



Wakefield Grammar School Foundation

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CHANGE RECORD - REVIEW PERIOD 2 YEARS

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WGSF Educational Visits Policy

1. Overview

Safely managed educational visits with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of a broad and balanced curriculum. They are an opportunity to extend the learning of all pupils, including an enrichment of their understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. They can be a catalyst for improved personal performance, promote a lifetime interest and in some cases lead to professional fulfilment. Educational visits are to be encouraged.

Educational visits should be inclusive, available to all students and should be organised accordingly, with particular consideration being given where possible to any students with a disability, especially when selecting venues and organising transport. It is also important that trips are planned to offer a range of experiences, whilst providing value for money.

This policy on educational visits and trips applies to all schools within the Foundation.

This policy has been written with reference to the Department for Education publication, Health and Safety: responsibilities and duties for schools (5 Apr 2022) and the DFE publication Health and Safety on Educational Visits (26 Nov 2018). These publications are supported by the Health and Safety Executive publication, *School trips and outdoor learning activities: Tackling the health and safety myths* (published June 2011).

2. Procedures

Procedures for organising and taking an educational visit are in the individual school's staff handbook and supporting information. (For example, the WGHS visits procedures are guided by EVOLVE). These are updated as and when required by changes to legislation or where experience of a trip suggests a review is needed.

This policy requires all staff within the Foundation to adhere to the Guidance of Outdoor Education and Off - Site Visits which is to be found on EVOLVE – Resources – General Advice and Guidance. This document provides clarification and interpretation of aspects of the **National Guidance (NG)** (<https://oeapng.info/>) including supervision, minibuses, approval procedures etc.

The individual school procedures will cover:

- responsibilities for visits including student behaviour
- planning, completion of risk assessments and first aid
- supervision
- preparation for students, including any special / medical needs
- communication with parents and consent
- transport
- insurance cover
- different types of visit including visits abroad if appropriate
- emergency procedures including contact details and permission for emergency medical treatment if parents cannot be contacted (*see also the schools' Critical Incident Policies*)

- Financial viability of the proposed visit
- Assessment of the suitability of suppliers

In addition to following procedure, staff are expected to follow additional advice and guidance from government regarding local conditions impacting on travel

Procedures for Joint trips

Staff must complete the initial planning on EVOLVE and send it to relevant EVC who will liaise with EVC in other Foundation schools. Staff must wait for approval from both schools before proceeding with bookings.

Supervision

On all visits there must be effective supervision. The levels of which have been approved by the EVC and Head Teacher in line with this policy.

Guidance on staff pupil ratios is as follows:

- FS1 (Nursery) / FS2 (Reception) = 1 adult for every 4 pupils
- Years 1-3 = 1 adult for every 6 pupils
- Years 4-6 = 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils
- Years 7 and above = 1 adult for every 15-20 students

Factors that should be considered are known as the acronym SAGED:

Staff eg experience, competence etc

Activities - eg adventurous

Group eg type of group, mixed, age etc

Environment eg remote, local, mountainous etc

Distance eg local, national, international

Other factors which may be considered:

- First aid cover available
- Type of accommodation
- Third party provider provision

Volunteers

Occasionally volunteers known to the school (ex-members of staff or spouses of members of staff) may be asked to provide supplementary staff supervision. This must be approved by the Head in advance and all such individuals will have had Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks if the visit involves an overnight stay. The trip leader must liaise with the EVC regarding any volunteers. EVCs will review the volunteer list annually and liaise with HR and J Lister to update this list.

Children of staff members

Staff taking their own children, who are current students of the Foundation, should not be included in the calculation of the overall staff ratio i.e. there must be sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced staff to safely manage the group without them if

necessary. Staff should not take their own children on school trips (external to the Foundation.)

The Head/Manager must specifically ensure if insurance cover is in place for the child/children of the staff concerned. (The Health and Safety Compliance Manager may advise on this.)

In exceptional circumstances, there may be some students who have specific medical needs that will require a specific risk assessment or additional insurance disclosure. This will be guided by each school's DSL.

All visits will have a clear, recorded educational, cultural or pastoral purpose and will be planned sufficiently well in advance in accordance with good practice and effective planning procedures and must be financially viable.

Significant trust is placed on Educational Visit suppliers by the Foundation, staff and by parents.

To ensure that we are working with suitable providers an approved provider list is maintained - see the WGSF due diligence list.. Educational visits may be booked with approved providers without further checks. However, if concerns are raised during the booking process or during a visit then these should be raised with the Educational Visits Committee and approved status may be withdrawn. The procedure for assessing suppliers and making amends to the approved supplier list is managed by the Director of Finance and Operations (DFO)

Approved providers may be added to the list by request to the DFO. The DFO, or a designated member of the Governor's office will undertake approval checks and notify the requestor once providers have been approved

Providers on the approved list have been assessed for:

- Organisational reputation - they are a genuine company or organisation with a record of successful provision. This might be evidenced through industry recognition schemes eg ATOL, ABTA and LOtCQ badge membership, website presence, Companies House checks, provision of insurance documentation;
- Financial viability - they have sufficient financial strength to provide the services being procured. Evidenced by Companies House checks;
- Data protection compliance - they have appropriate policies and practices to ensure the security and good management of personal data.

