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# Queen Elizabeth's School

## EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

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### 1 Context

- 1.1 *'Education in its broadest sense is not just about delivering a curriculum. It is about giving children the chance to extend their life skills. It is about developing their confidence. It is about fostering their resilience and sense of responsibility. And – let us not forget – it is about the enjoyment, engagement and excitement about venturing out into the real world, with all its capacity for uncertainty, surprise, stimulation and delight.'* [Tim Gill, 2010, *Nothing Ventured... Balancing risks and benefits in the outdoors*, English Outdoor Council, p.22.]
- 1.2 Queen Elizabeth's School seeks to ensure that every pupil has access to as wide a range of educational experiences as possible. The School recognises the significant educational value of visits and activities which take place away from the immediate School environment either during or beyond the normal working day.
- 1.3 Education away from the classroom helps pupils to:
- place their learning into context;
  - engage in professional working environments beyond School;
  - acquire skills which promote wellbeing and healthy lifestyles;
  - develop knowledge and understanding about risks and how to promote their own and others' safety;
  - enjoy and achieve, as a result of activities beyond the classroom;
  - gain and apply key skills including leadership, teamwork and decision making.

### 2 Legal framework

- 2.1 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 require employers to:
- assess the risks of activities;
  - introduce measures to control those risks;
  - tell their employees about these measures.
- 2.2 In addition employees must:
- take responsibility for their own and others' safety;
  - co-operate with their employers over safety matters;
  - carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions;
  - inform the employer of any serious risks.
- 2.3 These health and safety responsibilities apply to all School visits.

### 3 Duty of care

- 3.1 Members of staff have a particular duty of care for children, meaning that they are expected to exercise the same standard of care as a reasonably careful and responsive parent ("in loco parentis"). Staff at the School must therefore take all reasonable steps to ensure that every pupil under his or her care is not exposed to unacceptable risks.
- 3.2 The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel offers national guidance on visit planning and best practice, to which due regard should be given.

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### 4 Scope and remit of this policy

- 4.1 This policy applies to all members of staff, volunteers and other adults associated with Queen Elizabeth's School who take responsibility for children and young people participating in learning and recreational activities in environments that are different from where the young people are usually based. It therefore applies when organising and supervising children and young people taking part in off-site activities and visits.
- 4.2 All trips and educational visits will be planned in such a way as to ensure that the benefits and intended learning outcomes are clearly identified and understood by the supervising adults beforehand and can form the basis for objective evaluation afterwards.
- 4.3 Staff must ensure pupils are supervised in accordance with the contents of this policy, regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.
- 4.4 Queen Elizabeth's School uses specialist software called 'EVOLVE' to facilitate the efficient planning, management, approval, and evaluation of educational visits or trips. More details about EVOLVE can be found via this link: <http://www.edufocus.co.uk/evolve.html>.
- 4.5 Queen Elizabeth's School has drawn up a set of EVOLVE trip procedures that all staff must follow when organising school trips. Staff can find a checklist for visit leaders on eQE at: <https://eqe.fireflycloud.net/booking-a-trip-or-visit>
- 4.6 Pupils must observe the School's policies at all times during a trip or educational visit, maintaining the standard of behaviour expected.

### 5 Roles and responsibilities

#### The Headmaster

- 5.1 With the exception of Category C Visits (See section 10 below), The Headmaster delegates responsibility for approving educational trips and visits to the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC). He maintains overall oversight of health and safety across the breadth of the School's operations.

