



Reviewed: August 2024

Next Review: August 2025

Reviewed by: Director of Finance and 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;
- 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, or any event involving an overnight stay on the school's premises, and it includes more adventurous regular sporting fixtures, such as and rowing, skiing and equestrian events.

3. Educational Visits Coordinator

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

- 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 guidelines;
- 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, including identifying uninsured COVID risks;
- records are kept of individual visits, including reports of accidents and near- misses.
- a list of visits for the academic year is available via the school's intranet in the folder Staff Shared / Educational Visits and Trips.
- The EVC will be fully conversant with the school's Handbook for Educational Visits, and with the latest HSE guidelines.

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 DCSF guidance Health and Safety of

Students on Educational Visits (1998), together with its three-part supplement (2002):

- Standards for LEA's in Overseeing Educational Visits;
- Standards for Adventure;
- A Handbook for Group Leaders.

Where a trip involves activity in or around water staff must also refer to the DCSF publication 'Group Safety at Water Margins' (2003).

Staff can obtain copies of these documents from the EVC.

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 girl 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 party leader must arrange additional cover if a planned activity is not covered by the travel policy – e.g. for a specialist sporting activity. Guidance is available from the EVC and the DFO. The party 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 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 comms, 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. To help parents plan and budget for residential trips they need to be given plenty of notice. Proposed trip dates should initially be confirmed via the School Office.

Overseas school trips should be approved the preceding academic year. At the beginning of the academic year parents are given a calendar outlining all the school trips that are taking place to help with their planning. All trips must have the prior approval of the Headmistress, the Assistant Head Co-curriculum and the Head of the Junior School before they can be offered to students. This is obtained by submitting an initial approval request through EVOLVE. Once a trip has been approved, it will be given a unique reference number, which must be quoted on all associated documentation.

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. Please note section 4.3.1 on COVID Financial Risk above.

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 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 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 cost more than £500.*

The Parents agree that the Pupil shall be subject to School discipline in all respects whilst engaged in an educational visit.

The cost of educational visits: The School will advise the 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 consent form (EV08) 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. Trip checklist and post-visit evaluations

Trip Checklist (EV02)

The EVC provides a Trip Checklist for trip leaders whenever a trip is authorised. This document provides a comprehensive list of all steps to be taken when planning a visit and this form should be checked to confirm that all the necessary procedures have been followed before the trip departs.

Post-Trip Evaluation (EV06)

Requested from Trip Leaders for most trips in order that individual aspects can be evaluated and to provide an overview of the trip as a whole. Usually sent out by the EVC but also available for download via the shared area of the intranet in the appropriate folder in Staff Shared / Educational Visits and Trips.

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, as set out in the Educational Visits Handbook. This information will be available in the trip folder associated with the particular trip and will be available for inspection in appropriate folder stored in Staff Shared / Educational Visits and Trips.

5. Health and Safety

The party 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 HASPEV when planning a visit.

5.1 First aid

Staff supervising excursions should always be aware of any medical needs of the students taking part on 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 party 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 and a Form S1 filled in.

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 signed as approved by both the EVC and the DFO or other SLT member.

Risk assessments should be prepared by the party leader well in advance of a visit and sent to the EVC in good time.

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 party 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 party 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 party leader, before the alteration takes place, in accordance with the Educational Visits Handbook. All trip details, including risk assessments, are included within the EVOLVE system that can be accessed remotely.

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.

Please note that overseas trips must now be planned with one responsible adult who may be able to remain in county and quarantine with any pupil who is required to undergo local restrictions. Account should be taken of residual supervision ratios if one adult is required to remain behind. This could be for a period of upto 14 days and may change at short notice. This will make trips difficult to occur in the short holidays and may be restricted to the longer breaks.

The trip finances need to take account of the cost of an additional adult should this be required and also take account of the potential additional costs to be billed to the parents for the pupil although most medical and repatriation costs should be covered by insurance.

5.3 Emergency contact and procedures

The party leader is responsible for ensuring that for each trip they have access to EVOLVE to enable:

- The emergency contact information
- 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.
- The additional documents required for a residential trip, or for a trip abroad, as set out in the Party Leaders' Handbook.

The EVC must ensure that this information is held electronically within the school, so that the member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on-call for the duration of the visit, and the School Office have electronic access to this information for each trip.

The EVC will confirm with the SLT duty person the trips arranged for that period. Access to all trip information is through EVOLVE.

The SLT emergency telephone number must be given to parents in advance of each trip. In the event of a home-based emergency arising during a visit, parents may make contact with the party leader via the SLT number.

The party 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 Additional Needs

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 students with physical and/or mental health requirements, 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 students with additional needs 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 student who might have need additional medical or welfare 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 and in HASPEV 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.
- Whether an additional member of staff may be needed to cover potential quarantine cover (e.g. abroad).

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 girls 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 party 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, or of a private car

The school's Estates Manager shall keep a copy of the driving licence of each member of staff who intends to transport students in the school mini bus, school Land Rover or in their own vehicle. Staff must provide the school with an up-to-date copy of their licence if the details on the licence change.

Staff who intend to transport students in the school mini bus must hold a driving licence, which permits this, and undertake the necessary orientation training with a member of the Estates Staff or the EVC.

Where the school minibus is used for a journey, the driver is responsible for checking the condition of the vehicle before departure and must ensure that all passengers use the seatbelts provided. For all journeys other than local trips, a second member of staff should also be present.

Staff and others who drive students in their own car must ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy and that they have the appropriate licence and insurance cover for transporting students. Specific approval for the use of a member of staff's own vehicle for transporting students must be obtained in advance from the DFO or EVC.

When authorising use of the school mini bus or Land Rover, or a member of staff's private car for a trip, the EVC and the DFO will have regard to the length of the journey to be undertaken in the context of the overall length of the driver's working day.

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 girls 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.