

THE ROYAL SCHOOL, ARMAGH



Policy on School Trips and Educational Visits

September 2020

Amended June 2023

Ethos & Rationale

School trips and educational visits are an invaluable way to help pupils interact with their learning and develop their interests, experiences, relationships and skills beyond the school setting in an environment which is safe and relevant to learning. This policy covers all the school outings and visits which are curriculum based activities within school hours; day visits and activities which extend beyond the normal school day; visits requiring overnight accommodation from home within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and visits to places outside Northern Ireland which involve air or sea travel. During any trip or visit the overriding priority must always be the safety and well-being of children.

The Legal framework to protect children is primarily provided by the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The central thrust of which is that the welfare of the pupil must be the paramount consideration and it is this essential principle which underpins effective practice in the area of child protection. The basic principles of child protection, as defined in the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, must always be borne in mind when undertaking an educational visit, particularly where it includes a residential element.

- The pupil's welfare must always be paramount and this overrides all other considerations.
- All pupils have the fundamental right to be protected from harm.
- Pupils have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously.
- Careful consideration must be given to pupils who have special educational needs, as such children may be especially vulnerable.

The majority of educational visits take place without incident and potential risks should not discourage teachers from undertaking educational visits. However, good planning and attention to safety will reduce the likelihood of accidents and lessen the seriousness of any that may occur.

Staff considering an educational visit should follow the procedures described in this policy and complete the necessary documentation.

The school ethos and mission focusses on the importance of an education which in its wholeness enables pupils to achieve their full potential in academic, moral, social and spiritual terms and on care for the individual. Educational visits and trips are a key feature in that type of development and this policy should be read, interpreted, and applied in a manner which is consistent with the ethos and mission.

Categories of Educational Visits

The nature of the educational visit, the specific activity or activities planned, or the location will determine the level of planning and associated risk assessment required. The table below provides guidance on the categories of educational visit. These categories are referenced in the later sections detailing the specific planning and documentation required for educational activities.

Category 1 - Basic
Visits which take place on a regular basis and occur largely within establishment hours e.g. sporting fixtures, swimming pool visits and outings.
Category 2 - One-off day /evening excursions (non-hazardous)
e.g. field study trips, theatre visits, business/education visits, regional sporting fixtures.
CATEGORY 3 Residential visits of one or more nights within the UK or Ireland. (non-hazardous)
e.g. visits to residential centres, field centres and school exchanges.
CATEGORY 4 Residential visits outside the UK or Ireland (non-hazardous)
e.g. international exchange visits, sporting events, cultural activities and international community work.
CATEGORY 5 Hazardous activities – residential and non-residential as exemplified below:
Hill walking, Fieldwork, Cycling/mountain biking, Orienteering, Rock climbing/abseiling, Caving and potholing, Kayaking, Open canoeing, Windsurfing, Dingy sailing, Sub-aqua, Skiing/snowboarding, Horse riding, Angling, Water-skiing, Rafting rowing, Surfing, Bouldering/gorge walking, Swimming in open water, Coasteering, Stand-up paddle boarding

Category 1 and Category 2 recurring and one-off (non-hazardous) visit

Step 1 Identification of Educational Visit - Objective

The school, department or teacher identifies an area or areas of the curriculum for which an educational visit(s) may be an essential or relevant component.

Step 2 Approval

Details of the proposed visit(s) are submitted, by the teacher or group leader, on the EVA Form to the Headmaster for approval. ***Approval must be granted by the Headmaster, and the board of governors, before any further planning is undertaken. Staff should allow adequate time in their planning for this to be practicable.***

Step 3 Implementing Appropriate Risk Management

It should be ensured that all visits are organised in accordance with relevant school policies (e.g. Health and Safety and Safeguarding & Child Protection) and take cognisance of best practice, as set out in this policy and in the EA guidance (EA Educational Visits Interim

Guidance for Schools (2017) which can be accessed at <https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management>)

Step 4 Informing the Parents

Parents should be informed about the educational visit their children will participate in. This should be in the form of a letter on school headed notepaper (current version). All letters on school headed notepaper must be approved in advance by the Headmaster or one of his deputies. Once parents have been informed of visits their written consent should be obtained using the form provided in the Forms and Appendices section.

