



Watermill School

Educational Visits and School Trips Policy

Policy Information		
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Latest Review:	Summary of amendments	Date of next review:
Date: Adopted October 2025		October 2026

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Definitions

3. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
4. [Planning school trips](#)
5. [Risk assessment process](#)
6. [Vetting providers](#)
7. [Equal opportunities](#)
8. [Transport](#)
9. [Parental consent](#)
10. [Staffing ratios](#)
11. [Insurance and licensing](#)
12. [Accidents and incidents](#)
13. [Missing person procedure](#)
14. [Finance](#)
15. [Evaluating trips and visits](#)
16. [Monitoring and review](#)

Appendices

- a) Visit leader response to emergency while on a visit.

Statement of intent

At Watermill School we believe that visits and trips are a hugely important part providing our pupils with the wealth of experiences they deserve in order to develop educationally, socially and in their independence. Trips and visits can serve to boost pupil motivation, provide alternative ways to access learning than that which can be offered in the classroom, and provide unique opportunities for our pupils to develop a wide range of skills.

The school takes the health and wellbeing of our staff and pupils very seriously. This policy has been designed in line with DfE and HSE guidance and details our responsibilities for pupils and staff members while out on educational visits and school trips.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety on educational visits'
- HSE (2011) 'School trips and outdoor learning activities'
- DfE (2013) 'Driving school minibuses'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Business Continuity Plan
- Health and Safety Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

2. Definitions

'In loco parentis' means that the group leader of any school trip or educational visit has a duty of care over the pupils in place of a parent.

'School trip' means any educational visit, foreign exchange trip, away-day or residential holiday organised by the school which takes pupils and staff members off-site.

'Residential' means any school trip which includes an overnight stay.

Activities of an '**adventurous nature**' include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Trekking
- Caving
- Skiing
- Water sports
- Climbing

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy complies with the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensuring educational trips and visits positively impact on pupils' lives, teaching them life skills and providing new experiences.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
- Appointing an educational visits coordinator, liaising with the LA as necessary.
- Liaising with the educational visits coordinator and communicating information regarding any planned trips to parents.
- Liaising with the governing board regarding the organisation of extra-curricular trips and activities, including settling any disputes.
- Being part of the approval process for extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring the educational visits coordinator is competent to oversee the coordination of off-site education and arranging for training to be undertaken, as necessary.
- Ensuring that relevant paperwork is completed, including risk assessments, for extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring suitable safety measures are in place prior to each trip or activity.
- Overseeing the work of the educational visit's coordinator, ensuring a whole-school approach is adopted when planning and coordinating extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring there are contingency plans in place in the event of a member of staff being absent on the day of the trip or activity.

The educational visits coordinator is responsible for:

- Overseeing all issues and controls regarding extra-curricular activities and trips.
- Liaising between all appropriate parties, including the local outdoor education adviser, during the planning and organising of extra-curricular activities and trips.
- Ensuring the systems and procedures for dealing with educational visits adhere to the requirements of this policy.
- Partaking in relevant additional training to ensure they remain up to date with relevant educational trip information and health and safety guidance.
- Overseeing the planning of the educational trips, by ensuring all essential documentation, including risk assessments, is up to date and appropriate for completion by the Visit Leader.
- Appointing an appropriate and competent member of staff to be the Visit Leader for each trip.
- Ensuring the competency of the Visit Leader, in consultation with the headteacher, by organising training for staff and volunteers.

The Visit Leader selected to be in charge on an individual trip is 'in loco parentis' and has a duty of care to all pupils on the trip. They are also responsible for:

- Identifying the educational purpose of the extra-curricular trip or activity and presenting its benefits to the headteacher.
- Undertaking any relevant training or courses which are arranged by the educational visit's coordinator.
- Completing all essential documentation for the trip and ensuring it has been approved by the educational visit's coordinator.
- Conducting a risk assessment prior to school trips and educational visits to ensure pupil and staff safety.
- Creating an itinerary prior to an educational visit or school trip and distributing it to pupils, parents and staff to ensure the day is well organised and safe.
- Informing parents of the proposed extra-curricular trip or activity, usually no less than 3 weeks in advance and distributing permission slips to parents.
- Implementing safeguarding measures throughout the planning, organisation and delivery of the extra-curricular trip or activity.
- Ensuring all adults on the trip are aware of their responsibilities and that the necessary checks have been carried out on volunteers in line with the DBS Policy.

