

Queenswood



Educational Visits Policy

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EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Policy statement

Safely managed educational visits with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of a broad and balanced curriculum. They provide an opportunity to extend the learning of pupils, including an enrichment of their understanding of themselves, others, and the world around them. They can be a catalyst for improved personal performance, promote a lifetime interest and, in some cases, lead to professional fulfilment. Queenswood encourages all forms of educational visits, which fall into three broad categories:

- Curricular – to support the delivery of the curriculum.
- Supra-curricular – to enrich the academic curriculum beyond the minimum requirements.
- Co-curricular – activities that fall outside the boundaries of the normal school curriculum such as sports fixtures, expeditions and cultural visits.

This policy covers any journey or activity organised by, or for, the School for a group of its pupils that takes place away from the premises. In planning and conducting such journeys and activities, the most important considerations are the safety of the pupils and the promotion of their welfare.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure the safety and welfare of every girl participating in an off-site visit or activity organised by the School.
- Detail the procedures that must be followed in the planning and conduct of any off-site visit to comply with both statutory regulations and the requirements of the School.
- Provide additional guidance to staff, parents and pupils for any off-site visit organised by Queenswood.

References

- ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools: the Regulatory Requirements
- Handbook for Group Leaders (HASPEV Supplement part 3)
- DfE Guidance 2011 Health and Safety Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies

Roles and responsibilities

The role of the Principal is to:

- Be satisfied that there is a declared and valid reason for the event. This is delegated to the Deputy Head Pastoral who approves calendar entries and the EVC who, along with the Deputy Head Pastoral approves visits on Evolve1. Permission is granted once all of these have agreed, or consulted with the Principal if in any doubt. Adventurous activities and foreign trips need permission from the Principal.
- Approve or reject the initial application for any high risk and foreign residential visit.
- Be satisfied that visits comply with the regulations and guidelines as promulgated in this policy, the

¹ Evolve: the online Educational Visits Approval System

- ISI handbook for the Inspection of Schools, DfE Guidance 2011 Health and Safety Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies and other supplementary guidance.
- Ensure that the Educational Visits Co-ordinator is competent to oversee the coordination of all off-site educational visits.

The role of the Deputy Head Academic is to:

- Oversee and manage the impact of girls and staff out of lessons. This is detailed in the Protection of Academic Time Policy.

The role of the Deputy Head Pastoral is to:

- Maintain an overview of the timing of all educational visits and how they integrate with other whole school events.
- Check that the proposed dates for the visit or activity are suitable by reference to the School's calendar of events – along with the Assistant Head of Teaching and Learning.
- Focus on staffing and ratios when approving trips and to discuss in regular meetings with the EVC any concerns arising from trips or planned trips.
- Double check all foreign trip paperwork

The role of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) is to:

- Give advice for, and approve, each step of the planning stages for any trip for which the initial approval has been given.
- Ensure that all educational visits are planned meticulously using standardised forms which are uploaded onto Evolve
- Ensure that all members of staff involved in the planning and execution of a visit are aware of the guidelines available.
- Ensure that the Group Leader is competent and possesses the appropriate experience and training to undertake the activity
- Ensure that appropriate vetting of all staff and any volunteers accompanying the party has been checked for foreign and activity trips
- Ensure that visits have appropriate staff support ratios and cover for health and safety, first aid, medication and behaviour management.
- Work with the Group Leader to provide full and timely details of the visit to parents and obtain their consent or refusal.
- Organise the emergency arrangements and ensure there is an emergency contact for each visit.
- Ensure that visit evaluation is used to inform future visits and staff training needs.
- Flag up any concerns with the Deputy Head Pastoral or Principal

The role of the Group Leader is to:

- Have full responsibility for the planning and safe conduct of the activity, in accordance with this policy and its supplementary guidance, and for ensuring all participants are aware of their roles. Leaders accompanying girls are in 'loco parentis' and are responsible for their safety and well-being at all times. The Group Leader's duty is to exercise the same level of care as a parent. Other supervising adults will also have a duty of care, but the Group Leader retains overall responsibility. It is the duty of care of the Group Leader to ensure, wherever possible, that the competence of each member of staff is appropriate to her/his role.
- Submit detailed plans to the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) via Evolve, which identify the clear purpose and objectives of the visit.
- Ensure that any travel companies, companies organising activities, or venues are reliable, reputable and have no history of any safety concerns.

