



Educational Visits Policy



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Aims and Scope

At the Blue Coat School, we are committed to delivering a curriculum which ensures that students are offered a broad range of educational experiences to enhance their experience of learning, life and culture. We also make a commitment to enable our students have the understanding of the world around them and the life skills that will enable them to grow into empowered, well-rounded individuals who are able to live safe, happy and fulfilling lives and make a positive contribution to society and we believe that enrichment through outdoor learning, outdoor education and educational visits and ventures has a crucial part to play in this.

The school's policy and procedures are formulated in conjunction with the advice, guidance and training provided by the Hampshire Outdoor Education, PE and DofE Service and their documentation and guidance. It aims to ensure that such activities are planned and led effectively and professionally. The health and safety of staff and students taking part in offsite activities is of the highest priority.

This policy applies to activities taking place within and outside of normal school hours, including weekends and holiday periods. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Visits to places of interest in the local area
- Day visits to places such as museums and other cultural and educational institutions
- Sporting activities
- Adventurous and recreational activities
- Residential trips organised by the school
- Trips abroad organised by the school

The lead manager for the application and monitoring of this policy is the Headteacher and they delegate to members of the Senior leadership team. The Governing Body will be kept abreast of the offsite activities that take place.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's guidance on [health and safety on educational visits](#), and the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Approving staff requests for educational visits, including having final authority to approve any educational visit of less than 24 hours
- Making sure staff, including the educational visits co-ordinator, have received any necessary training
- Obtaining approval from CEO.

Senior Leadership

The Senior Leadership Team act on behalf of the Headteacher to oversee the adherence to the Offsite Activities Policy. They will manage trips and visits which fall under their curriculum line management as well as their strategic line management areas.

The educational visits co-ordinator (EVC)

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) will ensure that they keep up to date with the Outdoor Education, PE and DofE Service. The current EVC is Mr Rudd. The Educational Visits Co-ordinator will ensure that training and guidance is offered to staff involved in organising offsite activities and will ensure staff qualifications are monitored and updated accordingly.

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator will ensure that, in the case of each offsite activity, the Activity Leader has conformed to all the procedures set out in this policy and will check that all relevant information is included on EVOLVE.

Trip Lead

Each offsite activity will have a designated Activity Leader, who shall hold qualified teacher status (QTS) and/or NVQ Level 3 and above and be present throughout the offsite activity. Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and staff without QTS (e.g. teaching assistants without NVQ Level 3 and above) **will not** act as Activity Leader for offsite activities, unless deemed to be sufficiently and appropriately experienced by the Headteacher to lead local, low risk and short off-site visits.

- Plan the proposed visit, considering the health and safety risks to pupils, staff and volunteers
- Assign staff and volunteer roles, as needed
- Make sure the school has accurate and up-to-date information about the trip destination, to be used in risk assessments
- Make sure the needs of everyone taking part are considered, including co-ordinating any additional support needed
- Make sure parents and carers are given accurate information about educational visits, including any costs or necessary equipment not supplied by the school or a third party

- Communicate key details about the visit and all locations to staff, pupils and parents/carers, including roles and responsibilities and expected behaviour
- Make sure staff are capable and able to fulfil their roles at all times while responsible for pupils and others

It is possible that a member of staff is involved with out-of-school activities which include students from The Blue Coat School, but where this activity has nothing to do with the school. It is essential in such instances for the member of staff to seek permission from the Headteacher and, with agreement from the Headteacher, make it clear to parents/carers that he or she is not operating in his or her professional capacity as a member of staff at The Blue Coat School.

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers should not travel with the group, or form part of the staffing for an offsite activity, unless they are also employees of The Blue Coat School. Children of members of the staffing for an offsite activity may not travel with the group, or take part in the offsite activity, unless permission has been obtained from the Educational Visits Co-ordinator and the Headteacher, based on a specific risk assessment for those children.

Volunteers

All volunteers working within school or attending residential visits must obtain a full DBS (including a barring check) and sign the volunteer code of conduct.

Governors may form part of the staffing for an offsite activity, but must carry out their duties in full, and in line with the Activity Leader's requirements. Spouses may form part of the staffing for an offsite activity, but must carry out their duties in full, and in line with the Activity Leader's requirements and have a DBS. All adults attending the visit are acting as a member of staff and therefore must abide by the Volunteer Code of Conduct.

