



Educational Visits Policy

Reviewed: September 2021
Update Due September 2022
Co-ordinator: Mr D Ferris

St Joseph's Preparatory School
Policy for visits away from the school site
This Policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the EYFS

<p>The Governing Body of St Joseph's Preparatory School understands its regulatory responsibilities and will maintain an effective oversight of this policy, by evaluating its effectiveness, and reviewing and implementing change</p>

1. General Principles

The school recognises the importance of school visits for the educational, social and moral development of pupils. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that school trips are undertaken as safely as reasonably possible while retaining the enjoyment and educational or social nature of the activity. To this end the careful preparation and supervision of school visits is essential. Many of the roles detailed below overlap to some extent to ensure that all aspects are fully considered before the start of the trip.

While accidents cannot always be prevented the aim of this policy is to ensure that visits are well planned in advance, that all foreseeable risks have been considered and safety measures put in place. All staff on a school visit owe a duty of care to act in the manner of prudent parents in exercising supervisory responsibilities for the pupils. The golden rule is at all times: SAFETY FIRST.

Regard is had to the DfE Guidance on Health and Safety on Educational Visits 2018.

2. Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible in law for the safety of pupils who participate in school trips.

The Governing Body will wish to:

- a) Ensure that the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) has the appropriate time and expertise to fulfil the responsibilities expected of them.
- b) Ensure that guidance is available to inform the school's policy, practices and procedures relating to the health and safety of pupils on visits.
- c) To ensure that any visits are well planned in advance.
- d) Satisfy themselves that the necessary assurances have been obtained from any external contractors about competence and insurance cover.
- e) Ensure that any children with special needs or a disability are included as far as is reasonably possible in the visit.

3. Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher has an important role in being the focal point for the school. The Headteacher's main functions for school trips are as the overall supervisor of the trip and arrangements and to be the immediate point of reference for parents and the Governing Body.

The Headteacher will:

- a) Authorise school visits.

- b) Ensure that arrangements are in place for the Governing Body to be aware of visits undertaken.
- c) Satisfy them self that appropriate risk assessments including pre-visit assessments have been satisfactorily undertaken – this also includes the competence and insurance cover of any external agencies involved in the trip.
- d) Ensure that that an appropriate Group Leader is nominated. The Headteacher will consider the Group Leader's competence and ability to maintain discipline.
- e) Ensure that all staff and non-staff are both competent and appropriate to be on the trip.
- f) Confirm in writing that non-staff volunteers can attend the visit and make sure that DBS disclosures are in place where necessary. St Joseph's Preparatory School does not allow parents (other than those already employed on the staff or Governors) to be a non-staff volunteer, even if the parents hold a DBS disclosure.
- g) Ensure that parents are fully informed about the trip, have provided their consent and can be contacted for its duration.
- h) Make time available for the EVC to train any staff and non-staff supervisors before the trip commences.
- i) Ensure that the school has emergency procedures in place in case of a major incident (see below).

4. Role of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator

St Joseph's Preparatory School continues to see this as a pivotal role in that the EVC shall be responsible for ensuring the safety of the school visit before, during and after the trip has ended. The EVC will also be responsible for planning school procedures to help the school fulfil its health and safety obligations for visits.

In addition to any other responsibilities set out in this policy the Headteacher/EVC will:

- a) Liaise with the Governing Body to ensure that school visits have a stated and appropriate objective.
- b) Undertake such risk assessments including pre-visits as are necessary.
- c) Assign and if necessary, train competent people to lead the group.
- d) Assess the competence and, if necessary, train or arrange for staff or non-staff supervisors.
- e) Ensure that parents give their full and unequivocal consent to their child going on the trip. The EVC will ensure that such consent is given on a fully formal basis.
- f) Ensure that supervision ratios are appropriate (see below).
- g) Where an external agency assists with the visit, ensure the agency is competent and has appropriate insurance cover.
- h) Organise the emergency arrangements for a trip.
- i) Consider how pupils with special needs or a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 can be involved in school visits.
- j) Keep records of visits including reports of accidents or near incidents (near misses).

- k) Review practice and systems in the light of any lessons learned during the visit.
- l) Maintain a record of training for members of staff.
- m) Attend such training sessions as are required to ensure that they have the necessary competence and skills to act as an EVC.
- n) Prepare forms and checklists for Group Leaders to complete in preparation before the trip and reporting following the trip.

