



EVC newsletter

Winter
2011

update from Kent's Outdoor Education Unit

Welcome to our **Winter Edition** of the **EVC Newsletter**. As we look forward to a new year it is also the time when many of us take a look backwards to see what we have been doing all year, what successes we may have had and also what may not have gone so well.

As I reflect on the past 12 months I think that I would describe it as being an 'interesting' year. The highlights include making a positive contribution through advice, guidance and support the many thousands of visits that took place; to the local beach or to one of many far flung places in the world that where schools choose as locations to help bring the curriculum alive.

Further highlights include the high number of schools that have converted to Academies and have stated that they wish to continue to use our services, knowledge and expertise to support any learning outside the classroom.

A final success story relates to our Outdoor Learning CPD training courses and the continued good uptake on many of the courses. The evaluation forms from these course always makes good reading with the vast majority stating that the course was "excellent, good, and excellent again.

The not so good aspects of the year are mainly related to people, and in particular saying farewell to Outdoor Education Unit staff (Niall Leyden) but also to quite a number of EVC's as a result of job cuts. In the current financial climate, cuts to posts are something that seem to be affecting us all in one way or another.

*Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.
Richard, Nikki and Hilary at the Outdoor Education Unit.*

Contents

- 1) Visit Approval – forthcoming changes to our policy
- 2) Outdoor Education -Travel Service
- 3) Providers – A reminder
- 4) Resources – Live 'n' Dead!
- 5) Ski trips – why do you go?
- 6) Learning outside the class – case study
- 7) Self Planned Educational visits
- 8) Your staff changes
- 9) **Remember the 6 week submission deadline for visit approval**

Visit Approval Policy – forthcoming changes – advance notice

Following a review of the Local Authority educational visits approval policy we are now close to finalising some changes to the way that visits can be approved. All visits that involve a residential element and/or adventurous activities will continue to require approval but under the revised policy approval for many more visits will stop with Headteachers and Area Youth Officers.

e-Go is being worked on at the moment in order that it can accommodate the changes, and as soon as this work is completed we will be providing you with full details about the types of visits and which Providers will fall into the new list.

The sort of educational visits that will fall into the new category will include those that take place in the UK, are very tightly packaged and where the Provider is one that we have dealt with for many years and where we know meet KCC requirements and holds other nationally recognised accreditation. Approval of the visits that will fall into the new 'devolved' category will also be reliant upon the fact that the Headteacher or EVC will have attended one of our Educational Visit Co-ordinators training course or EVC Update course in the past 5 years.

The system is also being designed so that a Headteacher and/or Governing Body that would really would like the Outdoor Education Unit to look at the e-Go form and 'approve (or not)', will continue to be able to do so. To use this facility and service the current 6 week submission deadline will remain in force.

The Outdoor Education Unit will continue to monitor a selection of educational visits that fall into scope of this new category. We hope that these changes will make life a little easier for many of you but it will only work successfully if visits continue to be entered on to the e-Go system. If we find that visits are not being submitted for approval we may have to review our policy once again and revert to our current policy.

The Outdoor Education Unit Training Service



Places still available on our;
Outdoor Learning cards course
Camp Fire management course
Visit Leader training courses



Developing your outdoor learning space in your school grounds? The staff who recently attended our **Campfire Management Award** course now have the knowledge and confidence to introduce use of open fires into their outdoor learning activities.

For details of our next "excellent" course please see page 23 in our Outdoor Learning training brochure

Providers - BEFORE making any bookings or payments, please remember to check that the chosen adventurous activity or residential accommodation provider is currently 'vetted' by the Outdoor Education Unit.

Remember to use LOfC Quality Badge providers where possible.

Search the e-Go database or the Quality Badge website to find a badged provider –
www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/badgesearch

Remember new providers require 12 weeks notice to vet!!!!

Resources.

Primary Curriculum



CBBC's **Live 'n' Deadly** is a hugely popular wildlife and adventure show with a mission to get kids outside and closer to wildlife. The programme, fronted by Steve Backshall and Naomi Wilkinson, is packed with entertaining features about wildlife with a deadly twist, outdoor adventure activities, challenges and competitions.

