



Educational Visits Policy

FOREST OF DEAN TRUST

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Introduction

At the Forest of Dean Trust we create opportunities for our learners to enjoy the benefits that educational visits can bring. Educational visits have enormous potential for enriching the school curriculum and in some cases it is a vital part of examination courses. Learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life, providing deeper knowledge and understanding. It also encourages independent learning and develops self-confidence.

Priorities

1. To ensure every student has the opportunity to benefit from educational visits.
2. To provide safe, purposeful visits that are appropriate to the educational needs of the students.
3. To ensure that visits are planned, organised and risk assessed in compliance with this policy and the S.H.E Unit administration.
- 4.

Equal Opportunities

All students will be given equal opportunity to attend educational visits regardless of their special educational needs, race, religion, FSM, socio-economic background, culture or gender. Through the risk assessment process, the school will identify vulnerable students, students with disabilities, special educational or medical needs and address how their needs will be catered for. All educational visits must have specific stated objectives that are appropriate for the participating learners.

Implementation

The Headteacher of each school has overall responsibility for educational visits and has delegated the oversight of the administration of visits to the trip co-ordinator within each school.

In the case of visits away from school the following procedures **MUST** be followed:

1. An initial approach should be made to the EVC/OVC before seeking 'Approval in Principle' from the Headteacher of the school by submitting the Educational Visit Application Form to the school trip administrator.
 2. The Headteacher of the school will take into consideration the following elements of the planning of the trip:
 - a. The educational benefit to students of the trip
 - b. The value for money of the trip
 - c. The financial impact on families (looking at the broad range of educational visits available to students)
- NB** Minimum notice of at least two weeks is required for non-residential visits and at least 3 months for residential visits followed by approval through the eVisit system with the school trip administrator.
3. On receipt of the EV Application Form, signed by the Headteacher etc the letters can be sent home. This cannot be done without signed authorisation.
 4. Educational visit leaders **MUST** follow the guidelines and complete the appropriate documentation and procedures, according to the type of visit.
 5. Residential Visits must also complete the online system eVisit where confirmation of the trip is given this completed in conjunction with the school trip administrator.
 6. The EVC is always there to provide support and guidance to trip organisers. Each step of the process will be signed off by the EVC

7. Whilst most teacher student ratios can be fluid, if you are taking Air travel then airlines insist on a 1-10 ratio as a minimum. (You may be turned away if this is not adhered to) Normally this is 1 to 15 for general trips unless there are SEN students attending - which will be coverage on a needs basis.
8. Trips are only to be run for the educational benefit of students of the schools within the Trust and will not be extended to family members of students or staff who do not attend our schools

Educational Visit Leaders

In order to lead an educational visit a member of staff must be deemed by the EVC and Headteacher of the school to be sufficiently competent to do so. All visit leaders must read this policy.

Risk Assessment

The visit leader has overall responsibility to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that all normal precautions for health and safety have been undertaken. A written risk assessment must be carried out prior to every off-site activity. If the visit is to an accredited venue or centre, the visit leader must ensure the venue has carried out risk assessments. The visit leader is also responsible for monitoring risk during the visit and completing a written evaluation of the visit on return, to minimise future visits.

Advice on the consumption of alcohol on residential visits.

If a visit leader decides to allow staff to take some 'free time' during longer-term residential visits, it may be acceptable to consume alcohol. In this situation, care should be taken to ensure that staff regarded as 'on duty' understand that they are not permitted to consume alcohol during this time since they have a duty of care over the students attending the visit, and may be required to make professional decisions or actions. It is the responsibility of the visit leader to plan out which staff are 'on duty'/'off duty' and when this must form part of the risk assessment.

It is an essential requirement that a minimum of two members of staff remain 'on duty' to supervise the students on the trip, and 'staff drinking alcohol' should be part of the full risk assessment for the visit. Staff must not consume alcohol in front of students and if 'off duty' they must find a suitable place for this.

