



SAFE START SCHOOL

WILLPOWER-INITIATIVE-SUCCESS-EMPATHY-RESPECT

TRIPS AND VISITS POLICY

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Written by	Grace Speakman
Reviewed By	Kate Collins

Purpose and scope

Educational visits extend learning, confidence, independence and cultural experience. This policy applies to all school-organised off-site activities, including routine local visits, enrichment, sporting fixtures, day visits, residential stays, overseas visits and adventurous activities. Planning must be proportionate to the real risks and pupils' individual needs.

Visits must have clear educational or personal development aims. Consider SEND, EHCP provision, medical and communication needs and reasonable adjustments from the outset. Disability, behaviour history or family finances must not automatically exclude a pupil. Where an individual arrangement is unsuitable, leaders must consider adjustments or an appropriate alternative and record the decision.

Roles and responsibilities

The proprietor retains overall accountability for health and safety, ensures suitable resources and oversight, and agrees arrangements for higher-risk visits. The Headteacher approves visits, checks competence and safe cover, and keeps the proprietor informed. Any delegated approval must be recorded.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), or the Headteacher where this role is not separately appointed, checks planning, staff competence, provider suitability and risk management. The EVC must have suitable experience, training and access to specialist advice where needed.

The Visit Leader plans and manages the visit, briefs pupils and adults, allocates supervision, maintains records and responds to changing conditions. Staff and volunteers follow the agreed plan, maintain professional boundaries and report concerns. Parents or carers, and adult students as appropriate, supply current information; the school must check it and resolve gaps before departure.

Approval and planning timescales

All visits require approval before departure. The Headteacher approves after EVC review, involving the Deputy Head as appropriate. Residential, adventurous, higher-risk and overseas visits also require approval from the Executive Director or proprietor's designated representative. Initial approval must precede advertising, financial commitments or confirmed bookings; final approval follows checks of the completed arrangements.

The school's minimum planning lead times are two weeks for a non-routine day visit, six weeks for a UK residential and sixteen weeks for an overseas visit. These are school planning requirements, not statutory deadlines. Any shorter timescale requires a recorded exception authorised by the Headteacher, with any additional senior approval required for that visit.

Routine nearby visits may operate under a recorded standing approval and local-visit risk assessment covering the activity, area, pupils, staffing and consent arrangements. Record who is leaving, the destination and expected return each time. Reassess if the group, activity or conditions fall outside the agreed arrangements. Higher-risk activities must not be added spontaneously.

Consent and information

As a school rule, obtain written parental or carer consent for private-car travel and non-routine visits for under-18s. Standing written consent may cover clearly described routine local activities; tell families how these operate and how to raise concerns or withdraw consent. Obtain specific informed consent for residential, overseas, adventurous or materially different activities.

Provide clear information about aims, activities, supervision, transport, costs, timings, clothing and contact arrangements. Explain significant risks and safeguards. Check consent comes from an appropriate person, taking account of parental responsibility and relevant court orders.

Students aged 18 or over normally consent for themselves. Apply the Mental Capacity Act from age 16 where relevant, supporting decision-making and seeking advice if authority is unclear. Involve families appropriately while respecting the student's rights. Seek pupils' views and prepare them for the visit using accessible information.

Risk assessment and supervision

Record significant risks and controls, using existing assessments where suitable. Consider the venue, activities, journey, weather, public access, water, terrain, toilets, changing and personal care, food and allergies, medical needs, behaviour, absconding and safeguarding. Obtain specialist advice for activities beyond staff competence. Visit beforehand where necessary or gather reliable information.

Determine staffing from the activity and individual needs; there is no single ratio suitable for every visit. Consider staff competence, one-to-one support, emergency cover, first aid, transport and how the remaining group will be supervised if a pupil needs individual help. Volunteers must have clear roles and suitable checks. Apply safer recruitment and DBS or barred-list requirements according to the role and eligibility; volunteers without appropriate checks must not have unsupervised responsibility for pupils.

Allocate named groups and supervision responsibilities, including breaks, transport and handovers to provider staff. Remote supervision or independent time requires explicit approval, suitable readiness, boundaries, check-ins and a response plan. Count pupils at transitions and regularly during activities; The Visit Leader must know each pupil's allocated group or agreed activity area and maintain the planned check-in arrangements.

Brief everyone on expected behaviour, boundaries, meeting points, emergency actions and how to seek help. Use school communication arrangements and follow the photography and staff conduct policies. Review risks immediately before departure and throughout the visit; adapt, stop or cancel activities when conditions or needs change.

Medical needs and first aid

Check current healthcare plans, allergies, emergency contacts, medication, trained staff and first aid cover. Ensure suitable first aid kits, access to emergency medicines and arrangements for storage, administration and recording. Include food safety, hydration, accessibility and rest needs. Do not rely on parents attending as the default solution to medical support.

