



# EPSOM

COLLEGE

## Educational Visits Policy

### Context

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every pupil to an effective and balanced curriculum. Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment, and so form a key part of what makes Epsom College a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits to pupils of taking part in visits and learning outside the classroom include, but are not limited to:

- Improvements in their ability to cope with change;
- Increased critical curiosity and resilience;
- Increased levels of trust and opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves, them in each other);
- Improved achievement and attainment across a range of curricular subjects. Pupils are active participants not passive consumers, and a wide range of learning styles can flourish;
- Enhanced opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context' and the development of the social and emotional aspects of intelligence;
- Increased risk management skills through opportunities for involvement in practical risk-benefit decisions in a range of contexts. i.e. encouraging pupils to become more risk aware as opposed to risk averse;
- Greater sense of personal responsibility;
- Possibilities for genuine team working including enhanced communication skills;
- Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding of a variety of environments;
- Improved awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability;
- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.

### Application

Any visit that leaves the school grounds is covered by this policy, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time, or outside the normal school day.

In addition to this Educational Visits Policy, Epsom College:

1. Adopts National Guidance [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info)
2. Uses EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities (not Games fixtures)
3. Uses SOCS to manage Games fixtures

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with school policy (i.e. this document), and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

Planning and execution of the visit should be carried out in accordance with health and safety and safeguarding training and must comply with best practice.

There are Normal Operating Procedures for Games and for the Service Programme.

## Types of visit

There are two types of visit:

1. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.
2. Visit that are overseas, and/or residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

## Roles and responsibilities

*Visit leaders* are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering and updating these on EVOLVE or SOCS. They should obtain outline approval on EVOLVE prior to detailed planning and contacting parents or pupils, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements, and should seek advice from the EVC where necessary.

*Director of Educational Visits (EVC): Graeme Lodge* will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. The EVC is the first point of contact for advice on visit related matters and will check final visit plans on EVOLVE. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE and uploads generic school documents.

*Assistant Head: Total Curriculum: Andy Bustard* is delegated the responsibility by the Headmaster for authorising all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits via EVOLVE.

*The Board of Governors*, through this and other policies, has responsibility for ensuring the Health and Safety of staff and pupils at Epsom College. Individual governors may request 'read-only' access to online systems.

## Staff Competence

We recognise that staff competence is the single most important factor in the safe management of visits, and so we support staff in developing their competence in the following ways:

- An apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced visit leaders before taking on a leadership role;
- Supervision by senior staff on some educational visits;
- Support for staff to attend training courses relevant to their role, where necessary.

In deciding whether a member of staff is competent to be a visit leader, the Assistant Head: Total Curriculum and EVC will take into account the following factors:

- Relevant experience;
- Previous relevant training;
- The prospective leader's ability to make dynamic risk management judgements and take charge in the event of an emergency;
- Knowledge of the pupils, the venue, and the activities to be undertaken.

There are no exact ratios for school trips. The visit leader must ensure that the staffing for a trip is 'reasonable'. This will depend on the age, gender mix, ability and behaviour of the pupils involved and location. It will depend on the type of activity undertaken, the nature of the journey, and the type of accommodation if the trip is overnight.

## Approval

The approval process is as follows for each type of visit:

1. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. These are entered on EVOLVE at least 28 days in advance for outline approval. Once outline approval is granted the trip may be advertised and planning finalised before submitting for final approval;
2. Visits that are overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity are entered on EVOLVE at least two months in advance for outline approval. Once outline approval is granted the trip may be advertised and planning finalised before submitting for final approval.

## Emergency procedures

**A critical incident is any incident where events go beyond the normal coping mechanisms and experience of the visit leadership team.**

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical incident during a visit (see Appendix). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least bi-annually and following any major staffing changes.

When an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, or where it involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention then assistance will be sought from the appropriate authorities.

## Educational Visits Checklist

Epsom College's Checklist for setting up a trip is available on EVOLVE and is part of the risk management process.

