

Educational Visits Policy



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1. INTRODUCTION

Guidelines

This policy sets out the principles and criteria of good practice whilst leaving a good deal to the expertise and judgment of those approving, leading or supervising the visit. A “culture of safety” is the prime consideration.

Pupils can derive a great deal of educational benefit from participating in educational visits with their school. Educational visits often bring the curriculum alive. They encourage pupils to learn, make the subject more exciting and consolidate the learning process. They are an ideal vehicle for learning life skills, risk management and gaining maturity.

Educational visits may vary from a local trip to an overseas expedition. The planning required will vary but the principles of assessing risk and putting in place reasonable control measures remain the same.

Taking pupils out of school can be a source of anxiety to teachers but careful planning and understanding of what is required is the basis for confidence. This policy is referred to at the start of each academic year and staff are also directed to various DfE policies. Staff should consult the Educational Visits Procedures document available in the Staff Handbook. Planning for an Educational Visit is completed using EVOLVE (Edufocus).

The Golden Rule

Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. These duties apply to all school visits. Teachers and other staff in charge of pupils also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

1. The **Council of the Trust** is ultimately responsible for the health and safety at work of all staff and pupils. The Council’s day to day responsibility is delegated to the Heads.

2. The **Head** is responsible for staff, pupils and any accompanying adults, eg parents, on every school visit. It is important for everyone involved that the Head considers the EVC’s recommendations in relation to each trip and only approves it when they are satisfied that all appropriate safeguards are in place. There should be a written record that they have been approved.

3. The **Party Leader** is responsible for the planning, organisation and co-ordination of the trip, and for taking day to day decisions once the trip is in progress. Party Leaders must:

- be a member of staff employed by the Trust. Whilst Party Leader are normally a member of teaching staff, non-teaching staff may also lead trips
- have prior experience of being an Assistant Leader on similar visits before leading a school party.
- have adequate training, experience and be competent for the type of trip and activities being undertaken (more information ed. visit staff training, experience and competence **here**)
- have been approved as Trip Leader by the Head.

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4. The **accompanying staff** are in loco parentis (i.e. responsible for taking immediate and appropriate decisions) of the pupils in their charge at any given time. Case-law has established that a teacher is unlikely to be held negligent if his or her decision is one within the reasonable range of options available to a reasonable teacher in the particular circumstances.

5. Even if **other adults**, eg parents, accompany the trip, the staff remain responsible in law for the pupils. It is, therefore, essential that adults are properly briefed on their role. Parents accompanying the trip should not supersede the loco parentis of the staff leading and accompanying the trip, as this creates ambiguity for staff, parents and pupils.

2. AIMS

It is School Policy:

- To encourage visits and work outside school which enhances the curriculum
- For pupils to enjoy residential experiences during their schooling
- To offer a wide and stimulation programme of visits and trips in the UK and overseas

The School believes that such opportunities enhance the character, learning, skills and experience of its pupils and help strengthen relationships within the school between pupils and between pupils and staff.

Aims of this Policy

All activities which take place outside School are liable to potential hazards. It is appropriate, therefore, that special consideration be given to their organisation. This Policy will assist in the planning and expected conduct for all off-site school trips. Inevitably, most of the following is specifically relevant to lengthy long-distance trips, in the UK or abroad. However, much of the good practice in this document can also be applied to local, one day or evening trips.

3. EDUCATIONAL VISITS CO-ORDINATOR (EVC)

The Director of Enrichment and Partnerships (Senior and Prep) act as the EVC, on behalf of the Head. The role is to:

- Consider and approve proposals for trips
- Ensure that appropriate documentation exists in Evolve, including risk assessments (liaising with the Transport and H&S Managers when required)
- Ensure planning and documentation meets with School Policy
- Organise the training of leaders
- Support trip leaders
- Organise emergency planning including the emergency contact for each visit
- Evaluate and monitor trips
- Review policies and systems annually, especially in the light of any incidents
- Ensure that DBS disclosures are in place as necessary
- Work with the group leader to obtain the consent or refusal of parents and to provide full details of the visit beforehand so that parents can consent or refuse consent on a fully informed basis

The EVC reviews trips regularly.

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4. TRIP LEADERS: COMPETENCE AND TRAINING

The DfE identifies the competence of the leader as a crucial factor, especially in outdoor activities. It is the primary factor ensuring safe practice. The School is responsible for assessing the competence of staff to lead school trips and to provide information, support and training. The School must be satisfied that staff roles and responsibilities are commensurate with their experiences and competence to undertake them. Competence is wider than just holding of qualifications. All adult supervisors should fully understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. Staff will not be allowed to lead a trip until they have accompanied other trips at least once. Staff leading trips involving anything other than local travel will be required to attend the GDST Trip Leader course.

