

Education, Children and Families Committee

10:00 am, Tuesday, 12 December 2017

Communities and Families Excursions Policy

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Executive/routine	
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Executive Summary

The updated Communities and Families Excursions Policy sets out The City of Edinburgh Council's employer framework for delivering safe and high quality excursions, which make appropriate use of resources and deliver significant outcomes.

The Policy considers Scottish Government advice via the 'Going Out There: Scottish Framework for Safe Practice in Offsite Visits' resource.

Communities and Families Excursions Policy

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the proposed Communities and Families Excursions Policy is approved.

2. Background

- 2.1 An excursion is defined as an offsite activity away from a recognised establishment/location.
- 2.2 The Sports and Outdoor Learning Unit is responsible for the Communities and Families Excursion Policy.
- 2.3 The current Policy was last reviewed and updated in 2011.
- 2.4 The foundations of the existing Policy are fit for purpose. The overall safety record of City of Edinburgh Council excursions is excellent. Any specific issues are addressed via evaluation feedback, monitoring and incident reporting.
- 2.5 A policy review was required to take account of recent Council structural change; stakeholder feedback; updated national guidance; and to identify opportunities to reduce unnecessary paperwork and systems.
- 2.6 Scottish Government guidance on excursions states that employer's responsibilities include:
- Providing guidelines to Heads of Establishment, Excursions Coordinators and Group Leaders (titles adjusted to match The City of Edinburgh roles);
 - Providing access to technical advice;
 - Assessing proposals for certain categories of excursions (especially visits or travel outside the UK and adventure activities);
 - Having emergency procedures in place for dealing with major incidents / emergencies;
 - Ensuring training needs have been addressed;
 - Providing access to named staff for advice;
 - Having appropriate insurance cover in place; and
 - Having in place procedures to monitor and review off-site visits and activities.

Adapted from 'Going Out There: Scottish Framework for Safe Practice in Offsite Visits' (15.1)

2.7 The Scottish Government recognises the importance of excursions via the Curriculum for Excellence and Going Out There framework. For example, Going Out There states:

'Giving more children and young people access to outdoor learning and play opportunities provides invaluable life experiences which could not be achieved without 'going out there' more regularly and more frequently.

Scotland's outdoor environment offers motivating, exciting, varied, relevant and easily accessible activities from pre-school years through to college and beyond. Through Curriculum for Excellence, the Scottish Government endorses the value of children and young people enjoying positive learning and play experiences in a wide variety of settings from galleries and museums to woodlands, parks and wild, natural spaces, as well as planned adventure and residential experiences.'

2.8 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires employers to provide and maintain safe systems of work, information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary with respect to the health and safety at work. It also requires that this information is brought to the attention of all employees.

2.9 The updated City of Edinburgh Council's Health and Safety statement sets out general expectations:

Protecting the health and safety and welfare of our employees, and our third parties including members of the public, contractors, service users and pupils, is the starting point to delivering a thriving, sustainable capital city.

Accordingly, we will manage health and safety and welfare in a way that:

- takes all reasonable steps to protect the health and safety and welfare of our employees and third parties;
- demonstrates our commitment to continually improve health and safety performance; and
- complies with health and safety statutory and regulatory requirements, and all relevant approved codes of practice and guidance.

2.10 The Excursions Policy sets out the requirements for a significant number of excursions involving a high number of children, young people and vulnerable adults. For example, Categories Three and Four recorded excursion approvals by the Sports and Outdoor Unit (adventurous, residential, overseas and any other potential):

	Number of young persons per time period. Categories Three and Four only.		
	August 2014 – July 2015	August 2015 – July 2016	August 2016 – July 2017
Primary School Pupils	6680	6121	6830
Secondary School Pupils	11226	8175	11069
Special School Pupils	608	552	549
Community Centre Young Persons	675	1237	1492
Duke of Edinburgh's Award Young Persons	849	1068	1154
Residential centres young persons	125	244	161
Other	49	55	112
Total	20,212	17,452	21,367

- 2.11 The recent restructuring of the Outdoor Learning Team has retained and developed an important breadth and depth of knowledge and current experience of excursions across the Communities and Families Department. This includes highly qualified Instructors, Outdoor Learning Development Officers, former Teachers and Centre Operations Managers. These persons collectively provide the specialist technical knowledge and experience required to operate, monitor and review the Excursions Policy across the Communities and Families Department.
- 2.12 Continuing professional development evaluation feedback indicates that the Sports and Outdoor Learning Team provide high quality excursion training. A small number of pilot Excursion Coordinator training sessions were held in September 2017. Overall, feedback is very good - participants are asked to provide a score between 4 (fully/greatly/excellent) and 1 (none/not at all):

