



Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

Issued: September 2017
Review: Term 1 annually
LST: GGR

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Related Policies: Charging and Remissions Policy

Rationale

Educational visits enrich the curriculum and help to make learning relevant. They provide a different perspective on learning and encourage openness to new and often challenging experiences. When running educational visits it is important that all possible steps are taken to ensure students' safety.

Purpose

To ensure that educational visits are run in accordance with Department for Education and Local Authority Health and Safety Guidelines.

Outline

Each year Trust schools organise a range of activities that take place off site and out of hours to support our aims. We have, through our Local Governing Bodies (LGB's), formally adopted the Bath & North East Somerset Council 'Educational Visits Guide' as the primary guidance on how these visits should be managed.

The range of activities to which the LGB's have given their approval includes:

- Extra-curricular clubs (eg music, drama, art, science, sport, homework etc)
- School sports teams
- Simple local visits (eg primary schools, places of worship, other local amenities)
- Day visits for particular groups (eg university, theatre, museum, art gallery etc)
- Activities Week
- School Camp
- Residential visits
- Overseas visits
- Adventurous Activities
- Languages and cultural exchange programmes
- Home-stay visits (one way exchanges)
- European work experience for the sixth form

The EVOLVE software system is to be used as the standard mechanism for registering and recording the approval to run educational visits.

See https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/evchome_public.asp?domain=

Approval Procedure

An approval 'in principle' to run educational visits for the year ahead will be given at the start of the school year by each Trust Schools LGB. This will be based on an overview of the School Calendar and list of trips that have successfully run before and are intended to be run again. Each LGB has delegated the consideration and final approval of educational visits and off-site activities to the Headteacher who will sign-off the EVOLVE records on their behalf.

Each Trust School should have a nominated Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC). All LGB's approve these appointments and all EVCs have received appropriate training from the LA. The educational visit check list should be used as a guide by EVC & staff running trips ([Appendix 1](#)).

Educational Visits Co-ordinators:

Clutton Primary	Liz Ennew	Dundry	Andrew Dix
Farrington Gurney Primary	Daniel Turull	High Littleton	Gareth Griffith
Longvernal	Kerrie Courtier	Midsomer Norton Primary	Alun Randell
MSN Sixth Form	Timothy Chandler	Norton Hill	Timothy Chandler
Somervale School	Susanne Hobbs	St Dunstan's	Marion Sheppard
Trinity	Michelle Parsons	Welton	Elaine Heal

Before a visit is advertised to parents the Headteacher (or nominee) will need to agree the initial plan. In the case of a visit not previously arranged and involving 'higher risk' activities, the Headteacher will also seek approval from the LGB before agreeing. The EVC and Headteacher will then approve the completed plan and risk assessments for the visit before departure. This will, in the majority of cases, be undertaken using EVOLVE as the planning and approval system. In all instances, Visit Leaders should advise the EVC at the earliest opportunity of all intended visits so that direction and advice may be given.

Each school has agreed a system for categorising and approving visits as follows:

Category A: Simple local day visits ([Appendix 2](#))

Category B: Day visits approved at school level on Evolve by EVC and Head

Category C: Visits must be approved via Evolve and the LA's on-line approval gained

Where;

Category A = Simple local or regular visits that have a more generic risk assessment or standard operating procedures in place. (eg to local primary school, local shopping centre or sports fixtures etc)

Category B = Most 'Day' visits. (eg university, theatre, museum, art gallery etc)

Category C = All residential, overseas and Adventurous Activity visits.

Staffing

Accompanying staff play a key role in ensuring the highest standards of learning and safety on a school visit. The selection of staff for all educational visits will be a priority consideration in the initial approval of any proposed visit. The Visit Leader will be suitably experienced and qualified (where required) to lead the trip and any of the proposed activities if they are not being contracted out to an external provider. All staff are encouraged and supported to develop their abilities in organising and managing educational visits and less experienced members of staff will work alongside more experienced colleagues to achieve this. The Visit Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange and conduct the visit. This will include, as necessary, making time or finances available for an initial exploratory visit, briefing teachers and/or other staff, accessing training courses, reviewing and evaluating the visit or identifying time when the leader and EVC might work together to undertake planning and risk assessments. The ratio of staff to students required must form part of the initial planning and risk assessment and meet the needs of the group.

Volunteers

The school recognises the valuable contribution volunteer adults and parent helpers assisting with educational activities and visits may bring. All volunteers should have a role to play and will be approved in advance by the Visit Leader and where appropriate, the school will ensure that DBS and other safeguarding checks are carried out. All volunteers will be entered on the Voluntary Helpers list kept by each school and on EVOLVE and will be briefed by the Visit Leader on the scope of their role and their responsibilities.