5. AUTHORISATION/ESSENTIAL PLANNING INFORMATION

The GDST is committed to using **EVOLVE** to manage all educational visits and school trips. School visits / off-site activities are defined by the initial five questions asked when undertaking trip-planning using the EVOLVE online trip management software system. These questions determine the level of trip planning, risk assessment and trip management detail that is required. (NB The Evolve question set and procedures should be tailored to follow GDST guidelines). The questions ask whether:

1. The trip activity is off or onsite?
2. If offsite whether it is overseas?
3. Is it a residential activity?
4. Does it include adventurous activities?
5. And will this activity be led by an activity provider or by a member of staff?

On the basis of these answers EVOLVE then determines the level and detail required to safely plan and manage that trip. The more questions you answer yes to, the more rigorous the requirements are. Therefore the amount of guidance you should seek and follow increases similarly.

Subsequently, when entering details of the proposed activities on a trip, a question arises about whether the trip goes to a venue or an activity provider. In terms of a definition a 'venue' is a location such as a museum, art gallery etc. where some activities may be provided but these will be low risk, whereas a 'provider' is a facility where a structured higher risk activity is carried out i.e. a climbing session at an indoor climbing wall.

EVOLVE will also determine the approval chain to be followed and will not allow trip planning to continue until the steps to gaining full trip approval are completed. This approval chain mirrors previously used paper systems and can be set up to provide both an initial outline and then a subsequent final approval.

Due to its link to SIMS, EVOLVE is updated daily and so is able to display the most up to date information, if any paperwork is to be printed off and taken on the trip, it is important that this is printed off just prior to the trip, and not too far in advance, to ensure that it is current.

Evolve sends reminders for tasks, sets out suitable timescales for trip planning, manages the approval process and trip planning cannot be progressed without the inputting of information

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or approval from various people such as the school nurse, finance dept., curriculum cover organiser etc.

- The visit should be educationally justifiable, with a clearly defined educational purpose, and related or complementary to the philosophy outlined at the beginning of this section. There should be stated aims for the visit, which are in line with the School's overall policy.
- Any school trip must be individually sanctioned by the Assistant Head on behalf of the Head to whom a request should be made at least half a term in advance for a day trip and two terms in advance for a residential trip. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Co-ordinator will liaise directly with the EVC. Each trip must have a SLT link assigned. The EVC has the right to decline a proposal on the grounds of several criteria, e.g. cost, purpose, suitability of trip leader/staff.
- Overseas trips must be sanctioned by the EVC who must satisfy themselves that the person planning the visit is competent to do so and has the necessary relevant experience. Outside expert help to ensure that the visit has been planned effectively and that risks are minimised may be called upon to assess proposals for major tours. Advice can be obtained from the GDST Health & Safety Adviser. Where possible, for trips abroad, the GDST preferred supplies should be used and all trips must be ABTA and ATOL protected. A Three-Year plan for residential trips is kept up-to-date by the EVC to allow careful planning to take place.
- No group letter should be sent to parents without the Head's prior approval. Copies of all communications with parents should be lodged with all other relevant paperwork on Evolve.
- All trips should be value for money and Trip Leaders should seek at least three quotations.
- Organisers should make sure that the costings (including building in the costs of the preliminary visit) and methods of payment are agreed with the Assistant EVC and are made clear. All accounts need to be audited after the trip. All payments should be by Parent Pay. A 10% contingency should be added to all trip budgets.
- Insurance cover is provided by the GDST insurers, CHUBB (see 501a). Any queries should be directed to the Assistant EVC.
- The School reserves the right not to allow certain pupils to join a visit on the grounds of their history of inappropriate behaviour or on the grounds of potential danger to themselves or others. If a pupil is excluded from School they cannot be allowed to go on a school visit. They or their parents are liable for any financial loss resulting, for example, in the case of non-returnable deposits or cancellation fees.
- Pre-trip planning meetings are essential and minutes should be kept; meetings during the trip are crucial; a post-trip evaluation report is also necessary.

6. PRELIMINARY VISIT

Whenever possible there should be a preliminary visit by the leader or at the very least very careful research into the venue and its facilities. Other schools may be consulted, and it may be particularly useful to consult other GDST schools. Site-specific risk assessments must be carried out for certain visits and time must be allocated to this. The cost of this must be included

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in the eventual charge made to pupils.

7. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS AND PUPILS

Parents are responsible for ensuring the School is aware of any medical and/or dental health problems, or any personal problem that could affect their child during the trip. Parents should also ensure that their child understands his/her responsibilities during the trip. The School will provide parents with key contact details and other important information. Parents should carefully keep details of the itinerary and timetable and who to contact if there is an urgent need to get in touch with their child during the trip.

The EVC and/or trip leader (as appropriate) should address all pupils before residential trips. The briefing includes safety, discipline, Child Protection and terrorism. For major tours abroad pupils and parents should be addressed together. It is best practice for this meeting date to form part of the initial letter to parents regarding the trip.

