

Educational Trips and Visits Policy

This policy (and the procedure outlined within) applies across all partner schools in the Stephen Sutton Multi-Academy Trust (SSMAT). It is available on the SSMAT website and is accessible from our schools' websites.

POLICY APPROVAL and REVIEW

Review date: **Oct. '20**

Approval needed by: **Trust Finance, Audit and Risk Committee**

Adopted: **Oct. '18**

Next review date: **Oct. '22**

1. Introduction / Overview

- 1.1 SSMAT encourages its schools to enrich their curricula with educational trips and learning activities outside the classroom and appreciates the commitment of colleagues who plan and lead a broad range of visits and excursions.
- 1.2 The Trust has formally adopted the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel's National Guidance (<http://oeapng.info>) and a set of procedures that are consistent with Staffordshire County Council's Educational Visits Policy. Colleagues are made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when it is reviewed.
- 1.3 This policy applies to colleagues whose work involves:
 - direct supervision of young people undertaking activities beyond their usual experiences;
 - direct supervision of young people undertaking activities that fall within the category of 'Learning Outside of the Classroom';
 - supporting young people undertaking activities beyond their usual experiences; or
 - deploying staff, who supervise or support young people, who undertake activities beyond their usual experiences.

The policy applies both within and outside normal working hours, including during weekends and holiday periods.

- 1.4 No formal action is taken against an official of a colleague's professional association or trade union, until a full time official of the association has been notified.

2. Process and Procedure

- 2.1 Colleagues considering the organisation of a visit (prospective visit leaders) discuss the proposal with the relevant senior leader, ensuring that the school diary is checked and agreement in principle is granted before proceeding with the more detailed organisation of the proposal.
- 2.2 Where agreement (in principle) is granted, the visit leader adds the details through the 'Evolve' online system, which alerts the school's Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). The EVC checks through the details of the planning and risk management, ensuring that the policy and national guidelines are followed.
- 2.3 Where a visit involves additional or high risk activities, foreign travel or a residential stay, then (through 'Evolve') details of the visit are sent, by the school's EVC, to Staffordshire County Council's Educational Visits Adviser (contracted for support through the Trust's 'Evolve' subscription) for approval that all procedures have been followed and risk assessments are appropriate.

- 2.4 Visits requiring higher level approval (as described in 2.3) are submitted six working weeks before the visit is due to take place and before financial commitment has occurred. Approval notification is sent back within two working weeks.
- 2.5 Once permissions are in place, the visit leader completes the organisation and booking of the visit. When all details are complete, they are submitted again, via the EVC, to the Head of School, for final approval. This should be a minimum of seven days before the visit takes place.
- 2.6 Regularly repeated visits may be authorised through 'block approval', subject to parents being made aware of each visit, especially where this involves a return time that is out of normal school hours.
- 2.7 Following each visit, the visit leader undertakes a review and appraises the EVC of any new learning. Any incidents or accidents are reported to the Head of School.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for the approval of all trips and visits that involve that school's students. For trips with additional / high risks, they are supported in this by Staffordshire County Council's Educational Visits Adviser.

Furthermore, the Head of School ensures that visits can be accommodated within timetable constraints and are consistent in nature with the ethos and aspirations of the school and the Trust.

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), visit leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained, as required, for the role they undertake and are specifically competent to carry out the responsibilities and tasks they are given.

3.2 Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The EVC is a colleague, in each Trust school, who has received relevant training and induction for the role. The EVC:

- checks and approves that the planning and risk management of visits follows this policy and national guidance;
- ensures that the further requirements for activities with additional or high risks, residential trips and foreign travel are undertaken, liaising with the Staffordshire County Council Educational Visits Adviser;
- ensures that appropriate monitoring and evaluation of trips and visits takes place.

The school's current Educational Visits Coordinator is: **Faye Gilbert**

3.3 Visit Leader

The visit leader is in overall charge of the group of young people and adults who go on the visit and remains responsible throughout the visit.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 The starting point of a risk assessment is a consideration of the intended and likely benefits to be accrued from the proposed visit. This adds a degree of objectivity to the consideration of residual risk, i.e. the decision regarding whether, or not, the risk that remains, after suitable control measures have been implemented, is acceptable. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) endorses this approach, recognising that it is important for young people to be exposed to well-managed risks, in order that they can learn the skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes to enable them to manage risks for themselves.
- 4.2 It is a legal requirement that the assessment and management of risk is recorded and that suitable and sufficient control measures are identified for any significant risks, i.e. those that may result in serious harm to an individual or which may harm several people.