Checks undertaken will be appropriate for the type of trips provided. Locally provided, day time trips with minimal costs would be less rigorously reviewed than residential, activity based trips abroad.

Contracts should not be signed, nor deposits paid, nor trips confirmed with parents until the provider has been added on to the approved provider list.

Checks will be undertaken on a periodic basis to be determined by the DFO and in proportion to the provider's provision.

All appropriate risk assessments must be completed and signed off in advance of a trip taking place.

A trained Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) has been appointed to support the Head in each of the Foundation schools. It is the responsibility of the EVC to ensure that all educational visits and trips take place within a controlled, secure and legal framework and that individual and group safety remains the primary focus.

The Foundation uses the web-based system 'EVOLVE' to facilitate the robust planning, management, approval and evaluation of visits. All staff that lead or accompany visits can access their own EVOLVE account, which is managed by their school's Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). As well as being an efficient tool for planning and approving visits, EVOLVE also contains a variety of features including: search and report facilities, downloadable resources and information, staff records and visit history etc.

Approvals for visits run on two levels:

Lower risk/ routine visits

e.g. Local park, local shops, towns, theatre, theme parks within normal school / service hours and part of the normal curriculum. **The approval lies with the Head Teacher**

Higher Risk Visits

e.g. Residential , adventurous activities, as defined in the Guidance For Outdoor Education and Adventurous Activities (EVOLVE - Resources – General Advice and Guidance), or any activity close to natural water (sea, rivers, lakes, reservoirs).

Approval lies with the Head Teacher, but the form is passed on to the independent technical advisor for final checking and approval. (The independent technical advisor is a member of OEAP*.)

Charging Policy

To ensure consistency of charging reference should be made to the Additional Parental Charges policy.

In brief, this policy states:

- No parental charges will be made for essential visits
- Proportional and reasonable charges may be made for desirable visits
- Parents will be fully responsible for the costs of optional visits

Governor approval for any visit that includes an individual parental charge of over £1,000 is required before any booking confirmations are made.

Governor approval for any payment over £10,000 is required.

Essential visits are identified as those where:

- Attendance is expected
- Required by exam boards

- In Head of Department's view is **essential** to ensure an understanding of a topic or part of a specification
- Participation in national competitions

An example could be a geography or biology field trip, or participation in a national sporting competition or the final stages of an academic competition.

Desirable visits are identified as those where:

- Attendance encouraged but not essential
- In Head of department's view is not mandatory but worthwhile visit that encourages understanding of a topic
- In Head of Year's view is not mandatory, but worthwhile trip to support pastoral and well-being outcomes
- Participation in **non mandatory** competitions

Parents may be asked to contribute to the costs of desirable activities, but school will aim to minimise costs, and should funding be available, will subsidise a proportion of the costs

An example could be a theatre visit to better understand an English text, or a residential year group visit.

Optional visits are identified as those where:

- Entirely optional
- No educational advantage
- Recreational benefits that otherwise they may not experience

An example would be a ski trip or sports tour.

Where a charge is to be made to parents, communication of the charges and the optional nature of the charge should be clearly communicated at an early stage. Parents should be made aware of options for students if they chose not to participate in a desirable visit. This may include alternate learning arrangements.

Parents should also be informed that if insufficient funds are raised then a desirable or optional visit may be cancelled.

Financial assistance for desirable and optional visits is not generally available. However, a parent may raise a financial request or raise a concern with either the Head of School or Director of Finance and Operations.

3. Key principles

3.1 For Staff

- All staff organising a journey or education visit must follow the Foundation and schools' agreed policy and procedures at all times
- There will be a named and approved Trip Leader (and, where possible, a named Deputy) on all educational visits. The Trip Leader will be specifically competent for the role. Working with the EVC as necessary, the Trip Leader will be responsible

for all aspects of the planning, risk assessment and organisation of the visit. The Trip Leader will assume full responsibility during the visit, including ongoing risk assessment. All trip leaders may secure further technical advice from the WGHS Technical Consultant.