The Activity Leader must ensure that every adult attending is well informed about the visit, including the risk assessment, and that any group leaders have been given copies of contact and medical details for their group. Every group leader must be able to contact the Activity Leader in the event of an emergency.

Pupils

Our school behaviour policy also applies to all educational visits. This includes the expectation that pupils will:

- Follow instructions given to them while on the trip
- Dress and behave as expected for the length of the trip
- Take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others, reporting any concerns to a staff member or trip supervisor

Pupils will always be reminded of our behaviour expectations before going off-site for a visit, and will be expected to uphold the school's behaviour policy at all times. **Ref behaviour policy**

Approval

For fixtures, the Activity Leader for fixtures will ensure that a Medical Information Form has been completed and submitted for each student taking part in the offsite activity and that a copy is taken with them for reference to the sporting activity event. The Activity Leader will also ensure that written permission / consent from a parent/carer has been received for each student taking part in the sporting offsite activity. This must be written consent, this could be via Microsoft Forms (confirming consent and any changes to medical information) or via a trip letter or in the student planner.

A telephone call or a text message does not satisfy this requirement.

For all other offsite educational visits, the Activity Leader will first apply to the Administration Manager (to check calendar and staffing implications) and then to the Senior Leader for permission for the offsite activity to go ahead.

This will be done through use of form 1 (visits initial authorisation form) and form 2 (finance authorisation – if the trip incurs a cost to students) so that the decision is made in full knowledge of cover and budget implications.

The Activity Leader will/ should not make any arrangements with students, parents/carers or outside bodies until permission has been given by the senior leader.

Offsite activities will be discussed by the senior leadership team before permission can be given. A draft risk assessment will be needed in addition to forms 1 and 2.

Cover costs (which cannot be passed on to pupils) may need to be budgeted where supply is required to cover normal teaching staff as a result of an off-site visit.

Permission will not be given for an offsite activity to go ahead if:

1. there are concerns about the health and safety of students and/or staff taking part;
2. there is no sound educational basis for the offsite activity;
3. inadequate time is given between submission of forms and date of the trip;
4. the cover required would disrupt the efficient and effective running of the school;
5. students' learning would be disrupted, rather than enhanced; or
6. in conjunction with other activities taking place at the same time, the activity would be too disruptive to the normal daily routine of the school.

Once authorisation has been given, the SLT LM will inform the Educational Visits Co-ordinator, who will confirm that the trip has been authorised to the Activity Leader and will instruct them to input relevant details (including full risk assessments, itineraries, and student lists) onto EVOLVE. The EVC will ensure all trip leaders have an active EVOLVE account so that relevant details can be uploaded.

The SLT LM will inform the cover manager that cover is required. No additional cover form is required; Form 1 will be used to allocate cover.

The Activity Leader should read the supplementary Employer Guidance document found in the

'resources' section of Evolve and the RoSPA guidance on planning and leading adventurous activities. Please note that this should be read before each offsite activity is organised, as it is subject to change and revision.

The Activity Leader must enter details of the trip on Evolve, including completion of the Risk Assessment (form 3).

Please note that the Activity Leader could expose himself or herself to personal liability if any of the procedures set out in the planning checklist are not followed correctly. A trip leaders/organisers checklist is available on the internal teacher drive to support the organisation process. A flow diagram with time scales can be found in appendix 1.

Inclusion

We actively encourage all pupils, regardless of background or abilities, to take part in every aspect of our school life, including visits, enrichment activities including offsite activities where possible.

If there are more students who wish to attend a trip than there are spaces available, in the interests of equity, the following selection process must apply:

- For trips which are a requirement of a subject's curriculum, all students must be allowed to attend.
- For trips which are linked to a subject's curriculum (but not a requirement of it), students in the oldest cohort, for whom the trip is relevant, must be invited first (on the basis that they may not get another chance to enrich their subject or curriculum knowledge in future years). Remaining spaces will be allocated at random.
- For trips which do not relate to the school's academic curriculum, priority will be given to students with the least number of negative behaviour points. If the selection process gets to a point where a group of students larger than the number of spaces left all have the same number of behaviour points, students must be selected randomly.

