

Mount St Mary's College



MOUNT
BARLBOROUGH HALL
EDUCATING MEN AND WOMEN FOR OTHERS SINCE 1842

Educational Visits Policy

Policy written by: Lucy Kitchener (Educational Visits Coordinator)

Policy Date: September 2024

This Policy is for: Mount St Mary's College

Linked Policies: Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Major Incidents Policy

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Educational Visits Policy

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Section 1

Policy Statement

Name of Headmaster and EVC

Headmaster: Mr Dan Wright
Education Visits Coordinator (EVC): Mrs Lucy Kitchener

Introduction

Mount St Mary's views educational visits as a very important part of the provision for its students. In particular, it allows them the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom. As well as the educational benefits, students participating in visits advance their understanding of themselves and others. Visits are to be encouraged and form an important part of the enhancement of the curriculum.

Outside education, educational visits and overseas trips play a key role in the personal development of pupils, aiding their social understanding and building resilience. Amongst other things, they allow students to:

- develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, confidence and resilience
- develop spiritual understanding and appreciate non-material aspects of life
- know how to stay safe and understand how to be physically and mentally healthy, particularly in terms of diet, exercise and a balanced lifestyle
- respect and value diversity within society, show respect for and appreciation of their own and other cultures, and demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds and traditions

Furthermore, Educational Visits should contribute towards the goal of Catholic education: to educate children and young people in an environment of faith that will enable them to discover through their experience of learning the abundance of life that the Lord offers to them.

Policy Objectives

It is the school's duty to ensure that all educational visits are safely prepared and managed and that the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff are maintained in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE).

This policy aims to provide appropriate guidance and context for all off-site activities, and has considered the following objectives when drawing up this policy:

- To ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of any member of staff or student participating in off-site activities or any member of the public affected by the activity
- To ensure that staff are supported and understand their role in every offsite trip
- To ensure that trips for accessible for all students
- To ensure the impact of educational visits in terms of staff or student absence from the ongoing teaching and learning within the school environment is reasonable.

The school uses Evolve as a means of risk assessing school visits. This is provided by the Derbyshire School Visits Service (SVS) team which has a huge breadth of knowledge and experience and can provide support for any type of visit. The SVS provides training courses for Educational Visits Coordinators (EVCs) and other staff. The EVC, Headmaster and SVS monitor risk assessments using EVOLVE – the school uses this as a means of assessing risk for all types of offsite visit.

The school has a duty to its students and staff to protect them from risks to their health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities and roles of the Visit Leader, the EVC, the Headmaster, the governors and all staff on trips are set out below.

The Visit Leader

The Visit Leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit.

The Visit Leader is responsible for ensuring that the visit is risk assessed using the online Evolve system. The Visit Leader must also ensure that the trip is staffed appropriately and that all parties (the school, the staff on the trip, the students attending, parents/carers) have the necessary information for the trip to run effectively.

The Visit Leader must ensure that costs are fully met by parents/carers.

The Visit Leader is responsible for all aspects of risk management for their trip including checking licensing or seeking a provider's assurance, assessing the risks, pre-visiting the sites where practical and carrying out dynamic risk assessments on site.

The Visit Leader must report any incidents to the EVC and provide an evaluation of the trip using Evolve.

Educational Visits Coordinator

The EVC has responsibility for the implementation, day to day management, evaluation and review of this policy and supporting procedures. The EVC is also responsible for overseeing the planning, organisation and effectiveness of trips for the Headmaster by supporting the Visit Leader.

The EVC will ensure that staff leading trips are appropriately supported, advised, trained and monitored and will assist the Headmaster in judging the competency of staff to act as Visit Leaders.

The EVC will check that outside providers have been appropriately checked and where necessary contact the Derbyshire Visits Adviser or Outdoor Adviser depending on the nature of the trip.

The EVC will keep records of trips, and ensure that accidents and incidents are recorded and passed on to the relevant school staff.

The EVC will attend EVC training as required.

The EVC will ensure that emergency contacts for trips are in place and that the Visit Leader follows the trip procedure for all aspects of planning as outlined in Appendix 1.

The EVC will maintain a tracker of all school visits, monitoring each stage of the process of planning and risk assessment. This does not involve monitoring payments for trips which are the responsibility of the Visit Leader. The tracker is located in a central team which is also accessible to the Headmaster.

Headmaster

The Headmaster has overall responsibility for the final approval of visits.

The Headmaster is ultimately responsible for judging the competence of the EVC and of Visit Leaders for their roles.

The Headmaster will ensure that the governing body is informed of policy and about visits, will ensure that reporting of accidents and incidents is carried out, will check before approval that provider assurances/ licensing is in place and that procedures are implemented in line with policy and legal requirements.

The Governors

The Governors are responsible for being a 'critical friend' and for enabling and ensuring that the school's policy and procedures are appropriate.

Other Staff

All teachers who have a responsibility for looking after students have a duty of care in common law. Students on trips are always the responsibility of the school's staff until collected by their parents. If the persons in their care are under 18 they are said to be 'in loco parentis' and are expected to exercise the same degree of care that a 'reasonable, prudent and careful parent would exercise'.