5. Emergency Situations

- 5.1 The risk assessment for each visit identifies the relevant emergency procedures, to be used as required. For visits extending beyond the end of the school day, these arrangements include the designation of a home contact (a senior member of staff from the school), who may be called upon, as required, to serve as the link agency between the party, the school, parents and (as required) the Executive Headteacher.
- 5.2 In the event of an incident resulting in harm to any attending participant, or a significant delay in returning from a visit, the school is contacted (generally by the visit leader) to inform the Head of School, or designated senior leader, of the circumstances.
- 5.3 For less serious incidents, following consultation with the Head of School or senior leader, the parents / carers / next of kin of those affected are informed of the circumstances. As appropriate, this may be done by the visit leader.
- 5.4 For serious situations, the Head of School / designated senior leader contacts all relevant bodies using the emergency contact details for the trip. For complex and very serious situations (e.g. involving a disabling or life threatening accident), the Head of School (or, in their absence, designated senior leader) contacts the Executive Headteacher for advice and support.
- 5.5 In the event of a party being overdue for return by over an hour, with no contact made or possible, the Head of School or designated senior leader investigates the situation and, as appropriate contacts the Executive Headteacher and/or the police.

6. Charging

- 6.1 Colleagues involved in the planning, organisation and authorisation of trips and visits ensure that the Trusts' Charging and Remissions Policy is observed, in order to ensure an approach that is consistent across the Trust and in line with legal requirements.
- 6.2 For easy reference, the most pertinent section of the Charging and Remissions Policy is as follows:

Schools cannot charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours that is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- the cost incurred by employing supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential visit.

Schools can charge for board and lodgings during school trips. Board, lodging and travel costs are generally charged on residential trips, although the charge will not exceed the actual cost

Schools can ask for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any planned school activities. If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the school should make this clear to parents at the outset. Where insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, and the school cannot fund it from some other source, then the trip must be cancelled.

When a Trust school 'collapses the timetable' and offers a range of activities (some of which may be off-site) at a range of costs, including free activities, those activities that are mainly during school hours and for which the school incurs a cost are classed as 'optional extras', i.e. they are not integral to the curriculum.

Where an educational visit is to take place mainly during school hours and would contribute substantively to the requirements of a course, parents receive a letter including the following wording (or similar):

As this visit takes place wholly (or mainly) in school time, it is necessary to ask for a voluntary contribution of £... per student. There is no obligation to contribute and no student will be omitted from the visit on the basis that they do not pay, or do not pay in full. However, the visit cannot go ahead if the school does not receive sufficient contributions by (date).

Where a family is in receipt of certain benefits, as listed in the DfE guidance, the charges made for a trip may be reduced or waived on application. Any agreement to reduce or waive charges is agreed by the Office / Finance Team, in consultation with senior staff.

7. Vetting and DBS Checks

- 7.1 All Trust employees are subject to Enhanced DBS checks. Any volunteers or other persons accompanying a school visit are also subject to an Enhanced DBS check as a condition of their involvement in the visit.
- 7.2 A DBS check (or other vetting procedure) is not, in itself, a guarantee that a person is suitable to accompany a group of young people and so a broader risk assessment is essential.
- 7.3 Exchange homestays: Keeping Children Safe in Education specifies that anyone over 18 years of age living in a host family's home in the UK should be DBS checked. (It is the school's responsibility to ensure this is done).

8. Supervision

- 8.1 The law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios, but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is effective. There is an exception in that, for early years children, the staffing ratios for any educational visits must be at least as good as it would be in the classroom.
- 8.2 The conditions for effective supervision are determined by taking into account:
 - the age and maturity of the group;
 - gender-related issues;
 - the ability of the group (including learning disabilities);
 - medical needs of students in the group;
 - behaviour profiles of students in the group;
 - students who are especially vulnerable;
 - the nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, its duration, the skill levels required, the time of the year and prevailing conditions);
 - the competence of the staff involved.

9. Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances

- 9.1 All prospective visits are researched to establish the suitability of the venue, its facilities and any third party provision. This is essential in order to assess the requirements for the effective supervision of the young people involved. Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit. School procedures should clarify the circumstances in which a preliminary visit is required.

9.2 Visit leaders should take into account whether, or not, potential providers have been accredited by one or more national provider assurance schemes, e.g.:

- Learning Outside the Classroom
- Adventure Activities Licensing Service
- Adventure Mark
- National governing body centre approval schemes

9.3 For students aged 13 and under, visits will be accompanied (and usually led) by at least one appropriate member of the school's staff. Activities for groups of older students may be conducted by an appropriate provider organisation, without close supervision from a member of the school's staff (as long as the provider has met appropriate standards)

9.4 Notwithstanding the points above, the Head of School must understand that the responsibility for the authorisation of any educational visit rests with them and so standard risk assessments that are provided by providers (including nationally accredited providers) must be checked for suitability in the context of the specific visit planned (with the particular group of young people, staff and volunteers).

10. Insurance

10.1 The Trust holds an insurance policy that indemnifies it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person employed by it, where negligence is attached. This cover extends to persons acting in a voluntary capacity in a supporting supervisory role. SSMAT also holds Public Liability insurance that indemnifies it against claims for compensation for bodily injury relating to persons who are not in its employ and also for the accidental loss of, or damage caused to, property, where negligence is attached. As agents of the employer, employees and volunteers are indemnified against all such claims. The indemnity covers off-site activities and visits organised by all schools in the Trust.

10.2 Any provider used must hold Public Liability insurance cover, with a minimum limit of five million pounds.

10.3 For further information on insurance matters, colleagues should consult the Trust Business Manager.

11. Inclusion

11.1 Every reasonable effort is made to make trips and visits accessible to all students, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, gender, ethnic origin or religion.

12. Good Practice Requirements

12.1 A visit leader is able to demonstrate the ability to operate in line with the current standards of recognised good practice for the role. Furthermore, all accompanying

colleagues and helpers must be competent to carry out their defined roles and responsibilities.

12.2 A competent visit/activity leader requires:

- knowledge and understanding of this policy and its procedures, supported by appropriate training;
- knowledge and understanding of the group, the staff, the activity and the venue;
- appropriate experience; and
- (in some circumstances, e.g. adventurous activities) a formal qualification.

12.3 Where a volunteer helper (or member of staff) is a parent of a young person participating in the visit (or otherwise has a close relationship to the student), the visit leader should consider the potential for this relationship to compromise their plans and address this in the risk assessment process. Similarly, it is good practice to ensure that the home contact for the visit is not related to any of the young people taking part.

13. Transport

13.1 For most activities, travelling to and from an activity is (statistically) more hazardous than participating in the activity itself and so great care must be taken in making transport arrangements. All regulatory requirements must be met.

13.2 The level of supervision required in transit should be considered as part of the risk management process, giving proper consideration to the potential for driver distraction when a group of young people is being transported in a minibus.

13.3 The visit leader (with the support of the EVC) must ensure that coaches are hired from a reputable provider.

13.4 Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration, for safeguarding reasons. A senior member of staff (preferably the Head of School) should be consulted before making arrangements to use a private car.

14. Planning and Evaluation

14.1 Planning a visit must be done in accordance with this policy. Key points are as follows:

- all staff and volunteers involved must understand their roles well;
- parents and carers must be fully informed of the arrangements, with formal consents given, as appropriate;

- proportionate assurances must be obtained from providers (making use of accreditation already in place, where credible inspection regimes have been involved);
- designated emergency contact(s) must be identified, that will be accessible on a 24 hour / seven day basis, as required; and
- emergency contact(s) must have access to all details relating to the visit throughout the full period of the visit.

14.2 The EVC and senior leaders consult with visit leaders on the effectiveness of the visits undertaken and any incidents and insights that promote new learning and inform future actions. The Business Manager periodically checks that policy and procedure are implemented correctly and effectively across schools in the Trust.

Stuart Jones; Oct. '20