Every reasonable step will be taken to include students with specific needs on offsite visits. Where necessary, a risk assessment will be carried out to determine if reasonable adjustments could be put into place to make the attendance on the trip of students with specific needs feasible. However, if those reasonable steps cannot ensure the safety of the young person in question and/or that of others, then the school reserves the right to determine that students cannot attend a particular venture. Additionally, the school reserves the right to refuse to take any student whose behaviour record casts doubt on their ability to behave acceptably and appropriately on the trip.

Costings and Communication with Parents

Form 3 will provide trip leaders the opportunity to calculate costs to students/parents, based on running costs of the trip (including transport costs, accommodation fees, activity costs, etc) – this will need to be checked and authorised by the finance department, before initial authorisation is given. More costly visits (such as residential or foreign visits) may involve a letter of interest being sent to parents first, to establish whether there is enough interest in the visit to make it viable, this may

involve a deposit being requested. Parents and carers will be asked to provide consent for their child to attend the visit and will also be asked to confirm that they are willing to pay the full cost (or seek support from the school).

In line with the Charging and Remissions policy, we will ask for a voluntary contribution for all visits during the school day in order to cover costs. The school reserves the right to cancel visits if insufficient financial contributions are received. Visits which take place at least 60% of the time during school holidays or weekends will require a full financial contribution from parents/carers. Pupil Premium funding may be available to support with this.

For visits abroad, the insurance synopsis will be shared with parents (we now opt into the RPA since joining SFET).

The Activity Leader will ensure that a Medical Information Form has been completed and submitted for each student taking part in the offsite activity.

The Activity Leader will ensure that written permission from a parent/carer has been received for each student taking part in the offsite activity. Please note that a telephone call or a text message does not satisfy this requirement.

For all residential offsite activities, a Parents' Information Evening must be held, in order to inform parents/carers of your findings on the pre-inspection visit, to outline the itinerary and offer parents/carers the opportunity to ask specific questions.

Attendees and supervision

Offsite activities will only be provided for students who are on roll at The Blue Coat School Community School at the time the offsite visit takes place.

Former students who are over 18 years of age may travel with the group, but only if deemed suitable by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator and the Senior Leadership Team and with a DBS.

Ratio

A minimum of two members of staff shall form the staffing of any offsite activity, unless the group is within the recommended ratio and students are attending events where other schools and other members of staff are present, e.g. at a school sports tournament.

For offsite activities taking place less than 60 miles from The Blue Coat School, a ratio of 1:20 staff/students shall apply.

For all other activities, including residential offsite activities, a ratio of 1:12 staff/students shall apply. These are the minimum ratios and that these will be reviewed depending on the nature of the activity and the needs of the group.

If the offsite activity is taking place near open water, a member of staff with a current HIAS Outdoor Leader (Open Country) qualification must be present with students for the duration of the offsite activity that takes place near open water.

Transport

A variety of transport methods may be used, following local guidance. These may include: public buses, coaches (through recognised suppliers only), trains, mini-buses, and aeroplanes/ferries for foreign visits. Transport costs will be included in the request for a voluntary contribution from parents/carers. Evidence of relevant insurance will be expected as part of the planning process.

Risk assessments

The Activity Leader will complete a risk assessment (Form 4), in line with Hampshire Outdoor Education guidelines, which will be shared with all adults attending the visit (including volunteers). These will be added to Hampshire Evolve, along with other planning details, at least 8 weeks prior to the visit taking place and updated to reflect any changes in medical or safeguarding needs. The school's Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policies apply to all education visits. With all visits and activities, an analysis of the benefits of the activity to children's learning is weighed up against the possible disbenefits of the trip and followed by putting clear control measures in place so that potential risks can be satisfactorily managed. A pre-visit by a member of staff, wherever possible, is considered a key part of risk assessing and allows the member of staff to review the location and assess any potential risks.

During a visit, the Activity Leader will communicate with the base contact to make the school aware that they have arrived safely, and the time of departure. Residential Activity Leaders will communicate with the base contact at least once each day. Activity Leaders may also choose to update official school social media platforms to keep parents informed, particularly for residential or foreign visits.

