



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

This Policy Applies to Holmwood House School and Early Years Settings

Reviewed August 2026 by Jonathan Collins
Next Review August 2027

Associated Policies –

First Aid
Health and Safety
Risk Assessment
Safeguarding,
Critical Incidents
Curriculum
Behaviour

The policy also draws on the ROSPA guidance, "Planning and Leading Visits and Adventurous Activities", which may be consulted for further information:

<http://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/school-college-safety/school-visits-guide.pdf>

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Educational Visits Policy

This policy has due regard to the DfE Guidance, *Health and Safety Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies*. It also draws on the previous guidance *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits* (HASPEV).

At Holmwood House School, we believe that learning outside the classroom is an essential component of our curriculum for all of its pupils including the very youngest. It gives our pupils unique opportunities to develop their resourcefulness and initiative and to spend time together in an informed environment. Each trip is different and they provide opportunities which cannot be provided on site. Some are directly related to the curriculum, some are designed to promote social awareness, or to enhance physical skills, self-reliance and team working. Others will extend their knowledge of the world. The common factor is that they all make an essential contribution to our pupils' development and education in the broadest sense of the word.

Basic Principles

Responsibility

- The Head bears ultimate responsibility in ensuring staff meet the arrangements and follow the guidelines in this policy. The Head will hold the role of nominated contact in the event of an emergency, the – will be the second nominated contact in the event of the Head being unavailable
- The Educational Visits Co-ordinator is responsible for the review of this policy and ensuring that staff are aware of its contents
- Teachers who plan a day or residential visit are designated as the group leader and, as such, have responsibility to make sure the visit is properly organised, including risk assessment, and reviewed
- Staff accompanying children on visits will have appropriately designated responsibilities and a clear itinerary of events.

Health and safety

The school will consider the following documents in planning trips

- [Health and safety on educational visits, Published 26 November 2018](#)
- [HSE Guidance on School Trips](#)

Educational Value

- A clear aim and objective must be identified by the group leader and clearly communicated to the other accompanying adults and, as appropriate, the pupils. Visits are not taken in isolation. Pupils are well prepared for the visit and, subsequently, put the experience to good effect as a stimulus for work in class.

Inclusion

- The Head and Educational Visits Coordinator will ensure that all reasonably practicable efforts have been made during the course of risk assessment to include all pupils in educational visits. This will usually entail discussion with the pupil, parents, group leader and other supervisors, the manager of the venue to be visited, the tour operator etc. When planning, consideration should be made to ensure that all pupils are able to participate in the trip, in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy and with reference to SEND, Medical Conditions and Allergy Policies.

Parents and information

- At the start of each academic year, or on a child's registration at the school, parents are asked to sign a consent form for their child to participate in off-site activities such as visits to local sports amenities, churches and for sports fixtures against other schools. Such events do not then require further parental consent, but are otherwise regulated by this policy. However, parents are entitled information about where their children are during the school day. Therefore, information about an off-site visit should be available to parents, for example in the school calendar, on the website, in a newsletter or in a specific information letter about the trip.

The exceptions to the procedure for parental consent, above, are when;

- The trip is planned to extend beyond the normal start or end of the school day
- The trip involves an overnight stay, overseas travel or any additional level of risk management
- An additional charge is made to parents in relation to the cost of the trip

Parents will be notified of the details of such school visits in advance and permission for any school trip must be received from parents/guardians in writing prior to the visit date.

Procedures for Organising an Educational Visit

General Information

Early planning is essential for any visit. Plans for residential visits and overseas trips are formulated well in advance. All off-site visits and activities must be approved by the Headteacher, who is kept fully informed throughout the planning stages.

Preliminary Planning

An outline plan is presented to the Headteacher for approval prior to more detailed plans being made. Once outline permission has been granted and any particular conditions set, one or more meetings of the proposed staff involved will be held to formalise the administration and organisation of the visit. The Risk assessment is discussed and specific duties.