Oversubscribed Visits

In the event of a trip being oversubscribed places will be allocated via a ballot. This ballot will take place after the closing date for the trip. The ballot will be undertaken by the trip organiser and will be witnessed by a member of Forest of Dean Trust Leadership Group, who will sign it off as being completed fairly, using the attached form.

Students who have been unsuccessful in previous ballots for trips can be given priority in the ballot, as will PP students.

A space in any reply slip should also include the ability for parents/carers to say that their son/daughter has previously applied for a trip and not been allocated a place and which trip it was. It is important to emphasise that 'not applying' does not equal 'not getting a place'.

The following paragraphs must be used in letters:

In the event of the trip being oversubscribed then places, and reserve places, will be allocated by ballot. The ballot will take place after the closing date of XXXXXXXX. This ballot will be supervised by a member of the Leadership Group. If your daughter or son has previously been on a waiting list for a residential trip, please indicate this, and the trip, on the reply slip.

Only after places have been allocated will payment be requested.

Please note that places on trips, and reserve lists, are dependent on appropriate behaviour, attendance and other factors deemed appropriate by the school. Places can be revoked at any time. Where this happens a member of the Leadership Group will always be part of the decision making process.

The Use of Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones during any trip is at the discretion of the trip lead. The expectations of the role that they will play will be clearly laid out to parents/carers and students prior and during the trip.

Parents/carers will be given a mobile phone number to contact in the case of emergencies and they will be encouraged to contact staff rather than contacting students directly in the case of urgent information.

The school will not accept responsibility for loss or damage to mobile phones.

The following form of words can be used on information for parents/carers:

“On day trips, if you need to contact your child urgently then you may leave a message with the staff in reception. They will ensure that your son/daughter receives the message. Likewise, should your child need to contact you urgently, this will be arranged through the office.

On trips with overnight stays, the trip leader will have a school mobile phone. You will be issued with the number and may use it to pass on messages to your son/daughter.

Please also note the school/teacher accepts no responsibility or liability for any damage to a student’s mobile phone during school trips however caused.”

Appendix A

Financial Arrangements for Educational Visits

Charges cannot be imposed on parents/carers for any visit that occurs during school hours, but Forest of Dean Trust can ask for a voluntary contribution. Provided the activities take place mainly or wholly outside school hours and are not essential to the curriculum, students may be charged for:

- Board and lodgings during residential
- Travel costs
- Materials, books and other equipment
- Non-teaching staff costs
- Entrance fees
- Insurance costs

The school does have a small fund set aside for cases of financial hardship.

The Pupil Premium Grant may be used to give financial support to students. Please contact the school's Pupil Premium Champion.

In all cases, where the visit is paid wholly, or in part, by contributions from students, an account sheet will be drawn up by a member of the Finance Office. Check all arrangements with the school's Finance Team.

Payments from students will be accepted via an online payment system. The visit leader should liaise with the Finance Office prior to sending out letters regarding the activity to discuss cut off dates for payments etc. As the activity is set up on an online payment system and School Fund prior to letters issued, please allow administrative time for this to happen.

Visits must be financially sound and this should be taken into account during the planning stage. Receipts for all expenditure from the visit funds must be submitted to the Finance Office by the visit leader on return.

Any balance remaining after trips less than £10 per student will be added to general funds.

Subsistence

- Staff who attend educational visit/trips will be entitled to a reasonable meal or equivalent and drink (non alcoholic)
- Student donations will cover the cost of adults engaged by the school to supervise the associated trip

Insurance

The school insurance policy covers most of the out of school activities. Additional insurance may be required for residential visits and visits with greater risk. Check well in advance with the OVC/EVC to decide whether or not additional insurance is required.

Appendix B

Emergency Procedures

- Introduction.
- Extent of emergencies.
- Preparation before the visit
- Control and supervision of the group in the event of an accident or emergency.
- Communication.
- Administration.
- Reporting and Investigation.
- Use of social media.
- Care of young people, staff and relatives.
- Dealing with the terror threat

Introduction

Despite good planning and leadership, unforeseen emergencies or accidents may arise. On such occasions leaders may need the support, advice and management skills of the Head, Governing Body and the LA. The following guidance should help schools develop emergency procedures to ensure the rapid transfer of information, enlist services and assistance and to deal with the probable attentions of the media. Such procedures are an essential part of all visit planning.

