



Educational Visits Policy

This policy adopted	November 2024
Next review date	November 2027
Non-Statutory	

Table of Contents

1. Purpose of the educational visits policy.....	4
2. Implementation, monitoring and review of the educational visits policy.....	4
3. Introduction	4
4. Scope and remit	4
5. Roles and responsibilities	5
5.1 Headteacher	5
5.1.1 Policy	5
5.1.2 Staff and training	6
5.1.3 Inclusion, safeguarding and safety	6
5.1.4 Planning	6
5.2 Education visits coordinator	7
5.2.1 Policy	7
5.2.2 Staff and training	7
5.2.3 Inclusion, safeguarding and safety	7
5.2.4 Planning	8
5.3 Visit Leaders.....	8
5.3.1 Staff and training	8
5.3.2 Inclusion, safeguarding and safety	9
5.3.3 Planning	9
5.4 Assistant Visit Leaders.....	9
5.5 Member of the Trustee Body.....	10
6. Competence	10
7. Sporting fixtures	11
8. Planning.....	11
9. Regularity of whole cohort trips	12
9.1 Inclusion of year 11 students in a visit.....	12
10. Procedures and protocols	12
11. Trips shared with Watford Grammar School for Boys	12
12. Risk Assessment.....	13
12.1 Use of generic risk assessments	13
12.2 Plan B	14
13. Seeking assurances from provider/use of a provider assessment form (OV6)	14
14. Safeguarding.....	15
15. Preliminary Visits	15

16.	Outcomes.....	15
17.	Checklist	16
18.	Staffing and supervision	16
18.1	Staff: student ratios	16
18.2	Family members on visits.....	17
18.3	Unaccompanied Year 12/13 visits	17
18.4	Remote supervision	17
18.5	Use of volunteer helpers	18
18.6	Adult supervision in cases of foreign exchange visits.....	18
19.	Costing the visit	18
20.	Emergency procedures	19
21.	First Aid	20
22.	Approval of Visits	21
23.	Additional monitoring.....	21
24.	Communication with parents and carers	21
24.1	Letters to parents	21
24.2	Consent	22
25.	Insurance	22
26.	Inclusion.....	23
27.	Codes of behavioural conduct.....	23
28.	Transport.....	24
28.1	Private cars	24
28.2	Coaches	24
28.3	Minibus/minibus light	24
28.4	Public transport.....	24
29.	Swimming.....	25
29.1	Swimming pools – life guarded	25
29.2	Hotel and other swimming pools	25
29.3	Open water swimming	26
29.4	Safeguarding in changing areas.....	26
30.	Weather, clothing and survival.....	26
31.	Consumption of alcohol on school visits.....	26

1. Purpose of the educational visits policy

- To ensure that students participate in school visits safely and securely.
- To ensure that students' learning is maximised.
- To safeguard students' rights for equal opportunities to participate.
- To ensure a clear understanding by all staff of the rationale for approving applications to take students on visits.
- To ensure that responsibilities for staff are clear and that required formalities and agreements are adhered to.

2. Implementation, monitoring and review of the educational visits policy

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Governing Body. It will be implemented through the school's induction and training programme, and as part of day-to-day practice. Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Educational Visits Coordinator.

3. Introduction

The Staff and Trustees of Watford Grammar School for Girls acknowledge the immense value of off-site visits and related activities to young people, and support and encourage those that are well planned and managed.

This document provides concise and supportive guidance for the planning and management of off-site visits and related activities. It is available electronically on the school's shared drive and on 'EVOLVE', along with a number of other supporting documents.

All visits and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) activities will be planned in such a way as to ensure that the benefits and intended learning outcomes are clearly identified and understood by the supervising adults beforehand and can form the basis for objective evaluation afterwards.

The School uses the internet based system, 'EVOLVE', to facilitate the efficient planning, management, approval and evaluation of visits. All staff that lead or accompany visits can access their own 'EVOLVE' account, which is set up by the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC.)

Arrangements and considerations for all visits and LOtC activities will be recorded, either on 'EVOLVE' or by means of standard operating procedures using generic risk assessments, as deemed appropriate by the EVC in order to minimise associated bureaucracy.

4. Scope and remit

It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements of their employer's guidance. This policy applies to all members of Watford Grammar School for Girls staff, and other adults associated with the school who take responsibility for young people participating in learning and recreational activities in environments that are different from where the young people are normally based. It therefore applies when organising and supervising young people in off-site activities and visits, as well as when taking part in on-site activities outdoors.

This policy provides the key reference for sound planning for learning and recreational activities that involve taking groups of young people away from their usual operational base. It should be implemented when using places such as:

- School grounds
- The local environment
- Places further afield, e.g. visits to local libraries, theatres and museums
- Residential venues
- Learning ventures abroad

There are three categories of visit:

Curriculum-based: Visits which are required as part of an examination specification e.g. Geography Fieldwork.

