



# Educational Visits Policy

Reviewed: January 2024

Next Review: January 2025

Reviewed by: Director of Finance & Operations (DFO)

## 1. Introduction

The provision of educational visits for students is an important part of Bedford Girls' School life and assists greatly in making the school a vibrant and exciting place to learn. The school aims to ensure that all school trips:

- are of high educational value;
- represent good value for money; and
- are reasonably priced.

In order to maximise the opportunity for all girls to participate. At the same time the school ensures that the quality and safety aspects of the trips are of the highest standard.

## 2. Scope of the policy

For the purposes of this policy, an educational visit is any event involving the school's students which takes place off the school's premises, non-sporting activities at Cople Fields as well as more adventurous regular sporting fixtures, such as rowing, skiing and equestrian events (not organised by the National Schools Equestrian Association).

## 3. Educational Visits Coordinator

The school has an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) whose role is to ensure that:

- educational visits are correctly recorded on EVOLVE;
- educational visits are well-planned and managed, in accordance with the school's procedures;
- all trips are adequately planned in accordance with the most recent HSE and OEAP National Guidance;
- a comprehensive written risk assessment is carried out for every visit;
- staff have the emergency contact information necessary for each visit;
- appropriate insurance is in place for the visit;
- records are kept of individual visits, including reports of accidents and near-misses.

The EVC will be fully conversant with the school's Educational Visits Handbook and with the latest HSE and OEAP National Guidance.

## 4. The School's Procedures

### 4.1. Sources of Information

The procedures to be followed by staff in planning trips are contained in the Educational Visits Handbook, copies of which are available in the shared area of the intranet in the folder Staff Shared / Educational Visits and Trips.

The handbook has regard to the provisions of the DfE guidance Health and Safety on Educational Visits (2018).

Where a trip involves activity in or around water staff must also refer to the OEAP National Guidance document – Group Safety at Water Margins.

Staff can obtain copies of these documents from the EVC or on the internet.

## **4.2. Finance**

All trips will be self-funding and cover the whole cost of the trip.

Payment for all school trips is by the addition of the cost of the trip to the school fees. For residential or more expensive trips, the cost may be spread over more than one term.

Deposits will not be refundable in any circumstances unless the trip is cancelled. If a student pulls out at short notice, the cost of the trip may be covered by the school's insurance policy, depending on the circumstances. If the situation is not covered by the insurance policy, and a replacement student can be found in good time, the balance of the cost of the trip less the non-refundable deposit may be reimbursed. If no replacement can be found, the cost of the trip will remain payable in full.

In the case of a trip incurring a substantial cost to parents (more than £500), the names of pupils whose parents have expressed a wish that their daughter be included in the party must be sent to the Accounts Manager. The DFO will check the position regarding outstanding school fees. When arrears exist, inclusion in the visit is dependent upon them being cleared; any delay resulting in the allocation of the place to another pupil is held to be the responsibility of the parent concerned. The DFO will normally communicate on the school's behalf with the parent of the pupil affected by the arrears ruling.

## **4.3. Insurance**

Every authorised visit led by school staff is usually covered by the school's annual travel insurance. The cover extends to all accompanying adults, whether teachers or not, provided that their participation has been approved by the Headmistress.

The trip leader must liaise with the EVC to arrange additional cover if a planned activity is not covered by the travel policy – e.g. for a specialist sporting activity. The trip leader must make clear to parents and students that the school's travel insurance policy is invalidated if injury occurs due to an accident occurring under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

### **4.3.1 COVID Insurance**

It should be noted that, following a year of significant losses by insurers, no travel policy will now cover COVID risks / costs. This is because the trip would have been booked in the knowledge of the covid risk. The only exception to this is that medical expenses and repatriation costs will still be covered if someone contracts covid while on a trip.

Thus all overnight trips sign-up communication must now contain a Parental Disclaimer that states that:

*“We regret that our Travel Insurers, in common with most travel policies, now include a Communicable Diseases Exclusion that means that should a trip be cancelled, or losses occur due to postponement, or additional costs be incurred due COVID restrictions or quarantine requirements, these additional costs or losses will not be covered by insurance and will not be met by the School. The only exception to this is that medical expenses and repatriation costs will still be covered if someone contracts covid while on a trip.”*

*“Parents accept and confirm that they have understood the financial implications of this uninsured risk and confirm that they are willing to proceed on this uninsured basis”*

Some companies will however be offering “COVID Guarantees” or “Late Cancellation”. It is incumbent on the trip leader to obtain the written contractual details of these guarantees to establish whether these can genuinely be relied upon or are marketing spin. Even if there is a travel provider guarantee, the above statement must still be made in parent communications, with the additional statement we believe that there is a scheme running alongside it. However the parents remain at risk for the trip costs or losses associated with COVID and maybe additional costs in all circumstances.

