



## Reading School- Educational Visits Policy

### Context:

Reading School believes that educational visits are an integral part of every pupil's entitlement to an effective and balanced curriculum. Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment and so form a key part of what makes Reading School a supportive and effective learning environment.

We believe:

- Students should be able to experience a wide range of activities, the potential benefits of which are immense. Health and Safety measures are in place to enable the safety of activities, not to stop them;
- It is important that children learn to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life;
- Common sense should be used in assessing and managing the risks of any activity. Health and safety procedures should always be proportionate to the risks of an activity;
- Staff should be given the training they need so they can keep themselves and students safe and manage risks effectively.

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.

Due to the constraints placed on Educational Visits and trips as a result of **COVID19**, we have worked to introduce and streamline the visits to ensure that students still have access to opportunities that enrich the curriculum such as taking part in Geography field work, outdoor activities, visits to local historical sites and similar. The majority of such visits will take place within the schools Local Learning Area, defined in this policy. Until current guidance has been amended it is likely that all visits planned for the 2020 – 21 academic year will be within the LLA.

### Reading School:

1. Follows the 'Reading School Standard Operating Procedures for Educational Visits'. All staff have access to this.
2. Seeks advice on best practice from National Guidance ([www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info)) and is in addition supported by an externally appointed Educational Visits consultant.

In the event of any apparent conflict between Reading School policy and National Guidance, then Reading School policy must be followed and clarification sought from the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

All staff are required to plan and carry out visits in line with the above guidance and staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined later in this document.

### Visit Safety:

The safety and the quality of a visit are inherently linked. It is our role as a School to plan carefully in order that exposure to risk is carefully considered and managed.

Safety is the **responsibility of all** stakeholders in an Educational Visit. 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 every day risks such as walking into Reading town centre.

### **Educational Visit Categories:**

There are three categories of Educational Visit, which operate in conjunction with the Safety Framework in place:

**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.

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 to the *Reading Way*. 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 similar to 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.

### **Roles & Responsibilities:**

**Students & Parents:** Are responsible for supporting participation and striving to make the most of each opportunity. Students must take *partial* responsibility for their own safety and understand the value gained from each experience

**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.

### **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.

*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 place 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.

### **First Aid:**

For any EV the VL must determine (with support from the EVC) what level of First Aid provision is required. This is clarified in the *Management of Illness & Injury Risk Assessment*. It may be appropriate for some LLA visits, to be led by staff members without formal First Aid qualifications. Prior experience as a VL, historical training or acquired first aid knowledge may all be taken into consideration. This is due to proximity to the school of the visit and the availability of additional support.

For visits further afield, or activities with a higher inherent risk it will generally be necessary for a formal first aid qualification to be held by an accompanying adult. A first aid kit suitable for the EV must also be carried.

### **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.

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 student 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.

#### **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.**

#### **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.

#### **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.

### **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.

### **Planning Systems:**

Planning Educational Visits can be an onerous and time consuming process. The EVOLVE system will automate the process of trip sign off, allow for processes to be adapted in response to the nature of Educational Visits required and to record the effective planning and Risk Management processes in place.

From November 2020, all Educational visits will be recorded using EVOLVE and all staff leading visits will be trained to use the EVOLVE system.

*Policy approved by the Governing Body of Reading School, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020*

*To be reviewed: November 2021 (by EXPC Committee)*