- Once the visit/trip has been approved and planned, parents will need preliminary information before deciding whether their children should take part. This should include the purpose of the visit, dates and times, which pupils it is aimed at, destination, method of travel, itinerary, accommodation, the provisional programme, estimated cost/payment arrangements, supervision of the party, details of insurance cover, and mention of any special hazards. It should be made clear whether deposits are returnable.
- Parents should be asked to disclose any relevant medical information and must inform the organiser of any health issues arising since the completion of the GDST Medical Consent Form. Organisers should be aware of health issues and keep this information with them, briefing members of staff accompanying the trip.
- Before departure a letter should be sent to parents with final comprehensive details about the visit. The brief should include a statement on the code of behaviour expected from their children and that the School Rules still apply during the course of the trip. The guiding principle must be that students must at all times behave as their parents and teachers would wish them to behave.
- The pupils should be given a written brief and also be briefed verbally, particularly about behaviour and safety matters. Pupils will need to be regularly briefed during the trip itself, especially at the start of the day and at appropriate points during the day.
- Copies of the final written brief to parents, plus a list of names of the party and telephone contact numbers, should be stored on Evolve. Contact details should include all relevant residential contact numbers as well as home numbers of all members of the party (pupils and staff).
- If a pupil asks to travel home under her own arrangements, or to remain behind (in London, say) this should be discussed with the EVC. Consent will be required, with a form completed by a parent, before permission is given. For this purpose, an email from a parent from a known email address will suffice.
- All pupils will be required to return to School or be collected by parents, unless the

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School has written permission from parents. This is to ensure there is no delay in the return time to school. Parents should meet their children promptly.

8. PARENTS

Parents are responsible for ensuring the School is aware of any medical and/or dental health problems, or any personal problem that could affect their daughter during the trip. Parents should also ensure that their daughter understands her responsibilities during the trip. The School will provide parents with key contact details and other important information. Parents should carefully keep details of the itinerary and timetable and who to contact if there is an urgent need to get in touch with their daughter during the trip.

9. DISCIPLINE

Before the trip pupils should know the code of behaviour expected for the trip (see 504).

Parents will already have been informed of expectations (see Communication). Organisers should lay down explicit ground rules so that pupils know how they are expected to behave. On any school expedition they are subject to school discipline and the laws of the land, and are representing the School. The clear code of rules should, as far as practicable, be agreed with participants.

- Normal school rules will apply to trips (with the exception of dress on visits outside school time, e.g. to the theatre or on holiday visits).
- Smoking is forbidden, as is the buying or drinking of alcohol for all students. This includes pre-consumption of any nicotine product, alcohol or any other recreational drug(s).
- Pupils need to be made aware of any potential dangers, the need to obey instructions, to be punctual and to avoid noisy and inconsiderate behaviour at all times and not least in public places, especially when in transit. It is important to stress the importance of behaviour on coaches, trains, aircraft and ferries. Pupils also need to be reminded of the need to be responsible for their own property. Pupils should be told of emergency procedures (for example if separated from the party or in case of accident).
- Where an activity is governed by a national authority, e.g. walking in a National Park, these rules should be drawn to the attention of the group.
- If staying in a hotel, make sure pupils know what the rules are on bedtimes, the rules governing separate sleeping areas and general conduct of pupils, courtesy to other guests and general conduct. Organisers should take definite steps to ensure that all pupils are back at the hotel (and in bed) by the time decreed.
- Bullying in any form is unacceptable and should be dealt with promptly (see school Anti-Bullying Policy on the school website or available on request).
- The School reserves the right to send home any pupil involved in a serious breach of School rules. (In the case of an overseas trip, this would present serious difficulties but may still be necessary. The tour leader would liaise with the Deputy Head at School). A pupil may need to be segregated from the rest of the party.
- The SLT link and EVC should be informed of any major incident as soon as possible. A written report should later be submitted.

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Staff and Student Expectations

Staff should ensure that individuals on excursions and trips are not allowed to go off on their own. The law requires staff to exercise adequate supervision. Whilst detailed regulations would be inappropriate and much will depend on the age of the pupil and local circumstances, in general, where Senior School pupils are allowed “free time” in groups, pupils should always be placed in small groups of not less than four who must be told to keep together.

To safeguard the welfare of both staff and pupils on educational visits, no alcohol is to be consumed by any member of staff while in charge of pupils, of any age. For the avoidance of doubt, this responsibility is held for the full duration of visits, even when a member of staff has no specific duty.

10. COMPOSITION OF THE PARTY, SUPERVISION, AND STAFF: PUPIL RATIOS

Each supervisor will be given a written statement, detailing roles and responsibilities.

A school party should normally be composed of pupils and staff; other adults (e.g. spouses/partners of staff, parents) may also be included to establish the appropriate adult/pupil ratio, but may not be left alone with children for substantial periods. Adults who have not been DBS checked will not have unsupervised access to children. All volunteers working with the School are DBS checked, regardless of how many times they volunteer or whether they have unsupervised access. All School parties should have a named leader (and a deputy) who must be a serving staff member at Sutton High School.

