TRIPS AND VISITS POLICY

Statutory / Non Statutory

ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS TO EDUCATIONAL TRIPS AND VISITS POLICY

Section	Governors' Meeting or Committee
Whole document	Local Governing Body (LGB), March 2024
Whole document	LGB, March 2025
Next review: 2026-2027	

Introduction

Well planned and executed educational visits with clear purpose are an indispensable part of a broad and balanced curriculum and provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at our school. Educational visits provide the pupils with an opportunity to extend their learning and enrich their appreciation and understanding of themselves, others and the world around them through direct 'real life' experiences. They can be the catalyst for improved academic performance, motivation, self-esteem and confidence and other character building traits and as such are actively encouraged.

Aims

Through this policy we aim to:

- ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to benefit from educational visits whilst at our school
- ensure that all visits are safe, purposeful and appropriate to meet the educational needs of the pupils taking part
- to maximise the educational benefits of visits
- identify the appropriate functions, responsibilities, training and support required by the Governors, Headteacher, the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC), staff and volunteers accompanying pupils on visits and the pupils themselves

Roles and Responsibilities

In line with the OEAP National Guidance, the following roles and responsibilities lie with individuals with regard to educational visits.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body will ensure that:

- they are aware of the full breadth of their responsibilities for all young people as set out in the Statutory Guidance (2005) supporting Every Child Matters, Youth Matters and the Children Act 2004
- there are clear policies and procedures (including an audit trail) to ensure that all employees are directed to follow their employer guidance
- training is provided to ensure that employees understand the employer's guidance e.g. EVC Training, Visit Leader training
- policies and procedures are in place to ensure that legal duties, such as training, monitoring and guidance, are complied with
- where duties are delegated, the roles and responsibilities of all are clearly defined and specified within guidance documents, cross referencing with relevant job descriptions

The Headteacher

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- all Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC), off-site activities and visits comply with this policy and are notified or submitted for formal approval as required
- all staff involved are competent to carry out such responsibilities as they are allocated
- there is a clearly designated suitable member of staff as the EVC and that the designated person meets employer requirements, including undertaking EVC Training as recommended or required by the employer
- suitable child protection procedures are in place, including vetting at an appropriate level of all voluntary helpers. Where access to the young people is regular or significant DBS checks must be in place as required

- the EVC, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained and competent to carry out such tasks as they are allocated
- sufficient time has been assigned for staff to organise activities and visits properly
- all activities and visits are effectively supervised with an appropriate level of staffing
- information has been shared with parents and that consent has been sought where necessary
- arrangements have been made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the young people and staff
- inclusion issues are addressed
- suitable transport arrangements are in place and meet any regulatory requirements
- insurance arrangements are appropriate
- details related to off-site activities and visits (including personal details of both participants and staff) are accessible at all times to a designated 24/7 emergency contact(s) in case of a serious incident
- there are contingency plans in place should a visit plan be significantly changed or cancelled (Plan B)
- arrangements are in place for the governing body to be informed of such visits as are required by this policy
- appropriate consideration is given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships
- where charges are made to parents, these are within legal and employer requirements
- proper procedures are in place to account for the finances of activities and visits
- where the activity or visit involves a third party provider, appropriate assurances have been obtained
- all visits are evaluated with regard to best value, teaching and learning, quality experiences, addressing issues raised by any incident and to inform the operation of future visits
- appropriate emergency procedures are in place in case of a major incident and a procedure for communicating to parents in such an event
- serious incidents are reported as per the Health and Safety policy and where appropriate, meet the requirements of RIDDOR

Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

The EVC will:

- ensure that they have an understanding of how Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC), off-site activities and visits can support a wide range of outcomes for children and young people, and raise achievement
- ensure that they have attended EVC Training
- ensure that all LOtC, off-site activities and visits meet guidance requirements
- ensure that all staff involved in LOtC, off-site activities and visits access appropriate training to ensure that this policy and procedures are properly understood
- monitor Visit Leader planning and sample monitoring of visits.
- organise the training of Visit and Assistant Leaders (including voluntary helpers)
- ensure that where the accompanying staff includes someone with a close relationship to a group member, there are adequate safeguards to ensure that this will not compromise group management
- ensure that safeguarding checks are in place as required

