



St Martin's School

N O R T H W O O D

11b Educational Visits Policy

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Introduction

We have a large number of trips, out of school activities and visits at St Martin's School, which are an important part of our educational ethos. We expect that every member of staff endorses the educational value of activities outside the classroom. We encourage everyone possible to participate in them, and to help with the arrangements. We always welcome suggestions from staff for new trips. The EVC Policy objectives are:

- To ensure that visits are well planned and significant risks are identified and managed.
- That there are contingency plans in place for changes in circumstances during a visit that are reasonably foreseeable.
- That those in charge of visits have the necessary competence to manage situations appropriately.

Role of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator

The Educational Visits Co-Ordinator will:

- Ensure that the Visit Leader is competent to undertake and supervise activities and to monitor the risks throughout the visit.
- Support the Headmaster and Bursar with approval and other relevant decisions.
- Oversee the preparation procedures for all Educational Visits, advising the Visit Leader as required, making staff aware of the details of all proposed visits.
- Keep up to date with all legislation and best practice advice on the running of Educational Visits and ensure that all activities meet guidance requirements.

Role of the Visit Leader

Every trip or visit, no matter how short, must be planned in advance by the member of staff who is in charge of organising and running it. He or she will ideally have had experience of accompanying school visits before taking on the role of Visit Leader.

The Visit Leader will have:

- Overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit .
- Responsibility for agreeing a budget with the Bursar and determining the cost, method and timing of recharge to parents where appropriate (usually via the main fee bills).
- Responsibility for the health & safety, including First Aid, of the group. Ensure that a sufficient number of first aid kits are taken and that there is a qualified first aider present. They will also ensure that all medication for children with specific medical conditions is taken.
- Responsibility for the behaviour and discipline of Students during the visit
- Responsibility to carry out the risk assessment
- Overall responsibility for ensuring that First Aid equipment is carried on the trip and that up to date medical details and contact details for all Students are available.

On return from the visit, the Visit Leader is responsible for reporting any incidents that occurred on the visit to the Educational Visits Co-Ordinator and relevant SLT member.

Personal Liability and Insurance

The law places the Group Leader "in loco parentis". The Visit Leader section of 'The guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom' www.oeapng.info provides further information on teachers responsibilities. In short the Group Leader's responsibility is to "act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances."

St Martin's School has Employers' Liability Insurance and public liability insurance, as well as a group travel policy that covers most visits inside the UK and overseas. Cover includes cancellation or delay, medical expenses, replacement of passports, personal possessions and money. The policy covers most school visits, including skiing holidays; but does not cover all adventurous activities, such as climbing or scuba diving. Any member of staff organising an adventurous or hazardous activity should therefore check, via the Bursar, whether or not the activity is covered by the School's policy. An extension usually can be arranged.

Where there may be specific advice from either the DfE (Department of Education) or the FCO (Foreign & Commonwealth Office) that may impact on School trips or the insurance thereof, for example in a pandemic, then specific advice should be sought from the Bursar.

St Martin's school's policy is to discourage staff from transporting pupils in their private cars, and never to allow them to be transported in cars belonging to parent helpers (unless the parents make a private arrangement that does not involve the School). Staff must have a clean driving licence and must seek permission of the Bursar and will then be covered by the School's Occasional Use policy. Any penalty points or convictions must be immediately reported to the Bursar. Parents must be informed, and specific parental permission obtained, if it is intended that pupils travel in a private car. Seat belts must be used and children should not travel in the front if possible. If applicable relevant car seats should be used.

The Risk Assessment

Risk assessments must be written using the 'Event Specific Notes' section of Evolve or the St Martin's Risk Assessment Template. Activity specific risk assessments are required from the External Provider which must be added to Evolve. Its completion should take into account the Visit Leader's planning and also knowledge of the pupils taking part:

- Identifying the potential hazards of the place being visited.
- Listing the groups of people that are especially at risk from the significant hazards.
- Listing existing controls or notifying where the information may be found.
- Considering how he/she would cope with the hazards which are not currently identified or fully controlled.
- Carrying out continual monitoring of hazards throughout the visit.

Within the Evolve 'Resources' area are guidance documents for Visit Leaders.

These are for reference and to aid Visit Leaders in writing their own risk assessments.