A member of the staff team for the group may act as designated deputy leader and supports the Visit Leader. This staff member may assume the Visit Leader's responsibilities if the Visit Leader is no longer fit to lead the trip, e.g., is unwell at short notice. They are also responsible for supporting the Visit Leader in completing all their relevant responsibilities by assuming any delegated tasks.

Staff are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and applying its principles when participating in extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring they are competent and comfortable with their delegated responsibilities, undertaking training where necessary.
- Ensuring the safety of the pupils is maximised throughout any educational visit or activity.

Volunteers are invited along infrequently on trips or visits but where they are, they are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and applying its principles when participating in extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Supervising and ensuring the safety of pupils by following the procedures outlined by the Visit Leader.

4. Planning school trips

Prior to planning a school trip, the following guidance will be read by the organisers:

- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety on educational visits'
- HSE (2011) 'School trips and outdoor learning activities'

A thorough risk assessment will be conducted by the Visit Leader during the planning of the trip, to ensure pupil and staff safety.

When partaking in adventure trips, activities will always be identified at the planning stage and never added during the trip. When planning water sport activities, the need for instructors and lifeguards will be taken into account, particularly when using facilities which may not have a trained lifeguard present.

Activities, trips and visits are intended to be inclusive elements of our offer to pupils and will be planned to accommodate the individual needs of the whole group.

5. Risk assessment process

Our risk assessment process is designed to manage risks when planning trips, while ensuring that learning opportunities are experienced to the fullest extent. The individual carrying out the risk assessment process will have the skills, status and competence needed for the role, understand the risks involved, and be familiar with the activity.

The process is as follows:

- Identify the hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- Record findings and implement them
- Review assessment and update if necessary

A risk assessment will be conducted for each school trip before it is undertaken to identify hazards and control measures specific to the trip.

6. Vetting providers

When considering external providers for activities, the educational visits coordinator will check whether they hold the 'Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge' to indicate they meet nationally recognised standards.

If a provider does not hold the badge, the Visit Leader will satisfy the educational visits coordinator that they are a suitable organisation to work with by considering the following:

- Their insurance arrangements
- Their adherence to legal requirements
- Their control measures
- Their use of vehicles
- Staff competency levels
- Safeguarding policies
- The suitability of their accommodation
- Any sub-contracting arrangements in place
- The presence of necessary licences

7. Equal opportunities

The school promotes values of equality and does not discriminate against any individual or group of pupils when organising a trip. The extra-curricular trips and activities offered to pupils will provide new experiences and develop life skills. Extra-curricular trips and activities are organised, managed and conducted in accordance with the school's Inclusion Policy.

Where possible, pupils will be given the opportunity to contribute to the planning and organisation of extra-curricular trips and activities.

For school trips that require additional payment, the fee will be reasonable, and help will be provided where possible for pupils who cannot afford the initial fee.

8. Transport

The School Operations Manager is responsible for arranging the annual maintenance of the minibuses, including MOTs and road tax. The use of minibuses will be organised in accordance with the Minibus Policy.

The driver will have a current driving licence, be aged 25 years or over and hold a full licence in at least a category D PCV in order to drive on a domestic school trip. Category B PCVs may be acceptable in certain circumstances, as outlined in the Minibus Policy.

Start and finish mileage, along with any potential risks, defects or damage identified, will be reported upon return to the school. Staff members who hold the required licence and have completed specific training which allows them to drive the school minibus can be found in the appendices to the minibus policy.

9. Parental consent

Upon enrolment at Watermill parents/carers will be asked to complete a consent form which gives consent for their child to be involved in all activities both on and off-site within Stoke on Tent (e.g. in appendix), Newcastle under Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands, that take place during the school day.

Written consent in addition to this is required for:

- Activities of an adventurous nature.
- Residential trips.
- Trips outside of school hours.

Parents will be informed of activities in good time by letter and will have the opportunity to withdraw their child from taking part, should they wish.