#### The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

- 5.2 The EVC is an experienced visit leader who has received training for the EVC role and is a member of the Senior Leadership Team, reporting directly to the Headmaster. The EVC is currently the Assistant Head (Pupil Involvement).
- 5.3 Agreement in principle (Outline Approval) will generally be given to a proposed visit or trip if the EVC is satisfied that it:
- meets safeguarding standards;
  - will enhance the educational or extra-curricular experience of the pupils;
  - represents value for money.
- 5.4 The EVC is responsible for all aspects of the educational visits and trip co-ordination process. The EVC will:

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- ensure that all appropriate risk assessments have been carried out;
- ensure that appropriate safety measures are in place and that training needs have been addressed;
- confirm that plans submitted by the Visit Leader (see 5.5 below) comply with all relevant regulations and guidelines, including the School's Safeguarding and Health and Safety policies;
- ensure that the member of staff organising the visit has understood all issues relating to safeguarding and health and safety as outlined in this and other relevant policies;
- guide staff through the EVOLVE process ensuring that all procedures are adhered to;
- ensure the competence of the staff and volunteers nominated to lead or supervise the visit;
- ensure that all staff who accompany pupils are DBS checked;
- ensure that parental consent is obtained;
- ensure that emergency arrangements and contact numbers are in place for each visit;
- keep records of individual visits including accident/incident or near miss reports;
- review systems and monitor practice.

### The Visit leader

#### 5.5 Working with the EVC, the Visit Leader will:

- have overall responsibility for the safeguarding, supervision and conduct of the group;
- clearly define each additional teacher or group supervisor's role;
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity, or support a qualified externally provided instructor in carrying out this task, and be familiar with the location where the activity will take place;
- be aware of child protection and safeguarding issues;
- ensure that appropriate first aid provision is available;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation for the visit using the EVOLVE system including, where necessary, the briefing of parents;
- liaise with the Chief Financial Officer (Head of Finance) to set an appropriate budget for the trip, taking account of the need for a contingency for budget overruns, and communicate with parents to collect any required payments;
- undertake a comprehensive risk assessment;
- review progress regularly and advise the EVC when adjustments need to be made;
- ensure additional teachers and supervisors are fully aware of the purpose of the visit;
- ensure that the ratio of pupils to teachers and supervisors is appropriate, drawing upon the STAGER framework included in the [OEAP national guidance](#);
- consider stopping the visit if risks to the health and safety of the pupils are unacceptable and have in place procedures for this eventuality;
- ensure that the group supervisors have key contact numbers (including the trip Leader's mobile and School emergency contact details);
- ensure that the additional teachers and supervisors have a copy of the emergency procedures;
- ensure that details of pupils' SEN and medical needs are known by all staff supervising the visit.

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### 6 Planning an educational visit or trip

- 6.1 The Visit Leader must follow the process and guidance contained on the [Visit Leader Checklist](#) and on the EVOLVE system. An initial dialogue should take place with the EVC as early as possible in the planning process. In all cases this policy must be followed.
- 6.2 Whatever the destination, it is of critical importance that formal planning is undertaken to consider the potential dangers and difficulties associated with the visit and that appropriate plans are in place to reduce the risks.

### 7 Risk Assessments

- 7.1 Risk assessments must be undertaken and completed by the Visit Leader. Pupils must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained, then the visit must not take place.
- 7.2 The risk assessment should be carried out in accordance with the following considerations derived from Health and Safety Advice for Schools guidance. These are:
- What are the hazards?
  - Who might be affected by them?
  - What safety measures need to be in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level?
  - Can the Visit Leader put the safety measures into place?
  - What steps will be taken in an emergency?
- 7.3 The Visit Leader must undertake a risk assessment checklist, which will help determine if additional information needs to be added as 'Event Specific Notes' on the EVOLVE form. Assessing risk often takes place over time and, for more complex or higher risk trips, may involve multiple conversations with the EVC – taking account of contextual information as the trip approaches. The Visit Leader must make all teachers/supervisors and pupils on the visit aware of the measures they should take to reduce the risk.
- 7.4 For pupils with Special Education Needs or Disabilities (SEND) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), an individual risk assessment for off-site visits will be completed if appropriate. Visit Leaders must ensure that the individual risk assessments for pupils with SEND have been updated to take account of the planned activities during the proposed visit and that all leaders hold a copy for each pupil in their group.
- 7.5 Sports Away fixtures are subject to a generic risk assessment completed annually. The Sports Leader responsible for the group should monitor the risks throughout the fixture and take appropriate action when necessary.

