

Educational visits policy

Action	Policy to be reviewed annually		
	Owner	Date	Completed
Review	S Wijeratna	March 2015	✓
Reported	Education Committee	12 May 2015	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	9 June 2015	✓



Introduction

Our programme of educational visits fulfils several of our stated aims. It augments our pupils' academic and cultural education, offering new experiences and challenges which not only assist the achievement of outstanding examination results but also foster an understanding of the wider community at local, national and global levels. We realise the importance of visits in building team spirit and camaraderie between staff and pupils, amongst peer groups and also between girls of different ages. Our trips often help girls to realise more effectively their own potential in circumstances different to their usual surroundings. Educational visits may also be an opportunity to enhance the St Paul's reputation for excellence in specific areas.

We currently offer over 100 educational visits over the course of an academic year (excluding sports fixtures). We encourage all academic departments to organise educational visits and these are offered to all pupils throughout the school. We offer each year group a number of educational visits per academic year as either a compulsory part of the curriculum or as an optional extra.

The assistant head, director of pastoral care is also the educational visits co-ordinator (EVC) and is responsible for ensuring that educational visits represent good value for money, that they are of significant academic or cultural interest and that matters of health and safety or other regulations are addressed. The assistant head, director of pastoral care maintains the "visits" section of the staff portal which contains guidance for those planning and leading trips and also liaises with the business directorate, the medical department and relevant members of staff over matters relating to visits.

Outline of Procedures

For all school journeys, whether residential or not, in the UK or abroad, we ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to establish safe conditions for the pupils and adults concerned and that levels of risk are both manageable and acceptable.

The EVC does not approve any visit without having established that risks have been fully assessed, bearing in mind the age, gender and experience of the pupils. The EVC will also ensure that transparent costings, an itinerary and details of the staffing (including reserves) are provided at the earliest opportunity. The School's medical team and pastoral leaders are consulted during the planning process to ensure that special medical or welfare needs of participants are considered.

Financial and insurance matters

We carefully cost all visits and clarify this to parents before they commit to their daughter's participation. The EVC and school accountant advise colleagues about how to manage this, taking care to factor in all possible variables such as party size, exchange rates and so on. Where possible we take advantage of the TfL scheme offering free transport for school visits in London.

Party leaders always ask in plenty of time for information about passport numbers and dates and, where appropriate, visas in order that parents have sufficient time to ensure that their daughter's papers are valid for travel. We strongly advise that parents obtain an EHIC (for visits to European Union countries) for their daughter to ensure that appropriate medical treatment can be obtained in case of need. The School's comprehensive insurance covers all participants on visits and the School holds worldwide travel cover for overseas visits. The Deputy Business Director should be informed of any visit involving hazardous activities to ensure that insurance cover is adequate or to assess whether additional cover is required.

The cover on the School's travel insurance policy for personal items is generally low and pupils are advised not to take items such as expensive cameras or jewellery with them, or to arrange for their own personal cover.

Detail of Procedures when Planning an Educational Visit

Planning activities

Activities are planned, as far as possible, by staff who are familiar with the venue and the nature of the conditions likely to be encountered. They ensure that safety standards at the venue and on transport to and from the visit are adequate and compliant. For UK based activities, this includes obtaining confirmation that any third party staff have DBS clearance. In the case of overseas visits, the EVC will

assess the need for a reconnaissance trip where the visit is not organised through a recognised provider. This would include ensuring that all reasonable checks are made on third party staff. We sometimes ask for references from other schools who have used a particular venue or service provider.

Arranging staffing

The staffing for the visit is approved by the Senior Management Team and advertised to parents at a very early stage in the planning. A reserve member of staff is always identified to ensure that a visit can still go ahead even if one of the staff is suddenly incapacitated. For the purposes of visits, "staff" includes any employee of St Paul's Girls' School deemed by the EVC to be appropriate to undertake that responsibility.

Ensuring health and safety procedures for the visit

Visit leaders ensure that all accompanying staff know the itinerary and understand their responsibilities. They complete specific and detailed risk assessments for all visits out of school whether day or residential. We also obtain risk assessments from third party providers to ascertain whether adequate control measures are in place. For hazardous outdoor activities the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 apply (for England, Scotland and Wales) and therefore the School will check that the provider holds a license. The licensing requirement applies to caving, climbing, trekking, skiing and watersports.

All accompanying members of staff are confident in managing the needs of those girls on the visit with special medical requirements e.g. those at risk of anaphylactic shock, epileptics, diabetics and so forth. They are briefed and, where necessary trained, by the school nurse. Sometimes we hold a supplementary meeting with parents of a specific pupil in order to make the most appropriate arrangements to meet the medical or pastoral needs of the girl. The party leader also ensures that host families, centres, hotels etc are aware of any special dietary or medical requirements. The school nurse manages the issuing and maintenance of first-aid kits which are taken on all visits and parents are reminded that girls need to have with them any special medical requirements (eg inhalers, EpiPens).

For residential visits, parents are issued with forms pre-filled with their daughter's medical information. These are checked, amended where necessary and then signed off. Through this process, we obtain parental permission for St Paul's staff to authorise medical treatment should they not be able to contact a sick or injured pupil's parent in time. We do not permit pupils to participate in visits for which they are not fully fit to undertake all of the planned activities and the High Mistress may exclude a pupil from a visit on medical grounds.

