# Trips and Off-Site Activities Policy

## Document Control

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| **Distribution** | All Staff, Volunteers, Directors, Sessional Workers |

## 1. Purpose

This policy sets out how South Cumbria Skills Exchange (SCSE), operated by Whamos Training and Development CIC, plans, risk-assesses, runs and reviews trips and off-site activities involving learners.

Off-site activity is a significant part of the SCSE offer, particularly given our filmmaking work, which routinely takes learners to location for filming. Good off-site practice is essential to keep learners safe, to safeguard staff, and to maintain the trust of commissioning bodies, parents and carers.

This policy reflects the DfE's Health and Safety on Educational Visits guidance, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, KCSIE 2024, and the Equality Act 2010.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to any SCSE-organised activity that takes learners off the Devonshire Road Industrial Estate premises during a session. This includes:

- Local short walks
- Filmmaking location work in the local area or further afield
- Visits to museums, employers, training providers, festivals, or community settings
- Residential or overnight activity
- Activity involving learners attending an event in their own right where SCSE is part of the supporting arrangements

It does not cover:

- Learner journeys to and from SCSE (covered by the Attendance Policy and Safeguarding Policy)
- Personal activity learners undertake outside SCSE sessions

## 3. Categories of off-site activity

We use four categories:

- **Routine** — short, local activity in a low-risk setting (e.g. a walk to a nearby venue, a visit to the local library). Risk assessment is briefer; parental consent is via a standing annual consent at placement.
- **Standard** — activity that involves greater distance, longer duration, public transport, or a moderate-risk setting. Specific risk assessment and consent required.

- **Higher-risk** — activity involving water, height, special equipment, late-night work, vulnerable urban locations, or filming in challenging environments. Detailed risk assessment, written consent for that activity, and additional staffing.
- **Residential / overnight** — activity that involves staying overnight away from home. Most rigorous planning, including night-time supervision, gender-considered sleeping arrangements, and full risk assessment.

The session lead determines the category for each activity in consultation with the Directors.

## 4. Planning an off-site activity

For every activity above the “routine” category, the following steps are completed before departure:

**1. Activity proposal**

A brief written proposal capturing:

- Purpose and learning outcomes
- Date, time, duration
- Location(s)
- Mode of travel
- Staff involved
- Learners attending
- Risks expected
- Cost (if any) and how it is being met
- Commissioning school confirmation that the learner can be off-site for this activity

**2. Risk assessment**

A specific risk assessment, in addition to SCSE’s general Risk Assessment, that addresses:

- Hazards at the location and en route
- Staff:learner ratio
- First aid and medical considerations
- Behaviour and safeguarding (including off-site lone-working considerations)
- Filming-specific hazards (lighting, public access, weather exposure, equipment safety)
- Emergency plan and route to nearest A&E
- Specific risks for individual learners with known vulnerabilities
- Mitigation measures and contingency plans

The activity risk assessment is signed off by a Director before the activity goes ahead.

**3. Parental and commissioning consent**

Standing consent at the point of placement covers routine local activity. Anything beyond that requires:

- Written parental/carer consent specific to the activity
- Notification of the commissioning school (with confirmation that the school is content for the learner to be off-site for this activity)
- For looked-after learners, agreement of the social worker / corporate parent

For learners aged 16–17 who are competent to consent themselves, parental consent is sought where reasonably practicable and the learner’s own consent is always recorded.

**4. Information for parents**

Parents and carers receive:

- Times of departure and return
- The destination(s) and route
- The staff in charge and how to contact them in an emergency

- The activity description
- What learners need to bring
- Any cost involved
- The arrangement if a learner becomes unwell or distressed

**5. Pre-activity briefing for learners**

Learners are briefed on:

- What they are going to do
- Behaviour expectations
- Safety expectations
- What to do if separated from the group
- Who to go to if they feel unwell or distressed
- The plan for the day and any sensory considerations (helpful for neurodivergent learners)

## 5. Staff:learner ratios

Indicative ratios:

- **Routine local activity** — 1 staff member per 6 learners, minimum 2 staff
- **Standard activity** — 1 staff member per 4–6 learners, minimum 2 staff
- **Higher-risk activity** — 1 staff member per 3–4 learners, minimum 2 staff
- **Residential** — 1 staff member per 4 learners minimum, with night-supervision arrangements

For learners with heightened vulnerability, higher needs, or specific medical conditions, the ratio is increased and may approach 1:1.

Activities do not proceed if the minimum staffing cannot be met.

## 6. Filmmaking on location

Filming on location adds specific considerations:

- **Location consent** — written permission from the landowner or relevant authority. For public spaces, check whether a permit is required (e.g. for filming in protected sites or with technical equipment that affects public access).
- **Public liability** — confirm insurance cover for the location and activity.
- **Members of the public on camera** — filming in public places may inadvertently capture members of the public. The session lead briefs the team on consent etiquette and visible signage notifying the public that filming is taking place.
- **Equipment safety** — cables, lighting, cranes, drones, anything elevated or weighted, requires its own safety check.
- **Vulnerable subjects** — where filming involves vulnerable people (e.g. a community group with learning disabilities or older people in residential settings), written informed consent is obtained from each subject or their appropriate representative.
- **Late-night filming** — restricted to learners aged 16+ and only with parental consent; ratios increase; transport home is arranged.
- **Filming children outside SCSE** — where the project involves filming other children, additional safeguarding arrangements apply, including the child's school or organisation being involved.

