

Policy for Educational Visits

School visits have always been a prominent feature of the school's education. Students derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits organised by members of staff. In particular they have the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom. Visits help to develop students' investigative skills, encourage independence and are great fun. These guidelines are designed to help teachers feel confident that they have organised a safe and enjoyable experience for all involved.

The proposal, letter to parents, and risk assessment forms for educational visit forms are available on the VLE. All other forms will be issued by the Admin Office upon production of a signed proposal form. All visits must be approved before any communication is sent out to parents.

Categories

Certain categories of visits are subject first to the Local Authority's approval before the school can grant permission. These apply to category C and D visits.

Categories of Visit: (Full and complete definitions of these categories can be found in the Local Authority Guidelines on Educational visits and School Journeys.

Category A: Visits that comprise no significant risk e.g. non-timetabled recreational sports; visits to public places e.g. Ice rinks, theatres and universities. Note: Activities involving visits to coastal waters, river studies, boat trips or ferry crossings are category C.

Category B: Residential visits within mainland Britain but exclude outdoor and adventurous activities e.g. university residential courses.

Category C: All visits of an outdoor, demanding or adventurous nature, whether residential or not, that are potentially hazardous e.g. Skiing, mountain biking, mountain and moorland walking, rope courses and water related environment conservation and field study work.

Category D: All educational visits involving travel and residential stays outside mainland Britain and any major study projects or expeditions. Approval must be sought and agreed before the payment of any deposits.

The Group Leader should declare the category of visit on the School Visits 1 form but the responsibility for the categorisation of the visit lies with the school, Governing Body and Local Authority.

1. Visit Proposal

Submit a completed proposal form outlining the purpose, dates and target students to the Head Teacher. If successful, the visit has been approved in principle and more detailed organisation can begin.

In the case of overseas and residential visits within the UK, the matter will have to be raised before the Governors. It therefore follows that the proposal form must be submitted to the Governors' clerk in time for, and will not be returned until after, the next Governors meeting. Group leaders should plan accordingly.

For all non-residential visits proposal forms will be returned within 5 working days.

2. Application for approval

This section must be completed and the EV1 form, with supporting documentation, must be approved by the school before the visit can be publicised.

The Admin Office will issue the EV1 form once the visit has been agreed in principle. It should be completed after reading sections 1, 2, 3 and any other sections that pertain to the visit in particular of the Local Authority guidance: Safety Guidelines for Educational Visits. It is the responsibility of the Group Leader to plan a visit within these guidelines. The visit must conform to these guidelines before it will be approved.

At least 5 working days after issued by the Admin Office the EV1 form must be returned to the Admin Office along with the following documentation:

- 2.1 An itinerary: This should be as complete as possible at this stage but should include dates, departure, return and travel times, and main events.

- 2.2 Staffing must be included and the ratio must be appropriate for the type of activity. Calculating staffing ratios: These will vary depending upon the size and composition of the party. The minimum ratios can be found in the Local Authority's guidance material. The Group Leader should bear several factors in mind when choosing the team:
- Is it necessary to have a team member with an up to date (within 3 years) first aid certificate? This would be necessary if the visit were to a place where assistance could not easily be summoned.
 - It is not necessary for all members of the group to be CRB checked however the Group Leader should distribute responsibilities appropriately so that students are not put at risk.
 - If the members of the group are to be responsible for delivering an activity they should have a suitable qualification.
 - The effect on the cover situation they are creating for their colleagues. For residential visits not related to specific curriculum objectives, a substantial contribution to the costs of cover should be agreed in advance of the visit being approved. This should be indicated on the EV1 form.
- 2.3 A copy of the letter that will be sent to parents. A draft letter can be found on the VLE. This is intended as a framework alone and only the appropriate paragraphs need be included.
- 2.4 If the activity is to be covered by any additional insurance then it is the responsibility of the Group Leader to check that the provision covers any of the relevant areas as described in the Local Authority guidance booklet. Local Authority liability insurance covers third party accidents but does not include personal protection or comprehensive medical insurance. Additional insurance will be required to cover against loss of baggage, cancellation costs, personal accident and medical costs. Additional insurance can be provided by either School Journey Insurance or by a third party. School Journey Insurance can be raised by the Admin Office but takes a minimum of 7 working days. Clarification of the areas covered by a third party's policy can be confirmed by sending an Insurance Cover form to the insurance provider. All visits outside of the area must be covered by an appropriate insurance policy.

Local Authority Approval

The Admin Office will forward the completed and the itinerary to the Local Authority for approval. Category C visits may take up to 4 weeks for approval to be gained and category D visits up to 13 weeks. Group Leaders must plan accordingly.

When your visit has received full approval you will be informed in writing by the Admin Office and can publicise the event.

3. Organisation of the Visit

Once the visit has been approved, letters can be sent to parents/guardians and students informed. The draft letter can be adapted and submitted to the Admin office for typing. Parents/guardians must complete a written consent form. Students will not be allowed to take part unless this consent has been given.

For activities such as sports teams and 'walking to', a blanket consent form can be obtained for the year, but parents/guardians must be informed in writing when and where the activity will take place. These consent forms must be available for the duration of the visit. For a series of visits involving the same students, such as to a set of lectures, where the risks and procedures are the same, it is acceptable to produce one 'pack' for the series rather than treating each visit separately.

In the case of a large residential visit, possibly abroad, a second letter to parents will be necessary in order to convey all of the information such as departure and arrival times and flight details. In a visit of this nature there must be a Parents' Meeting a few weeks before departure.