Planning transport

We always select the mode of transport with the safety of the pupils as the paramount concern. Wherever possible, it is School policy to only use coaches and minibuses that are fitted with seat belts and the School holds a list of preferred companies. We also use an accessible coach where a visit involves a pupil or teacher with limited mobility. Staff should not to use their own cars to transport pupils except in an emergency. Older pupils who may hold a driving license are not allowed to give 'lifts' to other pupils when on a school visit or trip.

Supervision

The level of supervision must realistically reflect the purpose, location and nature of the visit, the age and maturity of the pupils and any special needs. Visits are therefore planned in accordance with the principles of effective supervision. When deciding staff to pupil supervision ratios, the EVC will also take into account factors such as staff experience, the potential risks and making adequate provision to allow for emergencies. Some activities may be unaccompanied or involve a sole teacher in charge, for example senior school study days which are low risk and involve pupils over 16. In all cases, we make staffing details clear to parents when they are notified of the visit.

We have a number of small-scale exchanges for girls in the senior school which do not have accompanying staff because they are essentially visits organised between the two sets of parents. Parents are fully aware of the staffing to be provided for any residential/overseas visit before they commit to their daughter's participation.

Where pupils on visits are not directly supervised, they are told where staff may be found and how to contact them by mobile phone should they be given free time, for example for shopping. The itinerary is approved by the EVC in advance of the visit.

Staff accompanying visits are responsible for pupils in the group according to a supervision ratio and risk assessment approved by the EVC. Therefore a supervising member of staff will only separate from the main party in unforeseen circumstances such as injury or illness.

We remind girls and parents that normal school rules apply on visits and that any pupil grossly disobeying these rules may be sent back at the parents' expense.

The School cannot undertake to provide for individual arrangements for girls to join or leave visits individually. Parents are made aware of this in the briefing communications. It is not possible to compromise the group's activities or distract a member of staff from their responsibilities towards the group.

Safeguarding measures

The School will undertake the necessary safeguarding checks in accordance with guidance given in the DfE's *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2015). Any person on a residential visit designated to act in a supervisory role must have an enhanced DBS check and in the majority of cases a Barred list check. This includes any person who is not a member of staff such as a volunteer. A DBS certificate/Barred list check may not be required if a volunteer (such as a parent helping as a one off) accompanies a **non-residential** visit and will be supervised by another member of staff and not left in sole charge of pupils. In any event, the EVC will confirm the requirements.

DBS certificates and Barred List check for host families (foreign exchanges)

The School is required to adhere to statutory guidance provided in the DfE's *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2015) and as such will request a DBS Certificate with Barred List check for all adults in a household who provide accommodation to a child under the age of 18 as part of a School organised trip (eg where the school makes the arrangements for the hosting of pupils on a foreign exchange). The DBS is not able to conduct the same checks overseas and therefore the School will follow any DfE guidance and obtain appropriate assurances from partner schools or language schools when arranging accommodation with host families overseas.

Briefings and correspondence concerning educational visits

Parents are informed about educational visits in writing by e-mail or letter and the following details are specified, some of which may be provided in follow up documentation:

- Names of staff accompanying visit
- Year group or forms
- Date(s)
- Time(s)
- Itinerary
- Venue(s) with address and contact details
- Aims and objectives of the visit
- Detail of any unsupervised time
- Mode(s) of transport with departure and return times
- Whether meals are provided
- Passport and visa requirements
- Insurance arrangements
- Health formalities (inoculations etc)
- Clothing, food, equipment required
- Total cost
- Meeting and dismissing arrangements

Through the School's standard terms and conditions, parents consent to their daughter taking part in educational visits, including those that take place at weekends or school holidays. Any costs are charged as an extra on the termly bill. Parents must be given the timely opportunity to decide that their daughter does not want to participate and therefore the information letter includes a deadline by which a parent must notify this to the visit organiser in writing. Any residential visits in the United Kingdom or overseas are subject to a separate agreement with the parents. For some visits we hold an information evening for parents before any commitment is made, especially if the visit is to somewhere distant, if the cost is considerable or the activities to be undertaken involve heightened risk. The EVC advises whether this is necessary.

Before the visit, the visit organiser fully briefs supervising staff and girls about the nature of the visit, all practical requirements and expectations of behaviour. For residential visits we hold an evening briefing with parents to explain the arrangements in detail.

Contact for residential visits

The EVC assigns a senior member of staff as the School link contact for all visits which take place during school holidays. This emergency contact person is given all details of the visit including contact telephone numbers for parents, appropriate medical details for girls, host family addresses in the case of exchanges, the risk assessment for the visits and next of kin details of accompanying staff. As a minimum, the visit organiser must text the staff contact on arrival and return.

Emergency on an educational visit

In the event of an accident or emergency, the priority of the visit leader and accompanying staff is to ensure the safety of pupils. The visit leader will liaise with local emergency services and staff will accompany any injured pupils to hospital and ensure that any other pupils are supervised. The visit leader is also responsible for arranging that the High Mistress, or the staff contact if in school holidays, is notified as soon as possible. The High Mistress or the staff contact will arrange for the parent of girls to be notified. Staff accompanying visits are advised not to speak to the media and any press enquiries are referred to the High Mistress's office.

Availability of this policy

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our website <http://www.spgs.org/school-policies> or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 0207 603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.