## 7. Transport

Transport for off-site activity follows these principles:

- **Public transport** — used where feasible and time allows; learners briefed on safety en route
- **Hired minibus or coach** — driver to hold the relevant licence (PCV or D1 as appropriate); vehicle to have a current safety check

- **Staff-driven private vehicles** — used only where the staff member has a current full driving licence, business-use insurance covering passenger transport, and a current SCSE check of licence and insurance documentation
- **Walking** — for short journeys in safe locations only
- **Learner self-arranged transport** — learners do not transport other learners

For all transport, an emergency plan is in place (alternative transport home, contact arrangements if a vehicle breaks down).

## 8. Insurance

SCSE holds public liability insurance through its insurer. Before any activity outside the standard local area, the session lead confirms cover applies. For higher-risk activities or activities further afield, the Directors confirm cover in writing before the activity proceeds.

## 9. First aid and medical

For every off-site activity:

- A first aid kit appropriate to the activity is carried
- At least one trained first aider is present (both Directors hold current First Aid at Work)
- Medication required by any learner is brought, with the relevant IHP and parental authorisation, in line with the Administration of Medication Policy
- The location of the nearest A&E and the emergency services contact are known to the staff team

## 10. Communication during the activity

Staff carry mobile phones with SCSE's emergency contact list. The Directors are reachable throughout the activity (or a named on-call Director is identified if neither is present). Parents and the commissioning school have the activity-specific contact number.

Where the activity takes learners into areas of poor mobile signal, an alternative communication plan is in place (e.g. agreed check-in times and routes, walkie-talkies).

## 11. During the activity

Throughout the activity, staff:

- Maintain a register of learners present
- Carry a written copy of the risk assessment and emergency plan
- Maintain regular head-counts (especially at transitions)
- Apply the SCSE behaviour and safeguarding approach as they would on site
- Address any safeguarding concern in the same way as on site
- Note any deviation from the plan or incident in the activity log

## 12. Missing learner off-site

If a learner cannot be located during off-site activity:

- The session lead immediately initiates a search
- A staff member stays with the rest of the group
- After 15 minutes the parent/carer, commissioning school and DSL are notified
- If after 30 minutes the learner is not located, police are called
- The procedure in the Missing Child Policy is followed in parallel

## 13. Incidents and accidents

Any incident or accident off-site is:

- Addressed immediately, with first aid and emergency services as needed
- Reported to the parent/carer and commissioning school the same day
- Recorded in the accident book on return
- Reported under RIDDOR if applicable (see Health and Safety Policy)
- Reviewed by the Directors and used to inform future activity planning

## 14. Inclusive practice

Activities are designed to be inclusive. Specifically:

- Sensory factors (crowds, noise, lighting) are considered for neurodivergent learners
- Quiet/down time is built into the day
- Activities are not made conditional on physical ability where reasonable adjustments can enable participation
- Cost is not a barrier — SCSE covers the cost or works with the commissioning body to do so
- Cultural and religious considerations are respected (food, observance, dress)

## 15. Residential activity

Residential activity is exceptional in scope and is subject to:

- Detailed planning at least eight weeks in advance
- Specific written consent from parents/carers and the commissioning school for each learner
- An enhanced risk assessment
- Designated sleeping arrangements that account for safeguarding (no learner sharing a room with a staff member; appropriate considerations of gender, vulnerability and any history)
- Night-time supervision
- 24-hour staff contact arrangements
- A medical plan in place for every learner

## 16. Cancellation

An activity is cancelled if:

- Minimum staffing cannot be met
- A specific risk has emerged that cannot be mitigated (weather, location closure, transport failure)
- A safeguarding or behaviour concern requires the matter to be addressed before going off-site
- A risk assessment review has not been completed

Cancellation is communicated to parents, learners and the commissioning school as early as possible.

## 17. Records

For each activity beyond “routine” the following records are kept for at least seven years:

- Activity proposal
- Risk assessment
- Consents
- Staff team and roles
- Register of learners present
- Incident log
- Post-activity review

## 18. Training

All staff who lead off-site activity complete:

- Off-site activity briefing at induction
- First aid training
- Annual safeguarding refresher
- Specific training for higher-risk activities (e.g. lone-working, water safety, drone operation) as required

## 19. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside:

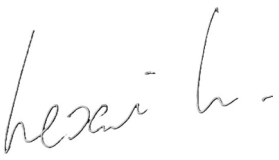
- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Risk Assessment
- Administration of Medication Policy
- SEND Policy
- Missing Child and Child Missing from Education Policy
- Photography, Filming and Image Use Policy
- Lone and Remote Working Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

## 20. Policy review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Directors, or sooner if statutory guidance, our activity programme, or our risk picture changes.

## Approval & Review

This policy has been approved on behalf of the Directors:

| **Elizabeth Amos-Milburn**<br>*Co-Director* | **Alexandra Gager-Liebhart**<br>*Co-Director* |
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**Date of approval:** 18th May 2026

**Next review:** 18th May 2027

## Schedule 1 — Record of Changes

| Version | Date | Nature of Change |
|---|---|---|
| 001 | 18th May 2026 | Initial published version included in the Combined Policies and Procedures 2026 edition. |