Accompanying adults must be given explicit advice about their role and responsibilities but the trip leader always retains ultimate responsibility

Additional members e.g. children of staff may only join a trip with prior approval of the EVC. The implications must be subject to risk assessment especially in light of the Glenridding Beck Tragedy.

It is not possible to be precise about the appropriate ratio of adults to pupils. In assessing staffing ratios the following factors are significant:

- The age and ability of the pupils
- Pupils with special educational needs or medical needs
- 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
- Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited
- First aid cover
- The type of activity
- Their previous experience away from home or school
- Their general capabilities, maturity and discipline
- Their training for the trip
- Location and travel arrangements

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1. Supervision Ratios on Lower Risk Day Trips and Activities

The recommended adult : pupil ratios for lower risk trips and activities are:

- 1:20 (senior pupils under 18)
- 1:10 (junior pupils in yrs. 4-6)
- 1:6 (junior pupils in yrs. 1-3)
- A higher ratio may be appropriate for pupils under 5.
- Heads (or designated senior member of staff) should use their discretion for pupils in yrs 12-13.

Depending on the circumstances a higher ratio may be necessary. For example, additional staff may be required e.g. if there are pupils with special needs are participating on the trip/activity.

- Where the adult: pupil ratio requires more than one adult, at least 2 of these should be members of staff. Parents or other adult volunteer helpers may make up any necessary numbers in addition to these. However, the majority of adults should be staff. If parents or other adult helpers accompany the trip, they must be aware who the Party Leader is and be briefed in advance on their responsibilities.
- For their own protection, **male members of staff** should normally be accompanied by a female member of staff. **Mixed gender groups** should have at least one male and one female member of staff.
- **Remote supervision** may be appropriate for certain activities or elements of a visit; the Party Leader should ensure that pupils understand the ground rules and that parents have agreed to this part of the visit. 'Ground rules' should include:
 - A member of staff being on duty at fixed place in the locality
 - Pupils to be in groups of 4 or more so that if one has an accident, one can remain with her and the other two can go for help.
 - Pupils to return by a specified time.

2. Supervision Ratios at Away Matches and Off-site Sport Fixtures

Due to the likelihood of accidents during sports fixtures that require injured pupils to go to hospital best practice dictates that, wherever possible, there should always be **two members of staff accompanying pupils attending sports fixtures** away from school. In reality, due to the number of fixtures taking place at any one time this is not always feasible. In order to ensure that schools are not limited in the number of fixtures that they can agree to whilst at the same time ensuring that safety is not compromised one member of staff accompanying pupils in the minibus to sporting fixtures may be acceptable providing the following is adhered to:

- A robust risk assessment is in place which takes into account:
 - **The distance travelled** e.g. local journey – less than approximately 10 miles / 30 minutes (taking into account local traffic conditions);
 - **The number and age of girls** - generally two members of staff would be expected for all fixtures involving Junior school pupils unless there were 5 or less year 4-6 pupils attending;
 - **Ability to call for help in an emergency** - Staff member must carry a mobile phone and have relevant contact details
 - **Availability of staff to call for assistance in the event of an emergency** situation - ensure that there are staff available who can be called and will attend if requested;
 - **First aid facilities** - ensure that the member of staff accompanying the pupils has some first aid training – minimum a current one-day first aid qualification) and has access to a first kit;

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- **Parents attending the fixture** – the availability of parents to assist at the fixture may be helpful in the event of an emergency but does not take away the need to have a back-up member of staff.
- The Head (or designated senior member of staff) must be in agreement with the level of supervision and;
- The procedure for allowing only one member of staff to accompany sports fixtures must be outlined in the Educational Visits Policy for the school.

For fixtures out of the locality (e.g. more than approximately 10 miles / 30 minutes travel time from school) then two members of staff must accompany the group.

This section should be read in conjunction with the guidance on '[Staff in Sole Charge of Pupils in a Minibus](#)' section 4

3. Supervision Ratios for Residential Trips and Overseas Visits

In addition to the general supervision requirements for lower risk activities (see section 1 above), it is strongly recommended that at least **two** members of staff accompany all **residential trips** (in case a pupil or member of staff is injured or falls ill and needs to stay at base, be closely supervised, accompanied to the doctors or hospital, or even escorted back home), and at least **three** adults accompany **trips abroad** (due to the time factor that would be involved in getting additional staff to the group in the event of an incident). The exception to the need for three adults on overseas visits, would be if it was a very small group (max 10 students) and the activity risks were low, in which case the Head (or designated senior member of staff) may consider two staff to be sufficient, providing a replacement member of staff was on standby and ready to join the trip if required.

Procedures must be in place to provide cover if a member of staff must return home.

On overseas trips, at least one member of staff should be reasonably **fluent in the appropriate language** or have access to a representative from the tour provider to translate for the staff.