Pre-visit Inspections

For residential trips, a pre-visit by a member of staff, is considered a key part of risk assessing and allows the member of staff to review the location and assess any potential risks.

Activity Leaders for residential offsite activities must satisfy themselves that the accommodation is appropriate for their group. The appropriate type of accommodation and supervision will vary according to the needs, age, gender and abilities of the group. Activity Leaders should ideally not book accommodation on which they have not conducted a pre-visit inspection, in order to satisfy themselves of its suitability.

On pre-visit inspections, Activity Leaders must consider and complete a detailed risk assessment to include;

1. the security of the building at night, including ensuring that doors and downstairs windows can be locked;
2. adequate fire exits and details of fire officer's report (or equivalent);
3. bathroom, toilet and washing facilities, including ensuring they do not have to be shared with others;
4. floor plan to illustrate location of students' and staff sleeping areas;
5. the size of the rooms, in proportion to the number of students it is expected to accommodate;
6. the cleanliness of the bathroom, toilet and washing facilities;
7. window openings and retainers in upstairs rooms;
8. access to balconies in upstairs rooms, including the height of balcony retainers, if applicable;
9. availability of a large meeting area for your specific use and needs at the accommodation;
10. whether or not the accommodation offers value for money;
11. the district and neighbourhood of the accommodation;
12. the availability of recreation and game facilities for students to use at the accommodation.
13. the availability of relevant tour representatives;
14. access to public telephones at the accommodation;
15. proximity of the accommodation to local amenities;
16. quality of the food offered at the accommodation;
17. condition of local transport available, including the mandatory use of seat belts;
18. availability of local doctors and dentists;
19. details of the nearest British Embassy or equivalent consular representative, if abroad; and
20. proximity to open water.

Activity Leaders must be able to state to parents/carers that a risk assessment has been completed and that the accommodation and proposed itinerary are acceptable, in their judgement, with respect to the health, welfare and safety of students.

Safeguarding

The school's Safeguarding policy includes all off-site activity, including residential activity. This applies, in particular, but not exclusively, to the following:

- Students' behaviour whilst on the venture (on residential trips, students and parents sign a code of conduct (Form 5) upon accepting a place on the trip)
- Suitable employment checks are carried out on volunteers and staff attending the visits
- Staff disclosure of any medical needs/that they are fit to participate in the visit
- External providers or outdoor centres are drawn from the Outdoor Education, PE and DofE Service's checked providers list, which confirms that safety management checks are in place. Should any other instructor or provider be recommended or found, reference would first be made to the Outdoor Education, PE and DofE Service to ensure that suitable steps are taken.

Incidents and emergencies

The Activity Leader is in charge of pupils during a visit and they have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty of care to act as a reasonably

prudent parent would. Adults accompanying the visit should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation. The priorities are:

1. to assess the situation and establish the nature and extent of the emergency;
2. to safeguard the uninjured members of the group;
3. to attend to the casualty and seek support from emergency services;
4. to inform everyone who needs to know about the incident.

For all visits there will be two 'base contacts' – these colleagues will have a full list of contact and medical details for the children on the visit, as well as details the risk assessment, planning, itinerary and guidance from the Hampshire Outdoor Education team, who will provide support in the event of an emergency on a school visit. Any concerns or 'near misses' are reported by the school to the Outdoor Education Service where necessary.