Risk Assessment

The Visit Leader will seek to identify any significant risks from any activity or aspect of the trip that is under their control or supervision and take appropriate steps to ensure all risks are mitigated to an acceptable level and that all participants remain safe. This should include checking the risk assessments of any providers used or locations visited. It is the Visit Leader's responsibility to identify good practice, precautions and any safety measures to be taken and this will be recorded in a risk assessment specific to that visit. The Visit Leader should ensure that all accompanying staff fully understand and co-operate with the requirements of the risk assessment.

Staff using their own vehicles

The Trust allows staff to use their own vehicles for transporting children for educational visits. Insurance for this is covered by the Trust wide policy. Staff must ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT, and must complete a 'volunteer driver self-certification form' ([appendix 3](#)). In addition, children under the age of 12 and are also under the height of 1m35cm MUST use a booster seat. All drivers and passengers must use seat belts. Drivers must have a clean driving licence. Staff without a clean driving licence should discuss any motoring convictions with the Headteacher or CEO.

External Activity Providers

Where external providers are involved in organising all or part of the visit, the contract will be made with each school on behalf of the students. The Visit Leader will make appropriate checks before committing the school to the contract. This will include seeking assurances about health and safety, and any accreditation or licensing. Where possible, the school will seek to use holders of the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge or other similar hallmark and for which minimal additional assurance checks are necessary. Where a visit involves plane travel, assurances should be sought that the external provider holds ABTA and ATOL licences.

Parental Consent

Written consent from parents will, in most cases, be required for students taking part in any off-site activities organised by each school. The only exception being with the express permission of the Head, for example in the case of regular sporting fixtures where other arrangements exist. The consent should be an 'Informed Consent' so that the parent has full understanding of what their child will be doing, where their child will be at all times and any extra information required. Each school has a basic Consent Form template which will generally be used for this purpose and can be tailored to meet the needs of the specific trip. In the case of residential visits parents will normally be invited to a briefing meeting where they can seek clarification of any aspect of the itinerary and organisation of the visit.

Expectations of students and parents

Each school has a clear code of conduct for school visits based on the Trust 'Behaviour Policy'. Observance of the code of conduct will form part of the condition of booking by the parents. Students, whose behaviour before or during the visit is such that the Visit Leader becomes concerned for their safety, or for that of others, may be withdrawn from the visit or any aspect of the trip. If already departed, the Visit Leader will consider what sanctions or measures to take and whether such students should be sent home early. If this is the case, parents will be expected to cover any additional costs incurred as a result of the journey home early. Accompanying staff and volunteers will be expected to conduct themselves to the same high professional standards as in school. During any 'down-time', they should not be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs such that their ability to recognise hazards or respond to emergencies is in any way restricted.

Emergency Procedures

The Visit Leader will identify a member of the Senior Leadership Team to act as the emergency contact for the visit. All major incidents should be relayed to this person immediately, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention. The Visit Leader will leave full details of all students and accompanying adults on the visit with the SLT emergency contact, including the home contact details of parents and next-of-kin, as appropriate. All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back and recorded following normal school procedures for reporting and investigating accidents.

Review by the Local Authority

Each School is supported in its arrangements for educational visits by the Local Authority (LA). Where necessary, each school will seek advice and guidance from the LA Adviser for Outdoor Learning. All visits that involve an overnight stay, going abroad and any that involve adventurous activities will be notified to the LA prior to departure. The LA will provide an independent reassurance check of the plan and the precautions and safety measures that will be taken. Some sample monitoring will also be undertaken by the LA & each school agrees to facilitate this when & where required. Any advice provided will be fully considered prior to the trip taking place.

Charging for Activities and Visits

Charges will be made in accordance with The Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership, Charging and Remissions Policy. Deposits are non-refundable and will usually make up at least one third of the total cost of the activity/trip.

Equal Opportunities

The Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership provides education for all, acknowledging that the society within which we live is enriched by diversity. We strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of our schools reflects the diversity of all members of the school community, where everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect and fairness. Students are provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

Overseas Visits and Terrorism

There is an inherent risk involved in any sort of travel abroad, including the risks associated with terrorism. This is not a reason for schools to avoid foreign travel. MNSP will take advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and avoid travel to any countries or regions which the FCO advises UK citizens to avoid. Additionally, advice from the tour operator or Travel Company (when used) will inform any decisions. Ultimately, in the case of an uncertain situation in a given country or region, the Headteacher and Local Governing Body (LGB) will make the final decision as to whether the trip goes ahead, seeking advice from the MNSP Trustees and Executive Headteacher/CEO as appropriate.

All MNSP trips follow BANES guidance as well as that from the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP). OEAP information concerning school trips and terrorism can be found at <http://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/6k-faqs-visits-and-the-threat-from-terrorism>.

