



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

This is a whole-trust policy, within the framework of which the Secondary School, Sixth Form, Primary School and the Nursery policies operate as appropriate.

Note: See Appendix regarding visit cancellations due to Covid-19.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students and pupils of the Trust.

This policy draws on information contained in:

- Health and Safety Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (February 2014)
www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools
- National Guidance (Outdoor Education Advisors Panel)
- Council for Learning Outside of the Classroom (LOtC) www.lotc.org.uk
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) www.hse.gov.uk

2. Context

A successful school visit or exchange can greatly enhance the curriculum provision and will serve to motivate pupils, students and staff. Visits can occur both on or off the Trust site. The Trust has a strong commitment to the added value of learning beyond the statutory school day and beyond the premises by the use of carefully planned educational visits. This is part of the school's role in providing a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares young people for the opportunities and experiences of adult life.

It is crucial that health and safety are paramount on all educational visits and, by following the instructions and guidelines set out, we believe the majority of problems can be avoided. We use existing legislation and guidance in formulating this policy. We have a formalised system in place for all visits which includes set paperwork for educational visit proposals, risk assessments and evaluations.

There are two broad types of visits requiring differing levels of planning. The categories referred to in this policy are:

- Day Visits
- Residential Visits

3. Principles

3.1 The principles of this policy are to ensure:

- Visits should have a clearly stated valid educational purpose: cultural, physical, knowledge enhancement, personal growth. The Head must be sure that the purpose of the visit is sufficient to warrant the effort put into organising it and the money spent on it by both the school and the parents/carers.
- Visits are open to all pupils and students within the scope of the visit's purpose.

- The aims of any visit should be commensurate with the needs of the pupils and students, including those with special educational needs for whom additional appropriate arrangements may need to be made
- Pupils/Students may be refused participation on a visit if it is felt that their behaviour is not up to the necessary standard. In such cases parents/carers will be informed why their child is refused a place.
- Where numbers on an educational visit are necessarily limited, and it is anticipated that more will apply than there are places, a fair means of selecting successful pupils/students will be used.
- The budget is organised so that visits may be cancelled in good time if there is not sufficient demand.
- The school will do everything in its power to prevent financial loss from visits by having adequate budgetary planning (via the Finance Office) including sufficient timeline planned in which will enable visits to be cancelled if need be without incurring loss.
- The financing of all visits must comply with the School Remissions and Charging Policy
- Consideration is given to establishing free places for those pupils/students who are currently in receipt of free school meals or those who are experiencing financial hardship

4. Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of the staff, pupils and students, and in so far as is reasonably practicable, for ensuring the safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. This responsibility extends to participants in off-site visits. The Trustees delegate to the Head the responsibility to approve all visits. One School Trustee is the link Trustee for Educational Visits and they will meet with the Head to discuss visits and look at completed paperwork at least once per year.

Responsibilities of the Head

The Head oversees the policy and processes of planning and organising visits and ensures that all visits are prepared and conducted in accordance with the required standards. The decision to approve a visit will be taken by the Head who will consult with SLT for new residential visits.

In addition, the Head will ensure that:

- Plans for the visit comply with the regulations and guidelines set out in the school's Educational Visits Policy and procedures for visits
- The group leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit
- They are clear about their role if taking part in the visit as a group member or supervisor they must follow the instructions of the group leader who has sole charge of the visit
- Adequate child protection procedures are in place
- Training needs have been assessed by the group leader and that the needs of the staff, pupils and students have been considered
- The accreditation or verification of service providers has been checked by the group leader
- Consideration is given to financial management, choice of contracts and contractual relationships in order to obtain best value by the group leader
- Staffing.

The Head must ensure that the accompanying staff are appropriate to the needs of the visit and are sufficiently trained.

In addition, the Head should ensure that:

- The group leader has experience in supervising the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- The group leader or another teacher is suitably competent to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location or centre where the activity will take place
- Non-teaching supervisors (such as supervisors/instructors employed by a travel company etc) on the visits are vetted by their employers and appropriate people supervise pupils/students
- Non-teaching adults (spouses of staff) who volunteer to supervise on visits – the school will ensure that DBS screening is carried out
- The school does not normally support additional people accompanying educational visits who are not pupils/students at the school or part of the agreed staff complement. This may include family members if the Head is not satisfied that their accompanying the visit is an education benefit for the pupils/students, or if the Head is not satisfied that including the family member will not compromise the successful running of the visit
- The ratio of supervisors to pupils/students is appropriate.

Responsibilities of the Group Leader

Only one teacher should have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit.

