

Offsite Activities Policy

2021-2022

Offsite activities visits enhance student interest and develop both the subject and the wider school curriculum. The social benefits attributable to school visits, particularly residential trips can be considerable and contribute to the curriculum. For some students with disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds the opportunities afforded by educational visits can often be significant. We believe that all students should experience the world beyond the classroom regardless of ability or circumstances and have the opportunity to enhance their cultural capital. Educational visits can stimulate enquiry and help students become independent, resilient and challenge thinking.

This policy ensures that all offsite activities are well planned and that health and safety of students and staff is paramount.

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Trips Co-ordinator: Mrs P Marshall-Thomas

Approved by: Mr I Tucker (Principal at St John's)

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Contents

The EVC Role	3
Roles and Responsibilities	3
Procedures	3
Charging	4
Inclusion	5
Health and Safety/Risk Assessments	5
Supervision	6
Over subscribed	6
Emergency Contacts	7
Role of the Duty Officer	7
Use of Staff Vehicles	8
Exchange Visits	8
Third Party Companies	8
Parental Contact	9
Local Visits	8
Covid	9
Policy Monitoring	9
Links	9

Role of the Education Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

Educational visits can have a significant impact on the school day in terms of staff and student absences and these need to be balanced against the educational merits of the visit. The EVC has oversight of all offsite activities before, during and after the visit. They are also responsible for the management of risks and to ensure that the requirements of this policy are adhered to.

Responsibilities

Trip Leader

The trip leader is responsible for planning the offsite activity, taking into account any health and safety requirements. It is a requirement that they must be a qualified teacher of St John's School and have previous trips experience. They must appoint a deputy to support them and take the lead role if necessary. They should liaise with the trips administrator frequently to make sure the correct information/details are communicated to parents/carers. They must also finalise the visit and complete a comprehensive risk assessment for approval with the EVC. It is important that the trip leader clarifies and communicates the intent of the trip/visit.

Staff (on the visit)

Staff should support the trip leader and assist in general control. They must inform the trip leader of any concerns. Staff are responsible to provide effective supervision in the event of a critical incident/emergency which could occur at any point in time and should therefore not consume alcohol and ensure that their conduct is professional at all times.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers need to complete all paperwork that the school requires eg, consent forms, emergency details, current health issues including medication taken.

Students

Students must follow all instructions on the visit and dress appropriately.

Procedures

All offsite activities applications must follow a common procedure.

St John's uses **Evolve**. This requires a Pre-application Form, to be completed on-line in Evolve (Outline Approval) before any communication to parents, staff and students. This will ensure that:

- There is an educational or enrichment value, consistent with the ethos of St. John's
- Cover needs are minimal
- Impact of the staff absence on student/school education
- There are no clashes on the school calendar with any events/exams etc.
- The visit is appropriate to needs of students
- The visit is led by an experienced member of staff
- Cost of the trip/value for money and follows the principles of "best value"
- Travel time involved compared to duration of educational experience.
- Timing relative to exams/beginning of the year.

Once outline approval has been granted by the EVC then a full application can be made by completing the form on Evolve.

Different approval levels apply to different category activities but all need to be approved by the EVC:

Category 1: Additional Principal and Hampshire Outdoor Education approval required.

High risk- residential of one or more nights, overseas visits and coastal or river related activities, e.g. Geography field trips, ski trips, activity centres.

Category 2: Additional Vice Principal approval required. Outside the locality day or to a place not visited before. Transport such as a coach required and risks are higher but manageable, e.g. theatre trips.

Category 3: Low risk, carried out often within the locality. Activities like visiting the local village church. A rigorous Risk Assessment must still be completed.

Charging

Visits which are not central to the curriculum can charge. Letters to parents must not mislead parents and create an impression that a school visit is essential and integral to an examination course. The specifications in some subject areas where field work is a compulsory part of the course assessment- such as A-level Geography, are an exception to this. It can be pointed out that if there are insufficient voluntary contributions then it is likely the trip will not be able to go ahead and Pupil Premium students can apply for financial help. Payment plans can be set up with the trip administrator. If a parent withdraws a student from a trip at any point or if the students' behaviour prevents them from taking part the cost will not be refunded unless another student takes their place.

Inclusion

There is a statutory responsibility upon schools to ensure that educational visits should be as inclusive as possible and EVCs should ensure that trip organisers have taken appropriate steps to make the trip accessible to SEND, disadvantaged students and those whose circumstances may otherwise prevent their participation in the trip/activity. Students with additional needs who are taken on educational visits need to be reviewed in terms of the Risk Assessment and an appropriate management plan agreed. With more serious medical situations, parental approval/awareness regarding the management will be required. These additional management plans must be included in the RA. There may be an additional requirement to ensure that staff have any specialist training to meet the medical needs of students or have arrangements in place during the visit to ensure adequate provision.

Students with behavioural problems may need one to one supervision. If an appropriate level of supervision cannot be achieved for a particularly difficult student, and where their behaviour is not related to a specified medical or special need, then, in the context of the school behaviour code, it is possible that the student may not go on the visit. A party leader who takes a student, who has a school history of un-cooperative behaviour, on a school visit will need to be confident that there is enough management in place to prevent this student being a danger to themselves and other students. For outdoor activities this is particularly important.

The sleeping arrangements for residential visits should be considered for transgender students before the trip is undertaken. Each individual case needs to be carefully considered and in depth conversations had between the student and parent/carer. It might be that the school has to pay for a single room.

Health and Safety and Risk Assessments

The planning of school visits ensure that all experience the best possible outcomes, minimising the risk to their health and safety. All school visits “offsite” will be risk assessed and signed off by the EVC. This person should have considerable experience of trips, be aware of the relevant legal requirements and have relevant EVC training. Party leaders should make full use of the generic risks and management information on the Evolve web site (Resources section) and complete a risk assessment using the school template.