The **free Live 'n' Deadly Teacher's Pack** is now available on the BBC Schools website to order or download.

The pack provides primary teachers with the opportunity to link their lessons to the themes of the show. It features practical, engaging lesson plans designed for flexible use across the primary curriculum as well as clips from the programme. Teachers can use the pack to teach about famous explorers, take their pupils on an expedition trying to find new species in their own school playground or local park and make a film about their adventure.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/teachers/livendeadly>

ANY STAFF LEAVING YOUR SCHOOL THIS TERM?

If any of your staff move on from your school please email us their details (and if possible let us know which school they have moved to, or if they have retired, etc). This allows us to move them out of your establishment staff list on e-Go.

✓ True or False? X

1. The Local Authority does not allow pupils to go on the beach.
2. The Local Authority does not allow pupils to go paddling.
3. The Local Authority does not permit open/campfires.
4. By using a vetted provider you do not need to undertake a Pre Visit.
4. Ice Skating is considered an adventurous activity.

If you can not wait until the next Newsletter for the answers please e mail
outdoor.education@kent.gov.uk



Does your school organise a Ski trip?

Do you support and approve ski trips simply because it's a traditional winter visit or even a bit of a holiday!?

If you are not clear what the aims of the visit are or the educational benefits for students, the **new** Snowsport England publication "**Snowsports and Learning Outside the Classroom**" will be of help.

To download a copy click on the following link

<http://www.snowsportengland.org.uk/files/download/1467>

Good planning shapes good decisions
Is time running out?

If any of your visits take place during the first six weeks of the new year, please note that they need to be submitted before you go on holiday (unless you are also working during this period!.)

The 6 week deadline still applies

Self Planned Educational Visits

As costs of educational visits increase a natural step for some staff is to consider the 'self plan' route, where you book everything directly with a supplier/provider i.e. the coach/ferries/flights accommodation, entrance fees etc etc. in the hope to keep costs down and making visits more affordable and inclusive

Although this is possibly an attractive idea this approach can be fraught with dangers and must be considered carefully before making any bookings. It is also very time consuming.

Because you will be 'on your own' with little or no local help or support one of the key questions that Visit Leaders need to keep asking is "What if".

What if a member of the group missed a flight?
What if a student(s) has to be repatriated?
What if find your accommodation is overbooked on arrival?
What if on arrival you find the agreed room allocation has changed?
What if your Coach does not turn up?
What if the Coach looks a bit 'weary'?
What if the seatbelts are not all working properly?
What if your return home is delayed due to weather or natural disasters?

THINK CAREFULLY BEFORE GOING DOWN THIS ROUTE. REMEMBER IT IS OTHER PEOPLES' MONEY THAT YOU ARE SPENDING AND THEY WILL EXPECT YOU TO BE ABLE TO RESOLVE ANY OF THESE PROBLEMS AND AT THE SAME TIME ENSURE THAT THEIR SON/DAUGHTER HAS AN ENJOYABLE, VALUABLE AND SAFE EXPERIENCE

LEARNING OUTSIDE the CLASSROOM AWARDS 2011. Case Studies - the two winners



Winner, Best LOtC Provision for Primary in the LOtC Awards for Excellence & Innovation 2011. St. John's Catholic School is a one form entry Primary school in Rotherhithe South East London with a diverse population and children from many different nationalities.

http://www.lotc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/St-Johns-catholic-prim_case-study.pdf

Winner of the Best LOtC Provision for Special Educational Needs in the LOtC Awards for Excellence & Innovation 2011. The mission statement of Mary Elliot School is 'Preparing for Life' and the school's learning outside the classroom activities are central to the achievement of the school's mission.

http://www.lotc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Mary-Elliot-School_case-study.pdf

If you have a case study showing how you have developed any aspect of Outdoor learning in your schools and how it has benefited your pupils please e mail a copy to the Outdoor Education Unit. We will include it in our next EVC Newsletter.

If you are handing over the reins to someone new please let us know as soon as possible. The Outdoor Education Unit will be staffed for most of the Christmas period and using this quieter time to catch up and ensure that as much as possible is updated and ready to go as we move towards what is traditionally the busiest time of the year.

