

# Educational Visits Policy

## Rationale

The school strives to provide a varied and stimulating education for all children, and well directed educational visits that enrich the learning experience, illustrate subjects in a different setting, or provide new educational experiences, are a major contributor to this aim.

The experiences offered by the school must always have clear objectives, whether these are directly related to learning in the curriculum or to wider aims of enrichment and breadth of experience.

Furthermore, the cost will always be a key consideration in planning to ensure that all school visits offer good value for money.

## Aims

To ensure that all school visits are:

- Educationally beneficial, interesting and relevant for participants
- Conducted entirely in line with the most up to date health and safety legislation and guidance
- Good value for school and parent.

## General Guidance

No member of staff can organise any educational visit without the careful application of this policy.

1. All proposals for trips should be submitted to the Headteacher using the proforma pack available from the finance office. Relevant forms are also available via the copies of the folder in the 'Staffshare' drive ([EVC forms](#)). **A minimum of six weeks' notice applies for trips in the UK, and three months for overseas visits to allow consultation with Governors.** New residential trips need to be included in a two-year advance notice review by Governors. Therefore, a new residential trip will not normally be **able to take place until this process has been completed.** In the case of oversubscription for school trips and activities, the names of pupils who have applied to participate will be included in a draw to determine those that can be allocated places. Once a pupil has successfully been drawn for inclusion in an oversubscribed trip, other pupils will be given priority over that pupil if further instances of oversubscription arise. The flow chart below provides an overview of the process for any trip that involves any form of booked transport. For local trips around the school environment, please see the 'specific guidance' at the end of this policy document.

**6 weeks in advance (or earlier if possible) for UK based trips, 3 months for trips outside UK:**

Proposal form submitted to Headteacher, to include:

- Educational objectives
- Dates, times, destination
- Groups invited to participate, number of places available
- Cost including breakdown of figures – Deputy Head will check these with the Business Manager. If the visit organiser needs help with booking coaches or determining the cost of coaches, the Finance Assistant will do this with them.

**5 weeks in advance:**

If the trip is approved:

- Organiser collects pack of EV forms and relevant risk assessments from the Finance Assistant and, if necessary, is given advice on how to complete them, including ensuring that one of the named contacts for the trip is trained to use the 'Schoolcomms' text service.
- Organiser submits the initial letter to parents to Headteacher for approval. Headteacher will liaise with the Business Manager and Finance Assistant to determine that financial and medical details are correct. Following proof-reading by Head's P.A. and final approval from the Headteacher, the Finance Assistant will send out letters as needed.
- Organiser informs Data Office for date to be inserted into the school calendar.

**4 weeks in advance:**

EV forms completed + Itinerary provided for residential trips:

- Organiser returns forms to the Finance Assistant for checking. Local, low risk trips to then be approved as ready to go by the Finance Assistant and Deputy Head. Trips with specified risks including travel distance to be submitted to LA SHE unit by the Finance Assistant.

**2 weeks in advance:**

- If the visit involves a cost for pupils, ten school days prior to the trip must be the latest deadline for collection. In the case of trips in curriculum time where voluntary contributions were requested from parents, a decision is now taken as to whether or not it is possible. If the cost of the trip needs to be subsidised, the Head of Department must consult with his or her SMT link to decide whether or not to proceed.
- The organiser must now check the final list of names with the Finance Assistant, who will liaise with the front office to produce medical information and contact details, and also to set up the 'Schoolcomms' text message service for parents. In addition, the Finance Assistant will assign a school mobile phone for the trip organiser and ensure that the number is included on the EV forms.
- Medical information and key contact details will now be copied and passed to the trip organiser by the Finance Assistant and the EV forms by the primary First Aider.
- Details of the trip and the names of pupils taking place must be given to the Head's P.A. for inclusion in Friday notices.
- The Finance Assistant will inform the trip organiser of the names of FSM pupils who require packed lunches.

Just prior to trip taking place:

- The school mobile phone that matches the number recorded on the EV forms must be collected by the trip organiser and then kept on at all times. If the trip is residential, the phone's charger must also be collected by the organiser so that the phone is always on throughout the trip.
- A first aid kit must be collected from School Reception by the trip organiser, plus any packed lunches for children eligible for FSM from the kitchen.
- An accurate register of those pupils who are participating in the trip must be left at Reception and passed to the trip's key contacts as soon as possible. 'Schoolcomms' is to be updated at that time if necessary.

