



Newcastle-under-Lyme School

Educational Visits Policy

This Document is available upon request to parents and prospective parents.

1. Introduction

“Newcastle-under-Lyme School aims to develop responsible, well-informed, confident and caring individuals by providing a journey of opportunity on which all pupils are motivated to achieve their very best through a challenging all-round education. We aim to provide all our pupils with the best start in life.”

A major part of this process is achieved by the pupils taking part in a variety of academic and cultural educational visits, offsite co-curricular activities and adventurous training. This policy seeks to set out the processes employed at Newcastle-under-Lyme School to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff whilst they are engaged in any of these activities.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is designed to ensure that all visits organised by Newcastle-under-Lyme School comply the requirements of the following legislation and regulations:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DFE Guidance for Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (2018)
- The Management Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Independent Schools Standards Regulations

3. Responsibility for Visits

(a) Board of Governors

The ultimate responsibility for the Health and Safety of pupils and staff taking part in educational visits and offsite activities lies with the Board of Governors of Newcastle-under-Lyme School. The process of approving visits and offsite activities has been delegated by the Governors to the Headmaster.

(b) Headmaster

The Headmaster has delegated the detailed monitoring and recording of all visits and trips to the appropriate Educational Visits Coordinator.

(c) Educational Visits Coordinator

It is the responsibility of the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) to monitor, record all detailed arrangements and recommend approval for all Educational Visits with due consideration being given to staffing provision and planning. They should provide induction training for new staff to ensure awareness of planning and risk assessment procedures.

(d) Visit Leaders

Visit Leaders are approved by the Head and have responsibility for gaining approval for the trip or visit, carrying out the detailed planning, risk assessment and contingency planning. They have overall responsibility for the supervision of the visit, including the health, safety and welfare of the group. In particular they should be aware of and be prepared for any specific medical needs of staff and pupils in the group.

All Visit Leaders must submit an evaluation of their visit for the EVC's review, using form EV4 and making amendments to risk assessments and planning documents to assist future visit planning.

4. Planning Visits

(a) Planning

All aspects of the proposed activity should be carefully planned, recorded and submitted for approval and should be endorsed or declined so that a clear audit trail exists of the planning process. Planning should be carried out in good time and completed paperwork should be submitted in accordance with the points detailed in the **Guidance for Visit Leaders document**, which is stored in the School Information area.

Particular thought should be given to assessing the suitability of venues and activity providers including: their insurance, that they meet legal requirements, their health and safety and emergency policies, their risk assessments, their use of vehicles, staff competence, safeguarding, accommodation, any sub-contracting arrangements they have, that they have a licence where needed.

Careful consideration should be given to the location and nature of the visit to ensure that any activity specific guidelines or legislation are taken into account. For example, field trips in the proximity of water should comply with the OEAP / DFE Guidance for Group Safety at Water Margins. Adventurous or hazardous activities need to be provided by an AALA licensed provider.

Activities involving The Duke of Edinburgh Award or Combined Cadet Force must also comply with the specific requirements and regulations of those organisations. The trip must comply with whichever requirements are the more stringent.

(b) Risk assessments

It is impossible to remove all risk from any activity. However, careful risk assessment and risk management can increase the safety margin on educational trips and activities. During the planning phase for any off site visit, Visit Leaders should carry out a risk assessment.

Where necessary and practical, especially for overnight visits, Visit Leaders should make an exploratory visit prior to the educational trip.

Generic Risk Assessments may be used and modified as required. Specific Risk Assessments should be carried out to cover any hazards not covered by Generic Risk Assessments. All supervising adults should be briefed on the Risk Assessments prior to going on the visit. Generic Risk Assessments are available in the School Information Area.

Visit Leader and Risk Assessment training and guidance will be offered by the EVC and periodically from external trainers. Any Visit Leader needing assistance with or training in completing Risk Assessments should contact the EVC.

It is the responsibility of all supervising adults to constantly assess how the visit or activity is progressing with respect to the original plan. If necessary a Dynamic Risk Assessment should be carried out, communicated to all supervising adults and pupils and recorded.

If outside providers are being used then the Visit Leader should obtain copies of the appropriate risk assessments, operating licenses and Public Liability Insurance.

(c) First Aid

All educational trips and activities not in the locality of the school should ideally be accompanied by at least one member of staff who holds a valid First Aid Certificate. The EVC has the discretion to waive this requirement in certain circumstances. All residential visits should be accompanied by a member of staff who holds a valid First Aid Certificate. First Aid Kits are carried in all school vehicles. If hire or private vehicles are to be used a First Aid kit should be obtained from the School Nurse unless this requirement has been waived by the EVC.

