



Learn
Love
Believe

Educational Visits Policy

Context

The school's Mission Statement states that "We aim to develop the whole person and enable him/her to make a positive contribution to society". School visits are an integral part of providing our children with enriched and fulfilling experiences, which will enhance their experiences of education at St. Gabriel's.

Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment, and so form a key part of what makes St Gabriel's a supportive and effective learning environment.

- Increased critical curiosity and resilience.
- Opportunities for meaning making, creativity, developing learning relationships and practising strategic awareness.
- 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. ie. encouraging pupils to become more risk aware as opposed to risk averse.
- Possibilities for genuine team working including enhanced communication skills.
- Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding of a variety of environments.
- 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, St Gabriel's:

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Guidance for Educational Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE**' (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE).
2. Adopts National Guidance www.oeapng.info, (as recommended by the LA).
3. Uses EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities.

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

Types of Visit & Approval

There are three 'types' of visit:

1. **Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day.**
These follow the 'School Learning Area' Operating Procedure (Appendix 1).
2. **Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.**
These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Head for approval.
3. **Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.**
As above, but the Head authorises and then submits to the LA for approval.

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE (where required). They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher or EVC prior to planning, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements.

- i. Request for trips for the next academic year need to be submitted in writing to the Headteacher e.g. for trips in the 2017-2018 academic year, requests need to be submitted by July 2017, especially if the trip is overseas. A proforma is available from the school office.
- ii. An overview of all trip requests will then be considered before approval is given for any trip.
- iii. Requests should be in writing and include an outline of the trip, benefits to pupils, estimated dates and estimated costs.
- iv. Residential and overseas trips will need approval from the Headteacher and Governors.
- v. Only one trip on any one teaching day should be organised. Clashes of days should be avoided by mutual agreement between departments.
- vi. It is expected that trips will have some relevance to the curriculum, religious life of the school, pastoral or sporting life of the school.
- vii. The school calendar will be completed before the beginning of a new school year normally around June or July of the previous academic year.

Protocol for School Visits

- i. If the visit involves potentially hazardous activities e.g. boating, fell walking etc. the local authority requires at least 20 days' notice.
- ii. For trips abroad, the guideline is at least 20 days' notice.
- iii. Members of staff organising out of school activities must first consult with the Headteacher, and Mr Loster as soon as possible and then see the Finance Manager Ms Standbridge to check for permission and which forms need to be completed before the trip can go ahead respectively.
- iv. Organisers must give notice to the Headteacher which members of staff will be involved.
- v. Letters need to be sent out to parents inviting applications for the trip. The school has standard letters, which cover all aspects of financing the trip and details of activities, which will involve the participants.
- vi. From September 2016, all trips must be paid for using the ParentPay system. It is essential that quotations are as accurate as possible.
- vii. A list of pupils and staff involved must be given to Mr Loster and a copy placed in the staff bulletin and on the noticeboard in the staff room two or three days before to act as a reminder.
- viii. Staff involved in visits must leave work for their classes, including home learning, where relevant. The work must be classroom based, but straightforward for the cover teacher, just in case the class has to move to the Hall or another room. Where appropriate, exercise books must be left.
- ix. It is advisable for staff to leave a copy of the work set with the relevant Head of Department.

The Educational Visits Coordinators (EVC) are Susan Vaughan and Adam Loster, who 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 before submitting them to the Head. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

The Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising all visits, and for submitting all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits to the LA for approval, via EVOLVE. Visits that are residential or that will be submitted to the LA should be discussed with him.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. Individual governors may request 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

The Local Authority is responsible for the final approval (via EVOLVE) of all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

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 Head Teacher 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.

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 2). 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 local authority.

Educational Visits Checklist

St Gabriel's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities. This has been adapted from the LA's generic checklist. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'. St Gabriel's Educational Visits Checklist may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources.

Parental Consent

Consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time.

The school obtains blanket consent at the start of each year for certain other routine activities, eg. after school fixtures, etc. Parents can use a traditional paper consent form.

Specific, (ie. one-off), parental consent must be obtained for all other visits. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents (via EVOLVE, letters, meetings, etc), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. As above, parents use a traditional paper consent form.

Inclusion - See Equality Policy

Charging / funding for visits – See Charging and Remissions policy

Transport

School Mini Bus – See Mini Bus Management Plan

Use of staff cars to transport pupils – See Evolve

Insurance

Off site visits insurance via Local Authority.

Other topics

Swimming Lessons

In terms of supervision in the changing rooms for lessons:

- All staff meet and greet the pupils to register before entering the changing room.
- Pupils are given a specific area to change and made aware of the expectations of behaviour in the changing rooms - get changed quickly, quietly and sensibly.
- Pupils are reminded to keep all of their belongings together and ensure they hide valuables away securely.
- Staff monitor the changing rooms by going in and out throughout changing time to get a balance between privacy for the pupils changing and also monitoring behaviour.
- All staff ensure the changing rooms are locked once the pupils leave.

Dismissal of pupils after evening activities

- Parents will be informed by letter to make arrangements for pupils to be collected after evening activities.
- Staff will supervise and stay with all pupils until parents have collected their child/children.

Consumption of Alcohol

No alcohol to be consumed at all by staff whilst supervising pupils.

Appendix 1 – School Learning Area

General

Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits/activities:

- do not require parental consent, although notification will be given.
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE

Boundaries

The boundaries of the School Learning Area are shown on the attached map. This area includes road and the John Banks Building.

Operating Procedure for School Learning Area

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our School Learning Area:

- Road traffic.
- Losing a pupil.
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc).

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Head or Deputy must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved. A current list of approved staff is maintained by the EVC and office.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'School Learning Area' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school, and a synopsis is in the School Prospectus.
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults. Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practised appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- All remotely supervised work in the School Learning Area is done in 'buddy' pairs as a minimum.
- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- Staff will deposit in the office a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route, and an estimated time of return.
- A school mobile/staff use their own mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (e.g. gloves, goggles)

Appendix 2 – Emergency Procedure

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

1. There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit (during school hours this is the office).
2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager at all times.
3. For activities that take place during normal school hours, the visit leadership team will be aware of any relevant medical information for all participants, including staff.
4. For activities that take place outside normal school hours, the visit leadership team and the emergency contact/s will be aware of any relevant medical information and emergency contact information for all participants, including staff.
5. The visit leader/s and the base contact/s know to request support from the local authority 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.
6. For visits that take place outside the School Learning Area, the visit leader will carry either:
 - a) An LA Emergency 'Card' (see EVOLVE Resources)
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.