



Reading School- Educational Visits Policy

Updated: September 2026

Context:

Reading School believes that educational visits are an integral part of every student's entitlement to an effective and balanced curriculum. High-quality educational visits are known to develop character, enhance learning, improve attainment and strengthen relationships. As such, educational visits form a key part of what makes Reading School a supportive and effective learning environment.

We believe:

- All students should be able to experience a wide range of activities from local visits during the school day, to overseas adventures
- All visits should be of a high quality to allow for learning outcomes to be achieved
- Health and safety measures must be considered and appropriately applied to every visit. Whilst it is not possible to eliminate risk, the risk assessment process must be followed to manage and mitigate any risk associated with a visit
- Participants should take some responsibility for their own safety and must adhere to the guidance and rules given to them. Educational visits can provide an opportunity for participants to develop their own independence and personal responsibility
- Staff should be given the training and support they need in order to ensure educational visits are both high in quality and safe

Any visit that leaves the school grounds is covered by this guidance, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time, or outside the normal school day.

Reading School:

1. Follows the [Reading School Standard Operating Procedures for Educational Visits](#) which is shared annually with all staff.
2. Seeks advice on best practice from National Guidance (www.oeapng.info) and is also supported by an externally appointed Educational Visits consultant.
3. Follows policy and seeks clarification from the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) in the event of any apparent conflict between Reading School policy and National Guidance.
4. Invests time in training all staff who plan, approve, lead and carry out visits with the above guidance. Staff must be clear and confident on their role within the visits system as outlined later in this document

Educational Visit Categories:

There are three categories of Educational Visit:

Local Learning Area Visits (LLA): These visits involve leaving the school site but only into the local area (within a radius of approximately 20KM but geographically defined and specific). These visits are planned and delivered by school staff, delivered free of charge and will generally take place within the school day. They are considered to be an integral part of the curriculum. Staff leading an LLA must be deemed to have suitable experience and training to lead the trip. LLA visits are signed off by the EVC.

Parents will be informed of any activities taking place beyond the normal school day.

Tier 1 Visits (T1): These visits involve day trips that are further afield. These visits will contribute to the learning and development of a student but may be considered as extensions to the curriculum, or go above and beyond developing additional skills, or have an explicit focus linked the development of character. Whilst there may be a cost incurred for participation in Tier 1 Visits, support will always be available to support Pupil Premium and other disadvantaged students, parents and carers will be given the option to make a voluntary contribution to support the costs of such activities.

These trips may operate outside normal school hours but will not involve overnight stays or trips abroad. They may also involve the use of external entities for delivery such as a museum tour guide or a climbing instructor.

Tier 2 Visits (T2): Are like Tier 1 visits however they also involve an overnight stays and/or foreign travel. As such they are likely to include Parental Information Evenings and a sign up and selection process. Again, funding will be available for Pupil Premium and other disadvantaged students to ensure equality of opportunity and participation in all visits, both at home and abroad.

Visit Safety:

Safety is the **responsibility of all** stakeholders in an Educational Visit.

The safety and the quality of a visit are inherently linked.

It is the role of all staff planning, approving, leading or carrying out visits to actively work to ensure that exposure to risk is carefully considered and managed.

Whilst steps are taken to mitigate risk and activities are carefully planned, risk can never be eliminated. As such, all students taking part in an Educational Visit must agree to adhere to the guidelines they are set in relation to the visit. These will be communicated clearly in advance and then again at the start of the EV.

It is the responsibility of Reading School staff to provide this 'visit specific guidance' and to create an environment that is both respectful and collaborative in its approach to safety.

Our Safety Framework provides an overview of the processes involved with planning and delivering an Educational Visit (EV). It provides a clear flow of actions that considers all aspects of an EV from its planning and conception through to its delivery and evaluation. The Safety Framework also categorises each EV and then dictates the necessary checks and balances required. This approach enables a simpler process for local visits with normal everyday risks such as walking into Reading town centre.

Risk Management:

Once an EV has been approved in principle it will be assigned a category (LLA, T1 or T2). The category and the nature of the activity will necessitate varying levels of input required in terms of risk management. Simply stated, the more complex and potentially hazardous the EV, the more work is required to ensure risk is managed to an acceptable degree.

