



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Policy Owner:	Chief Operating Officer (COO)
ISSR Reference:	Part 3 – Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils Part 8 – Quality of Leadership in and Management of Schools
Date of review:	Summer 2026
Approved by:	Group Board
Date of next review	Autumn 2026

Version Control Information

Reason for Amendment	Role	Date	Main Changes
Tier 1 policy formatted into SDEG house style and running order	Chief Operating Officer (COO)	Group Board – Summer 2026	Streamlined format, monitoring wording and policy links aligned to house style

1. Aims

St Dunstan's Education Group ("the Group") believes that educational visits are an integral part of a broad, balanced and enriching educational experience.

Educational visits provide valuable opportunities to:

- enhance curriculum learning
- develop independence, confidence and resilience
- promote personal, social and cultural development
- strengthen relationships between pupils and staff
- develop responsible decision-making
- provide opportunities to experience and manage risk appropriately.

The Group seeks to provide a rich programme of educational visits whilst maintaining effective arrangements for safeguarding, health and safety, welfare and operational oversight.

The Group recognises that exposure to appropriately managed risk forms an important part of learning and personal development. Risks should therefore be managed proportionately rather than eliminated.

This policy applies to all educational visits organised by, or on behalf of, any school or nursery within the Group.

This includes:

- local visits
- curriculum visits
- sports fixtures
- enrichment activities
- residential visits
- adventurous activities
- Duke of Edinburgh activities
- exchanges
- overseas visits
- nursery and EYFS outings
- co-curricular activities conducted off-site.

This policy applies to employees, volunteers, governors accompanying visits and external providers acting on behalf of the Group.

2. Legislation and Regulatory Framework

This policy has regard to:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- SEND Code of Practice
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework
- Independent School Standards Regulations
- Department for Education guidance relating to educational visits and health and safety.

The Group formally adopts:

- OEAP National Guidance for Learning Outside the Classroom and Educational Visits
- as its employer guidance for educational visits.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Group Board of Governors

The Group Board is responsible for:

- approving this policy
- determining the Group's risk appetite
- receiving annual assurance reports
- reviewing significant incidents where appropriate
- holding senior leaders accountable for implementation.

The Group Board does not approve individual visits.

3.2 Local School Boards

Local School Boards are responsible for:

- providing local challenge and support
- receiving assurance regarding educational visit arrangements
- reviewing significant trends and lessons learned.

Local School Boards do not ordinarily approve individual visits.

3.3 Chief Executive Officer

The CEO is responsible for:

- ensuring effective educational visits arrangements operate across the Group
- approving Tier 1 visits
- receiving reports relating to significant incidents and trends.

3.4 Chief Operating Officer

The COO is responsible for:

- maintaining this policy
- maintaining the Educational Visits Procedures and Risk Management Standards
- overseeing assurance and audit activity
- reporting educational visits matters to Governors.

3.5 Heads of School and Group Head of Nurseries

Heads are responsible for:

- ensuring visits support educational objectives
- ensuring competent Visit Leaders are appointed
- approving visits within delegated authority
- ensuring compliance with this policy.

3.6 Educational Visits Coordinators

The EVCs are responsible for:

- supporting Visit Leaders
- assessing Visit Leader competence
- providing advice and guidance
- overseeing approval arrangements
- maintaining records
- supporting training and development.

3.7 Visit Leaders

Visit Leaders are responsible for:

- planning visits appropriately
- completing risk assessments
- implementing relevant control measures
- briefing staff, pupils and volunteers
- undertaking dynamic risk assessment
- ensuring visits are conducted safely and effectively.

4. Educational visits management system

4.1 Definitions

Educational Visit

Any activity arranged by, or on behalf of, a Group school or nursery involving pupils leaving their normal educational setting.

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The trained member of staff responsible for oversight of educational visits within a school or setting.

Visit Leader

The member of staff responsible for planning and leading an individual visit.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

The ongoing process of identifying and responding to changing circumstances during a visit.