## Risk Management Plan

Visit Leaders are responsible for ensuring that all trips have a risk management plan specific to their trip. This must cover the planned reaction to potential emergency situations, the management of any unsupervised time and, for residentials, the management of overnight supervision. Risk management plans should be specific in assigning responsibilities and explaining when any briefings will take place. Visit Leaders should be aware of the following National Guidance documents:

- 4.3c "Risk Management – an Overview"
- 4.3f "Risk Management – Some Practical Advice"
- 4.3g "Risk Management – what to record and how"

## Parental Consent

Specific, (i.e. one-off), parental consent must be obtained for all visits that are charged for and/or take place outside normal school hours. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents (letters, meetings, etc.), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. Consent is not required for free trips during school hours but it is expected that parents will be informed that pupils will be absent from school.

For all residential trips, a Code of Conduct must be signed by the pupil and their parents/guardians and returned to the Visit Leader. For residential trips, a clear itinerary should be sent to parents, and details of the consequences of any poor behaviour by pupils explained, including any financial implications.

## **Pupil Expectations**

Prior to the trip, the purpose of the visit and the expectations of pupils will be clearly explained to all those attending, in writing and verbally. General standards of behaviour, dress, meeting points, emergency procedures, along with the consequences of any poor behaviour, will be discussed with the pupils, and their confirmation and understanding of these expectations will be sought.

## **Inclusion**

The school recognises its obligation to promote equal opportunities for pupils and will try to make trips accessible for all where possible. Careful consideration must be given towards those with special behavioural, medical, and/or dietary needs; disability access must also be considered. All of this must be detailed on the trip's Risk Management Plan.

Visit leaders must ensure that any pupils with special or medical needs may be accommodated by:

- Checking that accommodation and activities are suitable;
- Altering staffing arrangements where necessary;
- Making special arrangements with parents;
- Ensuring that any relevant medical paperwork (including medication, dietary requirements and allergies) has been provided by the parents and that all needs can be catered for.

## **Charging / funding for visits**

Parents will always be asked to give consent to any visit if a charge is to be made.

The cost of compulsory visits are included within school fees; charges are only made for optional visits, and the cost will represent the actual cost that the school incurs in organising and operating the visit.

## **Transport**

Pupils may be transported to or from a visit by the following means:

- On foot;
- By College minibus or car;
- By coach;
- By public transport, e.g. train or tube;
- By air;
- By car.

All pupils are expected to wear a seatbelt when travelling in a plane, car, minibus or coach. They will be reminded of this requirement by staff, and pupils are not permitted to leave their seats whilst in transit.

Staff driving a school minibus should ensure that they have read and signed the College's Minibus Safety Policy in advance of driving a minibus.

Special care should be taken when travelling by underground or train to ensure that pupils are not separated from the group; such considerations should be included in the risk management plan.

Pupils are not permitted to travel to or from visits in their own car unless prior permission has been given to the Visit Leader by the pupil's Housemaster or Housemistress and parents.

### **Use of staff cars to transport pupils**

On occasions it may be necessary to transport a pupil or pupils in a member of staff's own vehicle. On these occasions the member of staff would be covered by the College's own motor vehicle insurance if they have first provided the Bursar with a copy of their valid driving licence. Staff should be made aware of National Guidance 4.5c "Transport in Private Cars"

### **Insurance**

While the school's travel insurance covers the majority of trips, potentially hazardous activities may require additional cover. All Visit Leaders should consult the Bursar in the planning stages of the trip to ensure adequate cover and to arrange further insurance if necessary.

Categories of cover available are as follows:

- Employers' liability
- Public liability
- Motor Vehicle
- Personal Accident cover
- Travel insurance

Parents should be informed of the insurance that is applicable to the trip and whether the school's travel insurance applies or whether holiday insurance is additionally necessary.

This policy is updated as necessary and reviewed annually.

## Appendix – Emergency Procedure

The school's emergency response to an incident is based on the following key factors:

1. There is always a Nominated School Base Contact for any visit. During school hours this is the Reception Desk. This Nominated School Base Contact will be an experienced member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or the EVC.
2. For activities that take place during normal school hours, the staff on the trip will be aware of any relevant medical information for all participants, including staff.
3. For activities that take place outside normal school hours, the staff on the trip and the base contact/s will be aware of any relevant medical information and emergency contact information for all participants, including staff.
4. The visit leader/s and the base contact/s know to request support from the SLT in the event that an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention.
5. The visit leader will carry either:
  - a) An Emergency Contacts card or
  - b) An OEAP National Guidance Emergency action card
6. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desktop exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.