



# Educational Visits Policy

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| ISI Code:                        | 14d School Journeys               |
| Policy Author:                   | Assistant Head<br>(Co-curricular) |
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## Scope

This policy is applicable to all those involved in the organisation of, and participation in, Educational Visits for pupils at RGS Worcester. In addition to this policy, RGS Worcester:

1. adopts National Guidance [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info)
2. uses EVOLVE, the web-based platform for the planning, approval and monitoring of all the school's Educational Visits.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this policy, and National Guidance. In the event of any apparent variance between RGS Worcester policies and OEAP National Guidance, RGS Worcester policies and requirements take precedence, and clarification must be sought from the Educational Visits Coordinator or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Staff are directed to be familiar, in particular, with the roles and responsibilities outlined within this policy.

## Aims and Objectives

- To ensure visits are well planned and that significant risks are identified and managed
- To ensure that those in charge of visits have the necessary competence to manage situations appropriately
- To ensure that other school policies e.g. Safeguarding and Protecting Children are considered when planning visits.
- To ensure there are plans in place for changes in circumstances during a visit that are reasonably foreseeable

## Introduction

RGS Worcester recognises the immense value that educational visits provide for the development of cross-curricular skills and pupils' personal and social education. The School is committed to providing inspirational and real-world educational experiences for all pupils.

The School recognises and accepts that school trips are not completely without risk and undertakes to exercise its duty of care and take suitable precautions regarding participants' safety and welfare. We will ensure that all risks are assessed to an appropriate level and that staff have received relevant training. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people during outdoor learning and off-site visits. We will select venues and providers who maximise the educational content and achieve high standards of health and safety.

The school undertakes to comply with all relevant legislation and recognises the good practice set out in the DfES document '[Health and safety on educational visits](#) (2018).

The aim of this policy is to encourage educational visits by providing staff with a system that will give them the confidence to plan and carry out such visits, knowing they are following recognised best practice and have done all they reasonably can to ensure a safe and successful visit.

## Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- an educational visit is any event which takes place off the school premises.

- the term “Helper” refers to any adult helping on a visit who is not a Visit Leader: i.e. Staff (an RGS employee) or Volunteer (not an RGS employee).

## Procedure for Authorising Visits

The Headmaster will delegate authorisation of visits jointly to both the Senior Deputy Head and the Assistant Head (Co-Curricular), but will still be notified of all visits and visits away from school that involve travel to an international destination and/or might include any activity deemed to be of medium or high risk (e.g. abseiling). The Headmaster is able to access and scrutinise the details of all visits and visits on EVOLVE, and reserves the right to exclude any pupil from participating in a visit or expedition.

All school visits, with the exception of any considered routine, must be approved, first by the Assistant Head (Co-Curricular), and finally by the Senior Deputy Head.

Those considered to be routine and integral to regular school life (eg. Sports practices or fixtures, visits to other schools for competitions, visits by individual students to universities, etc.) should follow a generic Risk Assessment, modified, as required, according to the specific activity.

## Procedure for Planning Visits

The planning of any visit should be completed using EVOLVE and in conjunction with the ‘*Planning a School Trip*’ guidance document, but, as a brief overview, the visit leader should:

1. Discuss initial visit proposal and plausibility with SLT link or Assistant Head (Co-curricular)
2. Submit Calendar Request Form; EVC will take to SLT for International or major new visit.
3. Submit for Outline Approval. This form should supply as much information as possible (type of visit, dates/times, year groups involved, numbers, staffing, First Aid qualified staff, etc.), in particular including details any non-RGSW staff, volunteers or students.
4. Discuss visit and H&S with EVC. Costings to Bursary through Evolve.
5. Submit launch letter to Co-curricular Hub, once Outline Approval has been granted, for proofreading and authorisation by EVC before being published on SchoolPost for parents.
  - *Letter should include all relevant details (e.g. Draft Itinerary, Payment Schedule, Insurance, Medical Information, Parental Consents, Passport/Visa/GHIC Requirements).*
6. Confirm itinerary for the visit and details of all activities
7. Prepare and upload Risk Assessments, including ‘Event Specific Notes’ where necessary.
8. Submit Out of School Forms for all staff on visit.
9. Meet with the EVC to discuss the itinerary, risk assessments and individuals involved in the visit’s pre-departure meeting.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC): The Assistant Head (Co-curricular)**

The main functions of the EVC are to coordinate and monitor the planning and preparation of all school visits, and to support the Senior Deputy Head in ensuring that all visits follow all relevant regulations and guidelines, together with the school's relevant policies and procedures.