All adults involved in the visit should be briefed on their roles and a Deputy Group Leader appointed. The Deputy Group Leader must have access to all the visit information should an emergency arise.

Transport

Private Cars: All staff intending to use their cars to transport students should:

- Have first class business use insurance
- Use a car that is taxed and holds a current MOT

- Not have any criminal driving convictions, although it is at the Head Teacher's discretion to accept up to 3 points for speeding offences
- Be responsible for the wearing of seat belts by all passengers

The use of private cars by adults other than members of staff is to be discouraged.

Insurance

Category A Visits: School Journey Insurance is available but is left to the discretion of the Group Leader in consultation with the EVC.

Category B and C Visits: School Journey Insurance is required for visits where students are likely to be engaged in hazardous activities (i.e. rock climbing, pot holing) or which include a residential stay.

Category D Visits: School Journey Insurance is compulsory for all overseas visits. Students must also have a valid European Health Insurance Card for visits to Europe, to take full advantage of any E.C. reciprocal arrangements for medical treatment.

4. Visit information pack

This needs to be returned to the Admin Office at least 10 working days before the departure date. If the paperwork is in order, the EV2 form will be authorised and the Admin Office will activate the insurance. If this deadline is not met then the visit may have to be postponed. In addition to the information produced to complete the 'Application for Approval', the pack must also include:

- 4.1 Completed parental consent forms for all participating students
- 4.2 A telephone chain in the case of a residential visit
- 4.3 Emergency contact numbers for participating adults
- 4.4 A full itinerary that includes, where relevant, departing and returning times; travel information i.e. travelling times, stations or airports, company contact numbers and flight numbers; accommodation details, third party details i.e. emergency contact number for tour operator and a plan of events including locations and approximate timings
- 4.5 A Risk Assessments outlining the potential hazards that people may face and whether those risks can be eliminated or substantially reduced. It should also describe what action you would take in the unlikely event of a problem. There are examples of good practice for common hazards in the back of the Local Authority's guidance booklet. Extra information can be found in the pamphlet 'Five steps to Risk Assessment'. The EVC keeps a file of good practice.

The size of the Risk Assessment should be proportional to the risk involved. It should be comprehensive and provide a record of your plans and intended actions should there be a **foreseeable** problem. The Group Leader has the responsibility to produce this document covering all such **foreseeable incidents**.

If using a service provider such as a skiing instructor from a dry slope ski school, the Group Leader should request and attach the Risk Assessments provided by that company. Public activities such as swimming pools and ice rinks are now required by law to have Risk Assessments for the activities they offer and these should be attached to the EV1 form. In this instance the Group Leader is responsible for monitoring the service provided by the external agency and should stop an activity if it is considered dangerous.

A collection of approved Risk Assessments will be placed on the VLE that Group Leaders can view and use in part or full to produce their own Risk Assessment. They will be named and dated according to the visit for which they were produced. Please note that because a Risk Assessment has previously been approved that does not imply that it will automatically receive approval a second time.

5. Administration

The Admin Office will:

- 5.1 Raise Local Authority insurance as specified by the Group Leader
- 5.2 Assign a member of the Senior Team to be the emergency contact, and pass this information to both the Senior Team contact and the Group Leader
- 5.3 Liaise with the Cover Manager to prepare for staff absence

- 5.4 Communicate information to relevant parties e.g. staff cars being left on site overnight; kitchens if a large group of students will be missing over lunchtime, if instructed to do so by the Group Leader
- 5.5 Copy the contents of the pack, once completed, for the Senior Team contact and the Group Leader, and retain the original for the school records.

After this stage students will only be included if a completed parental consent form accompanies the request. This list should be finalised 5 working days before departure in the case of a residential visit, and 48 hours before departure in the case of a day trip. The Visit Information Pack will be in the Admin office at this time.

Teachers should arrange appropriate cover work for their classes.

6. On the day of departure

If necessary the Group Leader should collect mobile phones and first aid equipment. Upon departure, the Group Leader should take a register and inform the Senior Team contact if out of school hours and the school office at any other time of any student absent.

After the visit has returned the Group Leader should telephone the Senior Team contact to define the end of their duty period.

Any changes to the itinerary should be communicated verbally to the school at the earliest opportunity and within 24 hours of returning to school. A decision will be taken as to whether this needs to be recorded and, if so, a written report should be completed within 3 working days. The Senior Management Team contact will sign off the visit when this has been completed.

7. After the visit

Once the visit has been completed the Group Leader should complete an evaluation form and forward this to the Admin Office. These forms are used to assist decision making for future visits to the same venue.

Guidelines

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- The Local Authority Guidance (available on the VLE).
- The Policy for Charging for School Activities, with particular regard to residential visits; outings organised as an obligatory part of a prescribed specification for a public examination; activities involving a third party, i.e. a tour operator.
- DCSF Publication: A Handbook for Group Leaders 2002. A copy is kept by the school.
- DCSF Publication: Health and Safety of Students on Educational Visits 1998. A copy is kept by the school.

Summary of School Visit Forms

- SV1 Proposal
- EV1 Application for approval
- EV2 Approval of Visit
- SV3 Parental consent
- SV4 Parental consent for an international visit
- SV5 Parental consent for PE activities
- SV6 Risk Assessment
- SV7 Letter to parents/guardians
- SV8 Insurance
- SV9 Evaluation
- EV10 Approval for Outside Agencies: this needs to be completed and signed by the agency contacted to arrange a visit

Agreed by Finance and Site Committee: 17.05.10

Approved by Full Governing Body 08.07.10