Step 5 Maintaining Records

Copies of all forms (e.g. EVA and Consent Forms) and any other relevant information should be submitted to the Headmaster.

In the case of an incident/accident occurring, an 'Educational Visit Incident Record Form' must be completed.

Procedures Step by Step for Visits in Categories 3, 4 and 5

Step 1 Identification of Educational Visit - Objective

The school, department or teacher identifies an area or areas of the curriculum for which an educational visit(s) may be an essential or relevant component.

Step 2 Initial Approval

Details of proposed visit should be submitted by the teacher or group leader to the Headmaster for consideration in consultation with the Board of Governors. The EVP form should be used for this purpose and any relevant information attached e.g. details of the residential centre to be used. It is the responsibility of the Headmaster in consultation with governors, to decide whether a visit should proceed. It is essential, therefore, that they are consulted at the earliest opportunity. Under normal circumstances, a minimum period of notice of not less than 4 weeks is recommended. Detailed planning can proceed once initial approval has been granted.

Step 3 Completion of Planning Checklist

The appropriate sections of the planning checklist should be completed by the teacher and/or group leader for the visit. See EV1 Planning Checklist in the Forms and Appendices section.

Step 4 Briefings

Staff, volunteers, parents and pupils, should be briefed about all aspects of the educational visit. Once parents are fully aware of the visit details they should be asked to give their consent in writing. The Consent Form may be used for this purpose.

Step 5 Information Collated

It is important to gather together all relevant information about the pupils participating in the visit. This should be collated by the group leader and the originals retained by the school. An Educational Visits Group Details Form can be found in the Forms and Appendices section.

Step 6 Final Approval Secured

Visits in this category can only proceed once final approval has been secured from the Headmaster and governors. The EVP form should be signed by both the Headmaster and the Chairman of the Management Committee to confirm approval and endorsement of the arrangements for the visit.

Step 7 Maintaining Records

Copies of all forms and relevant information should be filed at the school.

Any changes to the original approved visit must be agreed, as appropriate, prior to the event taking place.

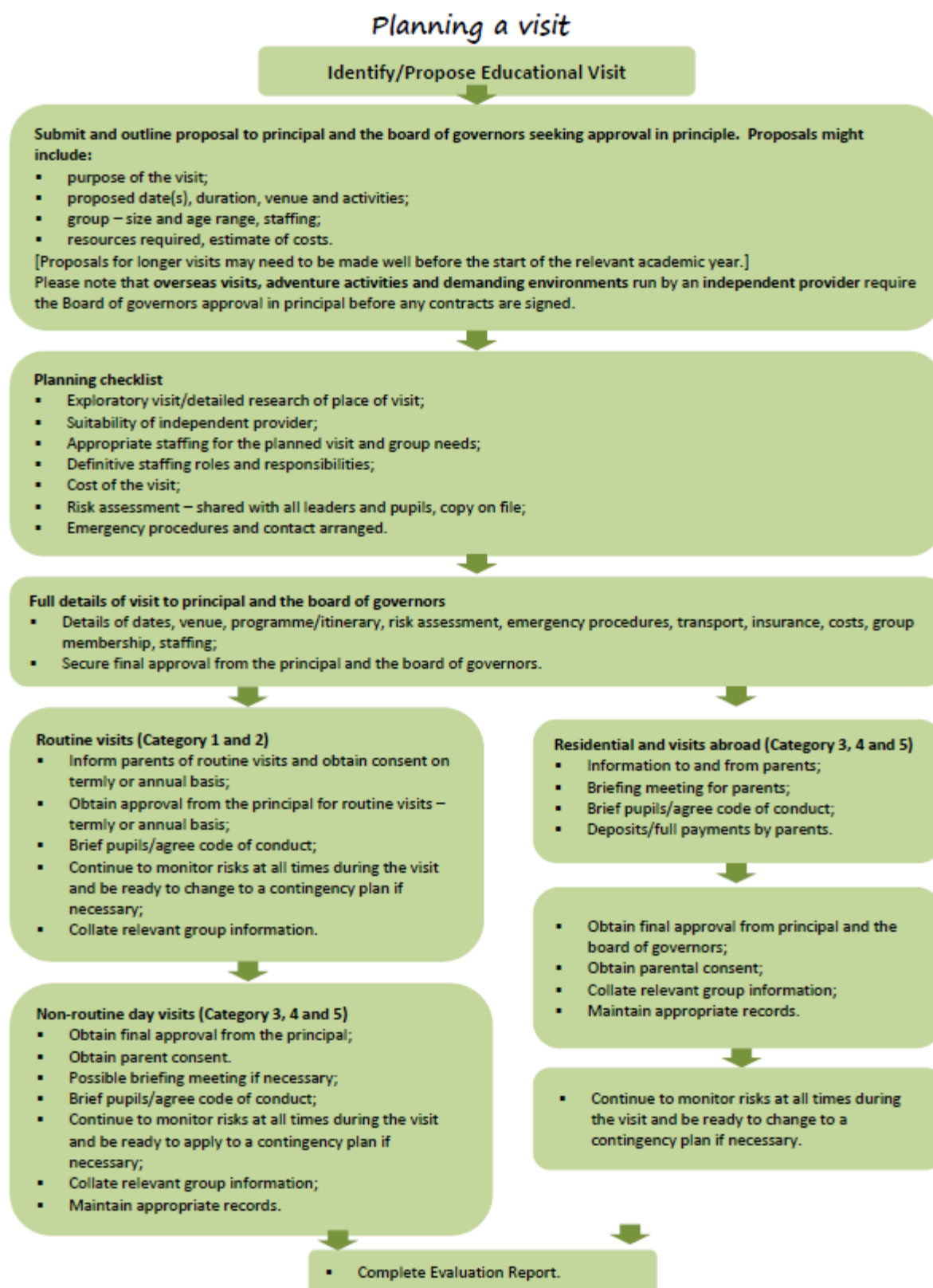
An Educational Visit Incident/Accident Form can be found in the Forms and Appendices section. This form may be used by accompanying staff to keep a record of the pertinent information required of any incident or accident that occurs during an educational visit.

