

Offsite Activities Policy and Procedure

This policy is designed to ensure that off-site activities undertaken by Engaging Potential (EP) are safe, and beneficial to young people. It is essential to ensure that the activities are suitable for the participants, the purpose is clearly defined, that activities are thoroughly planned and that the safety of young people is assured.

This policy refers to any activity that takes place off site organised with the young people in mind (sports, museum visits, etc), but does not refer to work experience or journeys to and from EP from home.

This policy has been designed in conjunction with West Berkshire Council's 'Off-site Visits and Educational trips Policy' (2008).

Duty of Care

When staff members are responsible for the care, custody and control of the participants, they must **take the same care that reasonable, prudent and careful parents or carers would take in the same circumstances.**

In implementing this principle and interpreting the meaning of "reasonable, prudent and careful", common sense should be applied. In doing so, those involved should:

- Try to think as a parent or carer would think in similar circumstances
- Consider whether they would be able to justify what is proposed to professional colleagues whose judgement they respect and, ultimately, to a court of law
- If they are in doubt they must not go ahead unless or until they have sufficient further information and advice to remove the doubt

The duty of care applies to all who take responsibility for the participants but the law is likely to expect a higher standard of care from professionals and those who hold qualifications, because of their training and experience.

Outside Agencies

Where an activity involves an outside agency the Centre Manager must take great care to ensure that the agency involved is competent and any establishment safe. Organisations should be approached directly to ascertain the qualifications and experience of the staff.

Generally, outdoor activity centres in the United Kingdom must be licensed by the [Adventure Activities Licensing Authority](#).

Equal Opportunities

Off-site activities are accessible to all young people regardless of gender, religion, ethnic origin, social background, medical need or physical ability. Existing EP policies should be applied to off-site activities, as with all other activities.

Roles & Responsibilities

Head

The Head should:

- Ensure DBS checks are in place as necessary
- Ensure that adequate safeguarding and accident/incident procedures are in place and are reviewed as necessary. This information should be used to influence future activities and should be investigated fully, in line with EP policy
- Ensure insurance cover is in place and is adequate and relevant

Centre Manager

The Centre manager co-ordinates all activities on young people timetable and should:

- Consult with the Head if an unusual activity is timetabled
- Gain **additional parent / carer consent** for activities that will involve caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or watersports (or any other activity considered high risk) and check that the provider holds a license as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. These regulations apply to adventure activities that take place in England, Scotland and Wales but these arrangements may be subject to change in the future.
- Ensure all necessary arrangements have been made for the activity proposed and that staff are competent to lead and participate in it
- Ensure that relevant tasks to prepare for the activity have been carried out (e.g. risk assessments etc)
- Ensure that the objectives of the activity are clear, inclusive, stated on all forms and are communicated as required
- Ensure that all staff are appropriately trained and that the staff member is competent to lead the activity (if appropriate), is familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place and will organise the group effectively
- Ensure arrangements are in place for the medical and special educational needs of all the young people
- Ensure adequate first aid provision is available
- Ensure that the accreditation or verification of providers should also be checked
- Be aware of the need to obtain best value. Appropriate consideration should be given to financial management, choice of contractors and contractual relationships
- Ensure that the ratio of staff to young people is appropriate
- Ensure that the address and telephone number of the venue is known and retained at EP
- Ensure that the staff member leading the activity has the contact details of a responsible person at EP
- Ensure that the staff member leading the activity, other staff involved in the activity, and EP have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures and are fully aware of their responsibilities. They should also have the names of all persons taking part in the trip and the contact details of their next of kin
- Ensure that activities are evaluated so that the experiences can be used for the planning of future activities
- Ensure that any media enquiries relating to an activity are dealt with according to EP's procedure for dealing with the media.

The EP Staff Member leading the activity

The EP Staff member leading the activity will have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the activity and should have regard for the health and safety of the group.

The staff member will plan the activity and ensure the safety and success of the activity.