Risk-Benefit Approach

A planning process that considers both the educational value of an activity and the foreseeable risks involved.

4.2 Principles

The Group's approach to educational visits is founded upon the following principles:

- visits should support clear educational or developmental objectives
- safeguarding remains paramount
- risks should be managed proportionately
- planning should reflect the complexity of the activity
- decisions should be informed by competence and professional judgement
- visits should be inclusive wherever reasonably practicable
- pupils should be supported to develop confidence, resilience and independence.

The Group recognises that educational visits undertaken by nursery, junior and senior pupils vary significantly in complexity. While common standards apply across the Group, planning and supervision arrangements must take account of pupils' age, maturity, needs and experience.

4.3 Approval Framework

The Group operates a proportionate three-tier approval framework.

Tier 1 – Strategic / High-Risk Visits

Examples include:

- homestays
- significant adventurous activities
- novel or high-risk activities
- overseas residential trips not using accredited travel companies (e.g. self-planned trips)
- visits involving significant safeguarding, reputational or operational risk.

Approvals required:

- Visit Leader
- EVC
- Deputy Head (or nominated Senior Leader)
- Head
- CEO

Tier 2 – Routine Overseas Residential Trips

Examples include:

- UK residential trips not using accredited travel companies/activity centres (e.g. self-planned trips)
- major sports tours
- Routine overseas trips, using a travel company to a location without heightened safety concerns and conducting routine activities
- Established overseas exchanges with approved procedures

Approvals required:

- Visit Leader
- EVC
- Deputy Head (or nominated Senior Leader)
- Head

Tier 3 – Routine Residential Visits

Examples include:

- UK residential visits using approved providers/activities centres
- Duke of Edinburgh expeditions
- Day trips involving significant logistical complexity within the UK
- Residential CCF expeditions

Approvals required:

- Visit Leader
- EVC
- Deputy Head (or nominated Senior Leader)
- This allows oversight of residential visits without requiring Head approval for every overnight trip.

Tier 4 – Non-Routine Day Visits

Examples include:

- fieldwork
- university visits

- theatre visits
- careers visits
- visits using approved activity providers
- visits led by inexperienced Visit Leaders
- visits to unfamiliar locations
- CCF day trips
- large-scale day visits.

Approvals required:

- Visit Leader
- EVC
- Member of SLT

Tier 5 – Routine Visits

Examples include:

- local curriculum visits
- routine sports fixtures
- routine educational activities, such as museums
- local community visits
- visits covered by existing generic risk assessments and established procedures.

Approvals required:

- Visit Leader
- EVC

Escalation

The EVC may require any visit to be escalated to a higher approval tier where professional judgement indicates additional scrutiny is required.

The following circumstances will normally require approval at least at Tier 3 level:

- overnight accommodation
- unfamiliar accommodation
- significant medical needs
- significant safeguarding concerns
- activities outside normal school practice
- pupils requiring complex support arrangements.

4.4 Planning and Risk Management

All educational visits must:

- have a clear educational purpose

- be appropriately supervised
- incorporate suitable safeguarding arrangements
- consider medical and welfare needs
- provide appropriate emergency arrangements
- consider accessibility and inclusion.

Visit Leaders shall apply the SAGED model when planning visits:

- Staffing
- Activity
- Group
- Environment
- Distance from support

Educational visits shall be planned and managed in accordance with the Group's Educational Visits Procedures and Risk Management Standards and associated risk assessment processes.

These procedures support this policy but do not form part of the policy itself.

4.5 Staff Competence and Training

The Group shall ensure that:

- EVCs receive appropriate training
- EVCs maintain current knowledge and competence
- Visit Leaders receive appropriate support and development
- competence is considered before responsibilities are delegated
- specialist qualifications are obtained where required.

The Group supports a graduated approach to developing Visit Leaders through mentoring and supported experience.