Professionally operated licensed activity centres and tour operators specialising in school visits will conduct their own risk assessments. If an External Provider is used to provide an activity, the Visit Leader must check they have appropriate safety standards and liability insurance. The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) awards the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge to organisations which meet the nationally recognised standards. Prior to organising an Educational Visit, the Visit Leader should check whether the provider holds LOtC certification. This information is available on the Evolve Resources system or: <https://lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/> If an External Provider does not hold the badge, the Visit Leader must check that they are an appropriate organisation. The Visit Leader should ask for copies at the planning stage. Provided that he/she is satisfied, it will meet the requirements of St Martin's School, for the activity part of the visit. Additional risk assessments will probably be needed to ensure complete coverage of all aspects of the visit. Risk assessments carried out by the School for previous visits can generally be updated and re-used, unless there has been a change of circumstances. The risk assessment is a dynamic document and can be updated at any time before or during a visit.

Within the Evolve 'Resources' area are guidance documents for Visit Leaders. These are for reference and to aid Visit Leaders in writing their own risk assessments.

A useful framework for assessing requirements for ratios and effective supervision is SAGE:

- Staffing: who is needed/available? The plan must work within the limits of available numbers, abilities and experience.

- Activities to be undertaken: what do you want the group to do and what is possible?
- Group characteristics: prior experience, abilities, behaviour and maturity, gender, any specific or medical/dietary needs.
- Environment: indoors or out; a public space or restricted access; urban, rural or remote; quiet or crowded; within the establishment grounds, close to the establishment or at a distance; and the ease of communications between the group and base. Do not overlook environments to be passed through between venues. For residential visits consider the accommodation and surrounding area. For outdoor environments, consider remoteness, the impact of weather, water levels and ground conditions. Consider the implications of current guidance about avoiding infection during an epidemic.

Preparatory Arrangements

The amount of advance preparatory work needed will obviously vary considerably with the type of activity. Very little preparation may be needed for walking with a group of pupils to a local museum, spending an hour there and walking back in time for school lunch. By contrast, a visit lasting a week or more especially abroad requires considerable research and preparation. Repeat visits and shorter visits will need less planning, and can be arranged at shorter notice, though it is always desirable to give parents as much notice as possible when planning visits for school holidays and half-terms. (Group Leaders may draw upon the EVC's stock of existing background material when planning regular repeat visits to familiar destinations).

Guidelines for preparing for the different types of visits, can be found in the educational visits folder on the shared area of the computer network and in the EVOLVE Resources area.

The Visit Leader should create a new trip on the EVOLVE system for their visit. The Visit Leader should then put all their documents in this folder. This can then be accessed by all staff including the EVC and the Headmaster. All documentation must be added to EVOLVE by the Visit Leader and will be approved accordingly.

Preparation for all trips must be completed on EVOLVE. All documents relating to the trip must be uploaded on to EVOLVE, so outline and final approval can be given by the Headmaster. No trips will go ahead until final permission is approved by the Headmaster via EVOLVE.

Preparatory Arrangements for Overnight Accommodation

The school will ensure that all off-site accommodation provided for use by pupils on educational visits are a specialist accredited centre for school trips.

Where this is not possible, for example: for exchange visits in private households and / or on tours and expeditions arranged through external tour operators or organisations, the school will obtain assurances that the accommodation supplied is of a satisfactory standard, such as by seeking references from other schools.

Pupils staying in off-site accommodation on educational visits will be supervised at all reasonable times by staff or by legally appointed chaperones or external providers who have been approved by the school to accommodate and supervise them on its behalf. Supervisors will have at least daily contact with pupils and regularly discuss any concerns that pupils may have in relation to their accommodation or care.

The group leader will ensure that pupils have details of the school's designated point of contact, who will be always contactable.

Group leaders making their own arrangements need to be clear about procedures in the relevant country for vetting the suitability of external providers, host families and others, including criminal background checks insofar as these are available and keep a record of checks which are made.

If the host School, placing agency or external provider does not have proper measures in place for carrying out checks to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils, the group leader should seek further assurances and / or reconsider whether the educational visit should take place at all. Care should be taken over choice of the supplier of transport and accommodation and only firms with ABTA membership should be used.

The Group Leader will ensure that each pupil's passport, necessary visas and other travel documents are kept safely and are returned to the appropriate staff member once pupils have used them at border control checks.

