

# Educational Visits Policy



**MINERVA'S**  
virtual academy

## INTRODUCTION

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Minerva's Virtual Academy (the School) is committed to enhancing the learning and experiences of students, as well as providing opportunities to connect face-to-face by providing regular trips and visits. Educational visits are activities arranged by, or on behalf of, our school, which require pupils to leave their remote place of learning, having been authorised to do so by the Principal or other designated member of staff.

Educational visits are a valuable way to supplement and enhance the curriculum, expand pupils' education and provide enriching social and cultural experiences, as well as promote social and independent learning, and form an integral part of our approach to furthering our students' education and personal growth.

This policy sets out our approach to planning and operating educational visits, to ensure the health and safety of our pupils and staff, and to make sure that our visits are available to all pupils. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff, pupils and volunteers when it comes to visits.

This policy applies to activities taking place within and outside of normal school hours, including weekends and holiday periods. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Day visits to places such as museums and other cultural and educational institutions
- Adventurous and recreational activities
- Family days
- Residential trips organised by the school

## Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's guidance on [health and safety on educational visits](#), and the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)

## Roles and responsibilities

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### Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- Approving staff requests for educational visits, including having final authority to approve any educational visit
- Making sure staff, including the educational visits co-ordinator, have received any necessary training
- Oversee and guide other staff to arrange and organise educational visits
- Assess the ability of other staff to lead visits and designate a suitable trip lead for each visit
- Assess outside activity providers
- Access the necessary training, advice and guidance

- Evaluate all visits once complete, from planning to the visit itself, and use this to improve future arrangements

## **Trip lead**

Every educational visit will have 1 member of staff designated as the trip lead. The trip lead will:

- Plan the proposed visit, taking into account the health and safety risks to pupils, staff and volunteers
- Assign staff and volunteer roles, as needed
- Make sure the school has accurate and up-to-date information about the trip destination, to be used in risk assessments
- Make sure the needs of everyone taking part are considered, including co-ordinating any additional support needed
- Make sure parents and carers are given accurate information about educational visits, including any costs or necessary equipment not supplied by the school or a third party
- Communicate key details about the visit and all locations to staff, pupils and parents/carers, including roles and responsibilities and expected behaviour
- Make sure staff are capable and able to fulfil their roles at all times while responsible for pupils and others

## **Staff**

Staff have a responsibility to make sure all pupils and staff who take part in visits are kept safe and understand the proper way to prepare for trips, as well as how to act while taking part. Staff will:

- Seek and obtain approval for all educational visits from the headteacher
- Carry out any required risk assessments and work with the trip lead
- Communicate with parents and carers and make sure trips are inclusive of all pupils' needs
- Look out for the health and safety of themselves and those around them
- Help manage pupil behaviour and discipline as required while on the visit
- Share any concerns or worries with the trip lead and others, as appropriate

## **Parents and carers**

By agreeing that pupils can take part in educational visits, parents/carers agree that they will:

- Provide all information required, such as emergency contact details and health/medicine information if applicable
- Sign and return consent forms and any other documentation required in a timely manner
- Share any concerns or information about the pupil that may affect or impact their ability to safely take part in the trip

## Volunteers

Volunteers attending school trips, including parent volunteers, agree to:

- Follow the directions of staff and act accordingly
- Behave appropriately and model good behaviour for pupils
- Report any concerns to the trip lead or other staff present as soon as possible
- Make sure pupils under their supervision are acting safely and appropriately, and raise any issues with staff as soon as possible

## Pupils

Our school behaviour policy also applies to all educational visits. This includes the expectation that pupils will:

- Follow instructions given to them while on the trip
- Dress and behave as expected for the length of the trip
- Take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others, reporting any concerns to a staff member or trip supervisor
- Act in accordance with the MVA Ways of Being during visits

Pupils will always be reminded of our behaviour expectations before going off-site for a visit, and will be expected to uphold the [school's behaviour policy](#) at all times.

## Planning and preparation

The decision on whether or not a visit will take place will be made by the Principal and based on factors including:

- Cost (including any potential cost to parents/carers)
- Timing in the school year and any potential clashes
- Educational purpose and value
- Disruption to the normal running of the school
- Health and safety considerations
- Staff-to-pupil ratio
- Location of the trip to try to make it accessible for as many students as is practically possible across the year
- Opportunities for social interaction as we are an online school

As part of the planning stage, information will be gathered by staff proposing the visit, including:

- Location and travel distance
- Travel plans or options
- Full cost breakdown, including multiple options where available
- Resources, including staffing, volunteer, and physical supplies
- Accommodation options, where needed
- Insurance detailed, where needed
- Risk assessment plans and first aid provision
- What safety measures can be put in place in order to reduce any risks

## **Inclusion**

All pupils, regardless of background or abilities, should be able to take part in every aspect of our school life, including visits.