Follow the First Aid Policy and individual emergency plans. Any adult may call emergency services without waiting for senior or parental permission. Plan how a pupil will be accompanied for treatment while others remain supervised. Agree how to manage illness, infection concerns and early collection safely.

Transport and external providers

Follow the Transporting Students Policy for private cars, including approved drivers and vehicles, insurance, restraints and safeguarding. Minibus use requires separate verification of licensing, operating arrangements and insurance. Check hired transport operators and suitable passenger safety arrangements.

Assess providers' suitability for the activity and pupils. Check relevant insurance, staff competence, safeguarding, emergency arrangements, equipment, accessibility and any required adventure-activity licence. A relevant Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge can support assurance but does not replace checking the specific visit arrangements. Record responsibility for supervision, including any subcontractors.

For swimming and water activities, specifically assess lifeguarding, instructor competence, pupils' ability, rescue arrangements and supervision. Unplanned swimming or water entry is not permitted. Do not assume that hotel pools have a lifeguard.

Residential and overseas visits

Assess accommodation security, fire and evacuation arrangements, sleeping and bathroom facilities, privacy, personal care, overnight supervision and staff availability. Make individual arrangements sensitively, considering age, SEND, safeguarding and pupil views. Include the safeguarding implications of adults and under-18s travelling together.

For overseas travel, check current FCDO advice, entry and passport requirements, insurance including medical and activity cover, healthcare access, relevant travel health advice and contingency arrangements. Review advice before departure and during the visit. Obtain specialist approval for significant risks; do not proceed where safe arrangements or suitable cover cannot be secured.

Emergency arrangements

For every visit, designate a school emergency contact who is available throughout the visit, including out of hours, with a backup. The contact must have the itinerary, passenger and staff lists, relevant medical information, emergency contacts and provider details. The Visit Leader must carry securely accessible copies and a reliable means of communication, allowing for poor signal or a lost device.

If a serious incident occurs, secure the group, call emergency services where needed, provide first aid within competence and contact the school emergency contact. Share the location, incident details, those affected and support needed. Keep the remaining pupils supervised and arrange safe care, transport or collection. Record decisions and timings.

The school coordinates family contact, additional support and the business continuity response. Communicate factual information through an agreed senior contact, protect privacy and avoid speculation or identifying posts on social media. Do not delay emergency care to obtain consent or complete paperwork.

Missing pupils and delayed return

If a pupil is missing, alert the Visit Leader immediately, establish when and where they were last seen, check agreed meeting points and contact the venue. Keep the rest of the group supervised. Undertake only a safe, coordinated search with allocated adults; do not send pupils to search.

Contact police immediately where the pupil's age, vulnerability, environment or circumstances indicate danger; there is no requirement to wait a set period. Notify the school emergency contact promptly so that family contact and safeguarding actions can be coordinated. Record actions and follow police advice.

For delays, breakdowns or major disruption, find a safe place, maintain supervision, inform the school and arrange updates and alternative transport as required. Confirm safe handover to the agreed responsible person or setting. Any independent departure must have been agreed and assessed in advance; do not leave a pupil stranded after failed collection.

Recording evaluation and review

Retain approvals, assessments, consent, relevant communications, provider checks, incident records and evaluations securely under the school's retention arrangements. Limit access to sensitive information and securely delete or return temporary copies when no longer required.

After each visit, check all pupils have returned or been handed over safely. Record accidents, safeguarding concerns and near misses promptly through the relevant school systems. The Headteacher assesses any external reporting duties. Evaluate learning, inclusion and the effectiveness of controls, proportionately to the visit, and update future arrangements.

The Headteacher and EVC review this policy annually or sooner following a significant incident, change in provision or relevant guidance. The proprietor oversees implementation through normal reporting arrangements.

Visit checklist

Before departure confirm:

- Educational aims, suitable participation and reasonable adjustments.
- Recorded approval and proportionate risk assessment.
- Competent staffing, allocated supervision and first aid cover.
- Consent, contact information, healthcare plans and medicines.
- Transport, provider and accommodation checks where applicable.

- Pupil and staff briefings, itinerary, emergency contact and backup.
- Final review of conditions and any changes.

Related policies and guidance

Read alongside Safeguarding and Child Protection, Health and Safety, Transporting Students, First Aid, Allergy, Behaviour, Missing Pupil, Photography, Data Protection and Business Continuity policies or procedures.

References: Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999; Equality Act 2010; Independent School Standards 2014; DfE Health and safety on educational visits; HSE school trips guidance; OEAP National Guidance; current FCDO travel advice for overseas visits.