All teachers on trips have a duty to safeguard the welfare of the students. Staff participating in school trips have all undergone safeguarding training and are aware of the legislation contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education. Trips must be run in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy.

Relatively higher risk activities such as climbing, skiing, canoeing etc need to be carefully regulated and assessed under the control of experienced and appropriately trained people exercising close supervision. When planning an activity involving caving, climbing, trekking or water sports, the school will check that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. This is overseen by the Health and Safety Executive.

Other staff are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of everyone in the group, follow instructions of the Visit Leader and help with the control and discipline of the students. They should consider stopping the visit, notifying the Visit Leader, if they think the risk to the health and safety of the students in their charge is unacceptable.

This policy will be reviewed every year unless circumstances warrant an earlier review.

Section 2

Guidelines and procedures for the management of School Visits

Introduction

Staff are expected to adhere to these guidelines and procedures in planning and carrying out a visit with students whether the visit is one that is short and local by nature or whether it is a longer visit, perhaps involving other agencies.

Planning responsibilities

The policy states that Mount St Mary's College views educational visits as an important part of the provision for its students. In particular, it allows them the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom. As well as the educational benefits, students participating in visits advance their understanding of themselves and others.

- It is essential that the procedures are followed and adhered to as, if things go wrong, the school must be able to demonstrate that it has taken appropriate care of its students.
- The school stresses the importance of making sound and thorough preparations including undertaking a complete and comprehensive risk assessment, following closely the school's procedures and communicating effectively with students, parents and the Senior Leadership Team to answer queries.
- It is essential that the school's Educational Visits procedure is followed - no school visit should take place without formal approval from the Headmaster.
- Individual Evolve submissions do not need to be completed for every Games fixture. Generic risk assessments relating to home and away fixtures are maintained by the Director of Sport and followed by Games staff.
- Full responsibility for the consequence of any off-site visit undertaken without the formal approval from the Headmaster will remain with the individual organising the visit.
- Those who are organising activities for the first time should seek advice, follow procedures carefully and make sure that everyone knows what is happening. Those who are experienced in organising visits may feel that they have a proven track record but even they cannot afford to become complacent. Regrettably, tragedy is no respecter of reputations – it can strike even the most experienced and well prepared. The school can never guarantee complete safety. It can, however, commit to doing everything possible to ensure it.

Mount St Mary's rules governing educational visits

- There should always be a named Visit Leader that has been approved by the Headmaster.
- The suggested ratio of staff to students is 1:15-20 for day trips, and 1:10 for residential trips. Activities such as climbing, swimming, skiing, hiking etc should involve additional staff.
- The supervising teachers should include at least one male and one female member of staff for a residential visit involving both boys and girls.
- A member of staff who is trained in first aid should be included as a staff member on every residential educational visit. For day trips, a first aid trained member of staff is ideal but not essential so long as staff consider what to do in an emergency and have up to date medical details as outlined in the procedure.
- Consent must be obtained from parents/carers for their child to be taken on educational visits, as well as information regarding emergency contacts and medical details. The spreadsheet of responses must be printed out and given to all members of staff involved in the trip.
- Where schools are using other educational establishments, checks should be made to ensure they have the 'LOTC' Quality Badge. If this is not in place, the Visit Leader should make the following checks:
 - Insurance
 - That the establishment meets legal requirements
 - H & S and emergency policies are in place
 - Risk Assessments and control measures are in place
 - Staff Competence

- Safeguarding
 - Use of vehicles
 - Accommodation
 - Licenses where needed
 - Sub-contracting arrangements
- Where travel, accommodation or other services or goods are produced, the Visit Leader must take best value into account.
 - Where residential visits are undertaken, ratios will be appropriate and all those responsible for the care of the students will have undergone the schools vetting procedures.
 - When planning activities involving climbing, caving, trekking, skiing or water sports, the provider must hold a license as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. Risk assessments must be obtained from all external providers at the time of booking.
 - The Visit Leader must have an emergency contact number so that the school can contact him or her and be in possession of an emergency number to enable contact with the school at any time during the visit.
 - All school policies and standards connected with staff and student behaviour as expressed in the student and staff codes of conduct apply during an educational visit just as they do during a normal working day.
 - All staff have responsibility for careful and diligent supervision of students at all times in the same way that they would were they with them in a conventional teaching situation.
 - The Visit Leader has the additional responsibility for the maintenance of professional standards of staff.
 - The Visit Leader must have considered the risks and benefits and taken common sense steps to minimise risks. Risk assessments will be printed and included in staff packs.
 - If the visit involves any sport or physical activity that could normally be said to require specific competences in the leader and supervising helpers, the Headmaster should assure himself that these competences exist.
 - There should be an emergency plan in place which is made known to all staff involved in the visit. The template for this is Appendix 3 – Visit Leaders should complete the back page.
 - The Visit Leader must have copies of care plans for any relevant students and should ensure that appropriate resources are available at all times for the duration of the trip.
 - The Visit Leader must have copies of emergency contacts for all students and staff involved in the visit.
 - Students and staff must be told explicitly and before the visit begins that the customary standards of behaviour and professional duties apply during the visit.
 - Students should be reminded that they should not take photos and videos of other students without their consent, and that they should not post content online.
 - It is the duty of the EVC to check that the school's insurance covers the visit.
 - All staff on the trip must submit a Microsoft form confirming they have read all risk assessments before departure. This will be monitored by the EVC.
 - The Visit Leader must ensure that all staff are given a pack before departure including the following documentation:
 1. Register of students (this must be used regularly during the duration of the trip)
 2. Emergency contacts and medical information for students
 3. Care plans for specific students where appropriate
 4. All risk assessments