The **Safety Framework** explains how risk management fits into the EV process. Key to our safety framework are the following associated documents which will be updated and reviewed annually.

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): This document provides the minimum requirements for an EV regardless of its objectives or parameters. It must always be adhered to unless an 'Operating Procedure Amendment' is recorded and approved by the EVC and External EV Consultant

Additional Operating Procedure (AOP): These documents provide additional operational parameters for specific activities. Not all activities will require an AOP as all risks may be covered by the SOP. Canoeing for example will have an AOP that when used in conjunction with the SOP form the Operating Procedures for Canoeing.

Generic Risk Assessment (GRA): This document outlines the risks and control measures that are consistent across all EV's.

Activity Specific Risk Assessment (ARA): These documents outline the risks and control measures associated with specific activities. As with Operating Procedures, there may not always be an ARA for an activity as all identified risks may be covered within the GRA.

Dynamic Risk Assessing: It is important to note that whilst identifying and mitigating risk ahead of the visit is essential, it is insufficient without the process of 'dynamic risk assessing' to complement it. Staff and students on visits should always be assessing risk as they go and considering mitigation measures to limit the risk of harm. Changes in temperature, changes in the plan for the day and the behaviour and wellness of the participants are examples of things that must be considered on an ongoing basis. The list of what must be considered is endless and as such the process of dynamic risk assessing must be constant.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP): This document dictates the required response from Reading School staff as and when an emergency arrives. It also defines categories of emergency and the appropriate level of response required in recognition of the fact that emergencies vary widely in terms of seriousness.

Evaluation: It is good practice that there is an evaluation process in places for all EV's to ensure the consistency of safety measures, to identify any areas of concern and for quality assurance purposes. This will be done following each EV and will generally be recorded within EVOLVE. Any instance of an 'emergency' will necessitate a formal evaluation record along with any mandatory accident paperwork such as R.I.D.D.O.R.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Students: Are responsible for behaving in line with the school code of conduct and are expected to adhere to any instruction given by visit staff. Whilst we acknowledge that mistakes are a normal part of learning, we do expect students to be accountable for their actions. Making a mistake or a judgement error will often be considered as different to deliberately breaking rules or ignoring set parameters for behaviour. Students must recognise that they determine the value of the visit for themselves, they have a key role to play in terms of their investment and commitment to visits.

It must also be made clear that poor behaviour by a student prior to a trip may result in them being removed from an upcoming visit. This is never done as a punishment but in recognition of the increased risks posed to staff and participants. Under this circumstance it may not be possible to reimburse parents for trip costs as often monies have been committed such as nonrefundable deposits or booked flights.

Parents: Are responsible for supporting participation and striving to make the most of each opportunity. We require efficient and honest communication with parents at all stages of the trips process. Educational visits is another facet of school life that benefits from an honest reciprocal relationship between parents and school.

Visit Leaders (VL): Are the staff responsible for the planning and delivery of the visit including the supporting paperwork and visit evaluation. Visit Leaders will work with the support of the EVC to ensure that the visit meets all criteria for safety and quality. During an EV the Visit Leader will support all participants and dynamically assess the quality and safety of the event. The Visit Leader has the authority to adjust or curtail the visit if this is required to maintain the safety and integrity of the activity.

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC): Is the individual within school who has the experience and authority to oversee all educational visits. The EVC is the first point of contact for Visit Leaders before, during and after the visit. The EVC will also authorise planned visits unless they are of a level of complexity and risk that requires further authorisation from the Headmaster. The EVC takes responsibility for considering mandatory rules and regulations and ensuring the compliance of visits and processes with guidance. The EVC will also hold responsibility for ensuring that staff with the correct level of qualification, competence and experience, are scheduled to plan and deliver visits.

Headmaster: Is responsible for oversight of the EVC and ensures consistency between the Educational Visits Policy and any other relevant school guidance. The Headmaster will also be required to evaluate and give authorisation for visits that have a high level of complexity such as residential stays and overseas visits.

