

# Educational visits policy

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To be published on the following:	
Staff Portal	✓
School website	✓



## **1. 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 pupils of different ages. Our trips often help pupils 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.

### **1.1 Role of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)**

The Deputy Head, Director of the Co-Curriculum has the role of Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) and reports directly to the High Mistress. The EVC is responsible for approving educational visits and ensuring that 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 school ensures that the EVC role is carried out by an experienced visits leader with the skills, status, competence and appropriate training needed for the job. They must be confident in assessing the ability of other staff to lead visits and in assessing outside activity providers.

The EVC 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, the Deputy Head, Director of Pastoral Care and other relevant members of staff over matters relating to visits.

## **2. Proposing visits**

### **2.1 Visit proposal**

There should always be a sound educational or pastoral objective for a visit, e.g. to support an aspect of the curriculum; to provide an educationally enriching experience for the pupils; to provide 'bonding' experiences for students and promote their wellbeing.

As the first step in organising a visit, the visit leader submits a proposal form via the staff portal, including: the key focus and purpose of the visit; the destination; the proposed dates and duration; the pupil groups to be involved; an estimate of costs; and the staffing if known at this stage.

A visit may not be added to the calendar or advertised to parents and students, until the EVC has approved the proposed outline for the visit.

### **2.2 Risk assessment**

For all school visits, both residential and non-residential, 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 oversees this process and ensures that planning for visits including risk assessment is proportionate and sensible, focusing on how to manage genuine risks.

Together with the visit proposal form as above, the visit leader submits an initial risk assessment, which is considered to be a working document that may require adjustment and enhancement as further details emerge in the planning of the visit.

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 risk assessment must give consideration to any potential hazards, who might be affected by them, the safety measures that are required to reduce the risks to an acceptable level, how these safety measures might be put in place and the steps that will be taken in the event of an emergency.

If the trip includes significant risks, e.g. overseas visits to places involving challenging terrain, going to remote places or extreme climates, we follow the guide to the British Standard for adventurous activities outside the UK<sup>1</sup> as the basis for planning and risk assessment. The risk assessment may also be informed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's detailed guidance on safer adventure travel and volunteering overseas<sup>2</sup>.

The EVC must approve the initial risk assessment before the visit may be planned further and advertised to parents and students.

Some visits will require more detailed planning and risk assessment than others, depending on factors such as the distance from the school, the location and the type of activity. Some off-site activities may be considered routine, such as the regular partnership activities with other schools in the local area and other nearby activities involving a lower level of risk – for these, the EVC will decide whether the activity is covered by the overarching risk assessment in place for such activities or requires a bespoke risk assessment.

### **2.3 Costs and staffing**

The visit leader must provide transparent costings and details of the staffing (including reserves) at the earliest opportunity, for approval by the EVC. Staff leading and accompanying the visit must be deemed competent and equipped with the necessary skills to do so, bearing in mind the nature of the visit and the planned activities.

### **2.4 List of students**

Prior to publicising the visit to parents and students, the visit leader submits via the staff portal a proposed list of students to whom the visit will be advertised. The list of students is reviewed by the Deputy Head, Director of Pastoral Care to ensure that the welfare needs of participants are considered and any pastoral concerns are identified at an early stage of planning the visit.

## **3. Financial and insurance matters**

### **3.1 Costing visits**

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 possible variables such as party size and exchange rates. Where possible we take advantage of the TfL scheme offering free transport for school visits in London. The login details for the TfL school account are available to trip leaders on the staff portal.

Any costs are charged as an extra on the termly bill. This is stated in the initial letter to parents regarding the visit.

### **3.2 Bursary award holders**

For some visits, bursary award holders receive financial assistance, particularly in those cases when all students in a year group or studying a certain subject are expected to participate in the visit. Where a pupil receives full tuition fee assistance, the bursary award will also include up to £250 per academic

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bsigroup.com/LocalFiles/en-GB/consumer-guides/resources/BSI-Consumer-Brochure-Adventurous-Activities-UK-EN.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adventure-travel-abroad-play-it-safe>

year for educational visits. Funds may be provided for additional support to cover the costs of visits where we recognise the educational value to the pupil. Assistance will be awarded based on financial need.

