

Going Places

The offsite and adventurous activities' newsletter

This is the third issue of Going Places, which is a newsletter for all those using the Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) offsite visits database. The system is now used comprehensively by schools, the Youth Service, Children's Centres and Children's Social Care who have recently received their training.

Cloning of visits

Database users have asked that regular and routine visits can be copied (cloned) to save time putting a visit on the system. This issue has been discussed several times at the Offsite Visits Group (OVG) (user representatives) and it was felt that each visit is unique with different participants and different needs. In addition personnel at venues change from one year to the next and therefore risk assessments would need to be reviewed. It was agreed by the group to put this development on hold and look at alternatives.



Changes to the database

Since the last newsletter there have been several changes to the database:

- After the training in February 2012 it was agreed that governors' approvals and comments would be part of the headteacher's approval. Governor approval should now be recorded as a comment as part of the headteacher approval.
- At the OVG meeting it was requested that Offsite Visits Co-ordinators (OVCs) should receive all alerts so that they can follow the progress of approvals for visits.
- Due to the volume of visits at some schools it was requested by schools that the old visits were archived. Frontline Data have incorporated a filter dropdown box so that visits would be stored yearly.
- At the request of the local authority Frontline Data have put a link to the offsite and adventurous activities manual on the status page.

Changes to the manual

Since the last newsletter here have also been several amendments to the manual including:

- Paragraph 5.07 provides a list of activities that are not approved by BFC because these activities have a higher risk of injury.
- Paragraph 6.07 requires that all foreign visits must comply with the advice set out by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
- There are new activity sheets for farm visits, ten pin bowling, activity theme parks and go karting.

The private use of cars

Since October motorists do not need to display a paper tax disc in their windscreens. You can look up the tax status of any vehicle by using DVLA's Vehicle Enquiry System <https://www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax>. You will need the vehicle registration number and the make of the vehicle to make the enquiry. The private use of cars form has been amended to include the registration number and make.

Consent for offsite visits

In June 2013 the Department for Education relaxed the guidance for parental consent for offsite visits. The local authority, in consultation with our retained consultant and advisor Brian Mallett (OVA) have reviewed the consent procedures. Please note the following guidance which has been included in Section 10 of the offsite and adventurous activities manual:

- The consent and medical form needs to be completed by anyone on an offsite visit, this includes all adults and staff.
- The consent and medical form can be completed once annually for all local visits that don't require OVA approval.
- Individual consent and medical forms must still be completed for visits which need to go to the OVA such as adventurous activities, residential activities, activities abroad and exchange visits.
- Paragraphs 10.12 and 10.13 provide advice on the retention and destruction of the medical and consent forms as agreed with the council's Data Protection Officer.



Annual consent

To save on the duplication of paperwork for schools to parents/carers the data collection form schools send out at the beginning of the Autumn term has been amended to incorporate the medical and consent form for local visits.

It must be made clear that a new form is required to be completed if there are any changes. If annual consent forms are used signatories must be notified in advance each time when participants are to be taken off site, and given other relevant information such as time of departure and time of return.

The Duke of Edinburgh's award (DoE) scheme

Our DoE manager Rachael Kenyon has drafted specific guidance on the "requirements for expeditions on foot". This is saved with the manual. This includes guidance notes for Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. This guidance helps in the pursuance of the council's duty for the safety and well-being of DoE Award participants. Additionally, it lays out for leaders and co-ordinators in schools the requirements of Bracknell Forest Council.

The DoE activity sheet has also been replaced by three individual sheets representing Bronze, Silver and Gold.



Lessons learnt

Approval by the Offsite Visits Advisor (OVA)

After checking the Spring term visits I noticed that some users are still sending local trips to Brian Mallett, the OVA and there a couple of incidents where trips to London were not sent to Brian for approval. The OVA provides the third tier of approvals for the more complex visits.

It is important that full addresses and telephone numbers are provided. Brian has been refusing visits that are missing this information. To assist users, on the planning page of the database there are drop down boxes which have been pre-populated with the contact details of transport companies and destinations regularly used by Bracknell Forest schools e.g. Milestones and the British Museum.

There have also been several visits sent to Brian within a few days of departure of the visit including some on the day. These visits have been rejected by the OVA because they have been submitted too late to review. To ensure trips run smoothly please double check information is complete before submission and these are sent to Brian Mallett in plenty of time.

Future issues of newsletter

If any school would like to share their photos of visits and any advice on good practice or what went particularly well the offsite visits group will consider it for future newsletters.

Caroline Moore

01344 354055

Caroline.Moore@bracknell-forest.gov.uk