Whilst taking reasonable care for themselves and others, visit leaders should not hesitate to take life saving action in an extreme situation.

The visit leader retains the legal duty of care and should take charge of an incident until relieved by police, doctor, ambulance crew or rescue team.

Extent of emergencies

With the scale and range of offsite activities, incidents with various causes occur on a daily basis, the majority of which are managed at a local level and do not require additional support.

Some incidents result in injury. Again, in the vast majority of cases, injuries sustained are very minor and are often caused by non-activity related factors, e.g. a child falling over whilst playing. Local staff, visit leaders and staff should be accustomed to responding to this sort of incident.

Occasionally, an incident may result in more severe injury requiring first aid and/or medical treatment. The most severe of incidents are where major injury and/or death occurs, or where there are instances of significant risk having the potential to cause major and/or fatal injury. Following such instances, a larger co-ordinated response will be required. Further information is provided in the GCC Major and Fatal Incidents Protocol available by logging into [Gloucestershire Schoolsnet - Major and Fatal Incidents](#).

Should a major or fatal injury occur, the first priority will be dealing with any casualties. Schools emergency procedures should detail arrangements for this, but generally the visit leader or other appropriate person should call 999 to request ambulance(s) and possibly assistance from the Fire and or Police depending on the nature of the incident, and deploy persons to receive them.

A person trained in first aid may be available to provide first aid to any casualties until ambulance crews arrive. Visit staff will need to liaise with the emergency services to enable them to recover and respond to casualties and control hazards.

Preparation before the visit

Talk through emergency procedures at a planning meeting and as part of your risk management process.

A template emergency procedure card can be downloaded. It is recommended that this is printed, laminated, given to all leaders and placed in first aid kits. This document is a model that requires the addition of specific details e.g. school, Headteacher, OVC, emergency contacts, hospital, doctor, rescue service, garage, others as required.

Two home emergency contacts should be identified. These will often be the Head, OVC or other senior member of staff. Such emergency contacts must not be parents/carers of young people on the visit.

These contacts must ensure that between them they provide 24 hour per day access by telephone. Their function is to act as a first point of contact with the group and to alert the Head and/or Chair of Governors and the LA when appropriate.

Both contacts must have:

- A full list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of parents of all young people and the next of kin of all adults on the visit. An identical list must be taken on the visit by the visit leader. Where parents are away from home during the visit, or where there is no home telephone, alternative emergency contact arrangements must be made for such young people.
- Depending on the situation, any other relevant information that can assist in the event of the party being overdue or in an emergency (e.g. itinerary with timings and details of routes etc.).
- For all trips abroad contact details of the British Embassy or Consulate.
- Relevant telephone numbers contained within the school's BCP, including the Schools Team and Press Office (see below).

All adults who will be supervising young people during the visit should be briefed as to the emergency contacts and should know the location of the nearest accident and emergency hospital, and the emergency services telephone numbers of the country they are visiting.

Medical information pertinent to emergency hospital treatment should be obtained using a parental consent form and be presented to medical authorities if required.

Where travel by minibus is involved it is important to have the Emergency Contact names and telephone number/s clearly stored in the vehicle in a dedicated folder.

A written summary of the emergency procedures should be part of the visit leader's reference pack.

Control and supervision of the group in the event of an accident or emergency

- Assess the situation.
- Account for ALL other group members and ensure their well-being.
- Immediately inform all group staff of the problem; share it; clarify actions to be taken and by whom.
- Agree who will be the co-ordinator and person dealing with communications etc.
- Establish the names and numbers of people involved in the incident and, if injured, call emergency / rescue services where necessary.
- Ensure that the injured are accompanied to hospital wherever possible by an adult known to them.
- Clarify with the rest of the group what has happened and your consequent course of action.
- Control communications - prevent group members from using phones or going online unsupervised and posting to social media or until approval is given.