### **3.3 Insurance**

The school's comprehensive insurance covers all participants on visits and the school holds worldwide travel cover for overseas visits.

The EVC and the PA to the Director of Operations and Resources 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.

## **4. Detail of Procedures when Planning an Educational Visit**

The EVC must be kept informed of planning and all arrangements for visits. Any problems or changes to agreed outline must be fully discussed before proceeding.

In planning a visit, the group leader must make every effort to ensure that the visit is available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of factors such as special educational or medical needs, ethnic origins, religion, etc.

### **4.1 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. 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. We sometimes ask for references from other schools who have used a particular venue or service provider.

### **4.2 Using outside organisations**

The school checks that outside organisations used to provide an activity have the appropriate safety standards, accreditations and liability insurance.

In the first instance, we check to see if the organisation holds the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge or a similar local accreditation for overseas visits. For organisations that do not hold this badge, additional checks are carried out to verify that this is an appropriate organisation to use, such as checks on their insurance, staff competence and risk assessments and control measures.

Before using an outside organisation, the school must be satisfied (either through the LOtC Quality Badge or through additional checks) that any third-party staff have DBS clearance. For overseas organisations where DBS checks do not apply, the school obtains verification that all reasonable checks are made on third party staff.

### **4.3 Arranging staffing**

The staffing for the visit is approved by the EVC. A reserve member of staff is always identified to ensure that a visit can still go ahead even if one member of 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.

#### **4.4 Passport and visa information**

Party leaders must 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.

Parents are strongly advised to 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.

#### **4.5 Health and safety procedures**

Visit leaders ensure that all accompanying staff know the itinerary and understand their responsibilities.

At least one mobile telephone and charger must be taken on all educational visits. School mobile phones are booked by the visit leader via the staff portal.

Accompanying staff carry an accurate list of students participating in the visit, along with medical details and parental contact details. Sections 4.11 below sets out the arrangements for handling personal data on trips and visits.

Accompanying staff carry a copy of the risk assessment and familiarise themselves with its contents.

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, off-piste skiing and watersports.

When planning watersports, the school considers the need for instructors and lifeguards. Care is taken when assessing whether it is appropriate to use hotel swimming pools or other water leisure activities which may not have a trained lifeguard.

All accompanying members of staff are made aware of the needs of those pupils on the visit with special medical requirements e.g. those at risk of anaphylactic shock, pupils affected by epilepsy or diabetics. They are briefed and where necessary trained by the School Nurse. Sometimes a supplementary meeting is held with parents of a specific pupil in order to make the most appropriate arrangements to meet the medical or pastoral needs of the pupil. The party leader also ensures that host families, centres, hotels etc are aware of any special dietary or medical requirements.

A First Aid kit must be taken on every school visit, to the extent that this is feasible. On occasions such as John Colet Day when the whole school community will be making a journey outside of school and it is not practicable to supply all groups with a First Aid kit, the risk assessment must give special consideration to the procedure that should be followed if a pupil requires medical treatment (e.g. staying within an urban environment, proximity to pharmacies/hospitals, availability of emergency services). The School Nurse manages the issuing and maintenance of First Aid kits. Parents are reminded that pupils need to have with them any special medical equipment (e.g. inhalers, EpiPens) and this is checked before departure.

For residential visits, parents update and confirm their daughter's medical information via an online form. Through this process, we obtain parental permission for St Paul's Girls' School staff to authorise medical treatment should they not be able to contact a sick or injured pupil's parent in time.

A note must be kept to record any first aid and/or medication given or accidents/illness reported. A record must be kept of any special diet or health problems.

