



SENSES Learning Hub

External Visits Policy

Created: 02.09.24

Review date: 11.09.27

Dawn Oughtibridge (Director)

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John Fox (Director)

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SENSES Learning Hub will occasionally arrange trips, visits and learning off-site.

We are committed to providing these as a positive tool to develop students' independent, investigative learning and to build their experience of the local and wider world.

All staff members have a responsibility to:

- take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety
- cooperate with the Directors
- carry out activities in accordance with training and instruction
- inform the Directors of any serious risk
- follow SENSES Learning Hub's safeguarding, health and safety, first aid and emergency procedures while off-site
- report any accident, incident, safeguarding concern, near miss or significant change in circumstances to the Directors as soon as reasonably practicable

This policy has been produced to offer guidelines for the planning and organising of all offsite activities in order to ensure the health and safety of students.

SENSES Learning Hub will take a proportionate and sensible approach to planning external visits. Planning will focus on the genuine risks associated with the activity, location, students and supervising staff rather than unnecessary paperwork. This reflects current HSE guidance on educational visits and the DfE's voluntary national standards for non school alternative provision.

The definition, for the purposes of this policy, of an 'educational visit' means any educational, cultural or sporting activity that requires the students to leave the provision premises having been authorised to do so by the Directors.

This includes the following:

- Visits to places of interest in the local area
- Day visits to museums, galleries and places of educational interest
- Forest School
- Sporting activities
- Community based learning and activities
- Educational, cultural or vocational visits
- Outdoor learning activities



These trips are planned to support and broaden the students' understanding of the current topic.

All activities are available to all children irrespective of needs, ethnicity, gender or religion.

SENSES Learning Hub will make reasonable adjustments where necessary to enable students with SEND or disabilities to participate safely and meaningfully in external visits. Risk assessments will consider individual students' communication, sensory, medical, mobility, emotional regulation and safeguarding needs.

Students will not be excluded from an external visit solely because they have SEND or a disability. Where a particular activity presents significant risks that cannot reasonably be controlled, the Directors will consider the student's individual circumstances and whether an alternative activity or reasonable adjustment can be provided.

Planning and Preparation for a trip

All off-site activities must be approved by the Directors prior to the trip.

The Directors will ensure that the person leading the visit has the appropriate knowledge, skills, experience and competence for the proposed activity and that supervising staff understand their responsibilities.

The level of planning and approval required will be proportionate to the nature of the visit. Routine low risk visits may require less detailed planning than visits involving higher risk activities, unfamiliar environments, significant travel, water, animals, remote locations or specialist activities.

Where an external organisation is used to provide an activity, SENSES Learning Hub will take reasonable steps to check that the organisation is suitable and competent. This may include checking relevant qualifications, insurance, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety procedures, risk assessments and any required licence or accreditation.

Where responsibility for an activity is shared with an external provider, responsibilities for supervision, safeguarding, first aid, emergency arrangements and communication will be established before the visit.

Parental consent

Parents/carers will be informed in advance of dates for trips with a request for consent.

Written parental/carer consent will normally be obtained for external visits, particularly where the visit involves higher levels of risk, travel outside normal hours, specialist activities or activities requiring specific medical or additional support arrangements.

Parents/carers will be provided with sufficient information about the visit to enable them to give informed consent, including where appropriate the destination, activity, timings, transport arrangements, significant risks, emergency arrangements and any specific equipment or clothing required.



Parents/carers will be given an appropriate opportunity to inform SENSES Learning Hub of relevant medical, dietary, communication, sensory or other needs that may affect the student's participation.

Risk assessments

A full risk assessment must be completed prior to a trip. To support the process, existing risk assessments can be used, evaluated and updated, including generic risk assessments, risk assessments completed by staff members who carried out the same trip and/or the generic risk assessments available.

Risk assessments must be proportionate to the activity and identify significant hazards, who may be harmed, existing control measures, additional measures required and the arrangements for monitoring those controls.

The risk assessment must include details of any specific medical issues, additional support for individual students.

Risk assessments must consider the needs of individual students, including SEND, disabilities, medical conditions, allergies, medication, communication needs, sensory needs, emotional regulation, behaviour, safeguarding risks and any known vulnerabilities.

A copy should be taken on the trip, and another copy left in the office.

Parents will always be informed about the trip or activity by email or letter.

The visit leader must review the risk assessment before leaving and remain alert to changing circumstances during the visit. Where circumstances change significantly, the visit leader may amend, postpone or terminate the activity where necessary to protect students and staff.