### 8 Suitability of Venue

- 8.1 For a venue which has not been used before, the Visit Leader is advised to carry out a preparatory visit or else gain sufficient information from other sources to:
- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the educational experience;
  - assess potential areas and levels of risk;
  - become familiar with the area before accompanying young people.

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### 9 First Aid

- 9.1 Before undertaking any off-site activities, the Visit Leader should assess the level of first aid that might be needed, guided by the information obtained from the risk assessment.
- 9.2 On all visits, the Visit Leader should ensure that there would be ready access to basic first aid supplies in the event they are needed. Usually that will mean at least one first aid bag is taken. They must also carry a mobile telephone at all times whilst on the trip and be aware of how to contact local emergency services.
- 9.3 For larger groups and adventurous activities, overseas or residential visits the risk assessment may identify the need to have a qualified first aider in attendance during the trip.

### 10 Types of Visit

- 10.1 **UK Based Visits** at QE are classified as follows and risk assessments carried out accordingly:

Category A visits (e.g. walking in parks, museum visits, field studies in benign situations) – these comprise activities which present no significant risk with no need for the visit leader to have National School Council or other accreditation.

Category B visits (e.g. residential visits, walking in non-remote areas, camping, low level initiative challenge) – higher risk activities which require that the leader has undergone an additional familiarisation process or induction, specific to the visit and or location.

Category C visits (e.g. skiing, trekking in remote areas, water sports, horse riding) – higher risk activities – **NB these will only be allowed with the direct approval of the Headmaster.**

- 10.2 **Visits Abroad.** For all Trips abroad, the leader will need to demonstrate to the EVC that they are a suitably qualified or experienced leader. These trips will require an early meeting with the EVC before Outline Approval is granted on EVOLVE.

### 11 Competence to lead

- 11.1 The School will always follow statutory guidance in determining levels of competency to lead.
- 11.2 For Category A activities with very low risk, any suitable member of the School staff may lead the visit. All permanent members of the School teaching staff will be deemed competent, as well as appropriate members of support staff. Unqualified teachers, first year Early Career Teachers, trainees, or other new staff will need to seek guidance from the EVC.
- 11.3 For Category B activities involving some higher risk activities, the leader will need to have been specifically inducted in the activity or location by a suitably qualified or experienced leader. Category A and B visits will cover the majority of off-site activities.
- 11.4 **Category C activities are extremely rare and require the direct approval of the Headmaster.** Outside providers must be checked for all relevant licencing and risk assessments. In the UK, Category C activities must be licensed by the Adventure

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Activities Licensing Service (AALS). The activity leader will need to have attended a recognised course of training or recorded relevant experience, or have his/her competence assessed by an appropriate technical adviser, depending on the activity.

### 12 Supervision

- 12.1 There is no legislation defining exact requirements for the supervision of pupils on School visits, but those planning trips will refer to the guidance issued by The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel. In all cases, precise levels of supervision will be determined by School risk assessment for the trip. The factors which need to be considered when calculating the ratio for supervision are:

**Staffing:** available numbers, abilities and experience.

**Timing:** the time of year or time of day; whether outside normal working hours or term-time, considering the level of emergency support available back at School; duration.

**Activities to be undertaken:** nature of activities.

**Group characteristics:** age, prior experience, abilities, behaviour and maturity, sex, any specific individual needs (including medical and SEND).

**Environment:** indoors or out; a public space or restricted access; urban, rural or remote; quiet or crowded; likelihood of adverse weather or ground conditions; locations needing to be travelled through; nature of accommodation and surrounding area; any public health concerns e.g. epidemics.

**Remoteness:** distance from School; ease of communications within the group and back to School/parents; accessibility for emergency services.

- 12.2 Staffing ratios will vary according to the factors noted above and the risk assessment. In addition to the staff member in charge, there should be sufficient supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency, including if the trip leader became indisposed. When visits are to more remote areas or engaged in higher risk activities (Category B and C) the level of supervision will be greater. Whatever the length and nature of the visit, staff must check pupils regularly. At all times, staff must carry a list of the pupils in their care.