4.6 Volunteers

If using volunteers on the trip, trip leaders will ensure:

- volunteers follow staff instructions
- volunteers are not left in sole charge of pupils unless appropriately vetted and authorised
- volunteers receive a briefing before visits.

4.7 Inclusion

The Group is committed to ensuring educational visits are accessible to all pupils wherever reasonably practicable.

Planning should consider:

- SEND
- medical conditions
- mental health needs
- accessibility requirements
- behavioural and pastoral needs.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered on an individual basis.

4.8 Sports Fixtures

Routine sports fixtures may operate under delegated arrangements approved by the relevant Head and EVC.

The EVC may require individual fixtures to be escalated where additional complexity or risk is identified.

4.9 Communication and Consent

Parents and carers shall receive information proportionate to the nature and complexity of the visit. This will include:

- itinerary details
- travel arrangements
- required equipment
- emergency contact arrangements

Written consent shall be obtained where required by:

- law
- safeguarding requirements
- insurance requirements
- Group procedures.

Additional consent arrangements may apply to:

- overseas visits
- residential visits
- adventurous activities
- EYFS visits.

4.10 Emergency Planning and Critical Incidents

All educational visits must have appropriate emergency arrangements.

Higher-risk visits, including residential and overseas visits, shall have:

- emergency contacts
- communication arrangements

- access to emergency information
- escalation procedures.
- Significant incidents shall be managed in accordance with the Group's Critical Incident Policy.

Overseas visits must take account of current Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office travel advice and any relevant public health requirements.

4.11 Gender Identity

As required by KCSIE 2026, students will only be permitted to share bedrooms/tents with students of the same biological sex. There are no exceptions to this. The school will work with transgender and socially transitioning pupils and their families, to explore other permitted sleeping arrangements, such as a smaller room if there are only one or two students of their biological sex they would feel comfortable sharing with, or individual rooms. However, this will always be balanced against other safeguarding risks, so individual sleeping arrangements may not always be deemed a safe option and may not, therefore, be available.

Pupils who are gender questioning or have socially transitioned, will be given access to individual changing facilities, toilets and showers wherever possible, or are able to use the facilities of their biological sex, never their identified gender where this differs to their biological sex.

In line with OEAP recommendations, we will also be alert to safeguarding risks associated with travel to countries or states in which it is illegal to be openly LGBTQ+, or where discrimination or hostility towards LGBTQ+ people is prevalent. In these instances, the options will be discussed with families and risks, such as pupils not appearing as their passport sex, assessed together.

4.12 College Withdrawal of Students from Trips

The Group may decline or withdraw a pupil's participation where there are significant:

- safeguarding concerns
- behaviour concerns
- medical concerns
- welfare issues
- safety issues.

Prior to a decision being taken:

- reasonable adjustments should be considered
- relevant pastoral staff should be consulted
- parents should normally be consulted.
- The welfare of the individual pupil, other pupils and staff remains paramount.

4.13 Mobile Phones

The usual principle is that the mobile phone policy within school applies on day and residential trips as well.

Any deviations from this, such as for trips with remote supervision, would only be enacted if absolutely necessary to the safe running of the trip and would be communicated in the pre-trip information to parents and pupils.

4.14 Alcohol and smoking

Students and staff are never permitted to consume, purchase, supply or possess any alcohol on a school trip. Similarly, smoking or vaping is not permitted, and all such items are also not allowed on trips. Breaching this would result in disciplinary action.

4.15 Insurance

The Group shall maintain appropriate insurance arrangements for educational visits.

Visit Leaders must confirm that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place during the planning process.

5. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the COO or sooner where required due to:

- legislative change;
- regulatory change;
- inspection findings;
- organisational change.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Group Board of Governors.

6. Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Educational Visits Procedures and Risk Management Standards
- Educational Visits Risk Assessment Template
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Minibus Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Gender Identity policy
- Drugs, alcohol and smoking policy