The EVC should:

- consider the suitability of a proposed visit, in consultation with appropriate HOD, HOY and with consideration for the demands on the school calendar. For international visits, must also be discussed and approval sought from SLT.
- work with each Visit Leader to ensure every visit is carefully planned with appropriate supervision and activities to ensure the safety and enjoyment of pupils and staff.
- consider the suitability of a colleague to lead a visit, and that of other staff helpers, in consultation with appropriate HOD, HOY and SLT and with consideration for the school calendar.
- check and confirm that the dates of each visit can be accommodated within the school calendar.
- monitor and guide the preparation for the visit through the visit leader: this should include a consideration of appropriate supervision ratios, the preparation of pupils (especially those with SEND or medical needs) and the expectations of pupil behaviour, transport arrangements including vehicle insurance, vetting checks of adults not directly associated with the school including drivers.
- ensure that if external providers are to be used they should hold the Learning Outside the Curriculum (LOtC) badge. Where organisations do not hold the badge, the school must check that they are an appropriate organisation to use. This will include checking their insurance; they meet legal requirements; their health and safety and emergency policies; their risk assessments and control measures; their use of vehicles; staff competence; safeguarding; accommodation; and sub-contracting arrangements they have; that they have a licence where needed.
- grant authorisation on Evolve at the different stages of the process.
- retrospectively review each visit with the visit leader to evaluate the conduct and success of the visit and share any lessons with appropriate colleagues and/or raise at the next meeting of the Health and Safety Committee.
- keep abreast of the regulatory framework for learning outside the classroom.
- maintain an understanding of the management of safe, effective and enjoyable visits and visits and disseminate good practice across the school.

### **Visit Leader**

Every visit must have a clearly designated leader who must be a teacher or other member of staff approved by the Head, employed at the school. The Visit Leader:

- is responsible for the planning of their visit, and for entering all necessary details on EVOLVE as required.
- should obtain outline permission for a visit from the EVC, and before making any commitments.
- must ensure that the visit will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements, and should seek advice from the EVC where necessary.

- is responsible for pupils' behaviour for the duration of the visit. The expectations regarding behaviour should be made clear to all before the visit departs.
- report any incident as appropriate to a relevant member of the Pastoral Team and Senior Leadership Team. (See *Protocol for actions following an Incident on a Visit* below)
- should check details of any external provider's relevant insurance and licence details (e.g. LotC, AALA, Adventuremark, ABTA, ATOL or other appropriate accreditation) and ensure expiry dates are sufficient.
- must ensure they are able to access the visit EVOLVE form and all key information relating to the visit 24 hours a day. Digital formats (e.g. password protected PDFs) may be used, as long as accessibility to key information is not compromised, due to exclusive reliance on internet access, e.g. in remote locations.
- should plan any visit in conjunction with the '*Planning a School Trip*' guidance document.
- provide details of external provider's relevant insurance and licence details, such as LotC, AALA, Adventuremark, ABTA, ATOL or other appropriate accreditation - please check expiry dates.
- be capable of performing dynamic/on-going assessment of risks throughout the visit, such that should circumstances dictate, and unforeseen risks occur or unforeseen learning opportunities arise, plans can be changed and activities amended or curtailed.
  - o *Visit Leaders should ensure they have considered 'Plan B' (especially for transport and medical issues) - for most local area visits, this may simply be to return to base.*

### **Adult Helper**

Any adult helper on a visit must always abide by the *RGSW Staff Code of Conduct*, and should:

- take responsibility for their own health, safety and welfare as well as those pupils and others allocated to them.
- carry out activities in accordance with instructions from the Visit Leader.
- be aware of the contents of the visit pack and keeps any information confidential.
- inform the Visit Leader immediately of any serious risks or concerns. If the concern relates to the Visit Leader, then they should contact the SLT Emergency Base contact.
- be prepared to contribute to the evaluation of all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event.