10. Staffing ratios

Due to the unique nature of our pupils every trip will be assessed on its own merits when assigning staff. Many factors are taken into account when deciding on what ratio of staff to pupils is appropriate, for example the type of venue, the type of activity, the weather, the medical needs of the pupils, past experiences of both the venue and the group etc. Both the visit leader and the EVC will ensure that they feel staffing levels are suitable to maintain general safety on the visit and be in a position to respond to an incident or emergency if one should occur. Staffing ratios will always match or exceed those

11. Insurance and licensing

When planning activities of an adventurous nature in the UK, the educational visits coordinator will check that the provider of the activity holds a current licence. Insurance will be organised for every trip, no matter how short, to ensure adequate protection and medical cover is in place. Parents will be informed of the limits of any insurance cover.

Where a crime is committed against a member of the party, it will be reported to local police as soon as possible.

Medical expenses will be recorded and stored in the school office.

12. Accidents and incidents

In the case of accidents and injuries while on a school trip in the UK, the school's accident reporting process will begin, as detailed in the Health and Safety Policy

The headteacher will keep written records of any incidents, accidents and near misses.

Media enquiries will be referred to the headteacher or, if they are not available, the deputy headteacher or the clerk to governors.

Staff will use guidance as set out in the Business Continuity Plan and the "School Emergency Plan", in particular the 'Initial Action (2.2)' section, to ensure the safety of pupils and staff should anything happen, e.g. a terrorist attack. Staff will be briefed on how to react and respond should an emergency situation occur. Relevant risk assessments will be undertaken before the trip, including for points of interests such as museums and hotels. Pupils and staff are informed of an evacuation plan before entering trip venues; this should include an agreed rendezvous point, to ensure everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

Where a visit includes areas where pupils may be harder to keep track of, staff will consider the use of high visibility clothing or identity wristbands or similar.

13. Missing person procedure

The school places pupil and staff safety as its top priority when participating in school trips, either domestically or abroad.

Before embarking on the trip, extensive risk assessments are undertaken in accordance with this policy. The visit leader will communicate with the venues of the school trips to ensure the correct group sizes are planned for each setting.

The additional needs of all pupils on a visit will form part of the risk assessment and appropriate steps will be taken throughout the visit to ensure that pupils are properly supervised throughout.

All staff members will be required to carry mobile phones with them at all times, and each staff member should have the phone numbers of each of the other staff members on the trip saved.

Upon arriving at a venue, the Visit Leader will identify a rendezvous point where pupils and adults should go if they become separated from the rest of the group. Visit leaders will use their judgement to decide if additional or alternative rendezvous points will be identified throughout the visit, for example if the group moves too far away from the initial point. Pupils and staff will wear school branded clothing where possible, in order to make them easily identifiable.

Regular head counts of all pupils and staff will take place throughout the day to ensure all persons are present at all times.

In the event someone goes missing whilst on a school trip:

- The Visit Leader will ensure the safety of the remaining pupils and staff by taking a register to identify who is missing.
- The Visit Leader will immediately identify at least one adult to start looking for the person and another adult to contact them via phone, these people will look for the person until, where necessary, the police arrive.
- Where possible, the venue will be notified of the missing person to help ensure the person is found quickly.
- The visit leader will liaise with school staff and those at the venue to conduct an initial search. If the pupil cannot be found within the first 10 minutes of their disappearance the police will be informed. If the visit leader feels that the pupil is in danger, they will inform police immediately.
- If the police are called, the trip leader will contact the headteacher, or other available person, back at the school and inform them of what has happened.

If the police, or another authority, is called to an incident where someone is missing, they will oversee locating the person and will advise on factors including, but not limited to, when to contact next of kin.

If the missing person cannot be found, the group will return to school.

If a member of the party has gone missing and is subsequently found, the trip leader will:

- Review the group sizes and staffing ratios to ensure no one becomes separated from their group.
- Review whether more registers should be conducted throughout the day.
- Assess which venues they attend to ensure they are suitable for the group.
- Make recommendations to the educational visits coordinator to ensure similar incidents can be avoided in the future.

14. Finance

The financial procedures outlined in the school's Charging and Remissions Policy will always be followed when arranging trips.

The school will act in accordance with the DfE's guidance document 'Charging for school activities' (2018) and, therefore, will only charge for trips which are classed as an 'optional extra'. This is education provided outside of school time which is not:

- Part of the national curriculum.
- Part of a syllabus for an examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.
- Part of religious education.

Money for school trips will always be paid directly to the school. Under no circumstances should school trip money be processed through personal accounts.