5. Supervision of Pupils

(a) Supervision Ratios

The following ratios are suggested as guidelines for non-residential visits, according to the category of the trip. (See Section 10 for details about the appropriate category for a visit):

Category of Visit	A	B	Adventurous Activities
Senior School	1:20	1: 12	1:8
Prep	1:15	1:10	1:8
Pre-Prep	1:8	1:6	1:6

The precise staff / pupil ratio for any trip may be higher or lower than these guidelines, depending upon a number of factors including the nature of the visit, the age of the pupils, the experience of the staff leading / helping on the visit, and if relevant the weather conditions. The precise ratio to be used should be discussed with the EVC.

The Visit Leader must also ensure that any minimum requirements of any external agencies such as Duke of Edinburgh or CCF are also complied with in the final approved supervision ratio.

For the purpose of supervision ratios, all residential trips will fall into the guideline ratios for category B (1:12). For more adventurous trips guideline ratio is 1:8

(b) Vetting of Volunteers

All volunteers with unsupervised access to pupils or accompanying a school party overnight must have a satisfactory enhanced DBS clearance and the school must obtain this in advance of the trip. A volunteer should not normally be counted as part of the staff supervisory ratio for a visit.

(c) Staff Qualifications and Competence

The EVC is responsible for ensuring that Visit Leaders are suitably qualified and have sufficient experience to lead any visit or activity undertaken. The EVC should be an experienced visits leader who has the status to be able to guide the working practices of other staff, be confident in assessing the ability of other staff to lead visits, be confident in assessing outside activity providers, be able to advise the Headmaster and governors when approving trips and have access to training, advice and guidance. The EVC should have undertaken EVC training provided by a recognised body (such as the OEAP) and maintain their level of knowledge and training.

Staff leading and assisting with any adventurous activities involving The Duke of Edinburgh Award or Combined Cadet Force must also comply with the specific requirements and regulations of those organisations.

(d) Supervision

It is the Visit Leader's responsibility to ensure that at all times the staffing ratio for supervision exercised is appropriate to the nature of the visit or activity being undertaken. Due consideration must be given to the qualifications and experience of the supervising staff, age and experience of the pupils, location and potential hazards and risks.

Some activities will require remote supervision. In these circumstances the Visit Leader must ensure suitable routine communication and monitoring procedures are in place. The minimum group sizes should be appropriate to the nature of the activity being undertaken.

The Visit Leader must ensure that all supervising staff and pupils are properly briefed before the activity commences. This brief should cover the aims of the visit, risks and hazards, rendezvous points and times, communications and emergency procedures. Head counts should be carried out at regular intervals and must always be done before leaving any venue.

Staff leading and assisting with any adventurous activities involving The Duke of Edinburgh Award or Combined Cadet Force must also comply with the specific supervisory requirements of those organisations.

6. Preparation of Pupils

(a) Participation

It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader planning the educational visit to ensure that it is pitched at the right level, so that it is within the capability of all the pupils in that group, with consideration given to any pupil's special educational need. Whilst every effort is made to encourage pupils to take on challenges and responsibilities, it is not the policy of Newcastle-under-Lyme School to coerce pupils or pupils into activities of which they have a genuine fear. Visit leaders should also consider carefully the cost of trips or visits which may prevent some pupils from taking part.

Owing to the potential impact on the insurance, health and safety and safeguarding of a trip, Visit Leaders should make it clear in communication with parents that pupils will be expected to participate in a trip's travel arrangements in entirety, departing and returning with the main party.

Exceptional requests for separate travel for party members must be formally requested in writing to Visit Leaders, and can only be undertaken if agreed in writing by, the School. However, parents should expect accommodation of such requests to not engage in the party's travel arrangements, or join or leave the main party late or early, to be declined due to the complexity, risk and infringement these create to insurance, safeguarding, logistics and health and safety management.

(b) Information to pupils

Pupils will be properly prepared for educational visits and this preparation is the responsibility of the Visit Leader. They will be informed what standards of behaviour are acceptable, they will be briefed on emergency actions, rendezvous procedures, supervisory groupings and their responsibilities regarding clothing and equipment.

(c) Consumption of Alcohol

Pupils under the age of 18 will not be allowed to consume alcohol under any circumstances. Alcohol consumption on school trips by pupils is not normally permitted. Should a visit leader wish to request an amendment to this policy in respect of pupils over the age of 18, they may do so to the EVC and Headmaster. However, such consumption should be moderate and appropriate to the occasion and permissible under local law when outside the UK. The impact on any risk assessments, planning and supervision should be considered carefully and recorded.

Parents must be made aware of the policy about alcohol consumption in the letter giving details of the trip. Pupils must be made aware of the policy about alcohol consumption in the briefing giving prior to departure.

7. Communicating with Parents

(a) Parental consent

The school obtains general consent from parents for pupils to participate in all non-residential visits that form part of the normal curriculum of the school day. This includes sports fixtures.