The staff member should:

- Obtain the Centre Managers agreement before the activity goes ahead
- Plan and prepare for the activity, including briefing other members of staff
- Complete adequate risk assessments that consider all significant hazards
- Appoint, if necessary, a deputy for the activity and define what this entails
- Ensure the mode of travel is appropriate, travel times out and back are known and drop off and pick up points are confirmed and will not be changed without the prior knowledge of someone at EP on the day of the activity
- Clearly define each member of staff's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned
- Be competent to lead the activities proposed. The staff member should ideally be familiar with the location and its characteristics. Assess the suitability of the activity for the young people's abilities and ensure that their needs are appropriately met. Ensure that members of staff have information on any specific needs or requirements of the young people involved

- Be aware of safeguarding issues and consider when planning the activity
- Ensure that there is adequate first aid provision for all aspects of the activity, including travel
- Ensure that staff, young people and EP have contact details for inside and outside normal hours
- Ensure that there is a suitable staff to young person ratio
- If necessary, do not allow a visit to go ahead if the risk to the health and safety of young people is unacceptable and report concerns to the Centre Manager
- Review each activity and where necessary make changes to future activities based on the experiences had by the young people and staff.

Preparation & Planning

Thorough preparation and planning are key to the success of offsite activities. Those who organise and run off-site activities have very substantial responsibilities to those in their charge. Ensuring that activities are properly planned and prepared should also help to reduce the degree of stress that can be involved. Each of the following should be considered in the planning process:

- **Planning lead time**

The EP staff member should ensure they have sufficient time to plan an activity to ensure there is no risk to safety due to arrangements made in haste.

- **Approval**

The types of approval are:

- **Local** - for trips that can be approved at establishment level (e.g trips with medium to low associated risks). The majority of EP activities will require 'local' approval, which will involve a review of the activity and associated risk assessments by the Centre Manager prior to approval.
- **Outline** - for trips that are being planned well in advance (e.g trips that are taken abroad, to Northern Ireland, or that last longer than 4 days);
- **Full** - for trips that require West Berkshire Council approval (e.g trips that require Outline approval, overnight trips of less than 4 days, trips that involve hazardous activities and/or hazardous environments, trips with high associated risks)

In the event of "outline" and "full" approval being required, further details can be found in section 2.13 of West Berkshire Council's 'Off-site Visits and Educational trips Policy' (2008), along with the required forms in Section 6.

- **Research of activities, providers and their staff, costs and venues**

The EP Staff Member leading the activity should ensure that activities are suitable for the young people, and that any outside providers are properly equipped (first aid, h&s etc) and their staff appropriately qualified. Costs should be considered in terms of best value. Venues should be visited as part of the risk assessment process. The following questions should be answered, when assessing venues:

- Have the fire precautions been checked and approved by the Fire Service?
- What are the arrangements for evacuation in case of fire and are they easy to understand, readily available and would they work?
- Do new arrivals go through a fire drill or at least have the arrangements explained to them?
- Are the staff familiar with emergency procedures in the building?
- Is appropriate first aid equipment and expertise available?
- Has the provider made arrangements for access to medical help if it proves necessary?
- List of Emergency Contacts (A list of emergency contact should be provided to staff involved in the activity and also to relevant staff at EP's premises. Young people should also be provided with a list of relevant emergency contacts.)

- **Safety, Security & Welfare**

Safety, Security and Welfare must be the prime considerations in all aspects of planning and preparation. Staff member leading the activity must be continually aware of the degree of care expected of them. In particular, care should be taken to ensure that appropriate preparations are made to deal with any emergencies, money for the telephone for example, and that appropriate first aid facilities are available at all times. The welfare and security of staff and young people should also be considered and plans put in place to guarantee this.