The group leader should also ensure that all documentation required by the Employing Authority (Board of Governors of the Royal School, Armagh) in relation to any incidents or accidents is completed as appropriate. This must be forwarded to the Headmaster as soon as is practicable.

Step 8 Evaluation

On return it is important to undertake an evaluation of the key aspects of the visit. The completed evaluation should be forwarded to the Headmaster and maintained by the school for future reference. A Post Visit Review Form may be used for this purpose and is available in the Forms and Appendices section.

Planning a visit - Overview



Planning a visit – Key questions



- What are educational objectives?
 - What is the nature of the visit?
 - Target group identified?
 - Does the venue/activity meet the educational objectives of the visit?
 - Is the age profile of the pupils suitable for chosen venue/activity?
 - What is the competence, experience of staff?
 - What environmental factors do we need to consider e.g. time of year, weather?
 - Venue facilities?
 - Venue accessibility?
 - Clothing equipment requirements?
 - Appropriateness of venue?
 - facilities
 - activities
 - location
 - access to tele communication
 - venue staff
 - first aid/medication/emergency action plan
 - accommodation in relation to security/emergencies
 - access to local services
 - If visit is not possible how can we fully research the appropriateness of the venue?
 - Has the independent provider all the appropriate insurances and risk assessments in place?
 - Suitable detailed itinerary agreed?
 - Appropriate supervision of qualified staff?
 - Any proposed changes to the agreed programme to be agreed with the EVC to assess risk?
 - Appropriate?
 - Competent/qualified e.g. first aider?
 - Staff/pupil ratios?
 - Training?
 - Clear roles and responsibilities?
 - Volunteer staff considerations?
 - Communications protocol in place and understood by all staff?
 - Clear roles and responsibilities of main staff?
 - First aider identified?
 - Familiarisation with educational visit venue to include location/first aid equipment/ emergency procedures and the responsible staff identified?
 - Arrangement of first aid/emergency procedures meeting with staff/pupils on arrival at venue?
- Immediate access to parental consent form information (telephone numbers etc.) especially for all pupils but especially for those with medical conditions?

Risk Assessment

Educational visits cannot be entirely risk-free. The aim, therefore, must be to contain risks within acceptable levels and provide evidence that relevant risks have been considered. Care must be taken not to expose pupils to unacceptable physical or psychological risk, particularly on those occasions when the educational visit aims to exercise the individual's sense of adventure. Fundamental to the planning process of any educational visit is the process of risk assessment.