Parents should be told where their child will be when not on school premises and of any extra safety measures required, normally via a specific communication including the opportunity to withdraw a child from any activity or visit.

All Educational Visits which fall outside the scope of general consent given by parents at the beginning of the school year, including overseas and residential visits, will require a signed consent form to be completed by a parent or guardian of each pupil. If an activity attracts an additional charge, the consent of a parent/guardian to accept the additional charge is also required.

All Visit Leaders for overseas visits should hold a parent meeting well in advance of the departure date.

Most commonly parents will be asked for their consent by letter and a list of points which should be considered for inclusion in the letter is shown in the Guidance for Trip Leaders document stored in the School Information area.

In very rare cases, where a pupil is a Ward of Court, the Head will need to seek permission from the Court for residential or adventurous activities.

(b) Medical Information

If a pupil has a listed medical condition or requires medication, the Visit Leader should ensure relevant information is gathered from school records / parents:

- Any allergies or special dietary requirements;
- Any medication that the pupil requires (if so, the dosage and frequency);
- Whether or not the pupil is able to self-administer;
- Parental contact details for the duration of the visit.

Group leaders and all supervising adults should be aware of any medication that a pupil is taking on the visit even if it is not a prescribed medication.

8. Planning transport

Modes of transport used for visits can be divided into 3 main categories:

- Transport owned and operated by an external provider;
- Vehicles operated by the school, including school-owned and hired minibuses;
- Private cars.

In all cases accompanying staff have a responsibility to remind pupils to wear a seat-belt, to check that pupils are present before departure, and to ensure that pupils leave the vehicle free of litter at the end of the journey.

See Guidance for Visit Leaders document for the school's Minibus Policy.

Using private cars is discouraged. If in exceptional circumstances this is approved, staff are reminded that they should check that this is permissible with their insurance company and that they should avoid being on their own with a pupil in a car.

Generic Risk Assessments for transport, which are stored in the School Information area, should be read, modified as required and signed by the Visit Leader and all accompanying staff.

9. Insurance

All trips and visits that fall within the scope of general consent are covered by the School's insurance, details of which are available upon request from the Director of Finance and Operations.

Overseas trips may need additional insurance cover. Trip organisers should discuss with the Director of Finance and Operations whether such additional cover is needed, for example the GHIC card which replaces the EHIC card.

10. Types of Visit

The DFE recognises two categories of activity with increasing levels of potential or actual risk.

(a) Category A: Routine visits

These are activities that present no significant risk beyond those of everyday life. However, some of these activities could still expose participants to appreciable risk depending upon the experience and age of the pupil. For example, crossing a road will present risks to young unsupervised pupils but will not present the same level of risk to pupils in the Sixth Form. By way of example, a trip to the Gladstone Pottery Museum would be classed as a Category A visit.

(b) Category B: Trips that need extra planning and risk assessment

These are activities or visits to locations with a higher risk. Safe supervision will require the Visit Leader to have some specific knowledge and abilities that need to be assessed. This will be by having additional qualifications and/or verifiable experience. By way of example, canal studies and activities along canal banks, or boating in a powered canal boat would be classed as a Category B visit.

Some activities which are more adventurous, including all those within the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004, will require additional support from qualified providers. By way of example, a school skiing trip, including supervised skiing sessions at ski resorts. Any visit leader on such a visit should make checks on providers as outlined in section 4 above and check licenses as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004.

As a general rule, all activities organised by the CCF or DofE will fall into Category B. All residential visits will fall into category B.

A list of the types of activities which fall into each category can be found in the Guidance for visit leaders documents which is stored in the School Information area.

Activities that are not on the current approved activities list are either not considered appropriate or are activities for which the School does not have the technical expertise. Should Newcastle-under-Lyme School wish staff to lead, instruct, or supervise any other

activity, it should check with the Outdoor Education Adviser. It may be necessary to engage an appropriate technical expert to assess the proposal.

If external providers are to be appointed the Visit Leader must obtain copies of their Licence, Public Liability Insurance Certificate and copies of the risk assessments for the activities being carried out. Further guidance can be obtained from the Educational Visits Co-ordinator.

(c) Visits Abroad

Further guidance points for Visits Abroad can be found in the Guidance for Visit Leaders document in the School Information area.

11. Emergency Procedures

All Visit Leaders will be given the name and contact details for the Duty Senior Manager or Managers for the duration of the visit or activity. For Minor emergencies, the Visit Leader will respond by attending to the injured, ensuring the safety of the rest of the group. In the event of a critical incident (a serious threat to the wellbeing of an individual or group), action will be taken in accordance with the School's Critical Incident Policy. A Critical Incident Summary sheet for Visit Leaders is available in the School information area.

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