Once the trip is approved, parents will normally be informed and provided with as much information as is appropriate. Greater detail will be expected for trips overseas, those of a potentially hazardous nature, or involving overnight stays. Checks will need to be carried out to assess the following and subsequently information provided to parents;

- Information about accommodation
- Itinerary
- Emergency Contacts/Medical Forms
- Staffing/Grouping Details
- Personal Items/luggage and passport/visa requirements
- Insurance Details
- Finance Arrangements
- Spending Money
- Information about the coach company and any other transport arrangements

Preliminary Visit

Except in the case of repeated visits, an exploratory visit by the group leader or another designated member of the accompanying staff is usually made. In the case of repeat visits, the group leader should contact the venue(s) to establish that there have been no significant changes to the premises or arrangements, which may affect the organisation of the visit. The

group leader should also consult the risk assessment and its evaluation from the previous visit to ascertain what lessons, if any, can be learnt to improve risk management

The school will make use of the Using Outside Organisations guidance and associated checklist in [DfE 2018 guidance](#)

Staffing

Pupil to staff ratios for school trips are not prescribed in law. Those planning trips, on the basis of risk assessment, should decide the ratios, taking into account the activity to be undertaken and the age and maturity of the pupils. Responsibility lies with the Head to judge whether appropriate factors have been taken into account and ratios calculated accordingly.

- The number and composition of the group of pupils, and associated legislation e.g. EYFS ratios, First Aid
- The nature, duration and location of visit
- The experience and training of adults

On trips involving both boys and girls, the staff must include both men and women. The Headteacher has the discretion to waive this requirement in the case of the youngest pupils, depending on the nature of the trip. Staffing must be appropriate, in terms of ratios and qualifications, to cope with any child on the trip with special or individual medical needs.

Adult:child ratios for excursions

Normal minimum guidelines, as a starting point to take into consideration the bulleted list above are in the table below.

EYFS minimum requirements and basic guidelines for other age groups

Ages	Ratios	Notes
Children under 2	1 adult:3 children	refer to EYFS framework for associated qualifications requirements
2 to 3 year olds	1 adult: 5 children	
3 to 4 year olds	1 adult:6-8 children	
Reception	1 adult:6-8 children	refer to EYFS framework for associated qualifications requirements This is the minimum requirement if the children are not with a qualified teacher. Nevertheless, given the age of the children, it is likely that a risk assessment would determine a stronger ratio for an off-site visit.
Year 1	1 adult:6-8 children	
Years 2-3	1 adult:8-10 children	
Years 4-6	1 adult:10-15 children	
Year 7 and above	1 adult:15-20 children	
Trips abroad	1 adult:8 children	Unless a stronger ratio is determined by the age groups above

Checks

For visits which involve children working with staff at another venue or organisation, the group leader must obtain written confirmation from the organisation that it has undertaken all appropriate checks on its staff and that they are appropriately qualified and suitable to work with children. The centre may make a statement to this effect in its publicity materials. The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) awards the [Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge](#) to organisations that meet nationally recognised standards, and the school will check if the organisation holds this badge. When planning an activity involving caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports, the group leader must check that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 (for England, Scotland and Wales).

Financial Arrangements

Records of all payments by individual pupils are kept by the leader and Commercial manager. At the Commercial manager's discretion, residential visit payments may be made in stages. All payments should be made through magic bookings. Payment by the school in advance for trip costs will be made by the Commercial manager. For payments and other sundry expenses during the visit, including, if appropriate, issuing of pocket money, the group leader should make appropriate arrangements with the Commercial manager. Similarly the group leader should liaise with the Commercial manager when foreign currency is required. The group leader must ensure maximum security for money, passports and other valuable documents before and throughout the visit.

Calculating Costs

Factors to be taken into account in calculating the cost of the trip include: travel, transport and parking, entrance fees for staff and pupils, hire of equipment (for activities), insurance, preliminary visits, extra staffing and supply cover at school, meals, materials, rewards, incentives, prizes for pupils' work, conduct etc., spending money, contingency fund.

Further Liaison with Parents

Except for routine off-site activities with a low level of risk, such as walking to the church for a carol service rehearsal, or a weekly trip to local sports facilities, it is imperative that parents are given full and complete written details regarding the organisation and administration of a visit. A signed parental medical consent form must be obtained for each participating pupil, agreeing to emergency treatment and medication to be given if needed and for staff to act in loco parentis.

Pupil Behaviour and Supervision

The group leader has responsibility for the good conduct of pupils on the trip. All accompanying adults have a duty of care. Teachers are briefed that they are in loco parentis at all times on the visit and thus are legally responsible for the well-being and safety of the children and also for their own behaviour, which should be impeccable at all times.

Except for older secondary school pupils, with the specific authority of the head, children should never be on their own, but always remain in a group, and must be supervised by an adult at all times. Groups and their leaders should be decided in advance and well publicised.

