SCHOOL JOURNEYS: EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Introduction

Queen Mary's School Educational Visits Policy is written in accordance with the (**ISI Inspection Framework 2022**).

Our programme of educational visits fulfils several of our stated aims. It augments our pupils' academic and cultural education, offering new experiences and challenges which foster an understanding of the wider community at local, national and global levels.

We realise the importance of visits in building team spirit and camaraderie between staff and pupils, amongst peer groups and also between girls of different ages. Our trips often help girls to realise more effectively their own potential in circumstances different from their usual surroundings.

We encourage all academic departments to organise educational visits and these are offered to all pupils throughout the school. We offer each year group a number of educational visits per academic year as either a compulsory part of the curriculum or as an optional extra.

The Deputy Head and the Bursar are the Educational Visits Co-ordinators (EVCs) and are responsible for ensuring that educational visits represent good value for money, that they are of significant academic or cultural interest and that matters of health and safety or other regulations are addressed.

Outline of Procedures

For all school journeys, whether residential or not, in the UK or abroad, we ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to establish safe conditions for the pupils and adults concerned and that levels of risk are both manageable and acceptable.

The Deputy Head does not approve any visit without having established that risks have been fully assessed, bearing in mind the age, gender and experience of the pupils.

A school mobile phone should be used for all trips. These can be obtained from the School Administrator in advance. Personal mobile phones should only be used in an emergency or with permission from the Head / Deputy Head.

The Deputy Head will also ensure that transparent costings, an itinerary and details of the staffing are provided at the earliest opportunity. The School Nurse should be consulted during the planning process to ensure that special medical or welfare needs of participants are considered.

It is essential that all trips are planned well in advance, this should usually be at least a term in advance for UK trips and at least a year in advance for International trips.

The School's comprehensive insurance covers all participants on visits and the School holds worldwide travel cover for overseas visits. The Bursar should be informed of any visit involving hazardous activities to ensure that insurance cover is adequate or to assess whether additional cover is required.

Activities are planned, as far as possible, by staff who are familiar with the venue and the nature of the conditions likely to be encountered. They ensure that safety standards at the venue and on transport to and from the visit are adequate and compliant. This would include ensuring that all reasonable checks are made on third party staff. It is also advisable to check if the venue has a Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge. This can be checked through the following link: www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/search

When proposing a trip a costings form should be completed and the following included and sent through to the Deputy Head;

- a full list of the girls / years involved
- a list of accompanying staff
- costings
- a proposed date (if specific) or a rough time scale/preferred day of the week.

Visit leaders must ensure that all accompanying staff know the itinerary and understand their responsibilities. They complete specific and detailed risk assessments for all visits out of school whether day or residential. They should also obtain risk assessments from third party providers, where appropriate, to ascertain whether adequate control measures are in place.

A detailed copy of the Costings Form Costings Form and an example of a Risk Assessment Risk Assessment can be found using the links. All risk assessments must be signed off by the Deputy / Bursar at least 1 week prior to the event / trip. Where relevant, a Provider Statement should also be completed at least 1 week in advance to provide further information about the proposed venue as well as any centre Risk Assessments.

All accompanying members of staff must be confident in managing the needs of those girls on the visit with special medical requirements e.g. those at risk of anaphylactic shock, epileptics, diabetics and so forth. Staff should be briefed and, where necessary trained, by the School Nurse. The School Nurse manages the issuing and maintenance of first-aid kits which are taken on all visits and girls are reminded that girls need to have with them any special medical requirements (e.g. inhalers, EpiPens).

The level of supervision must realistically reflect the purpose, location and nature of the visit, the age and maturity of the pupils and any special needs. Visits are therefore planned in accordance with the principles of effective supervision. When deciding staff to pupil supervision ratios, the EVC will also take into account factors such as staff experience, the potential risks and making adequate provision to allow for emergencies. Some activities may be unaccompanied or involve a sole teacher in charge.