There will be times where it is more appropriate for the Residential Centre's / Activity Provider's staff to be responsible for the pupils. When and in what circumstances the centre's staff will be responsible for the pupils should be agreed in writing prior to the start of the course. Where it is necessary to share sensitive personal information with activity providers, please be aware of the 'GDPR Guidance on School Trips' (see related documents panel.) The pupils must know who is in charge of them at any given time.

If school staff do not accompany the pupils on any element of the trip, this must be made clear to parents in advance, and the school must be satisfied with the safety precautions that will be in place.

4. Supervision Ratios for Outdoor and Adventurous Activities

The supervision ratios for outdoor and adventurous activities must not be less than **1 qualified** adult to 10 pupils and may need to be higher (e.g. 1:6) depending on the activity and the experience/competence of the pupils. Activity staff, e.g. instructors or group leaders, may be used to calculate the ratios.

Remote supervision may be appropriate for certain activities or elements of a visit; the Party Leader should ensure that pupils understand the ground rules and that parents have agreed to this part of the visit.

11. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

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The School will endeavour to make every effort to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, sex, religion etc. All young people are encouraged to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible. If a visit is to cater for pupils with special needs, a suitable venue should be selected.

Special attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures that may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

The School's ALN co-ordinator, Medical Manager and EVC will check that all reasonably practicable efforts have been made during the course of risk assessment to include disabled pupils in educational visits. The School will also include disabled pupils who wish to take part in educational visits out of school hours. The School will discuss with pupils, parents, group leaders and other supervisors as well as the manager of the venue to be visited/the tour operator to ensure a thorough risk assessment is carried out.

The School will update this Policy from time to time to keep informed as to the most current guidance and legislation surrounding SEN and disability to ensure this Policy is relevant.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

The School must comply with Health and Safety law.

The leader should collect such personal and medical information as is appropriate to the nature of the visit or journey. The leader will need to be informed by their named first aider and medical administrator of any known health problems/medications, restrictions, etc and ensure that they are complied with and shared with all accompanying staff. A First Aid kit should be taken on each School trip.

There must be sufficient adults to ensure the visit can continue, or appropriate measures be put in place, if an adult has to accompany a child to hospital.

When staying in a hotel or other residential accommodation, on arrival pupils and staff should be made familiar with fire and emergency procedures. An Evacuation Co-ordinator is to be designated at the start of the trip and a fire alarm procedure should be undertaken upon arrival.

A school mobile phone must be taken on all educational visits. More than one school mobile may be required in situations where staff supervise groups at different locations. Whilst staff may want to take their own mobile phones for their own personal use, they should avoid giving their own personal number to the pupils except in the event of an emergency. A satellite phone may be required on certain trips (as directed by EVC).

As far as possible staff should only contact pupils using the school mobile phone. This is to ensure that both staff and pupils are protected and that staff don't have access to pupil personal telephone numbers other than for the duration of the trip. In the event where any pupil or staff personal telephone numbers are used then it is imperative that these numbers are deleted at the end of the trip. Where lists of telephone numbers are created for an educational visit then these lists should also be destroyed after the trip.

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Where staff have used personal phones (e.g. in the event of an emergency), then a member of SLT must always be informed afterwards.

On trips abroad (and residential UK) pupils could usefully be given a card providing key information, e.g. phone contacts, hotel, British Embassy – examples are available on request.

Organisers should ensure that pupils behave sensibly when crossing roads. Authorised crossings should always be used. On any walk, there must be adults at the front and rear of the group.

Regular head counts should always take place, particularly before leaving a venue.

Adopting a sensible approach to H&S means recognising that “no one size fits all”.

13. CONTRACTORS

Contractors for educational visits might be tour operators, expedition providers, outdoor education centres, local farms, civic museums, and national bodies such as the RSPCA, YHA etc. Such contractors should be chosen carefully and contact be made with any relevant representative body e.g. the British Activities Holiday Association (BAHA).

Contractors are responsible for assessing the risks of those parts of the visit appearing in the contract. They must all complete a GDST Declaration Form for each visit.

Assurances should be obtained from the providers that risks have been assessed and that the provider’s staff are competent to instruct and lead pupils of the group’s age range on the activity. Contractors should also provide details of any independent, inspection-based external verification.

14. RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risk assessments and risk management are legal requirements. For educational visits they involve the careful examination of what could cause harm during the visit and whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more should be done. The School aims to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill. The risk assessment should cover explicitly how special educational needs and medical needs are addressed.

In every educational trip we will ensure that the programme of a visit, as set out in the risk assessment and the consent form, will, where is practicable, be adhered to and will include contingency measures i.e. a plan B.

The aim of an assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should be to prevent the risks or reduce them. Pupils must not be placed in situations, which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained, then the visit must not take place.

For routine trips there can be a generic risk assessment but an individual site-specific risk assessment is required for a trip which involves a higher than normal risk. Risk assessment is a key part of preparation for a school trip.