Risk assessment allows a reasoned judgement about the level of risk involved and what actions need to be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

This is achieved by either:

- 1) Eliminating the identified hazards altogether: -
- 2) Managing hazards by introducing effective control measures: -

Risk Assessment comprises the following steps:

- defining the activity to be undertaken;
- identifying the hazards associated with the activity;
- identifying the people who may be at risk;
- evaluating the potential risk;
- establishing additional safety and/or control measures;
- disseminating information to all relevant persons and compile information packs as appropriate.

The vital issue is whether the risk can be managed. If there are doubts that the risk is manageable, then it is advisable to change the activity and/or the location. Where there is considerable concern as to the outcome, it is better to abandon and redesign the educational visit than to expose pupils to an unacceptable level of risk.

Group leaders must fully record their risk management decisions on paper.

As with much health and safety legislation and regulations, the paper at the end of the process is of minor significance compared to the professional judgement of the group leader.

The group leader should understand that risk assessment is a dynamic process and therefore must carry out on-going risk assessments during an educational visit and ensure that appropriate action is taken as necessary e.g. cancelled public transport, pupils or staff illness, closed venue, adverse weather conditions. The ability to re-assess and manage changing risks whilst the visit is taking place is a key element of the competence for leaders of educational visits.

An example of an approach to risk assessment for a category 3 visit is contained in the Forms and Appendices section. A range of exemplar risk assessments for a variety of activities are also available in school. These can be obtained from the Vice Principal Curriculum or via the School Microsoft Teams site (Staff Team, Risk Assessment Channel) or <https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/facilities-management/qshe/health-safety-and-emergency-planning/health-and-safety>

The following risk assessments may be helpful to staff in planning educational visits, staff should consult the wider range of risk assessments described above as and when necessary.

- School Excursions Risk Assessment
- Residential Stays Risk Assessment
- Remote Supervision Risk Assessment
- Educational Visits – General Risk Assessment
- Adventure Activities – General Risk Assessment

Where it is practical, there should be a pre-visit by the party leader. Where this is not practical, a leader should seek advice from others who have been there before or from the appropriate tour operator. Upon arrival at the destination a leader should carry out a check of the locality to assess any risks/hazards/dangers. Planning and organisation of the visit should ensure that those involved are not exposed to risk of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment

Supervision and Staff Ratios

There should be a minimum of one adult to every 20 pupils, but after carrying out a risk assessment for the activity, consideration should be given to the nature and location of the activity and to the age, conduct and medical needs of the pupils taking part. Such consideration may require changing the ratio of staff to pupils. On the basis of a risk assessment, it is likely that additional supervision may be required, particularly in relation to categories 3, 4 and 5 with reference to residential visits and hazardous activities.

Visits involving a mixed group should have supervisory staff of both sexes where an overnight stay is involved. Where this is not possible parents must be made aware and give their consent to the proposed arrangement prior to the visit.

Arrangements should be made to ensure that appropriate ratios are maintained if a staff member needs to leave the group e.g. to accompany a pupil to hospital, escort a pupil home, personal illness or attend to a personal emergency.

Supervision can be close or remote but it is always for the duration of the visit.

Close (direct) supervision occurs when the group remains within sight and contact of the supervisor.

Remote (indirect) supervision is planned and is subject to stringent controls, while the group is not necessarily within direct contact or vision of the leader at all times. Both the leaders and the group will know of each other's whereabouts and clear lines of communication including rendezvous points will have been established. Leaders are required to remain in the area, in which the indirect supervised activity takes place, throughout period.

The need to involve volunteers e.g. parents or governors with clearly defined roles and responsibilities is an accepted practice.

Where a non-curriculum based trip requires cover to be provided for absent teachers an allowance for the cost of substitute cover should be built into the cost of the trip. This should be discussed with the Headmaster or Vice Principal (Curriculum)

Vetting

It is essential that the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures are followed by all staff or volunteers involved in the trip. Staff or volunteers involved in a trip should have the appropriate vetting through Access NI. Staff organising trips need to be satisfied that places to be visited, particularly residential centres have similar procedures in place for their staff., who also have substantial access to pupils.