Where pupils on visits are not directly supervised, they are told where staff may be found and how to contact them by mobile phone should they be given free time, for example for shopping. The itinerary is approved by the EVC in advance of the visit. Staff accompanying visits are responsible for pupils in the group according to a supervision ratio and risk assessment approved by the Bursar / Deputy Head. Therefore a supervising member of staff will only separate from the main party in unforeseen circumstances such as injury or illness. We remind girls and parents that normal school rules apply on visits and that any pupil disobeying these rules may be sent back at the parents' expense. The School cannot undertake to provide for individual arrangements for girls to join or leave visits individually. It is not possible to compromise the group's activities or distract a member of staff from their responsibilities towards the group.

Safeguarding

The School will undertake the necessary safeguarding checks in accordance with guidance given in the school's Safeguarding Policy and DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022). Any person on a residential visit designated to act in a supervisory role must have an enhanced DBS check and in the majority of cases a Barred List check. This includes any person who is not a member of staff such as a volunteer. Consideration should be given to the staffing ratios if a daughter of a teacher/volunteer is on the visit.

A DBS certificate/Barred list check may not be required if a volunteer (such as a parent helping) accompanies a non-residential visit and will be supervised by another member of staff and not left in sole charge of pupils. In any event, the Deputy Head will confirm the requirements. See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Parents are informed about educational visits in writing by e-mail or letter and the following details are specified, some of which may be provided in follow up documentation:

- Names of staff accompanying visit
- Year group or forms
- Date(s)
- Time(s)
- Itinerary

- Venue(s) with address and contact details for emergency use
- Aims and objectives of the visit
- Detail of any unsupervised time
- Mode(s) of transport with departure and return times
- Whether meals are provided
- Passport and visa requirements
- Insurance arrangements
- Health formalities (inoculations etc.)
- Clothing, food, equipment required
- Total cost
- Meeting and dismissing arrangements

Through the School's standard terms and conditions, parents' consent to their daughter taking part in educational visits, including those that take place at weekends or school holidays. Any costs are charged as an extra on the termly bill or through Parent pay. Parents must be given the opportunity to decide if their daughter does not want to participate and therefore the information letter includes a deadline by which a parent must notify this, in writing, to the visit organiser.

Any residential visits in the United Kingdom or overseas are subject to a separate agreement with parents. For some visits we hold an information evening for parents before any commitment is made, especially if the visit is somewhere distant, if the cost is considerable or the activities to be undertaken involve heightened risk.

Before the visit, the visit organiser fully briefs supervising staff and girls about the nature of the visit, all practical requirements and expectations of behaviour. For residential visits a briefing with parents may be held to explain the arrangements in detail.

Contact for residential visits

The Deputy Head is the School link contact for all visits which take place during school holidays. (If the Deputy Head is unavailable a member of the Leadership Team will be appointed). This emergency contact person is given all details of the visit including contact telephone numbers for parents, appropriate medical details for girls, the risk assessment for the visits and next of kin details of accompanying staff. As a minimum, the visit organiser must text the staff contact of their arrival and return.

In the event of an accident or emergency, the priority of the visit leader and accompanying staff is to ensure the safety of pupils. The visit leader will liaise with local emergency services and staff will accompany any injured pupils to hospital and ensure that any other pupils are supervised. The visit leader is also responsible for arranging that the Deputy Head, or the staff contact if in school holidays, is notified as soon as possible. The Deputy Head or the staff contact will arrange for the parent of girls to be notified. Staff accompanying visits are advised not to speak to the media and any press enquiries are referred to the Head's office.

Monitoring

The Deputy Head and Bursar will ensure that there is a system in place for appropriate monitoring of visits and events. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Mrs D Hannam Walpole
Deputy Head

Reviewed: November 2022
Next Review Date: November 2023

References: Health and Safety on educational Visits (November 2018)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits

Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (www.lotc.org.uk)