### **Parent Helper with own children on a visit**

If an adult (RGS staff or Volunteer) is a parent/guardian of a pupil participant, they must be aware of the potential for their parental instincts to compromise the plans for group management. This is a particular risk if there were a serious incident, when an individual may be distracted by the needs of their own child, rather than looking to the needs of the whole group. This means that in most situations, unless it is an agreed part of the plan, the Visit Leader should avoid assigning a parent to a supervision role that gives them direct responsibility for their own child.

### **Non-RGS staff members**

Any adult helper on a visit must have all relevant checks, including a DBS check, completed well in advance of the visit. The Visit Leader must also take the following steps:

- clearly explain and discuss the assigned role with the Helper, including its responsibilities and limitations, and how the role fits with other staff responsibilities.
- assess and be confident that each Helper is competent and confident for the role and responsibilities they have been assigned.
- explain any RGSW policies and procedures and Risk Assessments relevant to the visit (e.g. Staff Code of Conduct) and the Helper's role.
- brief each Helper about the nature and location of the visit and any appropriate information about the participants (including age, sex, health information, capabilities, special needs, safeguarding and behavioural issues).
- every individual must immediately report any concerns they have during the visit to the Visit Leader. If the concern relates to the Visit Leader, then they should contact the SLT base contact.
- every individual must be prepared to contribute to the evaluation of all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event.

**Visit Leaders and Helpers** must adhere to the **RGSW Staff Code of Conduct** at all times on a school visit. Anyone who is acting in a supervisory capacity and not employed by the school, must have undergone the relevant safeguarding checks, prior to having any unsupervised contact with pupils. The trip organiser must have evidence of this prior to the trip. All adults on an educational visit have a duty of care in all circumstances to ensure that the pupils are safe, and a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would do.

### **Emergency Base Contact**

There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit, plus a reserve contact. This nominated base contact will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. They will assume the role as the link between the visit leader, the school and parents, although during term time and the school day this role will initially be performed by school Reception staff.

Reception/Emergency Duty Phone (24 hours): +44 (0)1905 613391 and choose Option 9

### **Pupils on the visit**

All pupils must be briefed before a visit takes place. They must understand:

- The aims and objectives of the trip
- The details of the trip – dates, times, accommodation, travel arrangements
- The roles and responsibilities of the accompanying adults
- If the party is to be divided into sub groups, the composition of these groups
- What standard of behaviour is expected and the consequences of misbehaviour
- Rendezvous procedures
- How to avoid specific dangers
- Emergency procedures

The trip leader must make it clear to pupils that they must avoid unnecessary risks, must follow instructions given and behave responsibly. Normal School Rules apply at all times during a school educational visit and under no circumstances may pupils smoke or take illegal drugs while on a school visit.

### **Parents**

Specific consent should always be obtained from parents for any visit involving an overnight stay, activities of an adventurous nature, where remote supervision is involved or where the cost is over £10. Parents must be in position to give their informed consent and therefore need to be provided with all relevant details concerning transport, accommodation, venues and activities.

## Categories of Visit

This policy covers three types of Educational Visit:

### Day Visits

A visit that departs from and returns to RGS Worcester on the same day.

If a visit is likely to encroach upon lesson time then the visit leader must discuss their proposal with their SLT link or the Academic Team.

### Residential Visits

Any visit that includes an overnight stay.

The visit leader should either do a pre-visit inspection of the accommodation or obtain full details of the rooming, catering and evacuation arrangements. These will need to be checked immediately on arrival and then explained to pupils and staff.

For general guidance about residential visits, including considerations about accommodation, see

OEAP National Guidance document 4.2b "[Residentials](#)". In some countries, accommodation may

not meet normal UK/European standards and so might require additional controls:

- It is essential to make an assessment of the hazards of the accommodation and the immediate surroundings on arrival, and to brief the participants about the safety aspects.
- Depending on the destination, consider taking items such as toilet paper, hand sanitiser, mosquito nets, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, padlocks, door wedges.

### International Visits

Any visit that involves travel outside the UK.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website must be checked to ascertain where there may be political unrest or medical concerns. (FCO's website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>). The trip leader and other staff should know where the nearest British Embassy or Consulate is located and the relevant telephone number(s) should assistance be required.

The visit leader should consult <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/index.php> and the school Health Centre to seek advice on whether additional medical considerations (e.g. vaccinations) may be required. Parents should be advised to consult their GP prior to departure and make their own medical arrangements regarding vaccinations and medications.