If possible one member of staff should be able to speak and read the language of the country visited, or at the very least be able to hold a basic conversation and know what to say in an emergency.

During the Visit or Activity

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with the Visit Leader. He or she has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. There must always be a Plan B. He or she may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out a head count on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving a museum, restaurant, activity centre, hotel etc.
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts.
- Ensuring that they are satisfied with the conduct of the driver and with the condition of the vehicle. If not, he/she must stop the coach and contact the School to arrange for another driver/vehicle.
- Checking the fire exits and escape routes at each hotel or hostel. Ensuring that every pupil walks through the emergency escape route at each hotel.
- Ensuring that sleeping accommodation is suitable and located together (preferably not on the ground floor).
- Setting times for pupils to be in their rooms at night. Conducting checks (using the other staff).
- Setting agreed times and locations for checking pupils when they work or are moving around in small groups.
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour.
- Looking after – or reminding pupils to look after – passports, valuables and medication.
- Storing cash, prepaid currency cards, and tickets in the safe.
- Keeping an account of all expenditure.
- Recording all accidents and near misses, this should be reported to the Headmaster, Bursar and EVC immediately.
- Ensuring that close supervision is maintained at all times when using public transport.

Illness or Minor Accidents

If a Pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill, the Visit Leader, or another member of staff will take him/her to the local hospital or clinic. If the trip is outside the UK, he/she will notify the insurers on their helpline to arrange (where possible) for the medical bill to be sent directly to the insurance company for settlement. If the accident is more serious (such as a broken leg when skiing), the school's medical insurers may arrange for the pupil, accompanied by a member of staff to be repatriated to the UK. At St Martin's School we expect the Visit Leader to phone the pupil's parents

if their child has suffered an accident or injury that is serious enough to require medical treatment – as opposed to minor cuts and bruises.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a serious accident resulting in the death or injury of one or more of the pupils and staff, the Visit Leader's first priority would be to summon the emergency services, and to arrange for medical attention for the injured. One of the accompanying members of staff should accompany the injured pupil(s) to hospital. Ensuring that the rest of the group were safe and looked after, and informing the Headmaster or on-call member of the SLT of what had happened would be the next tasks for the Visit Leader, who would need to give as full, calm and factual account as the circumstances permitted. Where the full facts had not yet emerged, he or she should say so, and ensure that follow-up communications with the Headmaster are maintained. He/she would also need to arrange (most likely via the Bursar but if unable to make contact, perhaps using the Deputy Leader or another member of staff) for the School's insurers to be contacted as quickly as possible, together with the British Consul, if the accident happened overseas. A full record should be kept of the incident, the injuries and of the actions taken.

At St Martin's School, depending on the nature of the incident, we may implement our own model communications plan for informing as swiftly as possible both the families of the injured, and the families of those who are unhurt. We recognise that in an era of instant communications, it may not be possible for us to be the first to break the news. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that we have an important duty to speak personally to the parents of any pupil who has suffered some injury or mishap. We will also communicate with the parents of those children not affected.

Where possible, communication with the media should be left to the Headmaster. The Visit Leader should refer the media to the School. If comment is unavoidable, it should be factual, calm and no attempt made to cover gaps in knowledge. Pupils should be discouraged from talking to the media.

Safeguarding Children

All children have the right to be protected from harm. An educational visit, off-site and residential activities, provide a stimulating learning, environmental and, in many cases a different and more relaxed or interactive environment.

The School is committed to ensuring that:-

- Safeguarding Children procedures are initiated
- Ensuring clear lines of communication and effective liaison between staff managing and supervising this work.
- Ensuring clear lines of communication and effective liaison between all agencies responsible for the safety and welfare of children.
- Enabling children to understand their rights and recognise and deal with unsafe situations.
- Implementing the policy and procedures of the [School's Safeguarding Policy](#).
- A Level 3 Safeguarding trained member of staff is always available for trips that take place both during term time and school holidays.

Delayed Return

If a visit is significantly delayed, the Visit Leader should phone the school office (during school hours), or the designated member of SLT, who will arrange for a message to be sent to all parents.

On Return

Each Visit Leader is asked to provide the EVC with a report on the visit by completing a school visit evaluation form on EVOLVE, no later than 4 weeks after the visit. Full reports of accidents and near misses should be given to the Headmaster and to the EVC (they will already have been made aware of the incident at the time it happened). Personal observations and lessons learned are always valuable. The Visit leader should return all school property, together with a report of any lost or damaged property.