5. Procedure for a School Visit

- a) The teacher wishing to undertake a school trip will prepare a plan outlining the educational or social benefits likely to be gained from the trip. This plan will be provided to the EVC, who if satisfied the trip is appropriate, will approve the trip in writing and inform the Headteacher of its intentions.
- b) The Headteacher will authorise or reject the trip or could authorise the trip in principle provided certain steps are taken before their full consent is given
- c) An administration file should be opened and kept containing all the relevant paperwork.
- d) Parents will be informed of the proposed trip and, if it is deemed necessary, will be invited to attend a meeting(s) at the school to discuss the trip including insurance cover (see below).
- e) The parents' written consent will be obtained. Any child whose parents refuse to give their unequivocal consent to the trip will not be allowed to participate.
- f) The EVC will undertake written risk assessments for all aspects of the visit, including travel arrangements. These risk assessments will be:
 - Generic activity risk assessments that is assessments of risk likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place.
 - Visit/site specific risk assessments which are likely to differ from place to place and group to group.
- g) If necessary, the EVC will arrange for a pre-visit especially when neither the school nor the Group Leader has visited that location before.
- h) Where an activity centre or external agency is engaged by the school, the distinction between the responsibilities of the school and the staff of the agency needs to be clearly defined in writing.
- i) The involvement of any non-contracted adult must have the written approval of the Headteacher. Such persons must have undergone all appropriate checks.
- j) Up to date medical information should be obtained on all pupils, especially when on a residential visit. Pupils with a medical record which gives cause for concern should be taken on a visit only after consultation with the EVC and the Headteacher and with the written advice of the School Nurse or other medical professional.
- k) The EVC will ensure that all reasonably practicable efforts have been made to include special needs or disabled pupils as fully as possible in the visit.
- l) Each visit will have a designated Group Leader who is employed by the school and is considered by the EVC to be sufficiently competent and experienced to fulfil this role. The Group Leader will be competent to undertake ongoing informal risk assessments as the trip progresses.

Such assessments will consider unforeseen aspects of the trip such as illness of staff, inability of pupil to participate, change of weather or venue.

- m) The EVC will also authorise the ability of other persons to be suitable persons to supervise the pupils on the visit. In all matters the school expects members of staff or non-staff volunteers to carry out their responsibilities in a manner which is fair and reasonable.
- n) At the conclusion of the trip the EVC will ensure that a full report of the trip including a record of any accidents or near incidents is completed by the Group Leader and provided to the Governing Body together with any recommendations for amendments to procedures.

At all times the Headteacher reserves the right to exclude any pupil from participating in a trip or expedition or any part of the trip. This authority is delegated to the Group Leader who is authorised to forbid the pupil from participating at any time during the trip if it becomes clear that the pupil is either incapable of or insufficiently responsible to undertake all or any part of the trip or activities.

6. Supervision

- a) Every trip must have a clearly designated Group Leader. Where there is a large party a Deputy Leader must also be designated. A large party would be one where over 30 pupils are involved.
- b) The level of adult supervision must realistically reflect the purpose and nature of the trip, the experience of the accompanying adults, and any special needs or disabled pupils.
- c) While each trip must be judged on its merits the school recommends the following minimum staff/pupil ratios:
 - School Years Reception to PP2 1:5
 - School Years P3 to P6 1:10

Where the school is visiting abroad and/or a remote area or is undertaking a high risk activity it is likely a higher staff/pupil ration will be required.

Where a mixed visit is being undertaken, for the purpose of sports or residential then both male and female teachers must accompany the visit.

- d) If possible, adults of the appropriate gender should accompany all school visits i.e. male members of staff should, if possible, accompany visits where boys are involved and female members of staff should, if possible, accompany where girls are involved.
- e) The EVC and the Group Leader must explain clearly and preferably in writing the responsibilities of staff and adult supervisors on each visit. A brief meeting is considered best practice. During this meeting pupils will be informed of procedures set in place e.g. names of staff that hold Epi-Pens and Inhalers and the staff member who will administer and look after the medicines.
- f) Pupils must know where they can contact an adult member of a party at all times.
- g) All staff must carry a list of all pupils on the visit. Check and roll calls should be frequent and a roll call must always be called when pupils re-join any transport before departure.