Chair of Governors: Supports the Educational Visits process and delivery. They will support the creation and approval of policies and procedures designed to ensure a high quality of educational visit across the school. They may also be required to approve visits with a high level of complexity alongside the Headmaster and EVC.

External EV Consultant: Is responsible for providing high quality, and accurate guidance and support to the EVC. They will also offer supportive and critical analysis in relation to the systems and processes involved with educational visits.

First Aid:

For any EV the VL must determine (with support from the EVC) what level of First Aid provision is required.

A qualified first aider will be present on most educational visits.

It may be appropriate for some LLA or Tier 1 visits, to be led by staff members without formal First Aid qualifications. The following elements are all to be considered:

- Prior experience as a VL
- Prior experience as a qualified first aider
- Proximity or availability of first aid support
- Level of risk involved in the visit

It is important to note that visits will not go ahead if the appropriate level of first aid trained staff cannot be achieved.

First aid kits are provided and will be taken on every educational visit

Supervision and staffing:

Supervision is a key link in the safety chain during an EV. It is important to recognise that 'supervision' in this sense includes the process whereby the VL and other accompanying staff consider how to frame and explain the activity in question. Explaining and setting up an activity well will lessen the chances of an accident. There are several 'levels' of supervision, these can be employed depending on the students' behaviour, maturity and prior experience:

Direct: A staff member is physically with a student or group accompanying them. E.G Leading a group around a gallery.

Indirect: A staff member is in the near vicinity of a student or group but is not accompanying them and will have given very clear parameters and timings for the activity. E.G During a museum visit.

Remote: The supervising member of staff is easily contactable but is not in the near vicinity of the student/group. E.G During a Duke of Edinburgh hiking expedition.

Technical supervision: Supervision of a specific activity that requires knowledge and skills to manage safely. This can be delegated to an external provider such as a climbing instructor. However, staff are still empowered to curtail any activity they feel is not being led in a safe way regardless of their technical expertise with the activity.

Pastoral supervision: Overall supervision of participants remains the responsibility of the visit staff. This is the case at all times, including when engaged in an activity led by an external organisation or individual. There may be times when adults external to the school take partial pastoral responsibility such as exchange visits, but overall responsibility remains with the visit staff.

Although relaxing supervisory levels increases the element of risk it can also bring valuable educational and developmental benefits. Any decision to relax supervisory levels should be informed by some form of risk assessment (this could be dynamic) regarding the ability of the students or the group they are in.

Staff ratios are defined below based on the nature of the activity and the designated level of the EV.

Generally educational visits will involve at least 2 staff members however there may be exceptions and ratios should be considered as part of the Risk Management process. Appropriate ratios should be discussed and assessed by the VL and EVC during the planning stages of any EV.

In addition to the above the following parameters must also be adhered to:

For 'low risk' visits within the LLA, assuming staff competency, knowledge of procedures and prior experience it may be appropriate for a single staff member to lead a group of students on a visit. There must be a minimum of 2 staff members when the visit is Tier 1 or Tier 2 or has an element of Adventurous Activity. Any adjustment to these ratios must be approved by the EVC and each instance recorded.

To ensure the effective supervision by staff, alcohol consumption by visit leaders is not allowed during any educational visit.

Mobile Phones:

Reading School is committed to encouraging positive behaviours around mobile phones. We believe that for the vast majority of visits it is better to limit phone access in favour of students immersing themselves in the experience and enjoying time with each other. Students and parents alike should expect phones to be stored securely by staff during visits with little or no access given to students during the trip. The concept of 'no news is good news' applies here as staff will be in touch with parents directly if support is required or an incident occurs. Many trips will have updates shared on social media but some more remote trips may not. In case of genuine emergency (something that cannot wait until a child's return), parents should contact the main office where messages can be passed on. In today's world this may seem and feel strange, but it is completely safe and in the best interests of those on the visit.

Insurance:

Reading School will ensure that all activities completed during an EV are covered by our insurers. Details can be requested from the EVC.

