

Westminster Tutors



Educational Visits Policy
2024-2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy defines the expectations and intentions for educational visits. It applies to situations where the college has responsibility for children and young people who are taking part in learning activities in an environment that is outside of the classroom. It supports the principle of inclusion.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 College educational visits can enrich the students' appreciation of the school curriculum and contribute to their personal, social, and educational development. Visits may also form a compulsory part of an examination course. Therefore, all college trips must be appropriately organised and planned, and any reasonable and actual risks must be identified and minimised. This policy is expected to be utilised concerning field trips – for regular offsite trips to the local museums and sports centres, please refer to Health and Safety Policy.
- 2.2 This policy document summarises acceptable and advisable behaviour in organising and managing visits, field trips and holidays in which students participate and have been organised by or in conjunction with Westminster Tutors. Notice is taken of the Health and Safety Executive 'School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities (June 2011) and the DfE 'Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (February 2014) in compiling this policy.
- 2.3 The policy is made available to all those concerned with college trips, particularly staff members who will be planning, organising, and managing the trips and parents/guardians who want reassurance that the school takes every reasonable and proportionate precaution for the trip. Indeed, parents and guardians will be asked to confirm that they are aware of the college policy before consenting to their children's participation in visits.
- 2.4 While parental/guardian approval is essential to the process, it does not absolve the college of all responsibility if things go wrong. The school still owes a duty of care to the students and the parents/guardians, but this must be focused on actual risks and not trying to eliminate all risks, regardless of the likelihood of occurrence. As the Health and Safety Executive notes, school trips and outings are about striking the right balance between protecting pupils from risk and allowing them to learn from school trips by focusing on real risks (not fanciful or trivial) and ensuring that planning trips are adequately supported with proportionate systems in place.

Therefore, based on the above principles, this policy sets out the essential requirements for planning and organising such trips, including guidance on risk assessments.

3. Policy Scope

- 3.1 This policy and the Educational Visits Handbook formally adopt the website www.oeapng.info as their source of guidance about educational visits.
- 3.2 Educational visits are valued as an integral part of a Westminster Tutor's education and curriculum.
- 3.3 The Principal is responsible for the purposeful and safe provision of educational visits and activities and acts as the Educational Visits Coordinator. This includes ensuring that all adults accompanying a visit have appropriate background checks, the staff team is competent and appropriate risk management has been undertaken.
- 3.4 Delegated duties are given to Visit Leaders to plan and run specific educational visits, per the Job Description at www.oeapng.info.

4. Principles

- 4.1 Westminster Tutors will ensure the Principal has relevant EVC training and information to carry out their duties safely.
- 4.2 The Principal will ensure their staff are trained appropriately to lead and accompany any trips.
- 4.3 The Principal will approve all overseas, residential, and adventurous offsite visits before making any bookings or payments.
- 4.4 As an employer, Westminster Tutors will supply employees with the relevant EVC or Visit Leader training and information necessary to carry out their duties safely.
- 4.5 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Any staff member wishing to report a potential safeguarding matter during or after a visit should contact the school's DSL (or Principal if the concern concerns an adult). In cases of child protection concerns, this may also involve the member of staff directly contacting the relevant statutory agency, such as the police or social care services, particularly in the case of immediate danger or if a child is at risk of harm, in full accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 4.6 Visit Leaders must uphold the highest safeguarding standards, including Keeping Children Safe in Education and their locality child protection procedures. All staff accompanying students on school visits have a duty to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

5. Responsibility for the Organisation of a College Trip

- 5.1 The Principal is responsible for approving trips, ensuring that they comply with this policy, that a full risk assessment has been carried out (along with an emergency contingency plan if needed), and that the staff running the trips are suitably supported and trained.
- 5.2 The Visit Leader oversees all the arrangements concerned with the trip in consultation with and under the supervision of the Principal. It is their role to plan, cost, publicise, and recruit for the trip; to take all reasonable and proportionate measures to find out local conditions and to anticipate difficulties that could arise in the course of each activity planned; to assess the suitability of the transport and accommodation arrangements; to obtain the necessary permissions from the parents/guardians; and to ensure that the students are prepared and supervised in such a way as to promote good behaviour.
- 5.3 Auxiliary members of staff and auxiliary staff on a trip, including parent-helpers, must accept the leadership of the Visit Leader, even when an auxiliary teacher is a senior member of staff unless exceptional circumstances arise that dictate to the contrary.
- 5.4 The Head Administrator is responsible for reviewing the costings prepared by the Visit Leader, billing and collecting money from parents (see below for details of the process).

6. Organising the Educational Visits Finances

- 6.1 The Visit Leader is responsible, under the supervision of the Principal, for the proper pre-trip budgeting and post-trip accounting. Receipts must be handed over for preservation in the college accounts. Money entrusted to the organiser and auxiliary teachers for the trip must be identifiable from their private finances.
- 6.2 Unless otherwise authorised by the Principal, the Visit Leader, auxiliary staff are not paid a fee for their work in connection with the trip (that is additional to any usual salary or fee paid to them by the College) but are allowed to claim in full their reasonable expenses.
- 6.3 A parent/guardian who books a place for a participant is contracting with the college to pay in full for the trip per the terms stated on the booking form. Unless expressly agreed otherwise, parents and guardians who cancel or fail to use a booking may still be liable to pay cancellation charges up to the total amount.
- 6.4 In making a booking, the parent/guardian is deemed to have agreed to reimburse the college for any additional expense incurred during the trip on behalf of the student for whom the booking is made.