If a pupil with a disability, statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education health and care (EHC) plan, or any other specific needs (e.g. medical conditions including allergies) is participating in the visit, they will have the same support that is available to them during the school day.

We will adjust the trip programme where necessary, working with parents/carers to provide additional support, making reasonable adjustments to itineraries, providing additional support staff, and other adjustments as appropriate.

Additional risk assessments may be carried out to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils.

## **Risk assessment**

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We will carry out a full risk assessment at least 2 weeks before the start of all trips.

This will be completed using the school's risk assessment template and approved by the Principal. Existing risk assessments or those provided by the destination itself might also be used to support this process.

The risk assessment will include any specific medical issues and allergies (for staff and pupils), the role of additional support on the visit, specified activities to be carried out, as well as risks associated with transport to and from the destination.

Where practical, staff may make a preliminary visit to the trip destination as part of the planning and risk assessment process, but this is not mandatory.

Trip leads will raise any concerns or questions about potential risks and safety measures with the principal and, where appropriate, third party vendors.

Every risk assessment will be approved by the principal, and a copy taken on the visit.

## **Staff ratios and first aid**

Risk assessments for each visit will ascertain the safe level of supervision required. On all educational visits, we will make sure:

- At least 1 male and 1 female supervising adult is present (for mixed pupil groups)
- At least 1 supervising adult able to administer first aid is present on all trips

- Appropriate first aid equipment will be taken on all trips, in accordance with the school's first aid and health and safety policies. All supervising adults will be made aware of any medical issues or allergies at the start of the trip
- Adults without a DBS check will not be left alone with pupils at any time

## **Transport**

- Transportation for trips will be independently organised by parents. For practical purposes, arrangements can be made to travel to and from London to the trip venue with a trip supervisor. We will make sure pupils, staff and volunteers are transported safely and efficiently, with the required first aid provision.
- The trip lead and supervising staff will take regular headcounts and/or rollcalls

## **Use of external organisations**

As part of the risk assessment process, we will check that any external organisations providing an activity have appropriate safety standards and liability insurance.

This includes checking that organisations hold the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge. Where an organisation does not, we will check additional details as outlined in the DfE's guidance on [health and safety on educational visits](#) to make sure it's an appropriate organisation to use.

## **Communication and consent**

We will contact the parents and carers of pupils invited to take part in an educational visit at least 1 month before the proposed date of the trip. Communication will be via email using iSAMS and information provided will include the date, travel times, destination, purpose of the visit, and the size of the group attending.

We will also communicate:

- Times and details of travel, including drop-off and pick-up times and location
- Pupil-to-staff ratios and staff qualifications, where relevant
- Clothing and equipment required
- Expected behaviour
- Parents/carers will be asked to provide written consent for educational visits by signing and dating a form to be returned to the school; we will always give an opportunity for them to withdraw their child.

- Parents/carers will also be asked to provide current and relevant medical information and dietary requirements, as well as emergency contact numbers where they can be reached.

## **Emergency procedures and incident reporting**

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Generally, emergency planning will be defined as planning for:

- Serious and unexpected risk
- Serious and life-threatening injury
- Individuals going missing
- A serious breach of safeguarding expectations

The trip leader will be familiar with these plans for each visit.

In the case of an emergency, the trip leader or other supervising adult will contact the Operations Team who will then contact parents/carers as required, and inform them of changes to plans or cancellations of trips and/or alternative travel plans. This will form part of a wider communication plan that covers how routine communications should be handled in such situations.

1 member of staff will always accompany a pupil seeking medical treatment.

In a case of a pupil being unaccounted for, the trip leader will search the area while another member of staff remains in charge of other pupils. As students have the option of travelling independently with permission of their parent/carer, the trip leader will have contact numbers for students (when appropriate), so a student can be contacted directly. In the unlikely event that a pupil cannot be found within 30 minutes, the trip leader will contact the Principal who will notify the parents/carers. The trip leader will then contact the police and provide them with the relevant information so they can take over the search, staying with them to comfort the pupil when found. The remaining staff and adults will return students to the collection point.

All incidents and accidents will be reported in line with our health and safety policy. Smaller incidents, accidents or near misses that do not require external reporting will still be covered by an internal report, to include steps that can be taken in the future to avoid similar incidents.

There will also be a clear process for evaluating all visits and trips once they have been concluded from the planning through to the visit itself. This will help with evaluating whether planning worked and to learn from any incidents that took place.

Parents contribute to the cost of the trip in advance of the trip. We will make sure adequate insurance is in place for all trips.

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW**

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This procedure is designed to set good practice standards. However, the School recognises that best practice develops over time and, as such, will update it regularly in the light of experience and as a result of changes in legislation or its own internal organisation and policies. The procedure will be subject to a comprehensive review after two years.

## **Links with other policies**

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Health and safety policy
- Charging and remissions policy
- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Special educational needs (SEN) policy

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