On residential visits, close supervision of the pupils in the hostel, centre or hotel during the night must be maintained. Adults' rooms must be located in close proximity to the children's rooms. Staff should be allocated "on call" responsibilities on a rota basis and those adults should refrain from the consumption of alcohol in order to be able to perform their duties properly in the case of an emergency.

Homestays and host families

For further information, see the relevant section in the Safeguarding policy based on KCSIE 2026

Risk Assessments

Visits will only be approved after an assessment of the risks involved has been carried out. The risk assessment forms enable the group leader to apply the same thought processes to the trip being planned. What is required is an understanding of the potential risks involved

and the actions required to minimise those risks. Completing the forms will better enable the school to safeguard the children, thus giving the group leader peace of mind. Staff should also refer to the school's risk assessment policy. Final authorisation for each visit will be made by the Headteacher and only then if he is satisfied that an adequate risk assessment has been carried out. A list of timescales is in Appendix 1

Information and final arrangements

Final details of the visit, including the final version of the risk assessment, must be submitted to the Headteacher and Educational Visits Coordinator for approval one week before the visit. This information will be retained for future reference. The group leader holds the same information for the duration of the visit and checks immediately prior to departure for any late changes, for example due to pupil illness or absence. Such changes are noted and an amended copy submitted to the Head. As a minimum, the information should include details of:

- itinerary
- contact points
- pupils' and staff emergency contacts
- contact information for staff while on the trip
- copies of Parental Medical Consent Forms
- specific information about any children with individual special or medical needs, including their medical plans as appropriate
- copies of any insurance documents, contracts, etc
- emergency procedures, including the school's critical incident policy
- risk assessments

Ongoing Risk Assessments and Reassessments

The group leader, or other adults with responsibility, should dynamically reassess risks while the visit is taking place. Ongoing risk assessments normally consist of judgements and decisions made as the need arises. They should be informed by the site specific risk assessments and take account of local expertise and conditions.

3. On Departure and During the Visit Communication

The group leader must take a working mobile phone (usually a school mobile phone) and must ensure that the school has all the necessary contact information for each stage of the trip.

In advance of the trip, pupils should be given clear safety instructions based upon the nature of the activities and the associated risks.

Medical

All accompanying adults must be familiar with the following policies, which apply on school trips; first aid, supporting pupils with medical conditions and allergy safety. It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that

- arrangements are made to fulfil these with regard to the care of children on the trip
- other adults are aware of these
- any incidents responded to recorded and communicated in an appropriate manner

The regulations for the reporting of accidents (RIDDOR) apply to educational visits and can be

found in the school's first aid and medication policy. Other accidents which may occur, but which fall short of the threshold for RIDDOR reporting, must be reported and recorded in accordance with the school's normal procedures.

Transport:

It is the school's policy that only coaches with seat belts are booked. Vehicles used should comply with the current requirements on seat belts. All seats should be forward facing and seat restraints should comply with legal requirements. Occasionally a trip may be organised to a country where legislation does not require coaches to be fitted with seatbelts and such a coach may not be available. In such circumstances the group leader must endeavour to book a coach fitted with seat belts and must do everything possible to ensure the safety of staff and pupils. Parents must be made aware of such circumstances. Staff on the trip should make appropriate arrangements for the supervision of children during the journey and when exiting and accessing the coach, and on any breaks in travel.

Other Transport:

Holmwood House School's policy is to discourage staff from transporting pupils in their private cars and never to allow them to be transported in cars belonging to parent helpers (unless the parents make a private arrangement that does not involve the school).

- If school staff use their own cars to transport children they must have appropriate car insurance. Staff concerned must liaise with the Transport manager to establish whether such transportation is covered by the school's or their own insurance. If the latter, documentary proof must be provided to the Transport manager. Specific written permission must be obtained from parents. Other than in exceptional circumstances, a teacher should never use his or her own car to transport a single pupil. Any staff use of their own cars must be consistent with the safeguarding policy and, in particular, the staff code of conduct.
- If parents are transporting children, their cars should be fully insured; relevant legislation relating to pupils sitting in the front and the use of booster seats must be followed. Seatbelts must be worn. Specific written permission must be obtained from parents and documentary proof of insurance must be provided to the bursar.
- Parents should be fully informed of the time and place to collect the children.
- A staff mobile phone should be taken to the event in case of emergency.
- It is the responsibility of the group leader to look after pupils not collected after a visit. The pupils must not be left unsupervised and appropriate efforts should be made to contact parents if no information has been received about their late arrival. Reference should be made to the school's policy for the failure of a parent to collect a child.
- For transport by other means (train, ferry, aeroplane etc.) detailed risk assessments must be included in the overall risk assessment for the trip.
- Further information and a link to the DfE guidance on requirements for driving minibuses can be found in the health and safety policy.