Transport

Staff should ensure that all transport used during educational visits meets the legal statutory requirements for the type of journey.

- Consideration should be given to the most appropriate form of transport for the journey. Where possible a school vehicle should be used in preference to a personal vehicle.

Where it is necessary for leaders or parents to transport pupils in their cars, organisers of the visit should:

- Satisfy themselves that the vehicle is licensed and insured for purpose – this could involve asking for a copy of the insurance details;
- Seek the agreement of the parents of the pupils involved – this should be in writing;
- Satisfy themselves that private car users do not carry more passengers than the number of seat belts available;
- Do so in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Insurance Cover

The group leader must ensure, well before the group departs, that adequate insurance arrangements are in place. Additional travel insurance is required in relation to educational visits outside of Northern Ireland. This should be adequate for specialised risk activities, the location of the visit, participants with medical conditions, cancellation or other emergency situations and medical cover for leaders and staff. Parents should be advised as to the extent of any additional insurance taken out by the school.

The group leader should scrutinise carefully the conditions, list of exclusions, and limits on cover in any policy provided by an outside organisation. If there is any doubt, the insurer should be asked for clarification before departure. The group leader may need to seek advice from the school, Education Authority or insurance company if not completely satisfied with the insurance cover.

No person acting on behalf of a school should sign an indemnity for any outside body against liability without it first being checked and approved by the bursar.

Use of independent providers

The term independent providers refers to other organisations or companies which provide a service that is outside the direct control of the school e.g. tour operators, specialist activity providers, residential centres etc.

Where a trip is being organised or delivered by an independent provider the Headmaster must ensure that:

- Relevant policies and procedures are followed in relation to the use of such providers;
- Providers are reputable and have the necessary insurance in place for the services they provide;
- Staff involved in the delivery of the service are competent and are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the group and child protection;
- Risk assessments are available for the activities the group will partake in;
- Adequate emergency and contingency plans and procedures are in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

These prerequisites should be ascertained in writing from the external provider as part of the risk assessment process.

Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct should be provided, in advance of an educational visit, to all pupils. Staff, volunteer supervisors, pupils and parents should all be made fully aware of the code, including possible consequences of breaking the code. All pupils participating in an educational visit must agree to abide by the Code of Conduct at all times during the visit. It is the responsibility of the leaders to maintain standards of behaviour and discipline while on educational visits. Leaders cannot avoid setting an example to group members in everything they do or say.

While on a residential, leaders remain responsible for the conduct and safety of pupils at all times. This should be taken into consideration when deciding on appropriate behaviour, practice and supervisory arrangements.

It may be necessary to devise a duty rota in order that staff can have a break away from supervisory duty, while ensuring that an appropriate level of supervision is maintained at all times.

In developing and agreeing a Code of Conduct, the aim should be to reflect the ethos of the school, the nature of the place(s) visited and/or the activities undertaken.

After carrying out a behavioural risk assessment, the school has the right to refuse any pupil from participating in the visit, whose involvement may be considered to be a danger to him/herself or to the group.

Under no circumstances should persons other than official group members join the party.

Supervisors should be reminded of their responsibilities under child protection and safeguarding of young people. At all times staff must adhere strictly to school safeguarding procedures including the Code of Conduct.

A model code of conduct is provided in the appendices, this can be edited so that it is appropriate for the group, activity and trip.

It can be good practice to involve pupils and their parents in the process of drawing up the code of conduct: this is a useful way of getting them to think through the issues and to understand the reasons behind the requirements, and is itself a process of risk assessment. This process is not mandatory.

Communicating with Parents

Effective communication will ensure that parents are made aware of the purpose and nature of the visit and will ensure that parents inform the school about any particular needs and issues of their child relevant to the visit.

Letters to parents/guardians should give as much information as possible, including the costs involved and the type and level of supervision. A draft of this letter should be approved by the Headmaster or Vice Principal before circulation. The Headmaster or Vice Principal must be satisfied that the ratio of leaders to young people meets the required level and is appropriate to the activity being undertaken.