Key Evaluation Questions	Column A Mean Score* New Excursions Coordinator Training (September 2017)	Column B Mean Score* Existing Group Leader Training (January 2017 – September 2017)
Number of participants.	18	212
To what extent did the learning activity meet your learning needs?	3.82	3.77
To what extent do you think that your skills/knowledge in this area have improved/increased?	3.83	3.54
To what extent do you feel able to apply your new skills/knowledge back in the workplace?	3.83	3.70
Please rate the facilitator on knowledge of subject	4.00	3.94
Please rate the facilitator on style and delivery	4.00	3.72
To what extent do you think that the learning activity achieved the stated outcomes?	3.89	3.89
To what extent do you think that the learning will contribute to your future development?	3.89	3.59
To what extent do you feel your new skills/knowledge will have a positive impact on service users?	3.94	3.69

3. Main report

- 3.1 The proposed Policy content sets out the requirements for excursions within the Communities and Families Department which must be met.
- 3.2 The proposed Policy has considered and utilised guidance from the Scottish Government - Going Out There: Scottish Framework for Safe Practice in Offsite Visits (15.1).
- 3.3 The proposed Policy will replace the existing Excursions Policy from the 1 January, 2018. It takes into account the new structural arrangements and provides additional and updated guidance and requirements on specific areas relating to excursions.
- 3.4 New features, sections and requirements compared with the existing Excursions Policy are as follows:

- 3.4.1 The digital PDF version has interactive links in the header, contents page and throughout the document to assist users in finding information within the proposed Policy and other Council policies and guidance across The Orb.
 - 3.4.2 New summary tables provide an overview of information to assist users in understanding and following requirements. There is a summary table which identifies new and updated information within the proposed Policy.
 - 3.4.3 Scope of Policy (Policy Section 1.4). A new section provides clarity about the kind of activity that falls within scope of the proposed Policy. The aim is to ensure that all qualifying activities are identified as excursions and fall within the scope of the Policy.
 - 3.4.4 Excursions Coordinators are now required to register via SurveyMonkey. This is a quick process that allows the Sports and Outdoor Learning Unit to keep up to date information and disseminate key information quickly across the Communities and Families Department. Excursions Coordinators now receive a monthly update email to keep them informed about key information and changes. From August 2018, Categories Three and Four excursions will not be approved unless Excursions Coordinators are registered and have attended the relevant training programme.
 - 3.4.5 In line with advice from 'Going Out There', there is new guidance about the approval of 'unaccompanied excursions' in exceptional circumstances (Policy Section 3.2.12).
 - 3.4.6 There are clear expectations for local approval by establishments of Categories One and Two, defined as more familiar locations with less risk and closer to the establishment (Policy Section 3.4.2).
 - 3.4.7 New guidance and signposting information about data protection and retention is included. This will support upcoming changes in data protection laws (Policy Section 3.8).
 - 3.4.8 New guidance on signing waivers and disclaimers is included to ensure employees fully understand all documentation from third parties and are cautious when signing agreements (Policy Section 3.9).
 - 3.4.9 A new online feedback form should improve the number of feedback responses and reduce paperwork (Policy Section 7.3).
 - 3.4.10 New guidance on mobile phones should address how these can support excursions and potentially cause issues (Policy Section 10).
 - 3.4.11 Two new guidance sections on trampoline parks and drinking/cooking water provision on expeditions provide the necessary detail to minimise risks (Policy Sections 16 and 17).
- 3.5 Updated actions and requirements compared with the existing Excursions Policy are as follows:

