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## **REVISED OUTDOOR EDUCATION POLICY**

**Report by Service Director, Young People, Engagement and Inclusion**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**18 May 2021**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report proposes that the attached Revised Outdoor Education Policy reflects and aligns with the national guidelines outlined in the Scottish Government document 'Going Out There' in order to provide clear guidance on delivering outdoor education in Scottish Borders schools and Early Years settings.**
- 1.2 Outdoor education provides invaluable life experience for children and young people through play and off site activities.
- 1.3 These activities need to be planned ensuring safety at all times.
- 1.4 The National Framework 'Going Out There' was developed to enable its widest possible adoption by integrating support at Local Authority level, along with management, delivery and practice at school/Early Years level.
- 1.5 Adoption of the good practice detailed in the framework, and consequently in the revised Policy, allows Scottish Borders Council to fulfil their responsibilities within the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for outdoor experiences and off site activities for all participants.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee agree to approve the final draft of the Revised Outdoor Education Policy (Appendix 1) and confirm that it can be circulated to all schools and Early Years settings in Scottish Borders.**



### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scottish Government publication 'Going Out There' is central to the development of the Revised Outdoor Education Policy. It has been developed in partnership by the Scottish Government, the Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education, the Health and Safety Executive, Education Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education Scotland.
- 3.2 Its main aim is to give more children and young people access to outdoor learning and play opportunities, as this provides invaluable life experiences.
- 3.3 The framework, and revised Policy, is supported by tools, resources and accompanying examples of good practice for the planning and evaluation of different levels of outdoor experiences and off site visits.
- 3.4 The range of activities covered is as follows:
- a) Routine and expected – this is regular activity as part of normal everyday practice in play and learning. For example, local off site visits by foot, local transport or private hire.
  - b) Adventure activities.
  - c) Residential activities.
  - d) International trips and experiences.
- 3.5 Accidents and mistakes may happen during off site visits and the Revised Policy strengthens safety for young people by:
- a) Giving clearer guidance around first aid provision for all off site activities. This must now be accessible at the activity and transport to and from it. It can be a combination of first aid trained school staff and first aid administered by the providers.
  - b) Revising the staff:pupil supervision ratios for off site activity. These ratios vary with the type of activity being undertaken.
  - c) Transferring the responsibility of sourcing the relevant risk assessments and insurance certificates from providers to schools. This ensures that schools have direct access to this information, allowing them to make informed choices. Previously the Education Department sourced these items, but this was highlighted as poor practise in an internal audit.
- 3.6 Another key contributor to safe and successful practice in the different levels of outdoor experiences and off site visits is the ability and competence of front line staff to plan and manage a dynamic situation in a safe and appropriate way. This is underpinned in the framework by:
- a) The Local Authority supporting Headteachers.
  - b) Headteachers supporting, identifying and deploying staff with the right competencies and experience for leading different off site visits.

- c) Staff having available training opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence in planning, organising and leading outdoor activities or off site visits.

## **4 SUBJECT MATTER**

- 4.1 The Revised Outdoor Education Policy incorporates the action points from an Internal Audit and uses, as its basis, "Going Out There", the Scottish Government's Outdoor Education Guidance. By adopting this policy Schools and Early Years settings will have a framework which ensures they are planning outdoor education experiences ensuring the safety of all those participating. Using Going Out There also aligns Scottish Borders Council with the other Scottish Local Authorities.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

### **5.2 Risk and Mitigations**

The Council has considered new national documentation to ensure that Council policy and guidance takes account of all national advice, guidance and statute. Officers have been fully consulted with a range of partners before finalising documents, therefore mitigating any potential risks to practice. By not adopting the Revised Policy there is a risk that Scottish Borders Council will not fulfil their responsibilities within the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for outdoor experiences and off site activities.

### **5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

- a) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications. It was identified that cost of an excursion could be an issue for families with restricted finances but this is mitigated in the revised policy along with schools' work on reducing the cost of the school day by ensuring that alternative funding streams are accessed to support these families.
- b) It is anticipated that there are no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report. It was identified that there could be barriers to a young person accessing an activity due to a disability. This is mitigated in the revised policy that an activity must be accessible by all the young people participating. Any additional cost in ensuring accessibility is taken into account at the planning stage and is shared by all those participating. Schools can also access additional funding streams to help with any additional costs involved.

### **5.4 Sustainable Development Goals**

There are no significant impacts on the economy, community or environment arising from the proposals contained in this report.

## 5.5 **Climate Change**

On implementing the electronic excursion recording system, Evolve, there will be a significant reduction in the paper used in the planning and recording of excursions. The publication, Going Out There, encourages schools to use their local area as the basis for excursions thus reducing carbon emissions associated with transport.

## 5.6 **Rural Proofing**

Rural proofing was applied to the revised policy and one area emerged as a possible issue. In rural areas a significant proportion of young people rely on school transport. Where a school excursion commences or finishes out with the school day, schools must ensure that all young people have alternative transport arranged when school transport is not available.

## 5.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

## 5.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

### **Approved by**

**Lesley Munro**  
**Service Director,**

**Young People Engagement & Inclusion**

**Signature.....**

Author(s)

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**Background Papers:** N/A

**Previous Minute Reference:** N/A

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