

Educational Visits Policy

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Last review date:	September 2021			
Next Review date:	September 2024			
Review Cycle:	3 Years			
Statutory Policy:	No			
Publication:	Website. G/Policies			
Date	Version	Reason for change	Overview of changes made	Source
05.07.21	0.1	Scheduled Review	Name & Logo update. J Bowman	SCC
03.09.21	0.2	Internal Lead Scheduled Review	No changss. J Wynn	
03.09.21	0.3	Board Lead Scheduled Review	No changes. H Bowman	
17.09.21	1.0	Board Scheduled Review	Ratified	

Educational Visits Policy

The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust strictly follows the guidelines set out by Elite Safety in Education. The Trust is ultimately responsible for the safety of staff and pupils while they undertake educational visits.

An educational visit refers to any journey or activity organised by or for the Trust, for a group of its pupils, that takes place off Trust premises.

The following document contains TSSMAT's visits policy which is linked to the guidance in the Health & Safety Policy and Risk Assessments prepared by Elite Safety in Education.

It contains policy and procedures necessary to reduce any risks to an acceptable level and ensure the health, safety and welfare of all those taking part, including visit leaders, staff, volunteers, and participating young people.

The Role of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator

The CEO is ultimately responsible for Educational Visits co-ordination for the Trust. The CEO delegates authority to the Trust's Educational Visits Co-ordinator.

The Educational Visits Co-Ordinator will ensure that:-

1. All visits run by the Trust are correctly managed and that all processes are outlined in the following policy are undertaken.
2. All visit leaders are competent for the particular visit concerned.

The visit leader is the staff member in charge of and responsible for all aspects of the safety, conduct, supervision and deployment of all participants and staff attending the visit. Every visit must have a leader who, although they may receive advice from more senior staff, retains command. The leader should monitor all services provided to the group and receive satisfactory responses on any issue they judge to be unsafe or, if necessary, withdraw the group from the activity.

(Newly qualified teachers may not be visit leaders.)

3. All documentation is completed and retained in accordance with the Trust's policies and procedures.
4. An annual record of Trust visits is maintained by the Trust Administrator.

Categories of Activity Risk

The DfE recognises 3 categories of activity with increasing levels of potential or actual risk.

Category A – Normal Risk

There are activities that present no significant risk beyond those of everyday life. These activities are:-

- Visits to local places of worship, museums, open farms, zoos, sports centres, towns or villages.
- Theme parks and adventure playgrounds.
- Swimming pool visits under the auspices of the County Swimming Services or other qualified instructors, etc.
- Taking groups as passengers on any public transport.
- Inter-School sports matches and events.
- Field studies in environments presenting no technical hazards including pond studies where the supervisor could effect a rescue from the bank or by wading and small streams where the depth is nowhere deeper than 15cm.
- Activities such as walking in a park or non-remote country area with no technical hazards.

Category B – Additional Risk

There are activities or visits to locations with a higher risk. These activities are:-

- Walking or field studies in non-remote country where technical hazards exist.
- Camping.
- Cycling either on or off-road areas in Staffordshire such as Cannock Chase.
- Orienteering in areas that are open to the general public or have technical hazards.
- Canal studies and activities along canal banks and boating in a powered canal boat.

Category C –High Risk

These are the highest risk activities:-

- Walking and trekking activities on any open moor or land above 600m where it is possible to become more than 30 minutes walking time from the nearest transport or refuge
- Any activity on or in open water
- Caving (except guided visits to public areas of show caves)
- Climbing including gorge walking with technical ascents or descents
- High ropes courses
- Skiing including supervising skiing sessions at ski resorts or at artificial ski slopes
- Off-road cycling outside Staffordshire

Assessment of Trust Visits

The Risk Assessments outline all types of proposed visits and can be found in the Elite Health & Safety folder in the staff room, and in SharePoint/Office/Health & Safety.

Prospective visit leaders should read relevant risk assessments, and apply for approval of their visit from the EVC, who will apply for additional approval/guidance from the CEO or Elite Safety in Education as appropriate. All trips should have a completed Trip Analysis Form prior to the trip taking place.

Normal Risk Visits

The visit leader should complete the trip analysis form as far as possible, submit it with the necessary supporting documentation to the EVC and receive outline approval before confirming any booking.

Once outline approval has been received, final arrangements can be made and the form completed and resubmitted for full approval. Not all sections will apply to every visit. The Trust keeps the Trip Analysis Form with the financial documents in line with the financial document retention policy. Trip Analysis Forms are also kept in the SharePoint Trips folder for 1 year, if no incident occurred. Where an incident occurred, all paperwork relating to the trip will be kept in line with the retention policy.