The group leader should:

- Obtain the prior agreement and approval of the Head before any visit
- Follow the school Educational Visits Policy – a copy of which is held on the QEGS Intranet and in the Staff Handbook
- Appoint a deputy leader
- Maintain good order and discipline
- Clearly define each group supervisor's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned
- Ensure all members of staff are briefed fully about their roles and responsibilities during all the time of the visit including any 'downtime' that might be built in
- Be able to control and lead pupils/students of the relevant age range
- Be suitably competent to instruct pupils/students in an activity and be familiar with the location or centre where the activity will take place. If using external instructors ensure that they are suitably qualified
- Be aware of child protection issues
- Ensure adequate first aid provision
- Undertake and complete all necessary comprehensive risk assessments including those that are generic, visit specific and dynamic/ongoing
- Regularly review undertaken visits or activities and advise the Head where adjustment may be necessary in existing guidelines
- Ensure that all participating teachers, supervisors, parents/carers, pupils and students are fully aware of what the proposed visit involves
- Obtain sufficient information about participating pupils/students to assess their suitability and be confident that all pupils/students participating will behave in an appropriate manner
- Ensure that the ratio of supervisors to pupils/students is appropriate for the needs of the group

- Inform the Head of any plans to use supervisors not employed by the school so that they can be appropriately vetted and approved
- Consider stopping the visit or any part of the visit if the risk to health or safety of the pupils/students is unacceptable, and have procedures in place for such an eventuality
- Ensure that group supervisors have details of the school contacts
- Ensure that group supervisors and the school contact have a copy of the emergency procedures and a copy of a contingency plan for any delays, including a late return home
- Ensure that group supervisors have the details of pupils'/students' special educational or medical needs and are familiar with any specific intervention that they may need to make
- Ensure that parents/carers have signed the consent forms and arrangements have been made to meet the medical needs of all participants
- Observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults involved in school visits
- Make clear the responsibility of teachers, non-teaching supervisors, pupils and students as outlined below
- Ensure arrangements are set up with the Finance Office for the collection of payments for visits
- Ensure that all payments have been collected from parents/carers before the visit takes place
- Ensure that all supervisors observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults involved in the school visit
- Ensure that a school contact is named and that all relevant documentation is left with the school contact and Main Reception before the visit takes place
- Ensure that a list of pupils/students participating in the visit is placed on the relevant staff notice board at least one week before the visit takes place
- On return to school ensure pupils/students are safely collected or arrangements are in place for them to get home safely
- Produce a written evaluation and submit a copy of the evaluation to the Head.

Participating teachers and supervisors should:

- Ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and to act as a responsible parent would do in the same circumstances
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline
- Prepare themselves as fully as possible and inform the group leader if they are unsure of their ability to perform any supervisory function requested of them
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times: during all visit activities and all downtime activities, for example evening sessions
- Report to the group leader any concerns they may have concerning pupil/student behaviour or well-being during the visit
- Notify the group leader and consider stopping the visit or any part of the visit or activity if they think the risk to health and safety of themselves or those in their charge is unacceptable.

Responsibilities of non-teaching adult supervisors

Non-teaching adults should be clear about their role and responsibility during the visit and must:

- Ensure the health and safety of group members

- Not be left in the sole charge of pupils/students, except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and teacher supervisors
- Help with control and discipline and speak to the group leader or teaching supervisors if concerned about the health and safety of pupils/students at any time during the visit

Parents/carers accompanying visits

Parents/carers who accompany visits are generally asked to be part of a supervising group that does not contain their own child to avoid blurring of the role between parent/carer and supervisor. Occasionally it may be considered useful for a particular child to have a parent/carer who is there to supervise that child alone.

Responsibilities of participating pupils/students

Pupils/students whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. This should be discussed by the Head, Deputy Heads and group leader at least one week before the visit is due to take place. This does not stop the group leader raising a last-minute concern in regards to pupils/students that was not foreseen.

Wherever possible, the curricular aims of the visit for these pupils/students should be fulfilled in other ways.

Participating pupils/students, as a minimum requirement must:

- Not take unnecessary risks
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and other supervisors including those at the venue of the visit
- Dress and behave as advised by appropriately and responsibly
- Be respectful and sensitive to local codes and customs, particularly when abroad, and look out for anything that might hurt or threaten them or anyone in the group and tell the group leader or supervisor about it

If a pupil's/student's behaviour fails to meet the expected requirements on a visit, disciplinary procedures may be instigated in line with the School's Behaviour Policy. This could include being sent home at the parent's/carer's expense.

If a pupil's/student's behaviour results in the school incurring any additional expenses, the school will seek to recover these costs from parents/carers.

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers should be able to make an informed decision about whether their child should go on the visit. The group leader should ensure that parents/carers are given sufficient information in writing and are invited to any briefing sessions.