- h) According to context, pupils should not wander around on their own unsupervised, but in groups of at least 2 or 3. Where appropriate, maps of the area should be distributed.
- i) Non contracted adults can only accompany visits if the written permission of the Headteacher has been obtained and all appropriate checks have been made.
- j) Fire procedures at residential sites should be checked, as far as is possible, prior to the visit being undertaken. In any event, a fire evacuation procedure involving all pupils should be carried out as soon as practically possible after arrival.

7. Expertise in Activities

- a) Accompanying adults must have reasonable knowledge, experience and skills (and in hazardous activities, qualifications) in the activities undertaken.
- b) The EVC and Group Leader must be satisfied that pupils are medically fit to undertake the planned activities. If there is any doubt, reference should be made to the School Nurse.
- c) Where staff has specific qualifications it is their responsibility to make sure that these are up to date and valid. The EVC will keep a record of such training and if necessary, arrange for refresher sessions.
- d) If a member of staff has any reason to doubt the competence or conduct of any adult on a visit, this should be made known to the Group Leader at once with fully documented evidence (e.g. witnesses). It is the Group Leader's responsibility to deal with the matter at once, if necessary contacting the EVC or Headteacher at school. All discussions should be accurately minuted.
- e) Where an external agency is being used, such as a travel company, the EVC will establish the competence of the agency's staff in advance. Doing so may include an inspection of the agency/centre's documentation on staff and risk assessment, equipment and its accident log. Where the activity is an adventure activity as defined in the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 and 2004 EVC will check that the agency holds a current licence. The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) awards the LOtC Quality Badge to organisations which meet nationally recognised standards. Where the organisation does not hold the badge, the school will check they are an appropriate organisation to use. This will include checking:
 - their insurance
 - they meet legal requirements
 - their health and safety and emergency policies
 - their risk assessments and control measures
 - their use of vehicles
 - staff competence
 - safeguarding
 - accommodation
 - any sub-contracting arrangements they have
 - that they have a licence where needed.

- f) The EVC will ensure that all supervisors on the trip are competent to undertake informal risk assessments for any stage of the activity.

8. Knowledge of Area and Activities

- a) Group Leaders should be familiar with the nature of the conditions likely to be encountered.
- b) Prior information must be obtained by the Headteacher/EVC about local hazards and safety requirements that are likely to be encountered. Where appropriate, contact should be made in advance with local agencies, wardens, the Foreign Office etc in order to ascertain local conditions.
- c) Informed and responsible local advice must always be heeded and acted upon accordingly.
- d) Pupils and adults must be suitably clothed and equipped for particular activities and the conditions likely to be encountered.
- e) A pre-visit by the Group Leader and/or EVC may be necessary to evaluate the site(s) from an educational and safety viewpoint. Where this is impractical, the EVC and Group Leader must be able to demonstrate to the Governing Body that sufficient preparation has been undertaken (e.g. use of a reputable travel agent's package) to ensure the safety of the group as far as is reasonably practicable.
- f) Appropriate risk assessments need to be made.

9. Insurance Arrangements

- a) For each school trip, the EVC should prepare a statement on insurance cover in consultation with the Bursar where appropriate.
- b) Parents must be made aware of any insurance cover that has been arranged. Copies of travel insurance arranged through the Bursar must be sent to parents.
- c) Where the school is engaging an external agency the EVC shall satisfy them self about the adequacy of the agency's insurance cover.

10. Transport

The EVC will consider the transport needs of the party. They will:

- a) Ensure that the tour operator or hirer or transport providers, such as coach companies are reputable.
- b) Check that there are sufficient adults on the trip to supervise the pupils and maintain good discipline – in this regard, the school acknowledges that a staff or non-staff driver of a minibus cannot also be expected to supervise the pupils.
- c) Ensure that any staff or non-staff drivers have the appropriate qualifications and, if necessary, insurances for driving that vehicle.
- d) Consider whether there are any safety concerns arising from the mode of transport and plan in advance how to deal, for example, with pupils travelling on a ferry or train.
- e) Ensure that first aid is available at all times.

11. Dealing with Parents

The following are important:

- a) Draft copies of letters to parents must be sent to the Headteacher/EVC for their approval and/or amendment.