Information to parents may include:

- the aims and benefits of the visit;
- dates of the visit or series of visits;
- destination details;
- times of departure and return and whether parents will be required to meet their children on return;
- the location where the pupils will be collected and returned;
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;
- the size of the group and the level of supervision;
- details of accommodation;
- details of provision for special educational or medical needs;
- names of leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- the planned programme of activities;
- agreed arrangements for non-emergency contact during the visit;
- arrangements/protocols for parents to make contact with the child;
- arrangements/protocols for the school or pupils to make contact with their parents;
- a list of potential circumstances when a parent will be contacted by the school e.g. when a pupil:
 - reports feeling unwell and the symptoms/condition is giving cause for concern;
 - requires medical attention;
 - is injured as a result of an accident or emergency;
 - is involved in a serious breach of the established code of conduct for the educational visit.

- * the code of conduct for the visit detailing expected standards of behaviour and sanctions;
- * arrangements for the early return of a pupil for any reason during the visit;
- * details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation, medical cover, any exceptions in the policy and whether parents need to arrange additional cover;
- * clothing and equipment to be taken;
- what pupils should not take on the visit or bring back;
- advice on pocket money and how it is allocated during the visit;
- the information required from parents about their child;
- details on the cost of the visit;
- the risks associated with the visit (but tempered with information about the school's good safety record, and the overall benefits to the participants).

Information should (where relevant):

- be sent as far in advance of the visit as practicable;
- involve convening a meeting to clarify detail if appropriate. This is particularly important for residential visits, or when the pupils are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities or visits to demanding environments. Where a briefing meeting is required, alternative arrangements might need to be made for parents who cannot attend or who have difficulty with communication.

Parental Consent

Parental consent must be obtained for educational visits. The contents of a consent form for a parent to sign will vary according to the type of visit.

Please note that ordinarily pupils will not be permitted to go on non curricular trips (e.g. ski trip) if there are outstanding fees owed. Parents should be advised of this with the initial information and lists of pupils seeking to go on a trip should be submitted to the Finance Department at the earliest opportunity and before the pupil's place is confirmed.

Medical Consent

For visits that require parental consent, parents should be asked to agree to the young person receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If parents do not agree to this, the principal may decide to withdraw the child from the visit given the additional responsibility this would entail for the group leader.

Contact with Parents during the Visit

All parents of pupils taking part in an educational visit should be briefed (category 3, 4 and 5 visits) or provided with (category 1 and 2 visit) a copy of the communication procedure in advance of the visit. These should be clearly defined arrangements/protocols for parents to make contact with their child.

Parents should therefore:

- know the destination details;

- be aware of the emergency contact arrangements.

Pupil Contact with Parents

There should be clearly defined arrangements/protocols for pupils to make contact with their parents.

Parents should be made aware of and consent to the mobile phone protocol if applicable.

Roles and Responsibilities

The successful planning and implementation of an educational visit requires the duties, roles and responsibilities of staff to be clearly defined in advance of the trip, articulated, recorded in writing and understood by all those leading and/or assisting with such visits. This includes those responsible for the provision of first aid, administration or medication and communication with parents.

The Headmaster

The Headmaster (or his deputy), with the agreement of the Board of Governors, will grant or deny permission for all educational visits. Ordinarily the headmasters will bring the application to SLT to ensure compliance with the school calendar. Approval, in adequate time to allow consideration of the proposal must be sought in writing by those planning the trip using the form provided in the appendices. Approval must be granted before planning progresses or a visit takes place.

Educational Visits Coordinator

The role of Educational Visits' Co-ordinator (EVC) will be central in endeavouring to ensure that the best practice, in relation to educational visits, is developed and implemented within the school. At The Royal School, Armagh the role is performed by the Vice Principal (Curriculum) in collaboration with the headmaster.

In pursuance of this aim the EVC should:

- ensure that visits have specific educational objectives;
- be satisfied that risk assessment has been carried out and that appropriate safety measures are in place;
- ensure that all arrangements comply with the organisation's Child Protection and Health and Safety Policies;
- ensure that the principal demonstrates how proposals comply with best practice;
- assess and submit visit proposal for board of governors' approval;
- ensure that an acceptable code of conduct for pupils is in place.

Group Leader (Teacher in Charge)

The group leader will have overall operational responsibility for the supervision, discipline and conduct of the participants for the duration of the visit and should be experienced in organising such visits, the supervision of pupils, and all relevant health and safety matters.