Where appropriate, the group leader should tell the parents/carers how they can help prepare their child for the visit.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents/carers for whom English is a second language. In addition, parents/carers have a responsibility to:

- Support the visit's code of conduct

- Agree, by given consent for their child to take part in the visit, the arrangements for sending parents/students home early and agree to meet the costs
- Provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s)
- Sign the consent form
- Where appropriate, provide additional information about their child's emotional, psychological and physical health
- Where payment is required, agree to meet all payment deadline as defined on the Trust's current electronic payment systems. The Trust reserves the right to refuse for a child to take part in a school visit if payments have not been made before the visit takes place.

5. Organisation and Planning

Approval

All visits must be approved by the Head. The group leader must submit to the Head an Educational Visits Proposal Form and the Head will return a Visit Consent Form should permission be granted.

Time frame:

- Overseas residential: normally 12-18 month lead in and certainly not less than four school terms
- Home residential: normally 6-12 months lead in and certainly not less than three school terms
- One day visits: normally 1-2 months lead in and certainly not less than one school term

The group leader gains budget approval from the Director of Business and Finance which includes a timeline on the amounts of monies to be paid and the deadlines which they need to be paid by parents/carers.

Procedure

Group leaders will be provided with a list of actions that must be followed as part of the procedure for running the educational visit. These include:

- Letters home to parents/carers must gain approval from the Head before being dispatched
- Ensuring appropriate consent forms from parents/carers are returned and collated
- Heads of Year/Head of Primary School/Deputy Heads are consulted about suitability and behaviour logs reviewed of pupils/students who have applied to go on visits
- Any subsequent letters are sent to parents/carers in the approved time frame
- All letters concerning visits should be available on the school website
- All risk assessments have been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place. Risk assessments must be signed and provided to the EVC (DME) (2 weeks before the visit for residential visits and 1 week for day visits).
- Medical requirements of pupils/students are known and taken with the supervising staff. The group leader must consult with the Head's PA regarding the medical needs of pupils/students on the educational visit
- The provision of adequate first aid is available
- The mode of transport is suitable
- Travel times out and back are known, including pick-up and drop-off points
- All details of pupils/students on the visit and contact details are held centrally in a file in Main Reception for staff to be able to tell parents/carers
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover including medical cover if required

- The address and telephone number of a named contact at the visit's venue is available
- A school contact, group leader and all group supervisors have the names of all the participants travelling in the group, including contact details of the designated next of kin. The school contact and Main Reception should also be provided with an itinerary for the visit.
- All necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins.

6. Insurance

In respect of pupils/students, schools have a legal duty to take care of the well-being of young people.

There is no requirement for schools to make provision for loss through personal injury as the result of an accident where no blame may be attached. Personal accident insurance cover for pupils/students is a matter for parents/carers to arrange.

7. Passports and Visas

Group leaders should make a copy of all passports and visas and retain a copy throughout the visit. A second copy should be left with the school contact. On return from the visit, copies of this information should be shredded.

8. Emergency / Critical Incident Procedures

Group leaders should ensure that they are familiar with critical incident procedures. All leaders must carry the school's 'Serious Accident or Incident Guidance for Visits' with Emergency Telephone. On return, the group leader must comply with the school's normal accident reporting procedures.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

After any visit, it is good practice to ensure a system of feedback, review and rigorous evaluation. In the case of overseas visits, there is a particularly strong case for ensuring this takes place and includes the consultation of the young people concerned, the parents/carers, the leaders and partner organisations.

Group leaders should complete the Visits Evaluation Form and submit this to the Head no later than one week after the visit has returned. Any significant issues should be shared with the Head.

Visits information, including consent forms, should be retained by the group leader for a period of one academic year.

Overview visits information that has been submitted to the Head will be retained for a period of seven academic years. This includes visits proposal and authorisation, letters, risk assessments, list of pupils/students attending and the visits evaluation form.

The Head reserves the right to delegate the oversight of educational visits to another competent member of school staff if appropriate. If the Head does delegate the responsibility then this person will follow all guidance set out in this policy as if they are the Head.

Updated by Mrs CY Gammon: August 2021

Approved by Board of Trustees: September 2021

Appendix – Covid-19

During the Covid-19 pandemic the school has very closely followed government advice for the safety and wellbeing of our pupils, students, staff, and the wider community. There may be times when a visit has to be cancelled or postponed due to Covid-19, for a variety of reasons, such as a change to government guidelines, a change to a policy/procedure of a travel company/venue/local area we are visiting, or if we feel that the safety or wellbeing of our pupils, students, staff and the wider community could be compromised.

If a visit is cancelled due to Covid-19, whether it is school's decision or that of a third party, such as a venue or transport provider, the amount paid towards the visit by a parent/carer will be refunded.

If a student or pupil cannot attend a visit due to self-isolation, a refund will be provided to the parent/carer upon receipt of proof of the self-isolation such as a positive test result.