### 13 Pupils with medical needs

- 13.1 Additional safety measures will need to be taken during the visit for pupils with pre-existing medical conditions. Arrangements for taking medication and ensuring sufficient supplies for residential visits may be required.
- 13.2 All staff accompanying pupils with medical conditions must carry copies of the pupil's Individual Health Care Plan (or EHCP) and be fully aware of the pupil's medical needs and any procedures to be followed in the event of a medical emergency. Summary sheets must be held by all members of staff containing details of each pupil's needs.
- 13.3 If a pupil's safety cannot be guaranteed, or the relevant information is not provided by the parent/carer to the school, then the individual must be withdrawn from the visit. The Headmaster's decision is final in this matter.
- 13.4 Parental information on the following must be obtained:

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- current medical condition;
- emergency contact details;
- GP's name, address and phone number;
- written details of any medication required;
- parental permission for pupil self-administration, or agreement for a member of staff to administer;
- information on allergies or phobias;
- special dietary requirements;
- medical inoculations or injections, if required.

13.5 If the staff member is concerned about whether they can provide for a pupil's safety or the safety of other pupils on the visit, they must discuss this with the EVC. The EVC or a delegated representative will discuss this with parents and the School's Health and Wellbeing Officer, and/or the pupil's GP, as appropriate.

### 14 Voluntary help

14.1 Queen Elizabeth's School recognises that some visits may involve voluntary helpers. Volunteers will be told that they have the responsibility to follow all instructions issued by the Visit Leader who retains overall responsibility for the event. The School will appoint volunteer helpers as far in advance of the visit as practical. The School retains the right to make the final decision on which volunteers will accompany the visit.

14.2 The Visit Leader will ensure that each volunteer knows precisely what their role is and understands that they have a responsibility to carry out that role. All volunteers accompanying a residential visit will be required to obtain enhanced DBS clearance.

### 15 Travel and transport

15.1 Arrangements for booking coaches must be done via the School's Finance team. Parents should be informed as to the type of transport being provided for an educational visit. Where a School minibus is used, the School will follow the details set out in its Minibus Procedures.

15.2 Where travel will be by coach, seat belts must be provided and must be worn whilst travelling on a School visit. Staff should check before the vehicle is in motion and during the journey that belts are fastened and remind pupils that these must be worn throughout the journey in line with existing coach rules.

15.3 When on foot, pupils should walk in controlled groups. One member of staff should be at the front in control of the group, another at the back or aware of any individuals who are lagging behind. The degree of control will depend upon the nature of the group (age, ability) and the location.

### 16 Information for pupils

16.1 As part of their preparation for the visit, pupils should be made aware of the educational benefits of the visit. Prior to the visit, the pupils will be made aware of the standards expected of them with particular reference to the Pupil Discipline Policy. The Visit Leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

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- adhere at all times with School policies, procedures and expectations;
- not take unnecessary risks;
- follow all instructions given by any teacher or supervisor;
- be sensitive to people in the local environment.

16.2 Any pupil whose behaviour, before or during a trip or visit, is in breach of the School's policies, or who may be considered to be a danger to themselves or the group, may be withdrawn from the visit. Where relevant, the curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways where possible. The Headmaster's decision will be final in this matter.

16.3 Parents should be aware that in circumstances where the School has deemed that a pupil may not take part in a trip on the basis of a School risk assessment and/or misbehaviour on the part of the pupil, there is no right to any refund.

#### **17 Information for parents**

17.1 Parental approval must be obtained for all categories of visit. For all visits this approval must be given in writing or via the EVOLVE online system. In order that parents may make a reasoned judgement, written information about the visit, including details of the activities and mode of transport, should be sent with the approval form.

17.2 In cases where the visit is residential, parents should be invited to a meeting where information is given about the nature of the activity and emergency procedures.