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The risk assessment process involves identifying the hazards (something with potential to cause harm), assessing the risk, which is the likelihood that harm will be caused by a particular hazard, and then taking steps to control the risk. Activities should not proceed if risks are assessed to be too high. Guidance emphasises that risk assessment is a process not a document and part of the planning.

It suggests that the leader first of all produces a plan and then considers what could go wrong and how that could be avoided. The process is then repeated until a final proposal is produced.

Risk assessment for visits should be considered at 3 distinct levels:

- Generic activity risk assessments, which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place, e.g. water activities (generic risk of drowning – control measures would include assessing the water confidence/ability of participants, use of buoyancy aids) travel (risk of injury in accidents – control measures would include qualified driver, number of drivers, maximum periods of driving, use of seat belts, vehicle maintenance).
- Visit/site specific risk assessments, which will differ from place to place and group to group. Guidance recommends the group leader should visit the site beforehand to gain first-hand knowledge of the area/route. The knowledge will then inform the risk assessment. An exploratory visit will give the leader greater confidence when taking participants. It will, for example, enable the group leader to concentrate on leading the group rather than finding the way. Leaders are expected to have local intelligence of tides, potential for flooding and plan the itinerary accordingly: local intelligence on safe crossing place of railways, roads, rivers etc.
- If some aspects of the risk assessment turn out in practice to have been faulty (e.g. because it was impossible to implement certain steps, or because other measures would have been preferable), it is essential the risk assessment be modified for future use. The fact that the original risk assessment was not perfect does not mean that it was negligent; it just proves how difficult it is to foresee every eventuality.
- On a trip there needs to be on-going risk assessment. Planned events may change.

15. WATER

Many incidents affecting pupils have occurred by or in the sea and special care is needed when pupils enter water. If a swimming activity is planned, the GDST swimming consent form must be completed. The group leader or colleague should have a relevant lifesaving award, be fully aware of local conditions such as tides and currents, designate a safe bathing area and establish emergency procedures, including what to do if a pupil is in distress. The group should know recall procedures. Pupils should always be in sight of supervisors, and one supervisor should stay out of the water for better supervision. Local conditions can be obtained from the local coastguard, lifeguard or tourist information. See the Swimming on Educational Visits Policy (521).

16. VISITS ABROAD (ACCOMMODATION)

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When reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangement should be in force to stop unauthorized visits. In the absence of 24-hour staffing of reception, external doors must be made secure against intrusion and windows closed as necessary to prevent intrusion. Internal doors must be lockable, but staff must always have reasonable access to pupil accommodation.

- **Guidance for Staff Entering Pupil Rooms During Educational Visits**

During residential educational visits, staff must follow clear safeguarding procedures to ensure the safety, dignity, and privacy of all pupils. The following practices should be adhered to:

- **Knocking and Waiting**

Staff should always knock and wait for a response before entering a pupil's room. If there's no answer but it is necessary to enter, staff should clearly announce their intention before doing so.

- **Avoid Entering Alone**

Staff should avoid entering a pupil's room alone. If solo entry is unavoidable, it should be documented with details including the time, reason for entry, and any relevant observations.

- **Regular Supervision**

Patrolling pupil areas at appropriate intervals is encouraged to maintain safety, but any such visits should still follow the knocking and waiting protocol. Overnight supervision can be supported by having staff rooms nearby.

- **Emergency Access**

In emergency situations (e.g. illness, safety concerns), staff may enter without a response after announcing themselves. Entry should still be done with sensitivity and followed up with a record of the incident.

- **Room Allocation**

Separate accommodation should be provided for staff and pupils, and for male and female staff. Staff rooms should be in proximity to pupil rooms for effective supervision, but not within them.

- **Documentation**

Any instances of entering a pupil's room — especially those involving welfare concerns or incidents — should be promptly and clearly recorded to ensure transparency and accountability in CPOMS or by email to EVC to be actioned on their behalf.

- **Staff Training**

All staff participating in residential visits should be trained on safeguarding procedures, including appropriate conduct, privacy boundaries, and protocols for supervision during overnight stays.

17. VISITS ABROAD (MOBILE PHONES)

This section should be read in accordance with the **GDST's Safeguarding Procedures** (refer to section A3 'Promoting Safe Practice')

A mobile phone, preferably a school phone, must be taken on all educational visits. Ideally, it should be a smart or android phone that can be used to access EVOLVE. More than one school mobile may be required in situations where staff supervise groups at different locations. Whilst staff may want to take their own mobile phones for their own personal use, they should avoid giving their own personal number to the pupils except in the event of an emergency.

Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones on residential trips, unless there is a considerable concern over the impact of the mental health of a pupil, which will be decided by the Head (or Deputy Head: Pastoral in the Head's absence). As such, remote supervision of

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pupils should be limited to small areas that have been explored as a group, limited by consideration to the age of the pupils and their collective competence. No pupils should be allowed to move around an area alone in this circumstance.

Where staff have used personal phones, e.g. in the event of an emergency, then a member of SLT must always be informed.

