

SEAHAM HIGH SCHOOL



Educational Visits Policy

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Review Date	Cycle	Reviewer	Adopted	Committee
February 2025	Annually	L Hardman	February 2025	Finance & Premises

Educational Visits Policy

Context

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every student to an effective and balanced curriculum. Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment, which form a key part of what makes *Seaham High School* a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits to students in taking part in visits and learning outside the classroom include, but are not limited to:

- Improvements in their ability to cope with change.
- Increased critical curiosity and resilience.
- Opportunities for meaning, making, creativity, developing learning relationships and practicing strategic awareness.
- Increased levels of trust and opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves, them in each other).
- Improved achievement and attainment across a range of curricular subjects. Students are active participants not passive consumers, and a wide range of learning styles can flourish.
- Enhanced opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context' and the development of the social and emotional aspects of intelligence.
- Increased risk management skills through opportunities for involvement in practical risk-benefit decisions in a range of contexts i.e. encouraging students to become more risk aware as opposed to risk averse.
- Greater sense of personal responsibility.
- Possibilities for genuine team working including enhanced communication skills.
- Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding of a variety of environments.
- Improved awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability.
- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.

Application

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

In addition to this Educational Visits Policy, Seaham High School:

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Durham County Council Educational Visits, Off-Site Activities and On-Site Adventures Policy and Guidance**' (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE).
2. Adopts National Guidance, www.oeapng.info, (as recommended by the LA).
3. Uses EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this Policy, Local Authority policy, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

Types of Visit & Approval

There are three 'types' of visit:

1. Visits/activities that are within the local area and are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day.

- The Visit Group Leader submits an Educational Visit Request Form which is then approved by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- The details are then entered onto EVOLVE by the admin/finance team and submitted to the EVC for checking.
- This visit does not require parental consent
- There is no need to do any additional risk assessments other than following the Operating Procedure at Appendix 1.
- No approval is needed from the Headteacher, however all Educational Visit Request Forms are discussed at weekly SLT meetings.

2. Visits/activities and other non-residential visits within the UK that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day that do not include an adventurous activity

- The Visit Group Leader submits an Educational Visit Request Form which is then approved by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- The details are then entered onto EVOLVE by the admin/finance team and submitted to the EVC for checking.
- The Visit Group Leader sends all essential information to the admin/finance team to enable them to upload any documents needed for the visit.
- The EVC then submits to the Headteacher for approval.

3. Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.

As above, but the Headteacher authorises the visit and then submits to the LA for approval. Note that there are a number of venues which have been given delegated approval so the Headteacher can approve – see Evolve for the most up to date list.

Roles and Responsibilities

Visit Group Leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits. They should obtain approval for a visit from the Headteacher prior to planning, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit Group Leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is Leanne Hardman who will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. The EVC is the first point of contact for advice on visit related matters, and will check final visit plans on EVOLVE before submitting them to the Headteacher. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc. In the event of the current EVC being absent for any reason then she is deputised by Lynn

Whitehead, Assistant Headteacher. Paperwork relating to any visit should be forwarded to the EVC for checking and compliance.

The Headteacher has responsibility for authorising all visits, and for submitting all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits to the LA for approval, via EVOLVE.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. There is no requirement for governors to approve visits but they will be informed at regular governor meetings what visits have taken place and what is planned. Individual governors may request 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

The Local Authority is responsible for the final approval (via EVOLVE) of all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

Staff Competence

We recognise that staff competence is the single most important factor in the safe management of visits, and so we support staff in developing their competence in the following ways:

- An apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits, assist and work alongside experienced visit leaders before taking on a leadership role.
- Supervision by senior staff on some educational visits.
- Support for staff to attend training courses relevant to their role, where necessary.

In deciding whether a member of staff is competent to be a visit leader, the Headteacher will take into account the following factors:

- Relevant experience.
- Previous relevant training.
- The prospective leader's ability to make dynamic risk management judgements, and take charge in the event of an emergency.
- Knowledge of the students, the venue, and the activities to be undertaken.