2. Please also note: No pupil may leave the site on a school trip without parental permission. It is the responsibility of the trip leader to ensure that parents have given permission for their children to participate, and if there is any doubt the child must remain in school.
3. For any off-site visit where the return time is outside normal school hours and cannot be predicted with reasonable accuracy, parents must be informed via the Schoolcomms text message system.
4. If any pupils have to wait for parents to collect them after a visit, staff should remain in a supervisory capacity, until the last pupil is collected unless written consent has been received by parents/carers allowing the pupil to walk. No child should be allowed to walk home late at night.
5. School uniform must always be worn for all off-site visits/special events unless the Headteacher has given specific permission otherwise.
6. The highest standards of behaviour are expected from students at all times. If the visit organiser has serious professional doubts about the capacity of any student to meet this expectation then they should inform the Headteacher with their reasons and a risk assessment will be made regarding that child. If a child is in danger of being excluded, a reference to the possibility must be made in the original letter. Under no circumstances can any student on a foreign visit be permitted to act in a manner which is unacceptable in school – for example with regard to alcohol, smoking or the purchase of items illegal in the U.K.
7. Any member of staff accompanying an educational visit has clear legal responsibilities and roles as set out in law (see specific guidance). Volunteer helpers must have clear guidance as to their role.
8. Pupils with Special Educational Needs including special medical needs demand a specific risk assessment based on the arrangements established between the school, parents and the pupil's G.P. If the visit organiser has concerns regarding such matters they must consult with their SMT line manager, with the maximum possible notice. No pupil can be denied access to a school visit without a specific risk assessment being made and consultation with parents achieved.
9. It must be clear what strategies are in place, e.g. staff trained in EpiPen use. If Ritalin is administered the group leader must have the dose and agreement of parent in writing, and a double-signing procedure must be in place.
10. In the event of any emergency the visit organiser is expected to take immediate actions to safeguard pupils' welfare and to inform the school/SMT contact person immediately. For this reason no off-site visit should take place without establishing means of communication – in particular, a school mobile phone, plus the 'Schoolcomms' system.
11. All visits should be evaluated within seven days of their conclusion, using EVC forms and the form sent to the Headteacher.

## **Specific Guidance**

### **a) Different Types of Visit**

**Group 1:** Day Visit in Local Area, e.g. church, village, local survey.

If the local area is to be used during lesson time, the Headteacher or Deputy Head must be informed. Teaching groups using the local area in lesson time are the responsibility of the subject teacher. A register and destination must be left in the office, and on return the office informed.

**Group 2:** Non-residential visits to places of educational interest, e.g. theatres, concerts, museums, etc.

**Group 3:** Residential visits within and outside the UK not involving any potentially hazardous activity.

**Group 4:** All visits/journeys involving potentially hazardous activities.

Groups 2, 3 and 4 visits must be organised as described on the main policy flowchart.

The County Handbook outlining procedures and requirements and detailed guidance, plus specimens of letters and forms is available from the Deputy Head.

**b) When planning a visit, the following procedure must be adhered to:**

- The visit must be staffed according to the appropriate staff-pupil ratio. The DfE guidance, adopted by the LA as a minimum level of supervision is:
  - Group 1 and 2 trips: One adult for every 15-20 pupils in Year 7 – 11. **N.B. There must always be at least one teacher in charge.**
  - Group 3 and 4 trips: One adult per 10 participants. **N.B. There must always be at least two teachers.**
- Mixed parties must be accompanied by at least one staff member of each gender.
- The organising teacher must be satisfied that the venue is suitable and a risk assessment must have been undertaken.
- The letter being sent to parents must be approved before it is sent out, as described in the main flowchart. The letter must provide information regarding the nature and purpose of the visit, an outline of the programme/itinerary, equipment and uniform required; whether at any time the pupils will be unsupervised or working near possible hazards; the appropriate paragraph regarding the charging for such activities; a sentence such as “There has been no change in medical information already given to the school” (details of insurance, if required; although a letter giving details of automatic insurance is sent to all pupils at the beginning of the academic year. Staff must check that a signature has been received by the school). There must be a tear-off consent form.
- The Finance Office will collect money and keep appropriate records.
- Online cover sheets must be given to the Headteacher with a minimum of 10 days’ notice.
- Before leaving, an accurate register of pupils involved must be given to the office.
- A copy of the emergency procedures must be taken by the visit leader.
- Pupils must have a copy of the checklist for pupils going on a visit if appropriate.
- A first aid kit must be taken for all except Group 1 visits.

**c) Supervision**

All teachers and other adults responsible for supervising pupils taking part in any educational visit have a duty of care in common law. If the person in their care is under 18 this is often described as to be “in loco parentis”. In essence they are expected to exercise the same degree of care which a reasonable, prudent, and careful parent would exercise. Because teachers are trained, professional people, courts have tended to expect them to exercise a higher standard of care than that which might be expected from an ordinary parent. In the case of residential visits this extends to the entire duration of the visit.