Where staff use their own personal mobile phones on educational visits (rather than a school mobile) then the Head (or designated senior members of staff) must be aware of this and approve of this practice.

Mobile phones are extremely useful during educational visits and particularly in the event of an accident, emergency or for contacting the emergency services.

Staff should also be aware of the **GDST Staff ICT Acceptable Use Agreement**.

18. EMERGENCIES

Emergencies can occur in many forms, e.g.:

- An injury or medical emergency affecting an individual group member
- A road traffic accident involving the vehicle the group is traveling in
- A lost or missing person
- A fire in the residential accommodation being used by the group
- A terrorist incident in the locality of group

Good planning and preparation can help prevent an emergency from occurring or mitigate the consequences. This includes making appropriate **back up** arrangements in the event of problems arising both during and out of school hours, eg sending a replacement vehicle or additional staff to support the group, sending home/repatriating group members, or contacting parents in an emergency.

Information To Be Carried By The Pupil

- Each pupil should be provided with a card giving an emergency contact telephone number, and if appropriate, the address and telephone number of the hostel or hotel the group are staying in, in case she gets lost.

Information To Be Carried By The Party Leader, Accompanying Staff and Emergency Contacts at School Whilst the Visit is in Progress

The **Party Leader** must carry:

- the school's **emergency procedures** with them for use in the event of a serious incident.
- an up-to-date **photograph** of each pupil in the group NB GDPR restrictions require this to be stored in secure electronic form (this should include a digital copy of the pupils' passport photo page to assist in repatriation in case of a lost passport)

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- Pupil's **consent forms** and **parents contact details** NB GDPR restrictions require this to be stored in secure electronic form.
- **Insurance** policy.

All staff accompanying school trips should always carry the GDST Incident and Emergency Management Card and Checklist with them (available in the 'Related Documents' panel). In the event of a serious incident, this small document will remind staff of the key steps they must take, and will provide them with key contact numbers.

If the visit takes place out of school hours, the following information should be available to all the **school's emergency contacts** at all times. (Most information should be easily available via EVOLVE)

- (a) The **itinerary** and **daily contact numbers** for the group (Party Leader will need emergency contact number for Head/Deputy and school contact).
- (b) Pupil's **consent forms** NB GDPR restrictions require this to be stored in secure electronic form. (see GDPR info document in the related documents panel)
- (c) **Insurance** policy.
- (d) Contract / booking forms relating to the visit.
- (e) 'Head's approval for the visit .
- (f) Key Trust Office telephone numbers (Chief Executive, Director of Legal, Director of Education, Head of Communications, Head of Health and Safety) and the out of hours contact numbers of the Trust's Chief Executive.

Medical Emergency / Serious Accident

The following procedures should be used in the event of a Medical Emergency / Serious Accident. An emergency is unlikely to occur in circumstances where these procedures can be carried out to the letter, but staff accompanying the party should be so familiar with them that they are able to adapt them to the situation in which they find themselves.

The Party Leader (or staff member in charge of small sub-group if out of contact with the Party Leader) should:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency. Secure scene and safety of others. Take steps to prevent further injury to other members of the group and others in the vicinity. If appropriate / possible enlist others to help you
- If anyone is injured, establish the extent and administer first aid / contact the emergency services if appropriate
- Sort out documentation that might be required by the emergency services, eg pupil medical details, insurance, consent forms, GHIC if applicable
- If the casualty is being taken to hospital by the emergency services ensure you know **where** the ambulance/ helicopter/ mountain rescue team are taking the casualty(s). Ideally they should be accompanied by a member of staff, but consider the needs/safety of the remaining group members
- Contact base / school contacts - who will inform key contacts in school , parents, Trust Office, and if appropriate abroad the British Embassy/Consulate. Give full details of the incident, i.e..
 - Date and time of incident (if abroad give local and UK time)

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- Location of incident, a brief description, current situation
- Name of injured person(s) / those involved in the incident
- Details of injuries
- Authorities / emergency services involved
- Action taken so far.
- Contact name, telephone number, email for future communication
- Agree a time / means of next/further communication
- Manage communication by rest of group; explain why you do not want pupils to phone home or use face-book, twitter, Instagram or other social media
- Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout the incident and arrange for their early return to base;
- Wherever possible take photographs to record the scene and events
- For serious incidents where the media may be involved:
 - Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be divulged to the media. Procedures for contact with the media are given below.
 - Responsibility, legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.
 - Try to identify alternative telephone numbers at "home" and "off site base" as other lines will quickly become jammed.
- As soon as practicable, the Party Leader should write down all relevant details while they are still fresh in the memory. Other party staff members might also be asked to do so. A record should be kept of names and addresses of any witnesses. Any associated equipment should be kept in its original condition.
- All accident forms should be completed and insurers should be contacted.

