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Writing policies to reduce bureaucracy for routine off-site activities and visits

You can avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and paperwork associated with outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom, by ensuring that the planned activities are covered by the establishment's generic policy and standard operating procedures. This applies to visits and activities that are:

- Straightforward
- Suitable for being covered by a "blanket consent", or where parental consent is not required
- Covered by a generic risk-benefit assessment.

You can find further guidance in document 1b '*Foundations*'.

Activities and visits that can be covered in this way include:

- Activities/visits organised by schools during normal school hours, where parental consent is not required (except for nursery-age children), such as:
 - Forest Schools
 - Outdoor Learning Cards
 - Local sports fixtures during school hours
 - Weekly swimming lessons
 - Local learning area visits such as to local parks, libraries, museums etc.
 - Regular curriculum-based adventure activities (e.g. climbing as part of the PE curriculum)
 - 14 -19 multi-site curriculum delivery
 - Activities/visits outside normal school hours, where blanket consent is appropriate, such as local sports fixtures out of school hours
- Youth "drop-in" activity centres

Such policy and operating procedures **must** cover, as appropriate:

- Scope and remit
- Clearly defined geographical boundaries
- Clearly defined activities
- Defined leader competencies/identification of approved leaders
- Leader training and induction

- Generic risk management procedures
- Parental information and blanket consent (where consent is needed)
- Transport arrangements
- First aid
- Communications
- Emergency Plan
- Curriculum Planning if taking place in school time

For the procedures to be implemented on the day, the following conditions **must** be met:

- There is a sufficiently competent leader/leadership team.
- There is an emergency base contact at the establishment.
- The appropriate people know who has gone where, with whom, and when they will be back.
- Approval, if needed, has been given.
- The Visit Leaders have appropriate information about the individual needs of participants.
- Effective communication between the establishment and the leaders is possible.
- Fits parental expectations

Benefits of this approach include:

- Less bureaucracy
- Confident and reassured leaders
- Confident and reassured managers
- Confident employers
- Increased activity
- High profile of outdoor learning