Many countries have a requirement for passports to be valid for a minimum period (often six months) beyond either the date of entry to the country or the planned date of departure.

Therefore, passport expiry dates must be checked carefully well in advance of the visit's departure.

### Other Visits and on-site Events

- *School fixtures are covered by generic risk assessments, modified according to specific activity.*
- *School events on site are covered by generic risk assessments, modified according to specific activity and location.*
- *Visiting presenters are covered by the policy on Visiting Speakers.*

- *Visits associated with the CCF (and covered by MOD insurance) should follow MOD policies in addition to the needs of the school.*



## Staffing and Supervision Ratios

Staffing ratios for visits are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity, age, group, location, and the efficient use of resources. However, there must always be enough supervisors to cope with an emergency situation.

A useful framework for assessing requirements for ratios and effective supervision is **STAGER**:

**Staffing**: who is needed/available? The plan must work within the limits of available numbers, abilities and experience.

**Timing**: How will the time of year or time of day affect the visit and its staffing? If the visit takes place out of the establishment's normal working hours, or at a weekend or during holidays, how will this affect staffing and the availability of support back at base?

**Activities to be undertaken**: what do you want the group to do and what is possible?

**Group characteristics**: prior experience, abilities, behaviour and maturity, sex, any specific individual needs.

**Environment**: indoors or out; a public space or restricted access; urban, rural or remote? Consider environments to be passed through between venues. For residential visits consider the accommodation and surrounding area. For outdoor environments, consider remoteness, the impact of weather, water levels and ground conditions.

**Remoteness**: do the activities take place close to school or at a distance? Will communications between the group and base be straightforward? How easy will it be to summon help in an emergency, and for emergency services to reach the group?

The level of adult supervision must realistically reflect the purpose and nature of the visit, the age and maturity of the pupils, the experience of the accompanying adults, and any special needs.

In general, the preferred supervision ratio for School visits/visits is **1:15 plus 1** (i.e. a visit with 15 pupils will have two staff). Even if the supervision ratio may not require it, **the minimum number of staff on a visit should always be at least 2**. In Sixth Form, the default ratio is 1:20 (plus 1), but may be adjusted depending on the risk assessment.

For a visit deemed to involve a higher level of risk the ratio should be 1:10 (plus 1), and one involving hazardous and adventurous activities (e.g. outdoor expeditions, climbing, sailing etc.) will need fully trained staff and may require the employment of qualified staff from Activity Centres.

If the party needs to be split into two or more groups, each group must be seen as a separate entity with its own designated party leader, appropriate supervision ratios, first aid kit etc..

Co-educational groups must whenever possible contain at least one member of staff of each gender. If organising the appropriate staffing for a co-educational visit is proving difficult then the visit leader must consult the EVC as soon as possible.

It is accepted that on residential visits pupils cannot be directly supervised throughout the full 24 hours of any day, but staff must use their professional judgement when dynamically assessing how much freedom pupils are given when unsupervised. Much will depend on the age and maturity of the pupils concerned and on the potential hazards of the location.

If pupils are to be unsupervised, they must be given clear instructions to stay in buddy groups, confine themselves within a defined area and be at a predetermined meeting point within a specific space of time. All pupils should have the trip phone details at all times. For overseas visits, key information should also include a note in the relevant foreign language giving the reader instructions on how to contact the visit leader.

## **Protocol for actions following an Incident on a Visit**

Visit leader should manage incident in immediate aftermath as per Visit RA.

1. Visit leader to liaise with SLT base contact and/or School Nurse for advice (as necessary) and to report incident and how it has been managed. In school operational hours, Reception can be contacted (01905 613391). The mobile for the 24/7 SLT base contacts can be found on EVOLVE.
2. Visit leader (if able) to inform parents of incident, or to ask Nurse/HoY \*(or SLT) to do so (and to receive confirmation when done).
3. Visit leader to liaise with parents if pupil needs to be collected.
4. Once incident has been resolved (or visit has returned) Visit leader to inform HoY \*(or SLT) about incident and outcome.
5. HoY \*(or SLT) to follow up with phonecall to parents within 24 hours (e.g. if over a weekend, then before pupil returns to school).
6. HoY to inform Tutor so that Tutor can check in with pupil at first Registration and, if appropriate, inform pupil's teachers.
7. Visit Leader to submit completed Accident Form to School Nurse and report back any lessons to EVC.