Such an expense need not have had the specific prior approval of the parent/guardian if it is reasonably incurred for the welfare or protection of a particular child or because the child has incurred a debt or penalty or has failed to satisfy any legal requirement.

- 6.5 A Visit Leader who pays or instructs the college to pay money to anyone in connection with a trip is responsible for taking reasonable precautions to ascertain that such funds will be used appropriately. The Visit Leader is responsible for checking the credentials of travel agents and tour and holiday operators, including their membership in appropriate professional organisations.
- 6.6 Unless it is stated to the contrary at the time of booking, the charges made for a trip are designed only to cover its costs, including an amount to cover unforeseen contingencies. If there is a financial surplus at the end of the trip, its allocation is left to the discretion of the Principal.

7. Supervision

- 7.1 Teachers have common law and statutory duties to take reasonable care of students' health and safety and to maintain good order and discipline. This responsibility is continuous on college journeys until the recognised end of the trip (such as the arrival at college or the point of disembarkation).
- 7.2 It is the college's responsibility to carry out these duties. Supervised by the Principal, the Visit Leader must take reasonable steps to ensure that these duties are also understood and carried out by all those concerned with the trip's management and the students' supervision. A crucial part of this duty is evaluating the competence of the adults supervising the trip and the need for first aid.
- 7.3 The proper ratio of students to staff on a trip will vary according to circumstances. The Visit Leader must determine that the ratio chosen for a trip will give adequate supervision at all times of the day and night and for every planned activity, considering the "off-duty" periods allocated to auxiliary staff.
- 7.4 In planning supervision requirements and during the trip, the Visit Leader and auxiliary staff will consider the standards of prudence and sensible behaviour reasonably expected from students of the age of the individuals participating. Nevertheless, the Visit Leader and auxiliary staff, bearing in mind that in practice, students in groups sometimes behave irrationally, will aim to anticipate danger, especially if the students are unfamiliar with the territory or local customs.

- 7.5 The level of supervision must reflect the level of risk attached to the activity. For example, trips to remote areas involving hazardous activities require more supervision than visits to local, low-risk environments. Therefore, any supervision needs to be tailored to a particular trip rather than an assumption of high risk for all trips.
- 7.6 The Visit Leader is responsible for keeping the parents/guardians well-informed about the activities and supervision arrangements, including the conditions under which students can spend unsupervised.
- 7.7 Having been given the information, the parent/guardian must decide regarding their child whether the supervision arrangements are acceptable and whether to consent to the student's participation.

8. Health and Safety

- 8.1 It is the obligation of the parent/guardian who makes a booking to ensure that the student is fit to participate in the activities planned and will be provided with the clothing and equipment considered by the Visit Leader to be necessary. In making the booking, the parent/guardian undertakes to satisfy these conditions. If these conditions are not met on the travel date, the college may refuse to accept the student on the trip, and there will be no reimbursement of costs.
- 8.2 The Visit Leader must take reasonable care for the health and safety of those on the trip. The parent/guardian shall ensure that all special circumstances relevant to the mental and physical health of the participant are known to the Visit Leader to enable them to exercise that duty.
- 8.3 In an emergency, there should be a clear and known action plan. The Visit Leader should assess the situation, safeguard the other uninjured group members, attend to the casualty, and inform the emergency services. The Visit Leader should then contact the Principal with full details of the incident, who will contact the parent/guardian in an emergency.
- 8.4 Subject to the previous clause, the Visit Leader will be authorised by the parent/guardian to consent to any medical treatment, including inoculations, surgery, and blood transfusions that, in the opinion of a qualified medical practitioner, may be necessary for the student.
- 8.5 If the participating student needs to take drugs or medicines, the parent/guardian must decide whether to hand them over to the Visit Leader with instructions on when and how they are to be administered. Once this responsibility has been given to and accepted by the Visit Leader, they must see that the instructions are carried out.

9. Specialist Training

- 9.1 Special training is required for supervising certain activities. The list of such activities will vary from time to time according to expert advice, but by way of example, includes:
- Mountaineering (requiring mountaineering equipment).
 - Abseiling.
 - Camping.
 - Caving and potholing.
 - Skiing.
 - Riding.
 - Orienteering.
 - Swimming
 - Sub-aqua diving/swimming.
 - Sailing and boating
 - Canoeing.
 - Parachuting.
 - Hang-gliding.
 - Parascending.
- 9.2 The Visit Leader and Principal must provide adequate training to the relevant staff members.
- 9.3 In other activities, the Visit Leader and auxiliary staff must heed professional and informed local advice on the necessity for specially trained supervisors. The Principal will guide on such matters.

10. Discipline

- 10.1 Participating students are under the discipline of the Visit Leader and are expected to know and conform to the usual requirements of the law and acceptable rules of behaviour. As far as possible, the Visit Leader shall explain ambiguities and clarify uncertainties at the beginning of the trip.
- 10.2 It may be necessary for disciplinary, health or other reasons to send a student home before the end of a trip. In such cases, the parent/guardian must cooperate in the procedure and will be financially liable for any additional costs involved. In most cases, they would not be entitled to a refund for the basic price of the trip.

11. Risk Assessments

11.1 A risk assessment is a crucial requirement of the school trip procedure. Only some trips need a risk assessment to be completed; therefore, each offsite activity requires an individual appraisal. The Visit Leader should understand the risks and be familiar with the activity. However, it must be stressed that a common sense and proportionate approach should be taken, bearing in mind that risk assessments are meant to help students undertake activities safely and not prevent them from occurring.

11.2 In undertaking a risk assessment, the following should be considered:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What reasonable and proportionate safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?

Ownership and consultation	
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