Emergency Procedures

Every visit will have nominated emergency contacts. If the visit is off-site for only the duration of the school day, the school telephone number is sufficient to give as an emergency contact. However, if the visit is of a residential nature **two** 24hr contact numbers will be identified (i.e. mobile and/or home phone number). The emergency contacts will have a copy of the Emergency Card (EV8) with the relevant emergency contact details on. They will also have access to all the relevant medical and next of kin information. The visit leader will have a completed Emergency Card (EV7) with them at all times (this will detail the contact details for the emergency contacts).

A critical incident is any incident where events go beyond the normal coping mechanisms and experience of the visit leadership team.

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical incident during a visit (see Appendix 2). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least bi-annually and following any major staffing changes.

When an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, or where it involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention then assistance will be sought from Eden Learning Trust (ELT). The school also buys into a SLA with the LA for the Provision of Support with Crisis Communication which provide advice and guidance on dealing with media enquiries.

Educational Visits Checklist

Seaham High School's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities. This has been adapted from the LA's generic checklist. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'. Seaham High School's Educational Visits Checklist may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources.

Parent/Carer's Consent

Consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area (i.e., local area) that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time. However, parents/carers will always be informed of the detail when their child is undertaking an educational visit.

Written consent is only requested for activities which need a higher level of risk management or those that take place outside of school hours. A 'one off' consent will be signed by parents/carers when their child enrolls at school. This will cover a child's participation in any of these types of activities throughout their time at the school.

However, specific parental consent will be obtained for visits of a residential, overseas or adventurous nature. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents/carers so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis.

Inclusion

Seaham High School will make reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage. However, the Equality Act 2010 does not require us to place employees or participants at risk of injury or ill health in order to make reasonable adjustments.

If appropriate, we may ask the parent/carers of a particular student to accompany them on the visit. If there are any concerns about whether school can provide for a student's safety or the safety of others on a visit due to the specific needs of a student, we will seek advice from the DCC Health & Safety Team.

Charging/funding for visits

Seaham High School will arrange payment for visits on an individual visit basis. Visits such as residential visits, which will be more expensive, will have arrangements in place for payment to be made gradually over a period of time leading up to the visit.

Those students who receive specific benefits may be entitled to attend off-site visits with no charge and/or students may be asked for a voluntary contribution. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Transport

Use of staff cars to transport students – Seaham High School follows the Local Authority advice, please see guidance documents within evolve for transporting students.

Use of Parents/carers and Volunteers Cars – Seaham High School does not allow the use of parents/carers or volunteers cars to transport students unless it is their own child and this would be dependent on the reason and approval by the Headteacher.

Insurance

Seaham High School is covered by Zurich Insurance which includes Employers Liability and Public Liability insurance for activities when away from the school site, home base or when employees are working in the community within the UK. Depending on the cover at the time, we may not be covered for personal accident benefits or loss of property. Please speak to the EVC if there are any queries.

Appendix 1 – Operating Procedure

Below is simply a generic risk assessment for routine activities:

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our School Learning Area (Local Area):

- Road traffic – students know how to cross a road safely
- Students are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group
- Other people / members of the public / animals.
- Losing a student
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls
- Weather conditions
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish and so on)
- Group Visit Leaders to carry a mobile phone for contact and has the number of the school office to hand
- Staff are aware of any relevant student medical information and ensure that any required medication is available
- All remotely supervised work in the School Learning Area (Local Area) is done in pairs as a minimum – students are aware of contact details for the Visit Group Leader
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas'
- Students' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school
- Visit Group Leader has adequate supplies including water, sun cream, wipes, black sacks and anti-bacterial gel
- A list of all students and staff is handed into the school office before leaving the school together with a proposed estimated time of return

Appendix 2 – Emergency Procedure

The school's emergency response to an incident is based on the following key factors:

1. There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit (during school hours this is the office who will contact the Headteacher).
2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the Senior Leadership Team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior leader at all times.
3. For activities that take place during normal school hours, the visit leader and senior leadership team will be aware of any relevant medical information for all participants, including staff.
4. For activities that take place outside normal school hours, the Visit Group Leader and the emergency contact/s will be aware of any relevant medical information and emergency contact information for all participants, including staff.
5. The Visit Group Leader and the base contact/s know to request support from the Local Authority in the event that an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention.
6. For visits that take place outside the School Learning Area (Local Area), the Visit Group Leader will carry an Emergency Card (EV7).
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from Visit Group Leaders.