17.3 Clear information should be provided to parents regarding any charge or requested voluntary contributions to cover the cost of a trip. The Visit Leader or Finance team will chase parents who have not paid required amounts in line with the published payment schedule, in order to obtain payment or agree a plan. Where there is significant variance to budget, excluding the administration fee and contingency, the balance will be refunded to, or collected from, parents.

17.4 If significant changes occur during any visit, e.g. a change in return time, then arrangements must be put in place to inform parents. This is especially important for younger pupils.

17.5 Advice on communications with parents is also contained in the Visit Leader Checklist and must be adhered to.

#### **18 Accidents and incidents**

18.1 All accidents, near misses and/or incidents that take place during School visits and journeys must be reported and recorded in accordance with the school Health and Safety Policy. Accidents and incidents will be reviewed to identify learning points which will be shared, as appropriate, with others. Communications to relevant parents regarding significant illness, injury or near miss involving a pupil or pupils should be prompt, and without unreasonable delay.

#### **19 Emergency procedures**

19.1 Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a visit or an offsite activity. Trip leaders will carry a 'Visit Leaders' Emergency Action Plan'. If an accident occurs the priorities are to:

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- assess the situation;
- safeguard the remaining members of the party;
- attend to the casualty(ies);
- inform the emergency services;
- inform the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) contact.

19.2 In the event of an emergency, the SLT contact will follow the procedures on the 'SLT Contact Visit Emergency Action Plan'. If an accident occurs the priorities are to:

- take charge, remain calm;
- record a full description (who, what, when, where, how many) and decide what immediate actions are appropriate;
- ensure lines of communication with the group are reliable;
- inform the Headmaster;
- communicate with parents, the group, and relevant emergency services;
- arrange logistics and resources for recovery;
- record all details and actions throughout.

### 20 Minor injuries

20.1 In cases of minor injuries, the Visit Leader must:

- arrange for the visit first aider/s to give appropriate assistance;
- ensure the parent is made aware of the injury;
- fill in an accident form on return to the School.

### 21 Injuries which could have serious implications

21.1 In cases of injuries that could have serious implications, the Visit Leader should follow the advice on the 'Visit Leaders' Emergency Action Plan'. Priorities include:

- arranging for the visit first aider/s to give appropriate assistance;
- calling for an ambulance – then informing the SLT contact who will in turn contact the parent;
- phone the SLT contact – mobile numbers will be given to the Visit Leader;
- arrange for a member of staff to remain at the hospital with the pupil until a parent or SLT member arrives;
- writing a full account of events as soon as possible, with photographs of the scene, if safe and possible to do so;
- complete an accident report form on return to the School.

21.2 It is the responsibility of the SLT member to ensure that in such cases arrangements are made to:

- keep parents informed;
- ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to accompany the injured pupil to the hospital or other medical support centre as necessary;
- ensure that a member of staff remains with the injured pupil as appropriate during his time at a hospital or medical support centre;
- ensure all relevant information is recorded for use in the event of any subsequent investigation and/or insurance claim.

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### 22 Review

22.1 This Policy will be continually reviewed to reflect changes in any relevant legislation.

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#### LINKED POLICIES

- ❑ *Charging and Remission Policy*
- ❑ *Code of Conduct for Staff and Governors*
- ❑ *Governors' Statement of Education*
- ❑ *Health and Safety Policy*
- ❑ *Home-School Agreement*
- ❑ *Minibus Procedures*
- ❑ *Pupil Discipline Policy*
- ❑ *Safeguarding Policy*
- ❑ *SEND Policy*

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#### LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

- ❑ *The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*
- ❑ *'Health and Safety: responsibilities and duties for schools' (April 2022)* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilities-and-duties-for-schools>
- ❑ *Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel National Guidance.* <https://oeapng.info/about-national-guidance/>
- ❑ *Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel.* <https://oeapng.info/>
- ❑ *The Institute for Outdoor Learning.* <https://www.outdoor-learning.org/>

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Approved by the Governing Body on 27 February 2025

Signed .....

A.N. Gaskell, Chair of the Governing Body