Residential Visits and those involving Additional or High Risk Activities

Any visits that involve additional or high risk activities require CEO approval that all the procedures have been satisfactorily completed.

Additional or high risk activities led by Trust staff also require approval that the qualifications and/or experience of the leader is appropriate and that their risk assessments and control measures are suitable.

The EVA must receive applications for visits a minimum of six working school weeks before the visit date and before anyone is financially committed to the visit. This is to ensure that there is sufficient time for approval to be returned to Trust before bookings are confirmed.

Applications from approved leaders running school clubs, etc., that may involve multiple non-residential visits programmed at short notice may obtain EVA approval on an annual basis (academic year) giving an estimate of the number of visits. This annual application should be made on the Trip Analysis Form.

This is subject to the EVC being informed in advance of each visit to ensure that all the necessary procedures of parental notification and setting up a home contact person have been undertaken.

Approval of Visits

In deciding if a visit application merits approval, the EVC must consider the following:-

1. There are clear and justifiable objectives for the visit.
2. The visit leader is sufficiently responsible and capable of taking charge of the visit.
3. A Trip Analysis Form has been started.
4. Parental notification and consent will be undertaken.
5. Participants will be aware of the visit objectives and will have been prepared, briefed or involved in the planning, as appropriate.
6. All transport arrangements have been adequately assessed – including parental permission to travel in staff, volunteers, or other parents' cars when these are to be used.

7. The venue is either known, or the visit leader has undertaken a pre-visit in order to assess the suitability of the site and to enable risk assessment(s) to be produced. Where there is a distant destination, the process may be replaced by information and advice received from other sources.
8. Written risk assessments and control measures to control the risks have been produced. Copies will be filed in the SharePoint Trip file, and copies sent to the Director of Business.
9. A check has been made to ensure any provider has public liability insurance of at least £5 million.
10. Consideration has been given to deciding if contractual insurance (personal accident and travel insurance) is necessary for the participants and staff, and for informing parents about any cover applying to the visit.
11. The financing of the trip must comply with current legislation and the EFA audit procedures.
12. An emergency procedure is in place, which includes means by which the Trust and group are able to contact each other if necessary.

During the visit:-

1. An emergency contact list, including details of any relevant medical needs, for all those on the trip, is held by the visit leader for the duration of the trip. This will be shredded as soon as the trip is completed.
2. A list of children assigned to volunteers, may be given to volunteers to support them in ensuring children in their care are present. These will be shredded as soon as the trip is complete.
3. All staff and volunteers in the trip must be aware of the emergency procedures in place.
4. Staff and volunteers should not store pupil's emergency numbers in personal mobile devices.

After the visit:-

1. Evaluation after the event is an important aid to planning future visits.
2. The standard Trust Accident Report form must be submitted to the Trust Administrator for any accident that resulted.
3. An incident report must be submitted to the EVC giving details of any incident that did, or could have had severe consequences to the welfare of any participant or staff member, and any failure of the services offered by a provider.
4. Emergency contact lists, medical questionnaires, medical information, consent forms, and lists of children for volunteers produced for the trip will be shredded immediately after the trip, if no incident occurred. If an incident occurred, all paperwork must be kept in line with the Trust's Retention Policy.
5. The Trip Analysis Form, Risk Assessment, Permission letter & register of attendees, plus any accident forms that were completed, will be kept in line with the Trust's Retention Schedule.

Staff Ratios

The staffing ratio will vary with each activity and the age and ability of the participants. The final ratio will be identified by the risk assessment and should be recorded in the risk assessment or operating procedure. A basic guide is:-

- 1 adult to 6 participants for up to, and including Year 3.
- 1 adult to every 10 to 15 participants in Years 4 to 6.

Use of Volunteers

For day visits, a DBS will not be required for parents of pupils attending a Trust school. However, they must never have sole charge of any pupil or group of pupils and must remain under the supervision of a Trust staff member at all times. The Trust must satisfy itself of the suitability of all volunteers assisting.

Volunteer Drivers

Where participants are to be transported in the cars of parent volunteers, parents must be informed and consent to this travel. A parent volunteer driver must never travel alone with any participant who is not his or her own child.

Volunteer drivers must provide copies of their driving licence, and DVLA code for checking, car insurance, MOT and car tax to the Trust Administrator prior to transporting any pupils.

Volunteer drivers must be given instruction regarding what is expected of them and this can be achieved by asking them to sign a declaration of which they retain a copy.