St Mary's and Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy

Member of the St Gabriel the Archangel Catholic MAT

Educational Visits Policy

Person responsible for this policy & it's implementation	Debra Statham
Review Frequency	Every three or when an incident is experienced
Date approved	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2029
Purpose	The purpose of this Educational Visits Policy is to ensure that all school visits provide safe, purposeful and enriching learning experiences that complement and enhance the curriculum. Educational visits enable pupils to apply and develop skills in different contexts, experience first-hand and memorable learning, develop their ability to assess and manage risk, and discover new interests, talents and abilities. Through well-planned visits, pupils are given opportunities to broaden their experiences, build confidence and develop skills and interests that can have a lasting impact beyond their time at school.
Links with other policies	• Safeguarding Policy • Health and Safety Policy • First Aid Policy • Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy • Inclusion Policy • Staff Code of Conduct • Volunteers Policy / Procedures

Overview
The Committee and staff of St Mary's Catholic Academy and Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy acknowledge the great value of educational visits in broadening and enhancing both the learning and social experience of pupils.

Rationale
Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience.

Guidelines
The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils.

The following guidelines and policies support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at St Mary's Catholic Academy and Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy.

These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the regularly updated information provided by Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority 'Guidance Management for Outdoor Learning' (GMOL). The schools fully endorse everything that is stated in 'Guidance management for Outdoor Learning'.

Educational Visits Co-ordinator
(EVC) All schools are required to have a named Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC), who will ensure that the planning and supervision of all visits and adventurous activities meet DfES requirements and LA guidelines.

Our current EVC is Mrs D Statham (Executive Head of School)

Approval Procedure and Consent
Residential Trips: In addition to governor approval for residential trips, the Educational Visits Co-ordinator must also gain approval from the Local Authority.

Organising a Trip
Before a visit is advertised to parents, the Principal/ EVC must approve the initial plan. They will also approve the completed plan and risk assessments for the visit at a later date.

Where external contractors are involved in organising all or part of the visit the contract will be made with the school on behalf of the pupils. All payments for the visit will be made through the school's accounts.

Parents/carers will provide consent through Arbor for their child to participate in off-site educational activities and visits organised by the school.

For local visits that do not involve transport, such as walks within the local community or visits to nearby facilities, parents/carers will be provided with information about the activity and any relevant arrangements in advance. Where an activity is cancelled or significant arrangements change, parents/carers will be informed through the school's usual communication channels.

For visits involving transport, residential visits or activities requiring specific arrangements, parents/carers will be provided with detailed information about the visit, including the purpose, arrangements, timings and any specific requirements. Where additional consent is required for a particular activity, this will be requested through Arbor.

As part of the parents' consent, they will be fully informed of the activities and arrangements for the visit. For all residential visits parents will be invited to a briefing meeting where they can ask for clarification of any aspect of the itinerary and organisation of the visit.

Exploratory visit
Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;
- ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group and gaining establishment risk assessments. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards.

First Aid
First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities, visits which involve overnight stays it is sensible to have at least one trained first-aider in the group. The group leader should have a working knowledge of first aid and all adults in the group should know how to contact emergency services. For visits for the Foundation Stage, it is recommended that a member of staff that has paediatric first training is present.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- ✓ a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- ✓ a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first-aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The principal should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed. The contents of a first-aid kit will depend on what activities are planned.

The school has a separate policy for the Administering of Medicines.

Supervision
It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit.
The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group;
- special needs pupils;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in offsite supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation;
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.

The following ratios are ***only recommendations*** (the above factors may affect the ratios):

FS1 – 1:3

FS2 – 1:6 (age 5+)

Year 1 and 2 – 1:6

Year 3 and 4 – 1:8

Year 5 and 6 – 1:10

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

Approval for Visits
All matters regarding each visit outside school – feasibility, planning, safety, organisation etc – will require the prior approval of the EVC. A School Visits Form must be completed and authorised by the Principal/Head of School before the trip is officially booked.

The risk assessment on E-Visit must be completed 2 weeks before the visit takes place (failure to do so will result in the trip being cancelled). The risk assessment, letter to parents and itinerary need to be attached to the on-line form.

The risk assessment on E-Visit for Educational Visits involving Hazardous Activities or Overnight Stays need to be completed and submitted 4 weeks before the visits take place. All providers of adventurous activities must have been approved by AALA (Adventurous Activities Licencing Authority)

For overseas visit, the risk assessment on E-Visit must be completed and submitted 3 months prior to the visit.

Staffing
The school recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standard of learning, challenge and safety on a school visit.

Teachers and other staff are encouraged and supported to develop their abilities in organising and managing pupils' learning in a variety of environments through induction, apprenticeship and training. The selection of staff for educational visits will be a key priority in the initial approval of any proposed visit.

The appointed Group Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange the visit. This will include, as necessary, making time or finances available to conduct an exploratory visit, briefing teachers and other staff, accessing training courses, reviewing and evaluating the visit or identifying time when the leader and EVC might work in partnership to undertake planning and risk assessments.
Any adult in any visit trip will be required to have DBS clearance prior to the trip. All adults joining all visits will follow the schools Safeguarding Guidance

Group Leader
One teacher, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been appointed by the EVC.
The Group Leader should:

- ✓ be a qualified teacher- inducted by the school on the policy and procedure of educational visit;
- ✓ appoint a deputy leader (who is fully aware of emergency procedures in the event of needing to lead the group, competent to fulfil the role and is able to follow policy and procedure of educational visit);
- ✓ be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;

- ✓ be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- ✓ undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
- ✓ undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;
- ✓ have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- ✓ know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- ✓ observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- ✓ ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of pupils below).

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit
Teacher and other adults on the visit must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would;
- follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline.
- Non-teachers should generally not have sole charge of pupils except where risks to health and safety are minimal;
- consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

The expectations of pupils and parents/ carers
Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail.
The group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- ✓ not take unnecessary risks;
- ✓ follow the instructions of the leader and other adults;
- ✓ dress and behave sensibly and responsibly;
- ✓ look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it;
- ✓ should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity.

The school has a clear code of conduct for school visits based on the schools' Behaviour Policy. This code of conduct will be part of the condition of booking by the parents, and include the potential of withdrawal of a pupil prior to and during the visit if such conduct would have led to a temporary exclusion from school. In this instance collection/removal of the child from the activity will be at the parents' expense and all monies paid or due for the activity will be forfeit.

Pupils with special educational and medical needs
The EVC will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Parents/ Carers
The group leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits.

The group leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language;

Parents must:

- ✓ ensure the school has emergency contact number(s);
- ✓ sign the consent form;
- ✓ ensure the school has relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.

Communicating with Parents / Carers

Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place – 'in loco parentis' – and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupils' health and safety is useful to parents, and may be included in letter to parents / guardians prior to a visit:

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- names of leader
- visit's objectives;
- details of the activities planned;
- clothing and equipment to be taken;
- money to be taken;

Emergency Procedures

School will appoint a member of the SMT as the emergency school contact for each visit prior to it commencing. All major incidents should immediately be relayed to this person, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.

Leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency school contact, including home contact details of parents/guardians and next of kin, as appropriate.

All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back through the school system with compliance to the first aid policy on reporting.

The school will have emergency funding available to support the Group Leader in an emergency.

Evaluation

All visits will be evaluated by the Group Leader. A short evaluation report will be made available for the committee if requested.

The EVC will ensure that any risk assessments on the trip are dated as having been evaluated and/or modified as a result.

Dissemination of the policy

All staff and committee members will receive a copy of this policy.