In the event that the trip is cancelled due to unforeseeable circumstances, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the cost to the school, including alternative provision costs.

In the event that a pupil cancels their place on a trip, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the pupil's reasons for cancelling their place, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the space on the trip can be offered to someone else. Where a pupil has previously cancelled a space on a school trip and received a full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

The school will take a common-sense approach to refunds and cancellations, ensuring that all pupils are treated equally. Any charge made in respect of pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the trip divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Once trip arrangements are booked and confirmed, if contributions to a trip exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil. Any excess of expenditure will be subsidised by the school fund.

15. Evaluating trips and visits

Following an educational trip and/or visit, the educational visit coordinator will meet with any staff members present on the trip to assess the success of the trip in respect of both educational value and safeguarding effectiveness.

Based on this assessment, recommendations will be made to improve future trips and visits.

16. Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the headteacher. The governing board will review this policy annually. The scheduled review date for this policy is October 2026.

Appendix A

This section is taken from the School Emergency Plan.

It should be used by the Visit Leader and staff team to help guide their response to an emergency whilst on a trip.

3.8 Roles and responsibilities - educational visit leader

Ref'	Educational visit leader - initial response	Tick / sign / time
E1	Ascertain the whereabouts of all pupils and staff. Ensure the emergency services are aware of anyone who is unaccounted for.	
E2	Contact the headteacher (or nominated emergency contact) to ask for support. Remember to clarify international dialling codes if abroad.	
E3	Establish a basic overview of the incident. Ensure that accurate, factual information is available for those arriving on-scene.	
E4	Establish arrangements to meet the immediate welfare needs of pupils and staff.	
E5	Identify pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and anyone who may be particularly vulnerable. Inform the emergency services of any pupils or staff with known medical conditions or requirements.	
E6	Ensure that a member of staff accompanies any pupils to hospital but remember the safety of everyone else, even if unharmed. Do not leave anybody on their own and try to maintain an adequate adult / pupil ratio.	

E7	Ensure other staff are briefed (and given tasks) on a regular basis. Ask staff to maintain a log of actions taken and decisions made.	
E8	Keep a log of important information, actions taken and decisions made.	
E9	Remember to retain any important items / documents. E.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact details ▪ Consent forms (including medical and next-of-kin details) ▪ Maps ▪ Tickets ▪ Insurance policies ▪ Proof of identity ▪ Passports (if abroad) 	
E10	Avoid making comments to the media until parents / carers have been informed.	
E11	Do not discuss legal liability with others.	

Ref'	Educational visit leader - ongoing response	Tick / sign / time
E12	Continue to assess any risks to pupils and staff. Take action to prevent further harm if necessary.	
E13	Act as the main contact for co-ordination of the response and work closely with the headteacher / nominated emergency contact. Continue to liaise with the emergency services and other organisations.	
E14	Continue to brief staff and allocate tasks on a regular basis.	
E15	Monitor and reassure pupils. Make arrangements for the longer-term welfare needs of pupils and staff.	
E16	Consult the headteacher (or nominated emergency contact) about arrangements for notifying parents / carers and reuniting them with their children.	

E17	Liaise with the tour operator / provider, if appropriate.	
E18	Try to obtain the names and contact details of any witnesses to the incident. If possible, obtain a written account from them.	
E19	If abroad, contact the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office for support.	
E20	If abroad, check your insurance policy and seek insurance / legal advice before incurring any substantial expense (e.g. medical treatment).	
E21	Retain any receipts / documentation for insurance purposes. E.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Records of expenditure ▪ Medical certificates / hospital admission forms ▪ Police incident number 	
E22	Check that everyone who should have been notified of the incident has been informed. Remember that information given must be limited until the facts are clear and all parents / carers have been notified.	
E23	Ask the headteacher (or nominated emergency contact) to assist with developing a media statement, with support from other organisations as appropriate. Devise an ongoing strategy for dealing with media requests.	
E24	Ask pupils and staff to avoid speculation when talking to the media. Try to prevent the spread of misinformation (especially through the use of mobile phones).	

Ref'	Educational visit leader - recovery	Tick / sign / time
E25	Please refer to appendix 1 for providing welfare arrangements and post incident support after the initial emergency response.	
E26	Complete any necessary forms / paperwork.	