Communication

- Contact the appropriate emergency service(s).
- Alert your emergency contact with precise details as soon as practical.
- Do not release names of involved or injured participants other than to official sources such as police, medical services.

- Ensure relevant telephones are staffed and log all calls.
- Restrict access to telephones until your emergency contact at base has been alerted, with precise details.
- Consider how to utilise social media appropriately (see below).
- If an emergency occurs abroad, notify the nearest British Embassy or Consulate. Identifying contact numbers for these should be part of the initial preparation.
- Leaders must avoid any direct dealings with the media. Media response to a major incident is often immediate; depending on location leaders should expect and be prepared for media attention within 30 minutes. Media may be at the scene quicker than the emergency services. Legal liability should not be discussed.
- If the incident is serious, the emergency contact should alert the Head, EVC or designated deputy who should then contact the Chair of Governors. They will then jointly determine the need to initiate the LA Emergency Procedures.
- In the event of a critical incident involving a school, the Emergency Control Room has procedures to contact a Senior Education Officer directly. However, if the school need to speak to the LA:
 - the Schools Team can still be reached during office hours on the following numbers: 01452 427547 / 01452 328678 / 01452 328681;
 - in the event of an out of hours critical incident the Senior Education Duty Officer can be contacted on 07747 532852.
 - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/ojmdrx23/gloucestershire-schools-critical-incident-support-may-2022-update.pdf>
- Direct contact with relatives from the scene of the incident should be avoided. This task should be carried out by senior staff at the school. Contact with relatives should be as early as possible, consistent and accurate. It is vital to ensure parental contact, whenever possible, before news spreads through the media. This would normally be done through the Head, EVC, Deputy or other designated person at the school. In the event of a fatality, contact must be made by the police.
- For Press Office/Communications issues contact: 01452 427965 (Mon-Fri 09:00-17:00 hrs) or for out of hours emergencies only: 07747 898064.

Administration

As soon as possible:

- record all facts relating to the incident: time, date, those involved, what happened, witness details;
- maintain a record of subsequent events;
- notify the insurers;
- notify the tour operator or provider, where used;
- complete an LA incident report form online where facility has been provided, otherwise send a copy immediately to SHE.

Reporting and Investigation

Following any emergency situation, support may be required to assist in conducting accident investigations and implementing remedial actions.

Arrangements for responding to the incidents described above, are detailed in SHE Procedure 4 - Accident Reporting and Investigation, available by logging into [Gloucestershire Schoolsnet - Accident Reporting and Investigation](#)

Use of social media

Schools will already use social media in various forms to communicate on a day to day basis. This may be the use of social networking sites, messaging sites, texting, and other web-based or mobile technologies to support social interaction. Facebook is by far the most widely used social networking site. Twitter is by far the most widely used messaging site.

It is important that school management and staff understand the benefits and challenges associated with integrating social media in emergency management. During an emergency, people will seek information wherever they can find it so schools can use social media very effectively during and after a crisis to allow direct and timely dissemination of information to parents and establish a system of rapid communication to the broader community and the press. However, the uncontrolled use of social media can lead to mis-information being shared by others (e.g. pupils, relatives, media, public etc.) which can make the situation at the scene and for those back home a lot worse.

School policies should consider:

- Who should be responsible for delivering messages in an emergency.
- Decide what forms of communications will be used.
- The general content of messages or posts.
- Determine if there are any privacy concerns or issues that should be considered.
- Do you need to check with anyone else before posting or messaging on social media. Some information may need to be cleared by official sources (e.g. police, fire and rescue, press officer, etc.) to ensure that it is the same information they are posting to their social media platforms.
- How to control communications to prevent others from inappropriate or unauthorised posting to social media.

Care of young people, staff and relatives

Immediately following a serious incident it is highly likely that group members and staff will be in a state of shock. It is therefore important to ensure their well-being and to provide them with security and protection from media attention.