5. Emergency procedure including school contact numbers
6. Details of rooming for residential trips

In the event of a major incident/ emergency, the SLT first or second emergency contact must be contacted and emergency procedure followed.

Staff must ensure that staff and students have appropriate VISAs and documentation for overseas visits as necessary.

Foreign office guidance must be sought prior to trips to countries where there are potential hazards such as specific diseases, civil unrest etc.

For overseas trips, the Visit Leader must include in their trip paperwork the following:

- i) the British embassy/ consulate
- ii) the emergency services number
- iii) the location and number of the nearest hospital
- iv) any social media/text messaging warning notifications from the local emergency services
- v) where necessary, the contact details for the embassies or consulates of any foreign national pupils on the trip in case of lost passport or grave emergencies.

The Visit Leader is responsible for ensuring that if there is any period of remotely supervised time eg shopping or eating, that students have a designated mobile number to call a member of staff in an emergency e.g. if lost, late or if an incident occurs. Visit Leaders should ensure that they have the mobile phone numbers of the students on their trip if they are remotely supervised for any significant period of time or activity. Students should be asked for their mobile phone numbers before departure.

Staff should ensure that for trips in the UK they are aware of up-to-date advice on responding to a terrorist incident. The current advice is Run, Hide, Tell. Many major UK cities' police forces have warning alerts on text message or social media to which staff can subscribe.

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with the Visit Leader. Ongoing risk assessment and management should take place during the trip. The Visit Leader is responsible for amending the itinerary in the event of delays, unforeseen circumstances or a sudden deterioration in weather conditions. The Visit Leader may delegate part or all of the following responsibilities to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out a head count on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving a museum, restaurant, activity centre, hotel etc. Allocating each student a number can be useful for this.
- Checking that all students wear their seat belts
- Checking the fire exits and escape routes at each hotel or hostel.
- Ensuring that every student knows the location of the emergency escape route at each hotel

- Ensuring that sleeping accommodation is suitable and located together (preferably not on the ground floor)
- Setting times for students to be in their rooms at night.
- Conducting checks (using the other staff to assist)
- Setting agreed times and locations for checking students if under 'remote supervision'
- Checking students with known food allergies at all meal times
- Checking that students have any self-administered medication, as appropriate
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour
- Looking after passports and valuables
- Storing cash and tickets safely
- Keeping an account of all expenditure
- Recording all accidents and near misses.
- In the case of trips abroad, any trip where 'remote supervision' is involved, or any trip where there is a possibility of students becoming detached from the rest of the group, all students should be provided with a tag or card giving contact details or other information as considered appropriate.

Advice on driving a school minibus

There are circumstances in which a member of school staff with a car driving licence can drive a minibus. These circumstances vary depending on when the driver passed their car driving test. These arrangements only apply when driving the minibus in the UK not if driving abroad.

If you passed your category B (car) driving test before 1 January 1997, you can drive a minibus that is not being used for hire or reward as these licences automatically include category D1 (101) (not for hire or reward) entitlement 3. This means school staff with such a licence can drive a minibus carrying up to 16 passengers with no maximum weight restriction on the vehicle. Drivers with a D1 + E (101) (not for hire or reward) entitlement can tow a trailer over 750kg.

If you passed your category B driving test on or after 1 January 1997, you may drive a minibus that is not being used for hire and reward if the following conditions are met:

- you are over 21 and have held a category B licence for at least 2 years
- the minibus is used by a non-commercial body for social purposes,
- you receive no payment other than the recovery of your out of pocket expenses (e.g. fuel and parking costs)
- you provide the service on a voluntary basis

- the gross vehicle weight of the minibus is not more than 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if including any specialist equipment to carry disabled passengers)
- you do not tow a trailer

It is up to drivers to check with their insurer whether their insurance policy covers a minibus in the circumstances in which it is proposed to be driven. The school will also check their insurance and any employer's policies on this matter.

It is also up to drivers to check whether their driving triggers other legal requirements, such as the laws in respect of drivers' hours, tachographs and Certificates of Professional Competence. This guidance has been cleared by the Association of Chief Police Officers, who will promote awareness of this legislation amongst local traffic police officers.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring and refinement by the EVC. He/She will undertake an annual formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of implementation of this policy. Feedback from visits will be used to inform future planning for off site visits and risk assessments. The review will take place earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.