing, canoeing or swimming, will be only carried out by staff with appropriate qualifications and with adequate experience.

Evidence of staff training will be collated and archived in a form of certificates or, if carried out in house by experienced staff, by signed attendance lists with brief outline of the course content.

Preliminary visits and External Providers

The purpose of a preliminary visit is to check the appropriateness and safety of the venue and gather all the information required to fulfil the objectives of any educational trip. This include collecting information about the external provider, transport, accommodation, timings, local services and the weather. During the preliminary visit specific focus will be given to identifying potential hazards that will feed the risk assessment and help to draw up an emergency action plan.

The preliminary visit also includes gathering evidence of safety of a site or venue and competencies of external providers. This includes, as required:

- Licence for providing specific adventure activities
- Site safety check documents
- Evidence of liability insurance
- Evidence of up to date first-aid and fire safety procedures

This evidence must be gathered and archived by the school before any trip can take place.

Preliminary visits are not always possible due to distance of the venue or site. In this case the visit leader will carry out research and collect as much information about the trip listed above as possible.

However, in some cases a preliminary visit is essential. Such cases will include:

- Visits to unfamiliar terrain or locations where activity is to be teacher led
- Visit led by less experienced staff Number of children with additional needs in the class or on the trip
- Visits to locations where there may be specific hazards

In these cases, if site visit is not possible, the trip will not take place.

Parental consent

The parents will sign a one-off consent form for taking children outside of school premises for regular outdoor activities during the school hours, according to the school policy.

Written consent will be requested for activities that carry a higher level of risk management. These include:

- Lessons taking place outside of school hours
- Adventure activities
- School trips within UK or abroad
- Residential visits
- Community work

Parents will be informed of each activity and will be given an opportunity to withdraw their child from any particular activity or school trip if they wish to.

Charges for School Activities

All the general costs of outdoor education are covered by school fees. These include materials, equipment and tools. This excludes personal outdoor clothing and protective equipment that parents will need to acquire for their child in accordance to school's recommendations.

The parents will bear the cost of extra curriculum activities. This includes:

- School trips
- Adventure activities (e.g. sailing, canoeing or mountaineering)
- Craft activities delivered by professional crafts person

These events will be planned ahead and the parents informed in a timely manner about the nature of the activity with appropriate justification of how these activities will enrich their children's education.

Safeguarding children in outdoor education

Safeguarding the safety, health and the well-being of children is the foremost requirement from all staff in the school. All outdoor activities in the school are risk assessed. The assessment takes into consideration who will be accompanying children, the adults that they will meet at their visit or places they will stay. Parents accompanying children on occasional day trips are not expected to undergo DBS checks. Adults without DBS clearance will never be left alone with children. Volunteers will have enhanced DBS clearance if they have regular contact with children. Where the visit involves an overnight stay, parents and volunteers will require a DBS check. Centres providing activities for children should be asked to provide evidence that staff who have substantial or unsupervised access to children have been checked. Children must not be left unsupervised in any centre that is not able to provide evidence of appropriate checks.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document.



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