- check that there is a 24/7 emergency contact(s) with the base for each and every visit and that emergency arrangements are in place
- ensure that medical and first aid issues are addressed
- ensuring that emergency arrangements include emergency contact access to all relevant records, including medical and next of kin information for all members of the party, including staff
- ensure that individual activities and visits are reviewed and evaluated and that this process includes reporting of accidents and incidents, complying with employer requirements and Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)
- ensure that policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis. A review should follow any serious incident or systems failure. Risk management documentation must be updated if necessary
- ensure that there is a procedure for recording “near accidents/near misses”, including any resulting learning points and action
- ensure that Assistant Leaders are competent to carry out the tasks they are assigned
- ensure that activities and visits are led by competent and confident leaders. The Visit Leader needs to be both accountable and competent. Being accountable implies being an employee and thus part of a chain of specified roles and responsibilities. Being competent requires that the leader can demonstrate the ability to operate to current standards of recognised good practice.

The Visit Leader

The Visit Leader has the overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of the visit. To ensure accountability and to avoid potential confusion, a single Visit Leader must be appointed. If this role changes during a visit, a clear handover must be made.

The key requirements for Visit Leaders are that they must be accountable, and competent and confident to lead the visit/activity, not that they hold a particular post, title or job description.

Being **accountable** means that the Leader has been engaged through an appropriate recruitment process, which includes vetting and induction into the establishment’s policies and procedures. The details of this process may depend upon whether the Leader is employed, contracted or acts as a volunteer, but in all cases should be thorough.

Being **competent** means that the Leader has demonstrated the ability to operate to recognised standards of good practice, and has sufficient relevant experience and knowledge of the group, the activity and the venue.

The Visit Leader will:

- be formally approved to carry out the visit
- be specifically competent
- plan and prepare for the visit, taking a lead on risk management. It is good practice to involve all staff in the planning and risk management process to ensure wider understanding. It is also good practice to involve young people in these processes wherever appropriate.
- define the roles and responsibilities of other staff (and young people) to ensure effective supervision, appointing a deputy wherever possible
- ensure there are adequate safeguards if the staff team includes someone with a close relationship to a member of the group so that this will not compromise group management

- ensure that child protection issues are addressed (e.g. vetting including CRB checks)
- provide relevant information to supporting staff, including about the nature and location of the visit and about the participants (including age, health information, capabilities, special needs, safeguarding and behavioural issues)
- ensure that informed parental consent has been obtained as necessary
- provide relevant information to parents and young people, and arrange pre-visit information meetings where appropriate.
- make sure there is access to first aid at an appropriate level
- ensure the activity/visit is effectively supervised
- ensure that all staff and any third party providers have access to emergency contact and emergency procedure details
- evaluate all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event
- Report any incidents, accidents or near misses.

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit
Teacher and other adults on the visit must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would
- follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline
- consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable
- Non-teachers should generally not have sole charge of pupils except where risks to health and safety are minimal;

Responsibilities of pupils
The Visit Leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks
- follow the instructions of the leader and other adults
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it
- an agreed Code of Conduct, appropriate for the visit has been put in place

Parents
The Visit Leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions.

The Visit Leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language. Parents must:

- provide the Visit Leader with emergency contact number(s)
- sign the consent form
- give the visit leader relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit

Approval of Visits
The Governing Body delegates the approval of low risk, routine educational visits to the Headteacher.

Any visits involving adventurous activity, residential experience and/or foreign travel must first be approved by the Headteacher before being submitted to the local authority for their approval. (An adventurous activity is determined as defined in the Local Authority Educational Visits policy and guidance).

Where appropriate further technical advice will be sought prior to a visit being approved. All visits are approved in line with the OEAP National guidance.

Planning off-site visits
Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

The detailed planning for off-site visits is delegated to the Visit Leader, however the Headteacher must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

Risk Assessments Management?
A risk assessment must always be carried out before setting off on a visit. The risk assessment will decide the adult:child ratio for each visit and must include the following considerations:

- what are the benefits?
- what are the risks?
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce the risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit?

The Visit Leader and other supervisors must continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The Visit Leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken
- the location
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament
- pupils with special educational or medical needs
- the quality and suitability of available equipment
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing

If at any time the Visit Leader considers there is an unacceptable level of risk to the pupils, the visits must be stopped.