All staff accompanying a foreign trip will carry written details of emergency procedures and key emergency contacts, including the crisis team at BANES, as well as the phone numbers for at least two senior MNSP staff relevant to the school concerned (eg. Associate Headteacher, Executive Headteacher, CEO, Deputy CEO). These numbers will be saved in staff mobile phones. All staff will also have contact details for the nearest UK embassy, high commission or consulate. If the trip has been booked through a tour operator, all staff will also have contact details for the crisis team in the tour operator's UK office.

The trip leader will meet with the 'home school' Headteacher around one week before the trip departs, in order that both parties are satisfied with all trip arrangements.

Terror incidents are often targeted at busy locations such as capital cities, transport hubs and sporting or music events. This does not mean that school trips are to avoid these areas; merely that staff are to be especially mindful of following proper procedures to ensure student safety as far as reasonably practical.

In the extremely unlikely event that staff or students are in a location subject to a terrorist incident, staff are to implement the 'Run-Hide-Tell' advice issued by the UK government:

- RUN – Run to a place of safety. This is a far better option than to surrender or negotiate. If there's nowhere to go, then...
- HIDE – It's better to hide than to confront. Remember to turn your phone to silent and turn off vibrate. Barricade yourself in if you can. Then finally and only when it is safe to do so...
- TELL – Tell the police by calling 999 (UK) or 112 (Europe).

In addition, the French Interior Ministry's 'SAIP' smartphone app provides location-dependent information in the case of a major incident.

Languages and cultural exchange programmes (including one-way exchanges and home stay trips)

Exchange programmes, whether linguistic or cultural, are a valuable addition to students' experiences as they go through school. Students staying abroad in the home of a family they haven't necessarily already met brings with it a particular set of requirements. Contrary to media reports, there is no requirement for host families to undergo any formal vetting or police checks. We work following the guidance from John Young at BANES and the national guidance given on the OEAP website. Exchange programmes essentially work on trust between the two schools involved. This must be explained to parents in full in writing, to enable informed consent to be given.

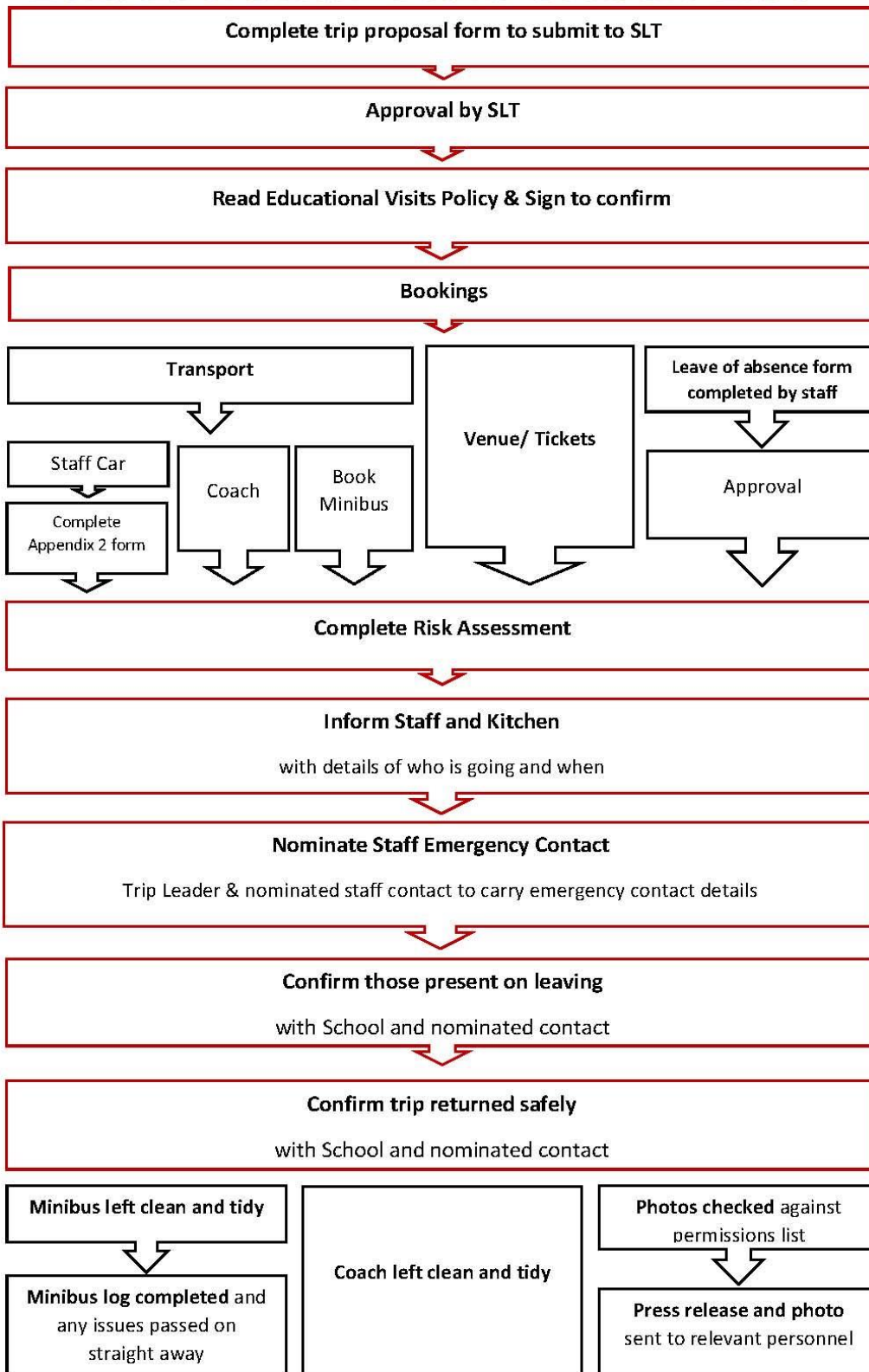
Each school undertakes to select suitable families to take part, based on what pastoral staff know about the family set-up and the suitability of the family taking part in such a programme. There is a short form for host families to fill in and return to school; this applies for both legs of the exchange.