Emergencies

Despite the best planning and organisation, emergencies that require immediate response by the leaders sometimes occur. Whilst still controlling and supervising the rest of the group, leaders should contact the appropriate emergency/rescue service immediately. The response

to an emergency is covered by the Critical Incident Plan.

After the Visit

After the visit the group leader must complete a visit evaluation form and review the risk assessment, which is submitted to the Headteacher and Educational Visits Coordinator. The views of other adults accompanying the visit should be taken into account. This should identify any area for improvement, including the guidance on organising trips, and should also highlight the successes of the trip.

Appendix A

At least 1 week prior to the trip; Risk Assessments, including those from the place to be visited, handed to Educational Visits Coordinator with a completed Off Site Visits Form, list of pupils involved, details of any particular requirements for pupils with special or medical needs, parental consent forms and all letters sent to parents. This will form part of the information file detailed under "information and final arrangements" below.

In the event of consent forms not being returned by the specified time, the pupil will not be allowed to travel.

At least 2 full days before the trip; The risk assessments and forms noted above, having been checked and signed by the Educational Visits Coordinator should be copied for the staff on the trip and the school office.

In the case of residential trips a meeting will be convened with the Head, in order to sign off the completion of all of the checks. The meeting will include attendance by all members of staff participating in the trip.

In the case of residential visits and trips taking place outside term time, these should also be copied to the nominated contact at school (if this is not the Head). Staff on the trip (excluding the Leader who should be in possession of them all) need only the consent forms of the children in their care for the trip.

It is the responsibility of the group leader to check that all the consent forms and medical details for each child have been successfully collected by the deadline. It is the responsibility of the Head to give final consent to the trip going ahead after reading the Risk Assessment.

If there are any worries or uncertainties, the group leader should always ask the Head, Educational Visits Coordinator or Bursar for help.

Appendix A

Final Residential Trip Meeting with Headteacher

Purpose: To confirm readiness, ensure compliance, and clarify any outstanding details before departure.

Agenda (Approx. 45–60 mins)

Welcome & Purpose of Meeting (5 mins)

- Overview of trip aims and key logistics
- Confirm final staff list and roles

Itinerary & Timings Review (10 mins)

- Daily schedule
- Travel arrangements
- Emergency alternatives (e.g. wet weather plans)

Pupil Management & Grouping (10 mins)

- Group lists and supervision ratios
- Behaviour expectations and sanctions
- Night-time routines and wake-up plans

Safeguarding & Medical Needs (10 mins)

- Safeguarding responsibilities
- Medical needs (meds, allergies, dietary)
- First aid provision and location of kits

Risk Assessments & Emergency Procedures (10 mins)

- Location of risk assessments (shared drive, printouts)
- Fire drills, evacuation routes, lockdown procedure (if relevant)
- Incident/accident reporting and communication plan

Communication & Contact Plans (5 mins)

- Parent updates (email/text/blog/app?)
- Emergency contact chain (including SLT)
- Phone signal/Wi-Fi availability at site

Logistics & Final Checks (5 mins)

- Transport checks (e.g. coach company confirmed, loading arrangements)
- Accommodation confirmed
- Staff to bring...? (e.g. ID, DBS copies, chargers)

Q&A and Final Sign-Off (5 mins)

- Clarify any uncertainties
- Headteacher sign-off and any final instructions

Checklist of Questions for the Meeting

Pupils & Grouping

Are all pupil lists confirmed, including room and group allocations?

Have behaviour expectations been communicated to pupils and parents?

Are there any pupils with additional needs or safeguarding plans we need to consider?

Medical & First Aid

Are we clear as to any medical needs and conditions of all people on the trip? Including allergies and food needs?

Where relevant have these been discussed with travel providers / accommodation?

Are all medications labelled, signed in, and logged?

Who is administering medications and keeping records?

Are we confident in who our designated first aiders are and when they're on duty?

Safeguarding

Who is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for the trip?

What is the reporting procedure for a concern while away?

Are all staff clear on sleeping arrangements and privacy protocols?

Risk & Emergency Planning

Have we reviewed all activity and travel risk assessments?

What's our plan for illness, injury, or poor behaviour?

Who is the on-call contact at school/Trust in case of emergency?