- Check when planning an activity involving climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 (for England Scotland and Wales).
- Carry out, and provide a written record of, a comprehensive risk assessment.
- Check with the Bursary about the School Insurance Policy.
- Arrange briefing meetings with parents, as appropriate, for high risk, residential and foreign visits.
- Whilst it is not essential for each group to be accompanied by a qualified First Aider, it is an aspect that should be considered at the planning stage of each event.
- Obtain Medical Needs from the Staffshare drive of the School Network, and for any residential trips also meet with the Medical Centre to discuss the girls on the trip in order to ensure that any specific medical and health issues of pupils or accompanying staff are considered within the planning stages and their needs are catered for.
- Complete the visit documentation and obtain the appropriate approvals from the Principal and EVC for any visit off-site, whatever the duration.
- Plan the itinerary in sufficient detail to identify every period of the visit including meal, rest and recreational times.
- Have or obtain prior knowledge of the venue.
- Assess, wherever practicable, the suitability and safety of any accommodation to be used. In addition the window and room locking policy should be established and communicated to parents.
- Inform parents of the detail of the visit, including its nature, purpose and related activities, and obtain their permission/consent for their daughter to take part.
- Ensure that parents are fully informed of the schedule for the collection of payments before any bookings are made.
- Allocate supervisory responsibility, to each adult accompanying the visit, for named pupils and ensure that the adults understand that they are responsible directly to the Group Leader.
- Ensure that all the girls in the party and the accompanying adults are fully aware of the risk assessments, emergency plans and the expected standards of behaviour.
- Ensure that staff have completed Cover Request Forms and given these in advance to the Cover Co-ordinator
- When on the visit, continuously monitor the appropriateness of the activity, the physical and mental condition and abilities of the group members, and the suitability of the prevailing conditions.
- Ensure that on return from a visit, all girls are delivered, where appropriate, into the care of a person with parental responsibility or their representative.
- Conduct a review of the trip on return, evaluating its success and proposed changes for repeat trips in the future. This report should be lodged with the EVC.
- Report any accidents or near misses in the usual way by completing the appropriate form in the General Office. They should also keep the EVC up to date.

The Role of the Parents and Guardians is to:

- Carefully read all information regarding the proposed visit before giving written consent.
- Provide up to date medical and emergency contact details, informing the school in writing before the visit commences.
- Support the school in upholding the Code of Conduct for educational visits.
- Make all payments by the deadlines given, taking note where payments are non-refundable.
- Inform the School immediately if their daughter has to withdraw from the visit for any reason, honouring any outstanding commitments to further payments.
- Arrange, where appropriate, for the prompt collection of their daughter on her return from the trip.

Procedures

The detailed procedures which must be applied to the planning and execution of every educational visit led by Queenswood staff are provided as a document accessed by staff via Evolve. (Queenswood Guidelines for Undertaking Educational Visits)

Health and Safety

The safety and welfare of every girl and accompanying adult is the overriding priority at every stage in the planning and conduct of an educational visit. This is embedded in the detailed guidance given in the Queenswood Guidelines for Undertaking Educational Visits available to staff on Evolve.

Risk Management

An essential element of visits and outdoor education activities is that they should exercise a pupil's sense of adventure but this must not be achieved by putting pupils at unacceptable physical or psychological risk. Visits and outdoor education activities cannot be entirely risk free but risks must be reduced to the lowest level as far as is reasonably practicable. This is achievable provided that the Group Leader carefully assesses the risks for:

1. The type of activity and, if an outdoor activity, the level at which it is being undertaken.
2. The location and accommodation including occasions when girls are staying in private households on exchange schemes or on tours. There must be satisfactory arrangements in place for these girls to communicate with an adult member of the School staff at any time of the day or night.
3. The competence, experience and qualifications of the Group Leader and supervisory staff.
4. The group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament.
5. The ratio of competent, experienced and qualified staff to students.
6. The supervisory arrangements, both for night and day and for structured and unstructured activities.
7. The quality and suitability of the available equipment (clothing, activity equipment and rescue/emergency equipment)
8. Seasonal conditions, weather and timing.
9. Travel arrangements
10. Emergencies – action in event of a serious incident and procedures for contacting sources of assistance.

Most accidents result from a combination of these factors having been assessed inadequately or overlooked altogether.

Risk Assessment

Comprehensive risk assessments must be conducted for every element of the visit and reviewed regularly throughout the trip or whenever the prevailing conditions or circumstances change unexpectedly. While no risk will ever be eliminated completely, appropriate measures must be put in place to mitigate every risk as far as is reasonably practicable. It is essential that every member of the party, whether adult or pupil, is familiar with and understands the content of every risk assessment.

Risk assessment can be seen as a five-step process that enables members of staff to:

- Identify hazards and dangers.
- Decide who might be harmed and how.
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are sufficient or whether more should be done.
- Record their findings.
- Review their assessments and, where necessary, revise them.

At Queenswood, risk assessments fall into three categories:

- Generic – permanent risk assessments, which exist within the School for a particular activity, e.g. Use of a Minibus.
- Visit or site specific – a risk assessment for any off-site visit. For a new venue/destination, this will have to be generated from scratch but, if this visit has taken place before, a previous risk assessment

will exist and can be reviewed and amended as appropriate. A detailed Risk Assessment Pro Forma provides guidance on key risks and management opportunities. Staff should consider safeguarding of children and contact the Child Protection Officer or other member of SLT if there are any concerns relating to Child Protection on a trip. Full details of this are found in the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

- Ongoing – the Group Leader or another nominated supervisory adult reassesses all risks to the group whilst the visit is taking place and as the need arises.

Other related school policies and procedures

- Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct for interaction with pupils
- First Aid Policy
- Educational Visits Guidelines (Staff Portal and Evolve)