*\* When an incident occurs during a school holiday, as well as informing the relevant HoY, the Visit Leader should also inform the SLT base contact who can then contact parents if HoY is unable to do so.*

## **Dogs on Visits**

Supervising staff may take their dog on an outdoor countryside visit (DofE/CCF) as long as:

- prior approval has been sought from the EVC at least 4 weeks in advance.
- each dog is appropriately vaccinated and insured, well-groomed, and in clean, good health and temperament.
- parents and pupils have been informed and no objections have been raised.
- each dog is kept under close control at all times – i.e. on a lead whenever around pupils or livestock, or close by and within sight at other times.
- It is the owner's responsibility to make sure their dog is not a danger or nuisance to other animals or other people.
- follow The Ramblers' Dog Walking Code and adhere to the School's Policy on Dogs.

## Consumption of Alcohol

### For Adults

On non-residential visits, no alcohol should be consumed.

On residential visits, it is understandable that staff may wish to consume alcohol, but the following requirements must be followed:

- designated Duty Staff on an evening must not consume any alcohol.
- number of Duty Staff required will depend on the number and ages of the pupils and reflect the environment and activities in which the pupils are involved. The required number of Duty Staff should be discussed with the EVC and agreed in advance of the visit, and the Duty Rota should not unfairly penalise any staff who choose not to drink.
- staff may consume alcohol when not specifically on duty, but should only do so in moderation and such that they are always able to be called upon, if needed, to assist Duty Staff. Staff who do drink should be fit to return to duty at the appropriate time (N.B. it can take up to three hours to metabolise the alcohol in one large glass of wine or a pint of strong beer).
- staff not specifically on duty should never be more than 10 minutes' walk away from the main group unless running a specific and pre-arranged errand in support of the visit.
- staff should not consume alcohol if they are driving pupils the following day

### For Pupils

For non-residential visits, pupils are not permitted to consume alcohol.

For residential visits, students below the Sixth Form are not permitted to consume alcohol at any time. If parental consent has already been granted\*, Sixth Form students may be given permission, at the discretion of the Visit Leader, to drink beer or wine (never spirits) in moderation (1-2 glasses) with a "table meal". This should only happen in a licensed venue and must always comply with the local drinking laws.

\*Parental consent must be granted in writing or electronically before the visit's departure. Verbal consent is not sufficient. Consent may not be given during a visit. Consent may be given by parents via the form '*Consent to Drink Alcohol at a School Function*'.

All members of the visit should be made fully aware that drunkenness and/or unsuitable behaviour could lead to them being sent home immediately at their parents' expense. If this is abroad parents will be expected to pick up the pupil from the airport. If the visit is within the UK, parents will be expected to collect the pupil from their accommodation.

On occasion, the School will facilitate visits for students who are over 18 and have completed their time at the School. In these circumstances, it needs to be clearly communicated to students and parents that the usual School Rules apply.

## Emergency Procedure

In an emergency situation, immediate steps must be taken to safeguard pupils and staff on visit. The guidance and assistance of the local Emergency Services should immediately be sought, calling 999 (in UK) or 112 (everywhere).

Additional guidance is also available to all staff on the School's *Emergency Action Card* and through National Guidance on the Evolve platform.

As soon as it is possible and safe to do so, the Trip Leader should ensure the Emergency Base Contact is informed so they can manage the School's response, inform parents and handle any enquiries. If necessary, they will initiate the School's Critical Incident Plan.

Although the likelihood of being caught up in a firearms or terrorist attack is very low, if a visit involves travel to a potential terrorist target (e.g. major city or transport hub), then all individuals should be made aware of, and instructed to follow, the current counter-terrorism advice of "Run - Hide – Tell"

**RUN** to a place of safety. If there's nowhere to go, then...

**HIDE** rather than confront. Turn phone to silent and turn off vibrate.

Barricade yourself in if you can and, only when safe to do so...

**TELL** the police by calling 999/112.

Sponsor – Assistant Head (Co-curricular) September 2012 Approved by the Board of Governors

Reviewed and Endorsed: August 2014, August 2016, July 2017, January 2018, August 2018, August 2019, September 2020, September 2021, June 2022, June 2023, June 2024 and June 2025