They should be able to direct and supervise pupils, and be suitably qualified/competent to instruct them in activities, as appropriate.

The group leader has a crucial role to play in the successful and safe completion of an educational visit.

The group leader should:

- obtain prior agreement and approval before any off-site visit takes place;
- appoint a deputy, if appropriate, with the consent of the principal;
- adhere to best practice as outlined in this guidance document;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation for the visit including the briefing of leaders, pupils and parents;
- ensure that all relevant checks have been undertaken if an independent provider is to be used;
- take steps to become familiar with the location/establishment where the activity will take place;
- inform parents as to the terms and conditions of any additional insurance cover taken out by the school;
- undertake and complete an appropriate risk assessment;
- collect relevant information on the pupils proposed to participate in the visit to assess and confirm their suitability;
- ensure the ratio of leaders to pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group and the nature of the activity to be undertaken;
- clearly define the role of each member of accompanying staff and volunteers and ensure that all tasks have been clearly assigned;
- have proper regard to the health and safety of the pupils and ensure that adequate supervision is provided at all times;
- ensure that the established code of conduct for both staff and pupils is adhered to;
- ensure child protection procedures are followed;
- ensure that adequate first-aid provision will be available;
- ensure that, during the visit, leaders have up-to-date emergency contact details of:
 - nominated contact
 - parents
- ensure that accompanying staff and volunteers and the nominated contact are aware of the emergency procedures;
- ensure that the group leaders have the details of group members' special educational or medical needs, which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively;
- consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the pupils is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality;
- regularly review visits/activities.

Accompanying Staff

Accompanying staff must endeavour to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances.

'In Loco Parentis' applies to all adults who work with pupils.

Accompanying staff should:

- accept the authority and follow the instructions of the group leader;
- under direction of the group leader, assist with the organisation of activities and discipline of the pupils;
- ensure that the established code of conduct, for leaders and participants is adhered to;
- consider stopping the activity and notify the group leader, if they think the risk to the health or safety of the group members in their charge, is unacceptable.

Volunteers in a Supervisory Role

To satisfy staffing ratios, it may be necessary to involve persons other than staff members as volunteers, e.g. parents. These adults can play a very valuable part in ensuring the safety of group participants while on a visit. However, prior to any visit they should be clear about their role and responsibilities during the visit.

Volunteers should:

- be vetted on the basis of having substantial access to children;
- endeavour to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- not be left in sole charge of group members except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment;
- follow the instructions of the group leader (which may be provided in writing) and other accompanying staff, and help with control and discipline;
- speak to the group leader or accompanying staff if concerned about the health or safety of the pupils, at any time during the visit;
- endeavour to ensure that the established code of conduct, is adhered to.

Nominated Contact at School

Dealing with unexpected situations can be aided by the Headmaster and Vice Principals, or another senior member of staff (if not on the visit) who will act as the contact person for both the group and the pupils' families.

Nominated contact should:

- retain details of the place to be visited, contact personnel and telephone and mobile numbers as appropriate;
- retain a copy of the contact details of all the pupils' parents;
- retain a copy of the contact details of the principal/group leader;
- be fully briefed and aware of his/her responsibilities including the action to take in the event of a serious incident.

Parents

Parents should be able to make an informed decision as to whether their child should go on the visit. However, in the interests of the overall safety and success of the visit the ultimate decision as to who participates rests with the school. The group leader should ensure that parents are given sufficient information in writing and are invited to a briefing session, where appropriate.

Parents should:

- sign the consent form;
- provide the school with an emergency contact number(s);
- provide the school with relevant medical/dietary details, including any medication currently being taken in writing (by means of the consent form) and any other relevant information (about their child's emotional, psychological and physical health) which may affect their participation in the visit);
- help prepare their child for the visit, for example, by reinforcing the visit's code of conduct;
- agree the arrangements established for a member of the group returning home due to unforeseen circumstances.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents who have particular or special needs, for example, those who are hearing impaired or whose first language is not English.

Responsibilities of Pupils

The group leader should, when briefing the pupils, make it clear that they have to act in accordance with the code of conduct at all times. Where appropriate, pupils should be fully involved in the planning process. Further consideration may need to be given to this matter when dealing with pupils with behavioural issues.