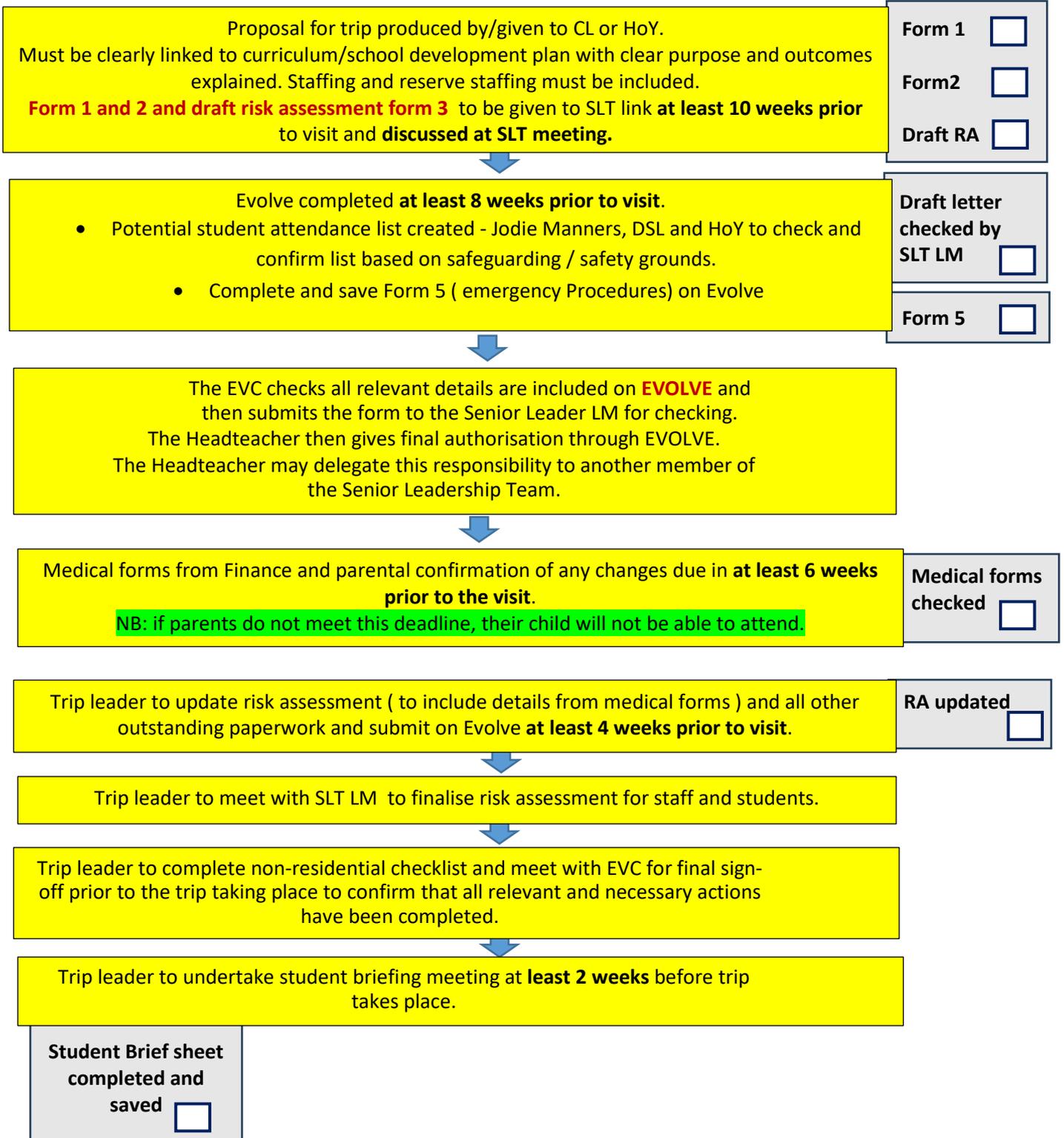
No-one in the group is permitted to speak to the media as this may cause distress to families and the School's critical incident plan will be actioned. If a child needs to go to hospital, a member of staff will accompany them. Once pupils have safely returned to school, the Activity Leader should complete an accident/incident form with details of what happened – this should then be saved retrospectively on the Evolve system, as well as passed to the school's Health and Safety Manager.

During an educational visit, if a pupil's behaviour presents a serious risk to themselves or others, they may be sent back to school or home. Parents will be contacted and will be responsible for the collection of their child, including any costs incurred (as stated in Form 4).

Evaluation of educational visits and events

Following any visit, colleagues should consider whether the original intended learning outcomes were achieved and make a note (via Evolve) of any adjustments or changes that might be needed to improve the visit, should it be repeated in the future. This may involve asking pupils to evaluate the visit, and might involve follow-up work in lessons. The teacher will ensure that any follow-up work is differentiated to allow pupils who did not attend the visit to participate and learn equally.

Trips and visits (non-residential and non-hazardous)



Trips and visits (residential or hazardous)