- b) Consent slips should be included at the bottom of the letter, to be signed by a parent with parental responsibility (no signed consent form, no visit for that pupil).
- c) Group Leaders must ensure that all the forms are collected.
- d) Parents must be informed of any special requirements in terms of equipment, clothing, time of return, addresses and telephone numbers of hotels/youth hostels, passports etc in advance of the visit.
- e) Full itineraries must be given to parents in advance of residential visits.
- f) A medical form must be sent to parents and returned to the Group Leader when residential visits are undertaken in order to ensure that up to date information is available on the visit.
- g) It is advisable that a meeting for the parents of those pupils going on residential visits should be held in order to explain the itinerary, ground rules of the visit and to answer questions from parents. At this meeting we will advise parents that teachers will act in “loco parentis” in the event of any emergency where parents or carers cannot be contacted.
- h) Charges for the visit should be clear and adhered to fully; any surplus must be reimbursed to the parents concerned.

12. Charging

- a) Where the visit is not deemed essential to teaching of the curriculum, it is an optional extra. As such, the full cost can be passed onto parents provided that they have given their consent.
- b) The cost of staff places on residential visits should be included in the overall total and apportioned to pupils.

13. Discipline and Sanctions

- a) Normal school rules will apply on all school visits, which will be vigorously enforced, and breaches dealt with appropriately at the time under the Behaviour policy. The Group Leader will remind pupils of their responsibilities.
- b) It is essential that pupils are given clear instructions about their conduct and any rules relevant to the trip such as dress code, out of bounds or lights out.
- c) Smoking and the consumption of alcohol is strictly forbidden.
- d) The use and/or possession of illegal drugs is strictly forbidden.
- e) Breaches of discipline on visits should be reported to the relevant person in writing on return to school under the Behaviour policy.
- f) Should a pupil’s conduct be deemed to be so bad (e.g. refusals to accept the instructions of adults, abusive language, et al) as to be intolerable and/or risk to the safety of pupils on the trip, he or she will be sent home.
- g) Parents and pupils need to be fully informed about the range of sanctions, which can be used on a visit; should either a pupil or parent indicate that they are reluctant or unwilling to accept these sanctions; the pupil will not be allowed to go on the visit.
- h) Such sanctions may include:
 - Loss of free time
 - Staying with adults on the visit to the various sites
 - Cleaning up the coach/hostel
 - Confiscation of money
 - ‘Grounding’

- ❑ Sending to bed early
- ❑ Prevention of participation in all or any part of the visit
- ❑ Sending home (any additional costs to be met by the parents including those of an accompanying adult).

14. Emergency Procedures

- a) Group Leaders should ensure that a First Aid kit is taken on every school outing.
- b) Group Leaders and supervisors must make sure that pupils are fully briefed about the local conditions, which they are likely to face; pupils must also be told what to do if they encounter any difficulty or emergency or to know where to find either the Group Leader or an adult.
- c) All adults on a visit should have a list of pupils and their parent' emergency contact numbers.
- d) Parents must be informed at the earliest opportunity if an emergency occurs.
- e) In the event of an accident or illness, parents must be informed as quickly as possible. If any pupil sustains an injury an Accident Report must be made and eyewitness accounts recorded in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy.
- f) A point of contact must be established at the school in order to transmit information to parents to certain circumstances (e.g. late returns); on residential visits, a contact must be designated and his/her telephone number given to parents in advance, this will normally be the school mobile telephone.
- g) Adults on the trip should take the school mobile telephone.
- h) The EVC will prepare or authorize contingency plans for eventualities which may happen on a visit (e.g. care and/or return of ill/injured pupils, early return for disciplinary reasons); as far as is possible, parents should be informed of these plans in advance of the visit.
- i) The EVC or Headteacher must be available to the Group Leader for emergency contact.

Useful advice and resources:

- DfE Health and Safety: advice on legal duties and powers for local authorities, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335111/DfE_Health_and_Safety_Advice_06-02_14.pdf
School employers should always take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that in school's risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable children to undertake activities safely, and not prevent activities from taking place.
- Health and Safety Executive School trips and outdoor learning activities Tackling the health and safety myths
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf> HSE fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life – it provides deeper subject learning and self-confidence. It also helps pupils develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives. Striking the right balance between protecting

pupils from risk and allowing them to learn from school trips has been a challenge for many schools, but getting this balance right is essential for realising all these benefits in practice.

- Government guidance -Recognising the terrorist threat Stay Safe: terrorist attacks
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recognising-the-terrorist-threat/recognising-the-terrorist-threat>
- National guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom <http://oeapng.info/visit-leader/> Includes useful templates, including Visit Leader Emergency Cards and specific guidance for the Visit Leader.