- 3.5.1 Clearer signposting to Sports and Outdoor Learning staff for advice and support.
- 3.5.2 The introduction has been rewritten to emphasise the importance of high quality excursions and the appropriate use of The City of Edinburgh Council's resources (Policy Section 1.1). It is important that Head of Establishments and Excursions Coordinators manage excursions to ensure high quality outcomes, relevant experiences and appropriate use of resources.
- 3.5.3 An updated training programme (Policy Section 1.5) will include separate training for Excursions Coordinators and Group Leaders; and additional 'bolt-on' specialist sessions linked to key topics such as transport, insurance and exchange visits. Excursion Coordinator Training and Group Leader Training will be mandatory and must be renewed every three years (Group Leader of Categories Three and Four excursions).
- 3.5.4 Updated roles and responsibilities will address recent structural changes (Policy Section 2).
- 3.5.5 The child protection guidance has been updated to reflect the latest national and local guidance (Policy Section 3.2.2).
- 3.5.6 Additional guidance on remote supervision is based on monitoring feedback (Policy Section 3.2.13).
- 3.5.7 Excursions categories have been named for clarity and updated with new activities (Policy Section 3.3).
- 3.5.8 Parental consent guidance has been updated to provide a recommended model to support establishments in managing consent (Policy Section 3.6).
- 3.5.9 Insurance guidance has been clarified, particularly around travel and personal accident insurance (Policy Section 5).
- 3.5.10 There is more detailed guidance on overseas excursions. This is based on monitoring and stakeholder feedback and will support future excursions (Policy Section 9).
- 3.5.11 Incident reporting guidance has been updated requesting employees to insert the word 'excursion' into reports. This will make it easier for the Health and Safety Team to report on excursion incidents (Policy Section 11).
- 3.5.12 Accompanying forms are being updated and will be included in the proposed Policy's appendices. Existing forms can be accessed via [The Orb](#).
- 3.6 Transitional arrangements have been included throughout the Policy. These will ensure establishments continue to deliver excursions and abide by clear deadlines for training and actions.
- 3.7 The proposed Policy will be launched via email, short presentations at key events and training.

- 3.8 The first review will be in August 2018. The proposed Policy will then be reviewed annually or earlier to comply with changing legislation, in response to a significant occurrence and/or significant internal and external guidance.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Excursions continue to be safe and of high quality.
- 4.2 The number of excursions are at least maintained and opportunities explored for increasing the number of high quality excursions, which are relevant to the needs of young people and vulnerable adults, and represent appropriate use of resources.
- 4.3 All relevant employees and volunteers are aware of the proposed Policy and know how to access it.
- 4.4 All Excursions Coordinators across the Communities and Families Department are identified and registered with the Sports and Outdoor Learning Unit by 1 February 2018.
- 4.5 All Excursions Coordinators have undertaken the new training programme by the 1 August 2018.
- 4.6 Group Leaders of Categories Three and Four excursions continue to update their training within three years.
- 4.7 Training evaluation feedback is a mean score of at least 3.5 for each relevant question.
- 4.8 User feedback indicates very high levels of satisfaction with the Policy.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 No direct financial impact.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The potential impact of failure to manage the health and safety of excursions and other requirements such as insurance and application of other policies includes death, injury, ill health, legal liabilities, financial losses and reputational damage.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 This Policy provides guidance on equality (Policy Section 8.4). This will minimise the risk of equalities issues arising from this Policy.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no sustainability issues arising from this Policy.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 A range of stakeholders have supported the Policy review processes. This has been via working groups, email correspondence and meetings. This included invitations to internal teams such as Fleet Management, Social Care, Insurance, Lifelong Learning, Early Years, Schools and Health and Safety colleagues. External partners were also engaged, including Friends of the Award and The Green Team.
- 9.2 The drafting of the proposed Policy has been monitored via The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Education Advisory Group (OEAG).
- 9.3 A draft Policy was presented to schools via the Head Teacher Executive Meeting on the 12 October 2017.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Going Out There: Scottish Framework for Safe Practice in Offsite Visits](#) . A framework developed in partnership by the Scottish Government, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education, Education Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education, with input from other partners including voluntary organisations and providers.
- 10.2 [Adventure Activities Licensing Authority](#). The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) came into existence in April 1996. It is currently sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions. The Health and Safety Executive is currently designated as the AALA. Adventure activities licensing ensures that activity providers follow good safety management practices. These should allow young people to experience exciting and stimulating activities outdoors without being exposed to avoidable risks of death or disabling injury.
- 10.3 The Scottish National Improvement Hub. [Support for Professional Development in Outdoor Learning](#).
- 10.4 [English Outdoor Council - High quality outdoor learning publication](#). This guide outlines the benefits of working in outdoor contexts and has been written to help evaluate, and set about improving, or further improving, the quality of outdoor learning. In support of this, ten key outcomes of outdoor learning have been identified with a range of indicators attributed to each one.
- 10.5 [Health and Safety Executive - 'Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974'](#).

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11. Appendices

11.1 Proposed Communities and Families Excursions Policy.