Communication with Parents, Trust Office and the Media

- The Head should arrange to contact parents/carers of those involved. For a serious incident, the Head should contact parents of all party members. It is also the Head's responsibility to act as a link between the group involved, the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust and parents.
- The Head or designated senior staff member at school should alert the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust (or in his/her absence, the Director of Education) and the Head of Communications, giving details as above. They may identify further actions or help required (which might include financial assistance). Alternative and additional telephone lines may need to be identified at an early stage.
- If it is necessary to talk to the media, the Head should agree with the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust who should make the initial statement. A designated person should then act as the ongoing point of contact with the media to whom all involved should direct questions and requests.
- Contact with media - Do's and Don'ts
 - Be clear and concise, avoid conjecture and apportioning blame
 - Express:
 - Sympathy- for those involved and their families
 - Praise- for those undertaking rescue/incident control
 - Promise- full investigation/cooperation with other agencies
 - Do not:
 - Reply to 'why' and 'how' questions

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- name individuals- explain that names will not be released until next of kin have been informed
- Say 'no comment'- explain above reasons why you cannot comment and if possible state when an update will be provided and by whom

19. DUTY OF CARE

In order for the School to discharge their duty of care we will ensure our records show:

- A structured supervision plan
- All pupils and adults on the trip knew and understood their particular responsibilities
- Adequate care was being exercised at the time of the accident

Records must include risk assessments, letters to parents, notes of pre-trip staff meetings and guidance to any adult volunteers. In the event of an accident, the supervisor should record carefully and as soon as possible his/her version of events and all action taken to minimise harm and protect pupils.

Investigation of serious incidents

If there has been a serious incident there will be a formal investigation. The purpose of the investigation will be to:

- Determine the cause of the incident
- Determine whether there are lessons to be learned
- Provide information to bereaved parents
- Exchange information with statutory investigation bodies as required
- Manage media enquiries

A serious incident would include a fatality of a pupil or adult but might also include serious injuries and incidents where no serious injury occurred but where the risk of injury was high.

20. TRANSPORT

- The use of **staff cars** is **not** recommended for transporting pupils on school trips / educational visits / sports trips, and staff should **not** transport pupils in their personal cars for **non-work related journeys**, except in an emergency. Where a member of staff's car is used for a work-related purposes, staff must have:
 - A clean driving license,
 - Current comprehensive and business use car insurance (see the guidance on insurance in the **Finance** section of the Hub when a vehicle is being used for school business)
 - An MOT if the vehicle is over 3 years old,
 - Parental consent should be obtained.
 - At least one adult additional to the driver to act as an escort, or if the driver has to be alone with a pupil, ensure this is for the minimum amount of time.
 - Evidence of the above should be retained.
- Use of **parent's cars** is **not** recommended for school trips and educational visits, but where they are used to transport pupils, parents must have clean driving licenses and current comprehensive insurance, an MOT if vehicle over 3 years old and parental

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consent should be obtained. NB See the guidance on Insurance in the Finance section of the Hub for details of the Trust's insurance policy when a vehicle is being used for an occasional trip or school business use.

- **Pupil's cars** - Schools should normally arrange transport for all pupil participants to all events and activities. Careful judgment is required if sixth form pupils, who have passed their driving test and have their parent's permission, wish to use their own cars for travelling to off-site activities. See separate guidance on '[Sixth Form Drivers](#)'.
- **Trips taking place outside of the normal school day** – Schools usually arrange transport for these activities, but occasionally parents may be asked to make arrangements for transporting their daughter to the activity venue, eg the local theatre in evening, the airport, or an 'away match' at the weekend.

21. EVALUATION

After residential visits, a brief evaluation should be submitted to the EVC/Deputy Head via Evolve. This should include what went well, what could have been improved and lessons for future trips. This will also include effectiveness of risk assessments. Brief verbal reports on major trips may be delivered at the next staff meeting.

22. STAFF TRAINING

The School provides training for staff who lead visits, identifies training needs and uses visit evaluation to inform training needs. Training for First Aid, minibuss driving and life-saving is also available to staff.

23. GOVERNORS

Governors may, from time to time inspect the procedures and paperwork for a major trip.

24. FURTHER READING

All staff who lead or accompany school trips should familiarise themselves with the following guidance: (available on the GDST HUB)

- Planning and Leading Visits and Adventurous Activities - Guidance for Schools and Colleges - RoSPA - 2013
- Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) - National Guidance Documents <https://oeapng.info/guidance-documents/>
- Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) - High Quality Outdoor Learning 2015
- Association for PE (AfPE) – 'Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity' (2016) – each school's PE Dept. should have a copy. Contains detailed guidance regarding adventurous activities such as climbing and water sports
- DfE H&S: Responsibilities and Duties for Schools - Nov 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilities-and-duties-for-schools>
- School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities -Tackling the HS Myths - HSE - June 2011
- The HSE website also has guidance on school trips on its 'Education - Frequently Asked Questions' page <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/faqs.htm>

[Trust-wide policy, procedure and guidance on Educational Visits can be found here.](#)

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