All involved may need help in coping with possible shock and trauma, which may last for many weeks. Support and counselling may be necessary so refer to Occupational Health.

Dealing with the terror threat

Although for short periods it can increase, the UK threat level has been severe (meaning an attack is highly likely) for several years. The advice from the Police, Counter Terrorism and central government is that people should continue to go about their everyday business as normal. The message is to be aware but not alarmed.

If schools are planning a visit that has a higher likelihood of a terrorist attack (e.g. a major city or crowded venue) it is sensible to be prepared to provide information to parents about the threat level because they may have seen the news and be concerned about their child. Although it would not be expected for every school to obtain specific consent because of the terrorism risk, some parents with a strong view may want to withdraw their child. If a large number of parents do not want their child to go this will obviously influence the visit. However, a local decision to cancel may not necessarily be

covered by insurance so it may incur costs.

It should be remembered that the chances of becoming involved in a terrorist incident are extremely small. However, there are some sensible precautions that schools can take when planning their trips.

When visiting crowded places such as a major city, venue or event, where the risk of attack may be greater, consider within your planning:

- Always check with tour operators and travel operator(s) in advance and ask if they have contingency plans in the event of an emergency.
- Review supervision ratios and whether pupils should be allowed to spend periods of time indirectly supervised by staff.
- Assess the needs of SEND students and their ability to react and respond to dynamic situations.
- Are staff phones charged and numbers shared?
- Brief participants what to do if separated from each other in the event of a security incident. This should include designating specified physical meeting points and contact telephone numbers for staff.
- Identify possible safe areas or venues, near where you intend to be, that you could use as an emergency shelter.
- Data based communication services such as WhatsApp might work even when voice calls don't so consider setting up a trip-specific WhatsApp group for communicating in an emergency.
- Brief participants in advance to follow instructions of police or security forces at all times, being mindful that they may be armed and appear more intimidating than they are used to. Officers might be extremely forceful, direct and may even point weapons directly at them and others.
- Liaise with the transport operator when planning itineraries. It may be better to arrange a coach pick up between venues instead of walking through crowded streets.
- Minimise waiting time at busy venues and minimise queuing times (such as not carrying unnecessary items) to speed up search and entry.
- Plan drop off and collection points for transport, where to wait and gather for head counts.
- Do all leaders have all group information? Will they be spaced apart?
- A contact card for all participants giving a number to call if separated from the group, and the name and telephone number of the school and any accommodation.
- How you would get away in an emergency, bearing in mind that the direct route and planned transport might no longer be an option. Are you aware of alternatives and can you access emergency funds to pay for them?
- Do you need to leave the site immediately with the crowd at the end of the visit event? You may want to delay departure until large crowds have dispersed.
- The possibility of an enforced overnight stay and what this might entail – for example do you need a reserve of any critical medication?
- How the leadership team might manage an enforced group split.

During the visit:

- Be vigilant and aware of your surroundings – know where the exits are and where you would run to.
- When staying at any place for more than 30 minutes, identify emergency meeting points in case the group is forced to move and becomes split.
- Avoid congregating too long around entrances to major public sites.

- At ports and airports don't linger unnecessarily on the public side of security screening.
- Be aware of the 'StaySafe' principles: 'Run, Hide, Tell' (see below) and know what to expect if you encounter armed response officers

If groups are caught up in a security incident, visit staff should attempt to keep everyone together whilst moving away as quickly as possible. Keeping together may be difficult and is ultimately less important than speed of action and staying safe. Staying low and moving away whilst behind solid objects such as concrete barriers or buildings (as opposed to just parked cars) will provide good protection.

The Group Leader should notify the home contact as soon as practicable, noting the known whereabouts of all members. They can then activate the school's crisis plan, establish a crisis team at the school that can become a communication focal point and receiving area for next of kin and students upon return to schools.

When the situation is sufficiently secure to do so, arrange the group's return transport. Schools should communicate with parents using their normal methods where possible. Parents should collect their children from school rather than travel to the incident location