Teachers should consider the full implications of this before planning a visit. For example, registration of the group should be rigorous and thorough and take place every time the group “moves off”, at meal times and each night/morning. A head count is not sufficient.

**d) Links to Thomas Keble Behaviour Policy**

The highest standards of behaviour are expected from students at all times. If the visit organiser has serious professional doubts about the capacity of any student to meet this expectation then they should inform the Headteacher with their reasons and a risk assessment will be made regarding that child. If a child is in danger of being excluded, a reference to the possibility must be made in the

original letter. Under no circumstances can any student on a foreign visit be permitted to act in a manner which is unacceptable in school – for example with regard to alcohol, smoking or the purchase of items illegal in the U.K. In order to preserve the highest expectations in terms of behaviour, the following should be made clear in letters to parents and reinforced at parent information evenings:

- Any students who has been placed at Stage 4 of the school discipline code or above, in the 12 months preceding a residential trip being advertised, will not be permitted to register an interest in any overnight, residential trip as they will not be permitted to take part due to concerns over behaviour.
- Any student who is on the discipline code, Stages 1–3 at the time of signing up for a trip, will need to be made aware that if they are placed at Stage 4 before the trip departs, they will be excluded from taking part and any monies that are not returnable will be forfeited by parents.
- A paragraph will need to be inserted into residential trip letters that states that by paying the deposits, parents are accepting responsibility that if a student’s behaviour gives serious cause for concern, as indicated by being placed at Stage 4, or above, on the discipline code, then that student’s place on the trip will be withdrawn and any non-returnable monies will be forfeited unless a replacement for the place can be found.

#### **e) Behaviour on the coach**

- Pupils must sit with seat belts fastened throughout the journey.
- They must not stand or move around on the coach.
- Pupils must not bring chewing gum.
- Food and drink must not be consumed on the coach (without the permission of driver/teacher in charge).
- The floor of the coach must be checked on return to school.
- Members of staff are expected to sit where they can achieve maximum supervision of pupils.

#### **f) Minibus Journeys**

If pupils are being taken by minibus the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- The minibus must be booked properly via the Finance Office. (In the event of a clash this should be referred to the Headteacher, or in her absence, Deputy Head as soon as possible. For this reason “block booking”, especially if booking far in advance, can be unhelpful to other colleagues).
- The minibus log book must be filled in at the end of the journey.
- The keys are kept in the office.
- The minibus must be left clean and parked in the space by the caretaker’s house.
- If it is necessary to buy diesel the school account at Fourways Garage should be used.
- RAC Recovery Service is included in our insurance, which also covers community use.
- Any member of staff who is convicted of a driving offence must report this to the Headteacher, if intending to use the minibus (depending on the offence, authority to drive will be reviewed or withdrawn).
- Drivers who gained a driving licence before the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997 can drive the minibus with a current County Council driving assessment. For those who gained their driving licence after this date they must have a P.S.V. driver’s licence as well. Under no circumstances can a driver consume any alcohol during the journey or for a lengthy period beforehand.
- It is illegal to smoke while driving a minibus. It is County Policy not to permit smoking on vehicles at any time.
- Other detail guidance is included in the LA handbook (Section 6).

Supervision on the minibus needs to be carefully considered when making a plan. For long journeys, or if a high level of supervision is anticipated, it would be reasonable that another adult should

accompany the party. Whether a visit can take place, given this request, will be a matter for the Headteacher.

#### **g) Private Use of Cars**

Extreme caution should be exercised over the use of private cars, both belonging to parents and staff. Where such transport is to be used the Headteacher must be assured that the driver and car are legal. Volunteer drivers will be asked to sign a declaration indicating that this is the case. This form must be requested from the Business Manager.

Where teachers offer their services they must ensure that they have an appropriate insurance cover for conveying pupils during the course of their professional duties.

Parents must be informed that transport to an event will be by private transport and informed that the matters above are all in order.

#### **h) Communicating with Parents and Parental Consent**

The importance of informed consent by parents cannot be over-stressed. Written information presented to parents must be a full and fair description of the venture. Teachers are entitled to an expectation of obedience to discipline, self-discipline, common-sense and responsible behaviour from the pupils in their care.

Parents should be clearly informed of the school's expectation on these matters and insist on the parents' full support and co-operation to achieve this end.

#### **i) Insurance**

The school holds a School Journey Insurance Policy that automatically covers all persons participating in educational trips and pupils/students on work experience placements irrespective of location, duration and activities included.