Finances

The Visit Leader should, in-line with the agreed budget, make a request to the Bursar for any money required for the trip. All foreign currency expenditure is to be funded via the pre-paid Caxton cards which are to be used to draw cash at the destination and as a credit card whilst away. These cards can also be used for sterling transactions when needed but should not be used to withdraw sterling cash. A small sterling cash float can be provided if required. In an emergency situation the Bursar can add additional funding to the pre-paid cards from the UK.

The Visit Leader is responsible for returning any unused cash and the pre-paid foreign currency card (s), together with all related transaction vouchers. The Visit Leader is also responsible for producing a schedule of all expenditure on the trip. Unused balances may be returned to the parents by way of credits shown on the next school bill.

Health and Safety

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator has the responsibility to ensure that School trips are undertaken in a safe manner.

Each trip has a designated Visit Leader who is responsible for the planning of individual visits. EVOLVE visit software will be used to provide assurance that each visit is methodically and suitably planned.

Permission must be sought provisionally from the Headmaster, Assistant Head (Organisation and Compliance) and the EVC to find an appropriate date for the visit. Final approval will be given by the Headmaster before any school trip takes place on EVOLVE. Once provisional approval had been given, the trip leader can complete all necessary documentation via EVOLVE. All documents will be reviewed by the EVC and final approval will be given by the Headmaster, on EVOLVE. This will be given only if:

- i. There is a clear purpose to the visit.
- ii. They are satisfied that it is suitable for the age and experience of the pupils.
- iii. They are satisfied that the Visit Leader has the appropriate experience to undertake the planning and organisation.

Parental consent must be obtained for any and each activity that is not of a routine curricular nature. A link to an online consent form must be included in the information letter to parents.

Parental consent must be obtained at the beginning of each year for any local visits and sports fixtures.

Where coach transport is required, it must be booked via the school office and the company must be on the School's approved list.

An appropriate minimum staff: pupil ratio is observed.

When travelling by private transport:

- Year 1-3: 1 adult per 6 children (EYFS more).
- Year 4-6: 1 adult per 10 children.
- Year 7 onwards: 1 adult per 15 children.

When travelling by public transport:

- Reception: 1 adult per 4 children
- Year 1-3: 1 adult per 6 children
- Year 4-6: 1 adult per 6 children
- Year 7 onwards: 1 adult per 8 children.

These ratios are for guidance only and the ratio should become closer the more complex or hazardous the activity. This is decided after discussion with the EVC.

There must be a minimum of two members of staff. Where parents assist with a visit they should not outnumber members of staff. Parents can only be responsible for their own sons and do not form part of the staff: pupil ratio for other pupils. Any adult accompanying a school visit must have DBS clearance.

If the visit involves out of school hours activities there must be designated contacts available, one of which should be the Headmaster.

Appropriate back up arrangements for contacting parents in an emergency must have been made in the event of problems arising both during and out of school hours.

A first aid kit must be taken and the Visit Leader or other member of staff must have appropriate First Aid qualification, unless the Headmaster considers that this is unnecessary given the context of the visit. The minimum first aid provision for a visit is that a person is appointed to be in charge of the first aid kit and first aid arrangements. There is a need for a paediatric first aider to accompany children in EYFS on Educational Visits.

The Visit Leader should ensure that procedures laid out in the risk assessment are carried out, and that parent contact numbers, first aid kit and mobile phone are always on hand. Foundation Stage pupils are to wear a wristband displaying the school emergency phone number.

The Visit Leader will be responsible for providing a register that has participants signed out and in to each visit. The Visit Leader will update all information on EVOLVE when planning the visit. The Visit Leader will ensure accurate notes are added to the EVOLVE form to advise any changes to the intended attendees.

The Visit Leader will ensure that all staff can access EVOLVE throughout their visit. If this is not possible, all relevant information must be downloaded from EVOLVE, on to a school device or printed off and distributed to all staff attending the visit.

No photos should be taken on cameras owned by staff. Visit Leader to ensure that a school iPad/mobile phone is taken on the visit and used as appropriate.

The Visit Leader may prevent a pupil from accompanying a visit if their behaviour is likely to jeopardise the welfare of other children in the group.