We appreciate that this required statement will make many overnight trips financially unattractive to parents and will make trip recruitment complex.

#### **4.4. Planning and organising a visit**

##### **4.4.1. Approval of visits**

When planning trips, staff should consider the benefits of the trip against the impact on the rest of the curriculum. This is especially important when trips are on school days; consideration should be given to lessons lost by students participating in the trip and lessons missed by those who should be taught by staff accompanying the trip. Taking staff out has cover implications. To minimise the disruption to the curriculum, each subject may only take out a particular year group once a year. With the exception of fieldwork no subject may take students out for more than one day in each year during term time unless agreed with the Headmistress. To help parents plan and budget for residential trips they need to be given plenty of notice.

Overseas school trips should be approved the preceding academic year. At the beginning of the academic year parents are given a calendar outlining all school trips that are taking place to help with their planning. All trips must have the prior approval of the Headmistress, the Director of Finance & Operations and the Head of the Junior School before they can be offered to students. This is obtained through the submission of the trip on EVOLVE.

Parents must be given sufficient details about the trip to enable them to make an informed decision as to whether their daughter should participate. Parents should be informed of trips via the school’s newsletter, or by a letter home.

##### **4.4.2. Parental consent for a school visit**

No student may participate in a visit without a signed consent form from their parent/guardian. For school visits taking part wholly during the school day and do not have a financial cost to the parent, this is already provided via the parental contract.

For visits, extending outside the normal school day, as noted below, specific permission should be sought via a letter or Wufoo enquiry to parents.

- *all visits (including overnight or residential stays) which take place during the weekends or school holidays; or*
- *non-routine off-site activities and specified sporting fixtures which extend beyond the normal start and finish of the school day; or*
- *adventure activities which may take place at any time; or*
- *visits that incur a financial cost to the parent.*

Parents agree that their daughter shall be subject to School discipline in all respects whilst engaged in an educational visit.

**The cost of educational visits:** The school will advise parents in advance of any additional costs associated with an educational visit. The cost of such a visit or any visit with a cost in excess of £500 will be payable in advance and may be subject to a separate agreement. All additional costs (such as medical costs, taxis, air fares, or professional advice) incurred to protect the pupil's safety and welfare, or to respond to breaches of discipline, will be added to the bill. The school reserves the right to prevent the pupil from participating in an educational visit if fees are unpaid at the time.

For residential school trips a separate medical questionnaire must be completed by parents, giving up-to-date medical, dietary and emergency contact information for the student. The form includes requests for permission to participate in planned trip activities and written confirmation of their daughter's swimming ability, where appropriate.

#### **4.4.3. Exchange Visits**

Where host families are to be used to accommodate girls overnight the arrangements must be made through a reputable organisation. Local DBS or equivalent checks are to be carried out in all possible cases, and the provisions of KCSIE 2023 Annex D with relation to host families must be complied with at all times. Any safety or suitability concerns, however raised, should be addressed immediately.

#### **4.4.4. Post-visit evaluations**

Trip leaders are requested to complete the Evaluation section on EVOLVE in order that individual aspects can be evaluated and to provide an overview of the trip as a whole.

The form should include any 'near misses', an evaluation of the key aspects of the visit, and recommendations which may improve the organisation of similar visits in the future.

### **5. Health and Safety**

The trip leader is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of students on a school trip and shall have regard to the guidance set out in the Educational Visits Handbook and to OEAP National Guidance.

#### **5.1. First aid**

Staff supervising trips should always be aware of any medical needs of the students taking part in the school trip. Staff are encouraged to seek out the school nurse if they have any questions or wish to seek advice regarding the student's health or to discuss specific medical conditions. The trip leader must ensure that responsibility for first aid during the trip is delegated to a suitable member of the school's staff, who must take with them an adequately stocked first aid kit. Any accidents or illnesses should be reported through the Accident Book on EVOLVE

#### **5.2. Risk Assessments**

Every visit must have a full, written risk assessment, which will be reviewed by the EVC in advance of the visit. A visit may only go ahead once the risk assessment has been reviewed and approved through the EVOLVE system.

Risk assessments should be prepared by the trip leader well in advance of a visit and uploaded to EVOLVE.

All risk assessments must be specific to the trip concerned and take into account the age of the students, the degree of adult supervision and the nature of the environment and activities involved. The trip leader should contact the venue/accommodation/activity provider, for any relevant information, which should be included in the risk assessment. In some cases, a copy of the venue's own risk assessment may be available to assist in the school's own risk assessment process.

The trip leader and accompanying staff are responsible for carrying out an ongoing (dynamic) risk assessment of the trip as a whole for its duration, and must be prepared to modify or cancel activities if they are deemed too hazardous. Any deviation from the planned activities must be subject to a risk

assessment by the trip leader, before the alteration takes place, in accordance with the Educational Visits Handbook.