#### **j) Charging**

It is illegal to levy a charge of any activity that takes part during the school day, or for any activity which is an essential part of the national curriculum or religious education.

Voluntary contributions can be requested. No pupil can be denied access to a visit through lack of voluntary contribution. However, if insufficient funds are collected the Headteacher may decide to cancel the visit.

Contingency money can be included in calculations of cost. Where, after the visit has been concluded, there is a financial surplus, the money should be shared evenly between contributors. In the event of any difficulty with this, see the Headteacher.

Cover for absent colleagues will also be applied to the overall cost of the trip at a rate of 3% of the overall trip cost. This was agreed by Governors.

#### **k) Role and responsibilities of the group leader**

The group leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit including direct responsibility for the pupils' health, safety and welfare. The group leader may not have a group of pupils so is able to problem-solve depending on staff. If parents are involved, the ratio of pupils they are responsible for should be 1:6 and the group leader should be free.

The group leader must:

- Be approved to carry out the visit, suitably competent and knowledgeable about the school's policies and procedures.
- Plan and prepare for the visit and assess the risks.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and pupils and ensure effective

supervision of what they do. This may involve allocating pupils to staff who then report to the group leader. The role of SMT on the trip needs to be clarified.

## **I) Summary of Good Practice on Educational Visit Risk Assessments**

A simplified and modified proforma for Group/Site Specific Educational Visits (EV) risk assessments has been developed and the following notes are provided for guidance in its use.

Key Principles:

Risk Assessments should be:

- Simple
- Proportional
- Suitable and Sufficient
- Manageable.

1. Only “Significant” Hazards need to be recorded and assessed. On educational visits it would be impossible to assess all potential hazards, and to then determine which are significant enough to control. The group leader’s professional judgement determines the level of risk considered “significant”; calculations/formulae are not always helpful in this process.

Key areas to consider are: Group, Activity, Transport & the Site/Environment:

2. Who may be harmed? These are identified and listed on the generic assessment; this therefore removes the need for the list to be repeated on the site-specific assessment. Consideration must be given to individuals with specific needs who may require additional controls measures to be in place.
3. Control Measures. These must be practical, understandable and deliverable. This list forms the briefing notes for staff, helpers and young people on the visit. Where the control measures are standard operating procedures or policies, they only need to be referenced and not repeated. All relevant participants must know and adhere to them.
4. Who needs to be informed? Identify the means of communicating the key safety measures to staff, helpers and young people.
5. Group leader to share and sign. The assessment should be produced by the Group leader and after discussion, signed and dated.

Increasingly Generic Risk assessment (of established and regularly undertaken activities) can be accessed from a bank of commonly undertaken activities produced by the LA, National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Providers or Establishments (Schools or Youth Groups).

Event Specific Assessments only need to refer to these Generic Assessments as long as the control measures are understood and adhered to. It is often unhelpful to reproduce them as part of the events assessment or briefing notes.

The Event Specific Risk Assessment form should not only act as the key safety briefing notes for the visit but they should contain:

- Educational objectives
- Alternative plans
- Emergency packs/procedures.

The group leader must constantly monitor all activities that are being undertaken noting any unplanned changes. Any changes in condition, or to planned activities, require an on-going or dynamic risk assessment.

Event Specific Risk Assessments should form the bases when reviewing the event on return. If any changes are made to the control measures during a visit they should be discussed during the review. All such changes if significant should be included in any future site-specific assessment.

For visits which are RESIDENTIAL, ABROAD or ADVENTUROUS, the following sections of the Educational Visits County folder are essential documentation:

- I. Pupil Code of Conduct (section 4, page 3 – choice of 2, depending on decision re: mobile phones)
- II. Preparing pupils (Section 4 pp. 1 & 2)
- III. Information to Parents (Section 5 p.2)
- IV. Health Advice (Section 9 p.1-6)

The county handbook can be obtained at any time by asking the Finance Office / Headteacher.

Finally, the responsibility and work involved in organising any educational visit/event is very great, but the potential benefits enormous. The policy is intended to give all colleagues core advice. All detailed enquiries should be answered by consulting the LA Handbook, which is exhaustive.



**Educational Visit Evaluation**

Date of Visit .....

Location: .....

Pupils Involved .....

.....

Brief Comment (did the visit achieve its aims?)

Were there any particular problems encountered?  
(Organisational, Transport, Venue, Pupils etc)

Would you recommend that a similar visit be organised again?    Yes     No

Signed ..... Visit Organiser

This form should be sent to the Headteacher asap after the visit and certainly within one week of your return.