Exploratory visit (Assessing Venues and Providers?)
Wherever possible the Visit Leader should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit
- assess potential areas and levels of risk

- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group
- ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue.

To reduce bureaucracy Visit Leaders are encouraged to take advantage of national schemes that have been established to eliminate the need for questionnaires and forms: e.g. LOtC Quality Badge, AALA Licence, Adventuremark. Holding one of the above is a credible assurance of appropriate Health and Safety management systems, and no further verification should be necessary. The LOtC Quality Badge also covers learning quality.

Where a provider does not provide such evidence, a provider form will be required before a visit can be approved.

First Aid
First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities, visits which involve overnight stays, or visits abroad it is sensible to have at least one trained first-aider in the group. The Visit Leader should have a working knowledge of first aid and all adults in the group should know how to contact emergency services.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid kit
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first-aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The Headteacher should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed. The contents of a first-aid kit will depend on what activities are planned.

Supervision
It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group
- special needs pupils
- nature of activities
- experience of adults in off-site supervision
- duration and nature of the journey
- type of any accommodation
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

Adult/pupil ratio for educational visits is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

These ratios do not include residential visits.

Regardless of these minimum ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits. A judgement will be made on the level of support staff required, based upon the needs of the pupils attending and the activities involved. All standard visits must be agreed by the Headteacher. All residential visits or visits which are defined as 'adventurous activities' must be signed off by the Headteacher and the local authority designated body and where appropriate Kingsbridge Educational Trust.

Where there is more than one adult supervisor, a group leader, who has authority over the whole party, must be appointed.

Where a high adult: pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents with appropriate clearance may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the pupil group.

All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a pupil.

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the Governing Body must ensure that the Visit Leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications should be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The Visit leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

Oversubscription

In the event of oversubscription, places will be allocated by a lottery system after the published closing date for the trip. The participants will be selected using an electronic randomiser and the process will be witnessed by two staff members to ensure transparency. A waiting list can then be operated for those students who did not gain a place in case other participants withdraw from the trip.

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. A lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This should also include considering any health and safety issues and involvement in the risk assessment process.

Information to pupils
It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader to decide how to provide information to the pupils, and they should be satisfied that the pupils understand the key safety information.

It is important that the pupils understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit / activity
- background information about the place to be visited
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules
- why safety precautions are in place and special safety precautions for anyone with a disability
- what standard of behaviour is expected from them
- who is responsible for the group
- what to do if approached by a stranger
- what to do if separated from the group
- emergency procedures
- rendezvous procedures.

Pupils with special educational and medical needs
The Headteacher will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures that may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Communicating with parents/carers
Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place – 'in loco parentis' – and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would.

The following information must be included in a letter to parents/carers prior to a visit taking place:

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel including, where appropriate, the name of any travel company
- details of accommodation if relevant, with details of the security and supervisory arrangements on site
- name of group leader, and other staff /accompanying adults
- objectives of the visit
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed
- If appropriate, insurance information with respect to luggage, accident, cancellation and medical cover. Any cover to be arranged by the parents, if appropriate, will be requested
- clothing and equipment to be taken
- money to be taken
- any information required from the parents/carers
- written consent

Parental consent
Hockliffe Lower School will require consent through Google Forms.

If parents withhold consent, then a pupil must not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible.

If the parents give a conditional consent then the Headteacher will consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not.

Reimbursement for school visits
If due to unforeseen circumstances your child is unable to attend the visit, the school will only be able to reimburse your contribution, if we are able to claim a refund from external suppliers for any payments made in advance.

Insurance
RPA

Emergency Procedures
The school will appoint a member of the Senior Management Team to be the emergency school contact for each visit, usually the Headteacher. All major incidents should immediately be reported to this person, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.

The Visit Leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency school contact, including the home contact details of parents/carers and next-of-kin, as appropriate and a copy of the contact details of the appointed emergency school contacts.

All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit must be reported back to the EVC immediately upon return to the school.

Evaluation
All visits will be evaluated by the Visit Leader with the EVC and/or the Headteacher.

The EVC will ensure that any risk assessments for the visits or activities are evaluated and/or modified as a result of findings or feedback from the visit.

Monitoring and Review
The governing body will review this policy on a two-yearly cycle or as appropriate.

Hockliffe Lower School
February 2025