The trip leader must take a copy of the risk assessment on the trip or ensure they can access it through the EVOLVE system. All staff and other adults accompanying the trip must ensure that the requirements of the risk assessment are followed.

Staff are reminded that the Staff Code of Conduct and the provisions of KCSIE 2023 apply throughout all school visits.

For residential trips, all accompanying adults must have passed relevant DBS/Safeguarding checks including full Safer Recruitment for volunteers. No parents or volunteers may remain with students overnight on residential school trips without these provisions being complied with. At all other times, their contact with students must be supervised.

### **5.3. Emergency contact and procedures**

The trip leader is responsible for ensuring that for each trip they take with them/have access to:

- Staff emergency contact details, i.e. SLT Emergency Number.
- A complete list of all students, staff and other adults on the visit, (including students' medical details, with care plans for students with particular medical needs), and emergency contact telephone numbers.

This information is stored on EVOLVE for each trip and can be accessed by all staff members including SLT.

A contact telephone number must be given to parents in advance of each residential trip to make contact in an emergency.

The trip leader will check that all essential medication has been brought.

The school has procedures in place for handling a major emergency arising in the course of an educational visit, as set out in the Educational Visits Handbook.

### **5.4. Students with Disabilities**

The school expects all students to take a full part in school activities, participating in sports, drama, music, camps and trips. The school will make reasonable adjustments to cater for the needs of applicants while giving equal importance to ensuring that no other student's education is impaired.

The school will continue to provide equal access to all school activities for disabled students, within the constraints of the physical nature of the site, the budgetary costs, the health & safety implications and difficulties of supervision. Risk assessments for trips and visits are prepared on a regular basis and take account of the particular needs of disabled students if required.

Individual Risk Assessment and management strategies will be provided for disabled students engaged in school trips or visits.

The medical needs of all students are considered carefully when deciding on residential trip locations, transport arrangements and whether extra support staff are required. This is part of the risk assessment process and it is carried out in full consultation with parents. For example, parents might attend a residential visit to assist a girl who might have need additional medical support requirements.

## **6. Supervision**

### **6.1. Ratios of staff to students**

The school will ensure that all students on trips are well-supervised, and that there is a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to students on any visit to ensure the safety of the students. Staff will have regard to the guidance concerning the ratio of staff to students contained in the Educational Visits Handbook when planning the staffing of a visit. In particular, staff must take account of:

- The age of the students on the visit;
- The presence of students with special needs on the visit;
- The nature of the activity and the environment;
- The experience of the adults in off-site supervision;
- The competence of the staff involved, particularly in relation to the activities to be undertaken;
- First aid cover;
- Whether a trip involves water-based activities, or access to water.

## **6.2. DBS Clearance**

Staff are reminded that the provisions of KCSIE 2023 apply throughout all school visits. For residential trips all accompanying adults must have passed relevant DBS/Safeguarding checks including full Safer Recruitment for volunteers. No parents, supporting adults or volunteers may remain with students overnight on residential school trips without these provisions being complied with. At all other times their contact with students must be supervised. Coach drivers and tour guides should not be billeted close to the pupils or have access to communal areas overnight unless accompanied by staff.

## **6.3. Behaviour**

Students will be expected to maintain basic standards associated with the good name of the school and necessary for the safety of all those on the visit, as set out in the Educational Visits Handbook.

Attention is also drawn to The Harpur Trust Drugs and Alcohol Policy. Strictly no alcohol is to be consumed by students on school trips. Staff are to moderate or abstain from consumption in case of the need to drive or provide medical care. Para. 10, Harpur Trust Alcohol and Drugs Policy states: It is strictly forbidden to work, or to remain at work, if the employee's ability to perform his/her duties are deemed to be impaired as a consequence of the influence of alcohol, whether on or off site (e.g. whilst on a school trip). If a member of management of the Trust/School has reasonable opinion to believe that an employee is inappropriately under the influence of alcohol, the employee will be sent home immediately and the Disciplinary Policy will be initiated.

## **7. Transport**

The trip leader is responsible for ensuring that transport is hired from a reputable company. Only coaches with seatbelts should be hired and the member of staff in charge on the coach must ensure that students use them.

### **7.1. Use of the school mini-bus or Land Rover**

Only authorised drivers are permitted to transport students in a school minibus or Land Rover. Records of authorised drivers, their licenses and training (as required) are maintained by the Head of Health & Safety.

All authorised drivers must adhere to the BGS Vehicle Policy & Handbook.

If parents, other adults or sixth-formers wish to help with private transport, specific permission must first be sought from the parents of all the students involved.

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy**

The School (via the EVC and the DFO) will monitor the operation of this policy, by ensuring that the procedures

it refers to are carried out to a satisfactory standard.

*Bold*

*Imaginative*

*Reflective*