While we take all reasonable steps to ensure that visits are fully accessible to all students, we do not permit pupils to participate in visits or particular activities during visits if their medical needs prevent them from taking part safely and present an unacceptable level of risk. In the first instance the EVC will give judgement in such cases, in consultation with the School Nurse and the Deputy Head, Director of Pastoral Care. Where necessary, and after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the High

Mistress will make a final decision and may exclude a pupil from a visit on medical grounds if in her professional judgement she determines it is in the pupil's best interest.

#### **4.6 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 use only 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 must not 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.

#### **4.7 Supervision**

National guidance states that activity and visit leaders must ensure that young people are supervised in accordance with the principles of 'effective supervision', requiring them to take account of:

- The nature of the activity (including its duration)
- The location and environment in which the activity is to take place
- The age and gender (including developmental age) of the young people to be supervised
- The ability of the young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs)

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, first aid qualifications, the potential risks and making adequate provision to allow for emergencies.

Parents are given information of the staffing to be provided for any residential/overseas visit well in advance.

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.

##### **4.7.1 Indirect supervision**

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.

##### **4.7.2 Unaccompanied visits**

Some activities may be unaccompanied or involve a sole teacher in charge, for example study days involving students in the VII or VIII which are lower risk and involve pupils over 16. In all cases, staffing details are made clear to parents when they are notified of the visit.

##### **4.7.3 Individual travel arrangements**

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.

#### **4.8 Safeguarding measures**

The school will undertake the necessary safeguarding checks in accordance with guidance given in the DfE's *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2019). 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 such cases the EVC will be consulted and will confirm the requirements.

#### 4.9 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* (2019) and, as such, will request a DBS Certificate with Barred List check for adults in a household who will have care-giving responsibility for a visiting child under the age of 18 as part of a school organised trip (e.g. where the school makes the arrangements for the hosting of pupils on a foreign exchange). Should a DBS not be received by the date of the exchange, a risk assessment will be undertaken.

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 as to the suitability of host families overseas in providing accommodation.

#### 4.10 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:

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

Through the School's standard terms and conditions, parents' consent to their daughter taking part in **non-residential** visits, including those that take place at weekends or school holidays. Parental consent is assumed provided that details of the visit have been given as outlined above and sufficient time (at least one week) has been allowed for parents to indicate that their daughter should not participate. 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, or any visit that involves some element of high risk or adventure activity (such as mountaineering, caving, canoeing or sailing), are subject to a separate agreement and require parents to submit an online consent form. 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 pupils about the nature of the visit, all practical requirements and expectations of behaviour. For residential visits the visit organiser holds a briefing with parents to explain the arrangements in detail.

#### **4.11 Data protection**

For non-residential visits, one copy of the medical and parental contact details is carried by the trip leader, with additional copies given to other accompanying staff if students are split across more than one location or across two coaches, for example. The distribution of trip booklets to accompanying staff other than the trip leader is at the discretion of the EVC, with due consideration given to the protection of data.

On residential visits, due to the higher level of risk involved, all accompanying staff are provided with copies of the trip booklet including medical and parental contact information.

Staff are routinely reminded of the importance of keeping this data secure. Trip booklets are returned to the Co-Curricular Administrator to be shredded upon the visit's return, within one working day.

Should any data breaches occur during an educational visit, staff must inform their SMT out of hours contact without delay. If a data breach occurs during the working day it should be reported to the Bursar.

Personal data, including medical information, may be shared with third parties (such as tour operators, partner schools and exchange schools) if necessary, for the purposes of organising the trip and on a need to know basis. Transfer of personal data outside the EU may be subject to separate arrangements. The school checks the GDPR or data protection policy of third-party providers prior to sharing personal data with them. All exchange schools sign an agreement with us confirming that they will abide by our data protection guidelines.

Staff are aware that all personal data should only be stored on the school's systems and destroyed securely once no longer required.

#### **4.12 SMT contact**

The EVC assigns a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) as the school link contact for all visits that take place out of school opening hours, during weekends and during school holidays. The EVC (being a member of SMT) sometimes acts as the SMT contact.

The visit organiser also has contact details of several members of SMT as part of the visit paperwork. The 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 visit and next of kin details of accompanying staff.

In the case of residential visits, as a minimum the visit organiser must text the staff contact on arrival and return.

### **5. Emergency on an educational visit**

In the event of a serious 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 SMT contact if in school holidays, is notified as soon as possible.

In light of recent events in a number of cities, the school offers the following advice and guidance to members of staff leading or taking part in school trips to urban centres.

#### **i Prior to the visit**

The possibility of a potential terrorist attack should be taken into account at the planning stage for each visit and should be included in the risk assessment. Staff should keep up-to-date with the latest news relating to their destination by accessing links on the trips guidance information sheets for UK and Overseas trips found on the Portal.

## **ii During the visit**

### **a) Busy locations**

When visiting crowded places such a city centre, venue or event, staff should consider possible safe areas, near to where the group intends to be, that can act as an emergency meeting point, secondary emergency meeting point or emergency shelter. Staff should think through how to get away in an emergency and bear in mind that planned transport routes may be disrupted. Groups are discouraged from congregating for long periods at the entrances to public sites and to be aware of the aforementioned emergency guidelines where this is unavoidable. Staff should have sufficient funds to cope with the possibility of an enforced overnight stay and envisage how to cope were there an enforced group split.

### **b) Vigilance**

All pupils are aware of the 'stay safe' principle 'Run, Hide, Tell' and staff and pupils alike are encouraged to be vigilant, aware of their surroundings and to report any suspicious items. Pupils should be aware what to expect if they encounter armed response officers. All school issued mobile phones have the 'citizenaid' app that provides advice in the event of an attack and staff are encouraged to refer to this if necessary.

### **c) After any incident**

Once it is safe to do so, staff should follow the guidelines for 'emergency on an educational visit' as outlined above.

## **iii Communications plan**

The visit leader will notify the SMT contact of a serious incident or emergency at the earliest safe opportunity. In response to a crisis situation, the SMT contact will inform the High Mistress (or if she is unavailable, the Senior Deputy) and the crisis management plan will be followed. The communications plan will include communications to inform and reassure parents, and further check-ins with the staff involved. Staff accompanying visits are advised not to speak to the media and any press enquiries are referred to the High Mistress's office.

## **6. Pupil conduct during visits**

Before departure, pupils must be reminded of correct behaviour during the journey, i.e. seat belts must be worn, litter to be placed in litter bags, orderly walking if on foot, preferably in twos, staff to be at the front and back of the group.

Meeting times must be clearly stated and adhered to. The group leader must establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the group.

Pupils must not wander unsupervised in groups of fewer than three and geographical area must be specified.

Pupils must not make unnecessary noise in public places and must behave courteously at all times.

Pupils must know where a member of staff can be found at all times.

Head-counts must be taken regularly. (Dividing a large party into groups with a member of staff in charge makes life easier for head-counts and any changes of plan.)

Any pupils whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity and kept under direct supervision.

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

## **7. Evaluating visits**

The lead teacher on a residential visit must complete an evaluation of their visit and submit this to the EVC within two weeks of returning (with the exception of this period falling outside term time). This evaluation should include an assessment of how successfully the objectives of the visit have been met, and any adjustments which may be required in the future or potential problems (e.g. in respect of changes to the itinerary, staffing, accommodation, etc.).

The visit organiser should review the risk assessment in the light of any particular challenges which arose and should, if necessary, adapt the risk assessment for future visits.

If there were any non-emergency medical issues arising, the lead member of staff should report these to the School Nurse upon returning home. The EVC will also check these have been raised by referring to the evaluation form.

For day visits, all teachers involved in the visit are encouraged to discuss any problems or concerns they have, relating to pupils or other matters, with the EVC or the Deputy Head, Director of Pastoral Care. This is of particular importance if there were any unforeseen problems on the visit.

The visit leader should securely destroy any confidential materials e.g. copies of passport details.

## **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.