All risk assessments must be written by the trip leader and should be specifically related to the environment/venue being visited, the actual students participating and the specific activities being undertaken. This should include accommodation supervision and any evening or downtime activities. The risk assessment is a legal document and once completed must be shared with all staff members on the trip/visit.

Trip leaders should appreciate that their risk assessment will be scrutinised by the EVC and Hampshire Outdoor Education & PE Service and possibly by other third parties in the event of an accident/incident and their response to certain scenarios will be tested-particularly with visits that have a higher risk profile. The visit cannot proceed unless this process has been satisfactorily completed.

One accompanying member of staff must be first aid trained and able to assist with medical needs (anaphylactic training for example).

The main legislation covering school trips is the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and regulations made under that Act. The trip leader has legal responsibility and common law duty of care for students once they are on the trip/visit.

Supervision

When someone takes on responsibility they take on a duty of care to ensure safety. Trip leaders must ensure that students are supervised appropriately, taking into consideration, the location, age, gender and nature of the visit. Staff to student ratios are not prescribed by law. The following ratios are recommended based on safety, by Hampshire Outdoor Education. Ratios do not include the centre base staff.

		Ratio	Qualifications
Category 1 <i>High risk – Residential, water based</i>	Year 7 – 9	1:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An experienced group leader • An experienced deputy leader • Responsible adults • Leaders should reflect the gender of the group.
	Year 10-11	1:12	
	Year 12 -13	1:12	
Category 2 <i>Medium Risk - Day</i>	Year 7 - 9	1:12	
	Year 10-11	1:12	
	Year 12 -13	1:12	
Category 3 <i>Low Risk – Local Visit</i>	Year 7 - 9	1:20	
	Year 10-11	1:20	
	Year 12 -13	1:20	

Over Subscribed Visits

If there are limited places available on a school visit then the trips administrator should look to see if there are any participating students that have already attended a school visit in that academic year. Attendance and behaviour of students should also be considered. This must be communicated to parents in the initial invitation letter. There must be a document to show how the decision has been reached.

Emergency Contact

If there is an emergency when on a visit within the school day- contact the school and ask for the trips administrator in the first instance or the EVC.

For visits outside of school hours there will be two contact numbers which will be senior leaders allocated on a rota basis to be duty officers. Please note the school's Reception number **cannot be used** for this. These duty officers will have both the RA and trip details provided by the EVC. In all situations, Hampshire Outdoor Education & PE Service will provide support services.

The 'Duty Officer' may have to consider the nature of the emergency:

Coach crash

Medical – outbreak of food poisoning,

School party in quarantine

Student death

Student hospitalised

Parent death in the UK.

Student detained by police for theft, alcohol or drug related offence.

Return journey prevented by ash cloud, company collapse or civil unrest

A member of staff must record the time, date and nature of any incident and contact the school/duty officer immediately.

Role of the Duty Officer

The duty officer is on call when a school visit is out of school hours or residential. The Trips administrator will give the two contacts all details of the visit. If there is an emergency the duty officer should establish:

- Are the group safe? Is the party leader able to continue and be an effective decision maker? Can the deputy leader cope with the situation?
- Does the school need to send additional support out to the location – is this realistic and who should be sent?
- Does the parent/career need to be notified?
- Who is going to deal with the media?
- Should the trip continue or should the party return home – how can this be achieved?
- Do any agencies need to be informed such as embassies? Does the insurance company need a police report or early notification?
- Does the emergency situation require specialist support such as trauma councillors or legal advice?

The duty officer should contact the principal and Hampshire Outdoor Education & PE Service.

Use of staff vehicles

The use of staff vehicles to transport students is subject to the same conditions as for minibus drivers in that they should be an approved minibus driver (with evidence of appropriate and up to date training). Staff using their own vehicles should have a clean licence, business use insurance and the vehicle must have a current MOT certificate, if legally required. Parental consent is needed to transport students in staff vehicles.

Exchange Visits

The trip leader must ensure checks are carried out with the host school on exchange accommodation. The school organising the International School Exchange is fully responsible for duty of care for the students, staff and others involved.

Third Party Companies

There is an expectation that a course or educational visit recommended by the school should be of good educational value and undertaken in a safe environment with an approved provider. This includes residential courses, outdoor pursuits and international travel companies.

Parental contact

Students cannot participate on educational visits without written parental permission. A 'General Local Trips Agreement Form' provided at the beginning of the school year should not be considered adequate. A parental signature on a reply slip, usually linked to the information letter, or ticked consent box on ParentPay is sufficient. With most residential visits such as language exchanges then an information evening with opportunities for parental questions is considered good practice.

Local visits

Local visits within walking distance of the school which are undertaken in lesson time should still complete approval through Evolve. The EVC/Vice Principal needs to be aware of the visit and should also be confident with the arrangements. A Risk Assessment should be completed and a list of students who are off site should be left with the school office in case of an evacuation emergency. Medical and parental contact details should be carried by the trip leader.

Covid

Government guidelines for international travel are changing and updating frequently and if an overseas residential trip is to be planned, a conversation with the EVC should be had first. It is not likely that a residential visit for 2021-2022 will be authorised as there are so many variables involved like impact of teacher absence if tested positive and the extra cost of accommodation if isolation is needed. COVID-19 is now a known risk, our school insurance has exclusions for cancellation cover. When planning a residential UK trip, communication to parents must be clear who is collecting a student if they test positive whilst on the trip/visit.

Policy Monitoring

This policy is available to all staff on the school sharepoint (trips) and published on the school website for parents/carers. It will be reviewed every year by the EVC and The Principal.

Links

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents>