



# **The John Fisher School**

## **Educational Visits Policy**

**Responsible: Student Learning and Welfare Committee**

**Next Review Date: March 2021**

*Nurturing young Catholic gentlemen  
Aspiring for Academic, Cultural & Sporting Excellence*

## **Introduction**

This policy applies to all educational visits run by The John Fisher School and all members of staff involved in their successful and safe implementation. These include: The Headteacher, Any Local Advisors, Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), Visit Leaders and staff/volunteers attending visits.

## **Aims**

The John Fisher School believes that educational visits are crucial for the wider learning of students. They provide access to knowledge and experiences that would not be possible if students remained in school for the duration of their education and are therefore invaluable in ensuring students can be academically successful whilst becoming well rounded individuals.

We aim to offer all students a range of experiences that are frequent and progressive and that enable them to;

- Visit new places, broaden their horizons, undertake new activities and enjoy new challenges
- Develop their confidence, self-awareness, independence and skills
- Learn new ideas, facts or concepts, and relate classroom learning to the outside world

These experiences will be integrated to their learning in school and we believe will play a key part in increasing our students motivation and willingness to learn, raising their aspirations and raising their attainment.

Students will have opportunities to reflect on these experiences and celebrate their achievements through their work in school, and through displays, presentations, web-sites, open days and assemblies.

### **To achieve these aims we will;**

- Plan the curriculum so that it includes progressive experiences for all students regardless of age or key stage
- Where possible include at least one opportunity for all students to participate in an off-site visit during each key stage
- Aim to provide every student with the opportunity to experience a residential visit (staying away from home for at least one night) during their time at the school
- Ensure that all experiences offered are high-quality, and where these are not led by our own qualified staff, will make use of providers who have the necessary skills, training and confidence to ensure that experiences are of a similar standard
- Offer visits that are cross curricular (where possible) and have both educational and social aspects of learning embedded in them

## **Clarification of Roles**

### **The Headteacher should ensure:**

- staff are familiar with their Employer's policies for outdoor learning, off-site visits and Learning Outside the Classroom;
- there is a clearly designated a suitable member of staff as the EVC and that the designated person meets your Employer's requirements, including undertaking EVC Training as recommended or required;
- outdoor learning is included within the process of self-evaluation providing evidence that may support how it contributes towards school improvement and overall effectiveness;
- they have assigned sufficient time for leaders to organise activities and visits properly;
- arrangements are in place for the Local Advisory Board to be informed of such visits as are required by your Establishment Visit Policy;
- they approve all visits on Evolve in good time before they go out;
- where needed, they have access to expert advice such as from an accredited outdoor education adviser;
- suitable child protection procedures are in place, including vetting at an appropriate level of all adults including volunteers, helpers and visitors. Decisions need to be made about when these adults are engaged in regulated activity and so should be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks;
- they support the EVC in ensuring that: all activities and visits are effectively supervised with an appropriate level of leadership, information has been shared with parents and consent has been given if required;
- inclusion issues are addressed;
- Risk Management is proportionate, suitable and sufficient;
- all visits are evaluated against the visit objectives. Evaluation should also cover best value, teaching and learning, quality experiences, addressing issues raised by any incident and informing of future visits;
- there are suitable Emergency Procedures in place for each visit and The John Fisher School has an Critical Incident – Trips and Visits plan for off-site visits, including procedures to ensure that parents are appropriately informed in the event of a serious incident.

### **Statement of support from the Governing Body**

Governors at the school are committed to ensuring that students experience a rich and stimulating curriculum that includes a comprehensive range of educational visits. Governors will ensure that systems and staffing lead to visits being worthwhile and of high quality, that are rigorously planned and effectively managed. We will also ensure that visits are inclusive in nature.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We recognise that every child has the right to join in all activities provided by the school, including outings and visits. We will make every effort to ensure that all visits are suitable and appropriate for the needs of the students concerned regardless of their ability or needs. We will make every effort to keep the costs associated with visits to a minimum to maximise participation.

## **Reference to and coherence with other school/setting policies**

The school has adopted as its guidance the 'Educational Visits Guidance (2012)' provided by the Local Authority. This guidance describes the role and responsibility of the Governing Body, Head Teacher and Educational Visits Coordinator, and includes practical advice on the many aspects of planning and managing visits.

This policy gives details of charges and voluntary contributions that may be requested from parents/ carers. This policy also gives details of remissions of charges that may be made at the Headteachers' discretion.

A 'model visit risk assessment' is in use and this should be used as the starting point for risk assessment on all educational visits. For many visits this model will suffice, but visit leaders must review the document and consider whether or not amendments or additions to the assessment need to be made when considering the nature of the visit and those children/ students that are to participate. Any amendments or additions must be recorded.

## **Gaining Approval**

The Governing Body may require informing of visits, and may also wish to approve or endorse the arrangements made for visits. This responsibility may rest with the Full Governing Body, or be delegated to a Committee or individual governor such as the Chair.

The authority to approve many (day) visits may be also delegated by the Governing Body to the Headteacher.

The school is required to inform and to seek approval from the LA for certain categories of visits. Approval of all visits will be recorded.

## **Visit planning and record keeping**

The Evolve system is used in the school. This ensures that visit planning meets best practice, and that record keeping of visits is thorough.

All visits (or agreed types of visits) must be entered into Evolve and submitted to the EVC/ Head (and Outdoor Education Adviser where relevant) for approval. In normal circumstances visits should be submitted to the EVC well in advance of the departure date. An allowance of two weeks should be made for the finance department to set up the trip on ParentPay. Any visits that will need submitting to the LA should arrive not less than one month before departure.

## **Management issues**

- Staff knowledge and skills – many staff are experienced in organising, planning and Leading Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) activities. All visits will be led by a suitably experienced member of staff, and more recently qualified staff will be given opportunities to work alongside colleagues to develop their skills and confidence. Where training needs arise, these should be brought to the attention of the EVC/ Head for inclusion in staff development planning
- Reviewing and monitoring procedures – all visits should be reviewed against the desired learning outcomes, and to record any concerns related to the visit planning or management (e.g. unforeseen eventualities)
- Funding – we will aim to assist with the finance on educational visits of students on Free School Meals and will also explore funding educational visits of students supported by the Pupil Premium on request from parents.

## **Communication with parents and obtaining consent**

Parents and carers must always be informed before their child takes part in an off-site visit. Children should not be relied upon to communicate this information verbally. It is also necessary for parents and carers to give their consent to allow their children to participate in off-site visits.

A system is in place to obtain termly/ annual consent from parents for their children to participate in local visits.

For all visits that include an overnight stay, distant or overseas destination or adventurous/ hazardous activity then a separate consent must be obtained.

Parents will always be informed before a visit takes place

When separate consent is not required, then parents will be reminded that they have already given consent to cover the planned visit, and they should advise the school if there is any change to this consent or any change to the medical information or parental contact details already held for their child.

## **Review, monitoring and evaluation**

If there is a clear set of aims that mesh with the school's overall aims within the development plan; are built into the curriculum; and are explicit in key policies, then the effectiveness can be measured as part of your wider self-evaluation process.

The most important thing is to identify which existing monitoring processes will reveal progress in LOtC and draw these together at appropriate points each year to allow for an annual review and planning for improvement.

## Support for Visit Leaders

### Visit Leaders

**For the purpose of planning a trip Visit Leaders should:**

- Be specifically competent (being competent means that the leader has demonstrated the ability to lead to the level demanded by the visit, and has sufficient relevant experience and knowledge of the activities, the group, and the environments they will operate in).
- Take a lead on risk management. It is good practice to involve all the visit staff/team to ensure wide understanding and to give clarity about what they need to do. It is also good practice to involve young people wherever appropriate.
- Ensure that child protection issues are addressed (e.g. good safeguarding practice is followed and adults are appropriately vetted and checked).
- Ensure that informed parental consent has been obtained as necessary.
- Make sure there is access to first aid at an appropriate level.
- Ensure that if the visit leadership team includes someone with a close relationship to a member of the group, this is managed to avoid any possible compromise of effective supervision.
- Ensure that all leaders and any third party providers have access to emergency contact and emergency procedure details.
- For residential trips check with Directors of Learning, Safeguarding Team (or other staff as necessary) to assess suitability. There may be a concern with a student as a result of a series of previous events or involvement in a major incident.
- Reserve the right to remove a student from a trip if the student is thought to be unsuitable.
- Let catering staff know in advance if you are taking a large group out so they can adjust amount of food prepared / cater for FSM students attending the trip.

### Assessing venues and providers

When choosing a suitable provider Visit Leaders should consider the following questions:

- Is there a clear understanding about the responsibility for supervision at all times during the visit?
- What are the respective roles of provider staff and school staff?
- What provision will be made for any special needs?
- How flexible is the programme to meet changing circumstances?

Visit Leaders have a duty of care to ensure that any provider they use meets acceptable standards. This may be as simple as checking that the chosen provider(s) hold appropriate accreditation. Where the provider has no external accreditation, or where your needs are not straightforward, checking the provider may involve further questioning and information gathering.

## Procedural Requirements

The following procedural requirements must have taken place for an educational visit to run:

### **Planning and Approval**

- Visit Leaders should follow all steps found on Evolve to run a day visit / an overnight visit and take full responsibility for fully assessing any risks.
- Trips should be added to Evolve at the earliest opportunity. As an example trips can take up to 4 weeks to approve, then a further 2 weeks to be added to Parentpay.
- Day trips are approved on Evolve by the EVC and Headteacher. Overnight trips must be approved on Evolve by the EVC, Headteacher, and the Local Authority Advisor.
- The Visit Leader must factor any costings into the trip (see **finance** section for guidance on this).

### Staffing Ratios

These should be regarded as starting points for consideration rather than being definitive, as they may be appropriate only where the activity is relatively straightforward and the group has no special requirements. For example, the DfE publication Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV) suggested the following 'starting points:'

- Overseas trips - Year 7 onwards, 1:10
- UK based trips - Year 7 onwards, 1:15/20

There is flexibility around suitable ratio's, as an example, activities that have a higher element of risk e.g. skiing may have a different ratio to that indicated in 'starting points' above.

### Insurance

- The Visit Leader should ensure that the correct type and level of insurance is in place for their visit. Before purchasing any additional insurance the Visit Leader should check if the **Sutton provided service** provides the necessary cover. Any concerns over whether a child is insured, such as if they have recently committed or considered self-harm, (typically this is something that would not be covered as a result of further self-harm) should be checked with the insurers.
- Insurance cards can be collected from finance.

### Finance

The John Fisher School passes on various fees to parents of all students wishing to partake in an educational visit. This is comprised of:

- Parentpay administration fees of 1.3%.
- Visit Leaders need to factor any cost of teacher cover, the value for this needs to be checked with the Cover Supervisor.
- If currency is required allow a minimum of 5 working days for finance to process this.

## Risk Assessment

- The John Fisher School takes a common sense and proportionate approach to risk management, recognising that risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable students to undertake activities safely, and not prevent activities from taking place. Sensible risk management cannot remove risk altogether and it should avoid needless or unhelpful paperwork.
- Staff leading visits do need to complete a risk assessment

Before any kind of hazardous activity e.g. skiing, water sports, swimming etc. staff should ensure they can confirm the following questions:

- Is this a planned activity that is on the approved risk assessment? If not it cannot go ahead, **parents may not be aware and may not have given consent.**
- Have staff planning visits considered all the options beforehand and included these in letters to parents to consent can be given?
- Is expert supervision in place at all times when students are taking part? E.g. instructors, lifeguards etc.
- Do all staff know the procedures should an injury arise? e.g. how to contact emergency services in this country, where is the nearest medical centre?

## During the trip, staff should ensure they can confirm the following questions:

- Do all staff have a copy of the risk assessments and know how to mitigate identified risks?
- Do all staff have a high awareness of any students with serious medical needs and the procedures should an emergency arise?
- Does one member of staff have responsibility for medication and an understanding of when and how this should be administered?
- Do all staff know precisely who they are responsible for and how to act should the group get separated?
- Are head counts carried out at key moments (e.g. when boarding and leaving transport or entering and leaving venues) to confirm all students are accounted for?
- Do all students have the emergency contact details hard copy with as many as possible having it in their mobile phones?
- Have students had behavioural expectations explained to them including a total ban on alcohol, drugs, sexual activity and purchasing items that could cause harm?
- Have students had protocols for how to act when unsupervised explained to them including to never be in any less than a group of three, how to avoid potential hazards and what to do in an emergency?

## Emergency procedures and incident reporting

Should a critical incident occur on an Educational Visit, the following guidelines should be followed:

- The Visit Leadership Team should stabilise the situation to the best of their abilities, contacting the emergency services as appropriate.

- The Visit Leadership Team should contact The John Fisher School's Emergency Contact.
- This will always be either the EVC or, the designated emergency contact
- In the event that either of these individuals are unreachable, or if the incident is sufficiently serious, Visit Leaders should contact the designated emergency contact. If appropriate the designated emergency contact may then contact the heateacher.

The first senior manager contacted should:

- Take on the responsibilities of the Critical Incident Response Team Lead until they are relieved.
- Establish and maintain communication with The John Fisher School and, if necessary, the group involved in the Incident.
- Ascertain the nature of the emergency and cascade this information to all staff required by the Critical Incident – Trips and Visits plan.
- Make some initial decisions about the level of support needed and put in train the formation of a suitable Critical Incident Response Team to provide this. This may need to be physically convened or virtually convened using conference call/electronic solutions.
- Ensure that essential information is obtained, recorded and relayed to allow the designated emergency contact to assess the situation correctly.
- Brief the school based critical incident team as soon as this is assembled (virtually or physically).

Any incidents on educational visits that had the potential to become critical but did not should be reported to the EVC for full evaluation so that procedures can be changed if necessary to ensure the risk of the incident being repeated is minimised. Any learning from this experience should be shared with staff (and the Outdoor Education Advisor, OEA).

### **Behaviour**

All students and staff are expected to observe the expectations laid out in the Home-School Agreement whilst on educational visits. Expectations specific to Educational Visits include:

- It is completely prohibited for students to purchase or consume alcohol or any illegal substances whilst on an educational visit.
- It is completely prohibited for students to engage in any form of sexual activity whilst on an educational visit.
- It is completely prohibited for students to purchase or use any offensive weapons whilst on an educational visit.

Should expectations of The John Fisher School not be met whilst on an educational visit, Visit Leaders should sanction students appropriately and in the spirit of school's Behaviour Policy. Should the incident be serious, particularly relating to the previous list, Visit Leaders should seek advice from the EVC or another member of SLT.

Visit Leaders should communicate behavioural expectations as close to the start of the visit as possible.

Visit Leaders must also ensure that the conduct of staff is safe, professional, appropriate and in line with The John Fisher School Staff Code of Conduct. On extended visits, Trip Leader should look to rotate duty staff to provide respite and leisure time.