External Providers:

The use of External Providers is sometimes required to enhance the experience of an EV. Reading School staff remain in loco parentis of all students at all times and cannot relinquish this responsibility to an external provider unless agreed with the EVC during the planning stage. In this instance this agreement must be recorded.

All external providers will either be LoTC accredited **or** complete 'Approved Provider' management paperwork and must as a minimum:

- Have a Safer Recruitment policy and systems (DBS or Overseas Police Check)
- Have a documented safety management framework in place to manage the safety of all participants (including Reading School staff). This paperwork may be requested from the provider by the VL or EVC
- Hold all relevant accreditations for the activities to be delivered and have all relevant insurances including **Public Liability and Indemnity**.

Some overseas providers may not be familiar with this type of paperwork. In agreement with the EVC it may be necessary to find a mutually acceptable way of confirming the appropriateness of an external provider. In these circumstances the EVC and VL will agree measures and these will be recorded. Advice from our External EV consultant will also be sought under this circumstance.

Transport:

Considerations on how to transport students and staff must be made in conjunction with the EVC. The staff team on the EV must be capable of managing the students during transport, whatever the method. This could be walking from school to the riverside or it could involve supervising students during a coach trip to France. Risk assessments are provided for the following methods of travel but a brief overview is included below.

Walking: Staff must either know the route and be capable of managing the group/student, including road crossings and other hazards, or have been briefed on specific risks by the EVC or VL.

Minibuses: Any use of minibuses must abide by the Reading School minibus procedure.

Coaches: External contractors must be chosen carefully and a reputable provider used. DBS checks are not essential as a Reading School staff member must accompany a student/group on any coach journey.

Trains: Staff must be comfortable with the journey and supervision during travel. Only reputable train companies may be used however in most countries we are willing assume that public train operators are appropriate and safe.

Air Travel & Ferries: Staff must be comfortable with the journey and supervision during travel. Only reputable airlines will be used.

Parental Consent:

The nature of an EV will determine the consent required from a parent or carer.

As a part of the Generic Trips Consent, given by parents or carers they will generally consent for their child to participate in EV's that:

- Occur within the Local Learning Area (LLA)
- Take part solely, or predominantly in normal school hours (such as sports fixtures)
- Require no monetary contribution
- Are planned and delivered using Reading School staff

Events that fall under Tier 1 and Tier 2 EV's will require additional consent given for each and every EV of this nature.

Photos of students taking part in trips may be taken by staff, assuming that photographic consent has been given, but students should be told if photos are to be used for official use.

Quality:

Whilst ensuring students are safe when on an EV, it is equally important to focus on the quality of the experience. Key to quality visits are:

Outcomes & Planning: Clear outcomes should be identified for each EV. Safety concerns must be managed in line with the procedures and careful consideration should be given to the appropriateness of the activity if it cannot be done safely without compromising its purpose or value.

Facilitation & Teaching: EV's must be planned in order to maximise the opportunities for learning. Appropriate time should be allocated for 'front loading' students with any information they may need before the EV in order to make the most of it. Consideration must be given to differentiating experiences for each student so that all may benefit from the experience.

Reflections & Transference: All EV's should have allocated time for reflection. This may take part whilst on the visit, or very soon after. Timely reflection is vital for transference and enables success to be measured and integrated into some element of the student's school life.

Participation and Withdrawal from Visits

Participation in an educational visit is conditional upon a student's continued compliance with the school behaviour expectations and any visit-specific requirements.

The school reserves the right to withdraw a student's place on an educational visit at any stage before departure where behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, welfare, medical, or other relevant concerns lead the school to conclude that participation may:

- present an unacceptable risk to the student or others
- adversely affect the safety, welfare or educational value of the visit
- require a level of supervision beyond that which can reasonably be provided

Any such decision will be made by the Headmaster or delegated senior leader, taking account of relevant risk assessments and the specific circumstances of the case.

Withdrawal from a visit under this provision is a safety and risk-management measure and not a disciplinary sanction.

Where costs have already been committed, including deposits, transport, accommodation or activity bookings, refunds may not be available.

Approved by EXPC Committee, 14 September 2026

Date of next review: September 2027