For higher risk activities, additional specialist advice, training or approval will be obtained where appropriate.

Trip Safety

Students will always be reminded of the behaviour expectations before going off-site on their visit.

SENSES Learning Hub takes the safety of its students on off-site visits extremely seriously. All supervising staff must be made aware of the duty of care which is placed upon them. SENSES Learning Hub's Safeguarding Policy will be implemented during all off-site activities.

A qualified first aider will be on the trips.

The level of supervision will be determined by the risk assessment and will take account of the age, maturity, needs and behaviour of students, the location, activity and environment. There is no single legally prescribed staff to student ratio for educational visits.



Staff will remain responsible for appropriate supervision throughout the visit and will ensure that students understand any boundaries, meeting points and instructions relevant to the activity.

Students will not normally be left unsupervised unless this has been specifically considered, risk assessed and authorised as part of an appropriate activity designed to develop independence.

Safeguarding

SENSES Learning Hub's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy applies during all external visits. Staff remain responsible for safeguarding students throughout the visit and must report any safeguarding concern in accordance with the safeguarding policy.

Staff will have access to relevant emergency contact details and necessary safeguarding and medical information for students. Information will only be shared where it is necessary, proportionate and lawful, subject to safeguarding requirements.

Where a safeguarding concern arises during a visit, staff will take immediate action to protect the student and contact emergency services, parents/carers, the Directors, the relevant commissioning school or local authority and/or children's social care as appropriate.

Medical and First Aid Arrangements

A qualified first aider will normally accompany external visits. The visit leader will ensure that appropriate first aid equipment is available and that staff have access to relevant medical information and emergency medication where required.

Students who require prescribed emergency medication, such as asthma inhalers or adrenaline auto injectors, will have their medication available during the visit in accordance with the SENSES Learning Hub First Aid and Administration of Medicines procedures.

Staff will ensure that medication is not left inaccessible where it may be required in an emergency.

Transport

Where transport is required, SENSES Learning Hub will ensure that reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the transport arrangements are safe and appropriate for the students attending.

Where staff use their own vehicles for an external visit, the vehicle must be appropriately insured for the journey and the driver must hold a valid driving licence and ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and suitable for transporting students.

Where public transport is used, the risk assessment will consider the suitability of the route, supervision requirements, accessibility, communication needs and arrangements for managing separation from the group.

Emergency Arrangements



Every external visit must have an appropriate emergency plan. The visit leader must know how to contact emergency services and how to contact SENSES Learning Hub and parents/carers if an incident occurs.

Emergency arrangements will consider serious injury or illness, a missing student, safeguarding concerns, severe weather, transport failure, fire, evacuation and other reasonably foreseeable emergencies relevant to the visit.

Where an emergency occurs, the immediate priority is the safety and welfare of students and staff. Emergency services will be contacted where appropriate. The Directors will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable where their child is involved in a significant accident, injury, illness, safeguarding incident or other emergency.

The visit leader will maintain appropriate communication with SENSES Learning Hub during the visit where required by the risk assessment.

Higher Risk and Specialist Activities

Activities such as climbing, water sports, trekking, caving or other adventurous activities require specific risk assessment and appropriate specialist provision. Staff must not introduce a higher risk activity during a visit unless it has been appropriately assessed and authorised in advance.

Where an activity requires a licence or specialist qualification, SENSES Learning Hub will ensure that the relevant requirements are met before the activity takes place.

Evaluation of Visits

Following an external visit, staff will consider whether the visit achieved its educational and wellbeing aims and whether any incidents, near misses or unexpected risks occurred.

Significant accidents, incidents and near misses will be recorded and reviewed so that future visits can be planned more safely.

Where a risk assessment or procedure is found to have been ineffective, it will be reviewed and amended before a similar visit takes place.

The Directors will use feedback from students and staff where appropriate to improve future external visits and ensure that activities remain accessible, purposeful and suitable for the needs of SENSES Learning Hub students.

Incident Reporting

Any accident, injury, illness, safeguarding concern, missing student incident or significant near miss occurring during an external visit must be reported to the Directors and recorded in accordance with the relevant SENSES Learning Hub policies.



The Directors will consider whether an incident requires notification to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR or referral to another appropriate authority.

Review Log

Review date	Completed by who
20.08.25	John Fox and Dawn Oughtibridge
11.09.26	John Fox and Dawn Oughtibridge