Where MNSP Schools engage an external provider to assist with home-stay trips or exchanges, for example with the Bristol-Bordeaux exchange or for European work experience in the sixth form, we must have a full understanding of the safeguarding arrangements in place. Again, parents must be fully aware of the roles and responsibilities of both MNSP and the external provider in order to give informed consent.

In normal cases of home-stay trips and exchanges, students must be placed with partners of the same gender and a similar age. There is no requirement for students to have their own room, but if sharing, they must have their own bed, and be sharing

the room with either their exchange partner or a partner's sibling of the same gender and a similar age. Some home-stay visits, using a commercial host family sourced through an external provider, may involve students staying in a home where there are no children of a similar age, or indeed no children at all.

Educational Visit Check List



Category A – Simple local visits

Below is the list of simple visits/trips that the LGB have agreed as being undertaken (generally) during only a part of the school day and do not require recording on EVOLVE. It includes 'sporting fixtures' despite some of them taking place outside of the hours of the normal school day. Staff should note that parents or guardians must still be advised of the trip/visit and when their child is being taken out of school during the school day. In most cases, an information letter with a simple Reply Slip as acknowledgment will suffice.

It is stressed that Category A classification of a visit, does not remove the requirement of the Visit Leader to undertake a risk assessment of the trip, the activity and the attendees. It may be that after this, it is felt a full EVOLVE should be completed. If in any doubt regarding a visit, the EVC should be consulted at the earliest opportunity.

An example of Category A visits:

- *local primary schools (for variety of purposes);*
- *local schools (for sporting fixtures or education competitions eg maths challenge);*
- *other local amenities within close distance of the school (e.g. shops, parks etc);*
- *in connection with Work Experience etc (NB other arrangements usually in place).*

At the start of each new academic year a "blanket consent" will be obtained by each 'home school';

- In secondary schools this will be via a generic consent form held within the students contact book/diary.
- In primary schools a consent form will be provided to all parents via their child's class teacher for completion.



Volunteer Driver Self-certification Form

Name (block capitals)

Address

.....

.....

Car Registration

- 1 I have a current driving licence.
- 2 I meet the legally required eyesight standard and I know of no medical reason why I may not drive.
- 3 I have a current MOT certificate. (please tick only one)
- or My car is less than three years old.
- 4 I will ensure that the children that I transport, use appropriate child restraints (see below note.)

Signed Date

Summary of Regulations on the use of child restraints for Primary aged children.

Children under 1.35 metres tall, who are also under 12 years old, must use an appropriate child restraint in vehicles, in conjunction with an adult seat belt, from 18th September 2006. Group III ‘Booster cushions’ are the appropriate restraint for use by children weighing from 22kg, which is typically those aged around 6 years and upwards. It is not permitted to carry more children than there are child restraints, but there are three exceptions when children over 3 years of age and up to 1.35 metres tall, may be transported in the rear of vehicles whilst only wearing an adult seat belt:

- *where two occupied child seats in the rear of the vehicle, prevent the fitting of a third child seat, then a third child may just use the rear adult belt; or*
- *for a short journey in an **emergency**, where an appropriate child restraint is not available; or*
- *in a licensed taxi, where an appropriate child restraint is not available.*

For more information, parents can visit <http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk> or call DfT's helpline for a leaflet 0800 32 72 52.