**FAQs in relation to Outdoor Learning off-site visits – issue 1 : April 2021**

When planning any off-site visit it is important that:

* the educational aims and objectives are clear and purposeful
* it complies with LA/Employer and Scottish Government guidance[[1]](#footnote-1)
* an appropriate risk/benefit assessment has been carried out
* any travel arrangements follow latest guidance as set out in the Scottish Government’s Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Routine and Regular Visits**

*Can I still use my local greenspace for outdoor learning if members of the public regularly walk through it?*

Yes. Using local greenspace can support safe outdoor learning and provide extra space for distancing between consistent groups of learners. Its good practice for groups to use uncrowded green space for outdoor learning and have a plan B prepared if a local or further afield outdoor venue becomes overcrowded.  Evidence indicates that the risk of transmission outdoors is low, but distancing between other users should be maintained.

**Managing groups and equipment**

*What additional measures do I need to put in place when working outdoors?*

Evidence has shown that teaching outside is the **safest method** of delivery but here are some issues to consider:

* Plan 5-10% extra activity time to help cover hand washing, equipment cleaning and additional information to keep the activities as safe as possible. Build this into your risk assessment
* Although 2m physical distancing is not required, consider how to maintain distancing where practical and minimise contact
* Minimise sharing by allocating easy to clean equipment to groups. Follow employer enhanced cleaning protocols between groups
* Use of face coverings are not compulsory outdoors, however, they can be used if individuals want to or are advised to
* Consider how to maintain personal hygiene including frequent washing/sanitising of hands by providing suitable hand sanitiser or wipes and extra bags for disposal of waste

**Residential Visits – UK and Overseas**

*Can I book a residential at a Scottish outdoor centre for this year or next?*

Yes – from 10th May outdoor expeditions are allowed and from 31st May you can visit an Outdoor Education Residential Centre. However you need to ensure you are following your LA/employer guidance. Schools should check relevant guidance for other UK countries if they are planning cross border visits within the UK.

*Can I start planning a ski trip abroad for my school?*

Whilst current restrictions do not permit overseas visits, they need to be planned and booked well in advance. As such we would advise early discussion with operators regarding the measures they are putting in place, including safeguarding payment, should continuing travel restrictions result in cancellation. You should ensure you are following your LA/employer guidance.

*Is it recommended to wild camp for my DofE group or use designated campsites with amenities where regular cleaning takes place?*

From 10th May outdoor expeditions are allowed subject to limits and conditions[[3]](#footnote-3). Deciding whether to wild camp or used a managed camp site should considered as part of a COVID based risk assessment and it may be that a managed site offers certain advantages, whilst in other circumstances a wild camp may offer benefits. Much will also depend on the experience of the group, and the competency and qualification of the leaders, which should be considered as part of the risk assessment process.

**Extra-Curricular Activity**

*Can I restart my cycling after school club?*

Current Scottish Government advice is that the provision of activities or clubs outside the usual school timetable, that are important for wider health and development of children, can be offered. This is subject to following Scottish Government’s Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools[[4]](#footnote-4) and Covid guidance for the general public where applicable. Schools should consider the need for out of hours cleaning when scheduling activities.

**Volunteers and Partners**

*Can a local outdoor learning specialist come and work with my class in the school grounds?*

In the most recent guidance from Scottish Government outdoor specialists were listed as those allowed to work across schools. Engaging with partners who can support outdoor learning is encouraged but it is important that a risk benefit is carried out to ensure the risks of COVID transmission are minimised.

*Can our volunteers and outdoor learning specialist partners be part of the Asymptomatic School Testing Programme?*

Some partners may have already have access to asymptomatic testing, but if not, consideration could be given to them being included in the school system as part of the risk benefit

**Transport**

*Can we transport groups to facilitate Outdoor Learning? (e.g. hire a coach to undertake a day visit to an outdoor adventure centre, use the school/partner organisation minibus to take a group on a field trip or to participate in an adventure activity?)*

Scottish Government states that offsite visit travel arrangements should follow latest guidance as set out in the Scottish Government’s Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools.

School staff should check their local authority / employer guidance for advice and approval.

1. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-school-visits-and-trips/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.scot%2Fpublications%2Fcoronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools%2F&data=04%7C01%7CAli.Dreyer%40fife.gov.uk%7C3ca4d379d058431728e608d8eeff2cc8%7Cf969a52f42c040f198badaed6c43087c%7C0%7C1%7C637522127036615328%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=W8NEfPdiipZgyriQAWECTNQ4H6mcd8MFGUIYRHlscww%3D&reserved=0) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-school-visits-and-trips/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.scot%2Fpublications%2Fcoronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools%2F&data=04%7C01%7CAli.Dreyer%40fife.gov.uk%7C3ca4d379d058431728e608d8eeff2cc8%7Cf969a52f42c040f198badaed6c43087c%7C0%7C1%7C637522127036615328%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=W8NEfPdiipZgyriQAWECTNQ4H6mcd8MFGUIYRHlscww%3D&reserved=0) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)