Emergency / Contingency Arrangements

Establishing emergency procedures is an essential part of planning an educational visit. Everyone involved in the educational visit should be aware of the procedures that are to be followed in the event of an emergency.

Such procedures should outline clearly what is to be done during the actual emergency and after the event. An exemplar framework to follow is set out in the appendices.

Contingency planning relates to areas and circumstances which should be anticipated in advance of an educational visit, e.g. unsuitable weather, transportation problems, cancellation of an event, illness or injury etc. It should also define roles and responsibilities for all staff involved in the organisation of the trip including senior managers remaining in school.

Those responsible for organising educational visits should familiarise themselves, and others involved, with relevant contingency arrangements.

Visit organisers should ensure that a clear communications plan is established with key contact numbers available. All staff members and parents of those taking part in the visit should be briefed and be provided with a copy of the procedure. It should clearly define the circumstances where contact should be made.

In the event of a medical emergency designated staff responsible for managing first aid/ medical emergencies should have knowledge of:

- medical conditions;
- parental advice relating to a medical condition;
- an emergency contact number for parents;
- how to access any medical equipment e.g. the defibrillator at the facility;
- the emergency procedures within the facility.

Critical Incidents

“A critical incident may be defined as any sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within a school community and which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of that school.” (iMatter Every School a Good School. A Guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools).

In the event of a critical incident (as defined above) occurring during a school visit the school’s critical incident management plan should be implemented.

Additional guidance

- The RSA Planning Checklist should be completed throughout the organisation of a school trip. If approval has been gained for the proposed trip, the leader should inform relevant and appropriate aspects of the school community of the trip, e.g. entered in the school diary, information to staff, a letter home to parents, informing the school canteen regarding catering, appropriate school transport.
- The trip leader must ensure that the school canteen is aware of the numbers involved in the trip. Pupils on free school meals are entitled to a packed lunch.
- Proposals for school trips should be submitted on an appropriate form. The Headmaster may invite the organiser to discuss aspects of the trip. Those who organise trips or educational outings and those who help supervise have a statutory responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of the young people in their care. As a ‘duty of care’ they have the same responsibility as would be normally discharged by parents and the circumstances may require a higher standard of care from a leader than a parent.
- An information card should be given to each participant containing the telephone numbers of the emergency services of the country to which you are travelling, contact names and addresses for your accommodation (if relevant) and the emergency contact details of the group leaders.
- An itinerary of the trip should be prepared and all members of the group **should be aware of it**. Roles and responsibilities and lines of communication should be clearly defined, agreed and effective within the party.

- Any changes to return times should be communicated to the Headmaster or Vice Principal as soon as is practical.
- Group supervisors should be aware of the specific medical needs of the pupils on the trip and prepare and plan accordingly including ensuring that appropriate spare medication is available. A list of names and contacts of those involved on the trip should be compiled and a copy left in the Concourse Office and with the Headmaster and Vice Principal. Departure and return times should be clear as well as a contact number or location for the group for the duration of the trip. The party should have access to a First Aid Kit, if appropriate.
- Where payments are involved, receipt and expenditure records must be kept. A record of pupil receipts should also be kept and a receipt supplied to the parent/guardian. Procedures for this should be in line with the cash handling guidelines issued by the Finance Office. Detailed processes should be discussed with the Bursar if required.
- In the event of any serious accident or incident (critical incident) on the trip or visit, the school leadership must be contacted immediately.
- In the event of an accident or other incident an Incident Record Form must be completed and submitted immediately upon return. In the event of an accident resulting in hospitalisation of any member of the group, the Principal or Vice Principal must be informed immediately.
- Each evening, all participants should be brought together to check on welfare.
- On each day of the trip, a short briefing meeting should be held with all participants to remind them of the plans for the day and outline any necessary changes.

MONITORING:

- Mechanisms for monitoring will be overseen by all those members of staff who undertake a school trip/outing. The Headmaster should be consulted about the arrangements for the trip/outing at its various stages of planning and preparation. It is important that new or substitute members of staff should be fully informed.
- Following a school trip/outing, a post visit review must be completed as a means of evaluation and feedback.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed in line with new legislative requirements, updated guidance and the needs of the school, the framework for this policy is based on Education Authority Educational Visits Interim Guidance, 2017 and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.