- The standard of care required of a teacher is that which from an objective point of view can reasonably be expected from teachers generally applying skills and awareness of children's problems, needs and susceptibilities.
- The law expects that a teacher will do that which a parent with care and concern for the safety and welfare of his or her own child would do (see Appendix 1).
- The law demands that each teacher will maintain a standard which a caring teaching profession would expect of itself.
- A teacher must ensure supervision of the students throughout the journey or visit as professional standards and common sense demand.
- There should be adequate first aid training - either on the trip or contactable.
- Reasonable steps must be taken to avoid exposing students to dangers which are foreseeable and beyond those with which the pupils can reasonably be expected to cope.
- The need for direct supervision has to be judged by reference to the risks involved in the activity being undertaken. Instructions given to students are not always enough. The possibility that they may disobey has to be taken into account together with the risk they may encounter if they disobey.
- The EVC must check all preparations are in place and ensure that the Trip Leader and other accompanying staff have the ability, experience, training and health to undertake the responsibility of the care and welfare of students in a different environment.
- There is a critical incident plan attached and emergency contacts on the risk assessment.
- Where the school visits a residential or outdoor activity centre, the Trip Leader can reasonably allow children to be supervised by the centre's own staff, provided that he / she is satisfied that they are able to do so safely. To assist with this process the activity centre's Safety Management Plan and Risk Assessment should be carefully analysed. Where an LOTC Quality Badge has been awarded, this is not required. Similarly, if teachers have taken reasonable steps to ensure that the premises where children stay are safe, then, in normal circumstances, no more needs to be done.
- Teachers should not participate in a journey or visit which they believe is not being adequately prepared and organised.
- It is the responsibility of the visit leader to ensure that all visits are financially viable and that all costs are covered and budgeted for from the outset.
- Liability goes with fault. In the case of a pure accident no-one bears liability and this is covered by 'no fault' insurance.
- Employers have 'vicarious liability' for the negligence of their employees at work. This means generally that the employer takes responsibility if employees do not fulfil their safety obligations at work properly. Where a claim is made following an accident and there is a suggestion of negligence on the part of the teacher, the claim will most likely be made against the governors. If, however, a teacher is guilty of gross negligence (through drunkenness for example) a right of recourse exists for the governors against the teacher.
- All staff who plan overseas visits must ensure they are conversant with the local protocols, particularly around any water activities. This may be by seeking clarification from a third party provider such as a tour operator.
- All staff who plan overseas visits need to be aware that they are working in a different legal jurisdiction and that they must comply with their regulations.

3.2 For Parents

- Informed parental consent is required for all educational visits for all pupils/students whilst they are on the school roll. **If no parental response is received (despite attempts to make contact) seek advice from EVC.**
- Parents will be given sufficient written and supplementary information about an educational visit to enable them to make an informed decision and give written consent together with medical and emergency contact details. Whenever appropriate for higher risk, residential and foreign visits a briefing meeting with parents will be arranged.
- Expectations with regard to behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents. This information will include the necessity of meeting additional costs and making collection arrangements in certain circumstances.

3.3 For Pupils

Wherever appropriate, pupils should be involved with the planning of an educational visit, establishing codes of conduct, assessing and managing risk and evaluating their own learning, development, attitudes and behaviour.

Students should be adequately briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all educational visits. Ongoing briefings are an important element of learning and safety.

3.4 For the management of visits

The Foundation operates regular Foundation EVC meetings. Such meetings are designed to share best practice, increase collaboration and quality assure all systems and procedures in conjunction with current legislation/government guidance. The meetings are attended by the EVCs from all foundation schools, the Director of Finance and Operations, the Finance Manager and the Foundation's external visits consultant who is a member of the OEAP.*

4. Other Foundation Policies to be read in conjunction with the Educational Visits Policy (these can be found on Firefly):

- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- School Transport Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Retention Storage and Disposal Policy
- Additional Parental Charges

5. Significant public health concerns

The Foundation recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer and provider of services and will provide a safe and healthy workplace and learning environment for all staff, pupils and such other persons as may be affected by its activities.

In response to significant public health concerns, including pandemics, we will adopt health and safety arrangements that follow the requirements given by the DfE, PHE and other recognised Governing bodies and the Health & Safety legislation, and in

consideration of Government Guidance given in the Living safely with COVID-19 and other respiratory infections.

The Foundation must ensure staff are aware of any local restrictions applicable to countries they are visiting or travelling through.

Good health and safety management will be an integral part of the way that the Foundation operates and will be considered across all work activities and across the wide range of educational activities delivered.

* Outdoor Education Advisors Panel

Appendix I

HEALTH & SAFETY: RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS

These regulations are contained in the *Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)* and set out the legal framework, under health and safety law, in which employers and employees work and the powers, under education law, which help employers and employees to ensure compliance. They apply to all educational visits. The employer retains overall responsibility for health, safety and welfare. In other words, the Foundation is legally responsible for the health and safety of educational visits. Employees also have significant responsibilities as follows:

- Take reasonable care of their own and others health and safety.
- Cooperate with their employers.
- Carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions.
- Inform the employer of any serious risks.

A teacher has a Common Law Duty of Care. This means that:

- A teacher has a duty of care for young people under their supervision.
- A higher duty is expected of teachers as a result of their specialised knowledge.
- The age of the young person and the nature and location of the activity help to determine the degree of supervision required.

With reference to any civil claims of negligence made against a teacher, an injury or damage that may not be reasonably foreseeable is deemed to be an accident. Foreseeable is defined as something that has happened in the past of which the supervisor has knowledge or something that one can visualise happening. Negligence may arise from the lack of due care.

The questions likely to be asked in a court of law are:

- Was there a duty of care?
- Was there a breach of that duty?
- Did harm result directly from the failure to exercise reasonable care?

Should the answer to all three questions be "Yes," then most probably negligence did occur.