- **Parent / carer consent – to include medical consent**

Although it is not necessary for parental consent to be acquired for the majority of off-site activities organised by EP as these take place during school hours and are part of the young person's normal schooling, parents / carers are asked to agree to the young person receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic and or transfusion of blood products as considered necessary by the medical authorities.

Written consent is usually only requested for activities that need a higher level of risk management or those that take place outside school hours. These include adventure activities, off-site sporting fixtures outside the school day, and residential visits.

Parents/Carers will be told in advance of each activity and will be given the opportunity to withdraw their child from any particular EP trip or activity for which permission has been requested.

- **Risk Assessments**

Risk assessments must read, understood and adhered to by the staff member leading the activity in line with EP's risk assessment policy and procedures.

- **First Aid**

Staff with first aid training must always be present on an activity. First Aid boxes must be available for the journey and the activity, and arrangements for first aid must be in place at external activity providers and venues.

- **Travel arrangements**

EP operates a transport policy. All arrangements for using any vehicle on an EP related activity must be in line with this policy. Contingency plans for any delays must also be in place.

- **Equipment**

Where EP staff are using personal or company equipment, this equipment must be checked for suitability and safety etc. Where necessary, staff must know how to use specific equipment, and be qualified to use it.

- **A detailed itinerary / Programme**

A clearly defined itinerary / programme for the activity must be produced and distributed to all involved prior to the activity

- **Appropriate Staff / young person ratio**

EP uses a staff to young person ration of 1:2.5 for all off-site activities.

- **Insurance**

EP holds Public liability insurance to the value of £5 million, and Employers Liability Insurance to the value of £10 million. With high risk activities such as climbing, trekking, skiing or watersports there may be a need to check insurance cover – if in doubt, **do not proceed** with the activity until confirmation has been given by the Head.

- **Absconding**

EP operates an absconding policy and procedures which must be followed in the event of a young person absconding from an off-site activity.

Emergency Procedures

For the purposes of these procedures a 'serious incident' is defined as:

- an accident leading to a fatality, serious or multiple fractures, amputation or other serious injury;
- circumstances in which a young person might be seriously at risk;
- serious illness;
- any situation in which the press or media are, or might be, involved.

It is important that these procedures are implemented as quickly as possible. They should be carried, along with appropriate information (telephone numbers for example) whenever possible.

First response - care of the group

- Ensure all staff and young people are safe from further danger
- Ensure all necessary steps have been taken to provide rescue, medical care and hospitalisation of anyone who is injured or missing
- Ensure appropriate steps are taken with regard to the welfare of all concerned.
- Contact the Office
- If an incident has, or is at all likely to, involve the press or media, it is important that you inform the Head or other senior member of staff as soon as possible. DO NOT speak to the press yourself
- Do not let young people telephone home until contact has been made with EP. Young people must not use their mobile phones to contact their parents/carers at this stage.

In the case of a serious accident or incident inform the Centre Manager and/or Head as soon as possible. This person must be identified on the emergency contact list. Indicate clearly that it is an emergency and give the following information;

- where you are;
- what has happened to who;
- what has been done so far

The contact person will normally arrange for the next of kin and others to be informed. They will also complete the accident /incident report.

Be sure to keep a careful written record of all facts, events and circumstances and retain this record until all matters are finally settled.

In the event of a fatality:

- notify the police
- give them details of what has happened and what you have done so far (The police will inform the next of kin, if this has not already been arranged through the contact person at EP)
- Ensure that you retain all equipment involved in an accident or incident in an unaltered condition
- NEVER ADMIT LIABILITY OF ANY SORT
- Do not allow anyone to see any party member (staff or young person) without an independent witness being present
- No one, unless they are in a relevant official capacity, has any right to see anyone who does not wish to see them. Should any person not in a relevant official capacity try to force a confrontation, do not say anything and call the police
- DO NOT SPEAK TO THE PRESS OR MEDIA – REFER THEM TO THE HEAD

Monitoring & Review

This policy is reviewed by the Head annually as part of EP's annual cycle of review.