Extended-Curricular: Visits which supplement a department's curriculum e.g. MFL trips to a foreign county

Extra-Curricular: Visits that go beyond the curriculum but benefit students' personal development e.g. ski trip.

Staff must ensure that students are supervised in accordance with the contents of this policy, regardless of whether the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including overnight, weekends and holiday periods.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), health and safety responsibilities lie with the employer, The Trustee Body of Watford Grammar School for Girls. An employer has the legal responsibility to carry out duties imposed by the act. However, employers can delegate the tasks necessary to discharge these duties, even though the overall responsibility for health and safety rests with the employer.

The responsibilities of key members of the school community involved in planning, scrutinising and approving arrangements for Offsite Visits and LOtC activities are laid out below.

5.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher (or nominated delegate) will ensure that:

5.1.1 Policy

- All off site visits comply with employer guidance and are submitted for formal approval as required.
- Establishment visit policy should identify the types of visit that require a preliminary visit.
- Establishment visit policy should formally adopt a set format for written risk assessments.
- The establishment visit policy includes appropriate emergency procedures in case of a major incident.

- The establishment visits policy includes a procedure to ensure that parents are appropriately informed in the event of a serious incident.
- Arrangements are in place for the Governing Body to be informed of such visits as required by the Educational Visits Policy.

5.1.2 Staff and training

- There is a clearly designated person, either herself or another suitable member of staff, such as the Education Visits Coordinator and that the designated person meets employer requirements, including undertaking EVC training as recommended or required by the Trustee Body.
- All staff involved are competent to carry out such responsibilities as they are allocated;
- If taking part in the visit or activity as either an Assistant Leader of a group member, s/he is clear about their role and will follow the instructions of the designated Visit Leader (who will have sole charge of the visit).
- The EVC is supported in ensuring that visits are effectively supervised with an appropriate level of staffing.
- The EVC, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained and competent to carry out such tasks as they are allocated.
- A culture of apprenticeship/succession planning to ensure sustainable visits and the development of competent visit leaders and EVCs, is supported within the establishment.
- Any member of staff acting as assistant leader or group member is aware of their role and that they must follow the instructions of the designated group leader who will have sole charge of the trip.

5.1.3 Inclusion, safeguarding and safety

- Inclusion issues are addressed.
- Suitable safeguarding procedures are in place, including vetting at an appropriate level of all voluntary helpers. Where access to young people is regular or intense DBS checks must be in place as required.
- Arrangements are made for the medical and special educational needs of all the young people and staff.
- Serious incidents are reported to the employer as required by employer guidance, meeting the requirements of RIDDOR.
- Such risk assessments should be proportional, suitable and sufficient and based on the 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management.' The adoption of Hertfordshire County Council exemplar risk assessments available through 'EVOLVE' to reduce bureaucracy is good practice.
- Where the activities or visit involve a third-party provider, appropriate assurances have been sought; national schemes e.g. LotC Quality Badge, AALS licence, Adventuremark, or a clear management Statement of Competence, are recognised in keeping with Hertfordshire's recommendations and make further seeking of provider assurances unnecessary.

5.1.4 Planning

- Sufficient time is allocated to organise trips properly.
- The EVC is supported in ensuring visit information has been shared with parents and that consent has been sought where necessary.

- Suitable transport arrangements are in place and meet any regulatory requirements.
- Insurance arrangements are appropriate.
- Details related to the visits (including person details of both participants and staff) are accessible at all times to a designated 24/7 emergency contact/s in case of a serious incident.
- That there are contingency plans in place should the visit plan be significantly changed or cancelled (Plan B).
- Staff are aware of the need to obtain best value. Appropriate consideration must be given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships;
- All visits are evaluated with regard to best value, teaching and learning, quality experiences, addressing issues raised by any serious incident and to inform the operation of future visits.

5.2 Education visits coordinator

The Education Visits Coordinator is **Mr Kevin Coetzee, Deputy Headteacher.**

The EVC will:

5.2.1 Policy

- Ensure that the Educational Visits Policy is updated as necessary and available for staff and that procedures should aim to minimise bureaucracy, taking full advantage of any national schemes that provide assurances regarding safety and quality of provision (e.g. there should be no need to seek assurances from adventure activity providers who hold the LotC Quality Badge, or a current AALS Licence, or Adventuremark.).
- Ensure that visit policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis and immediately following any serious incident or systems failure.

5.2.2 Staff and training

- Support the Headteacher in ensuring that competent staff are assigned to lead and accompany visits and with approval and other decisions.
- Be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by an establishment and be a member of SLT.
- Attend training, and update training, as required by the Headteacher,
- Ensure the Headteacher, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers understand that all staff involved in visits require access to training at an appropriate level to ensure that employers' guidance and establishment procedures are properly understood,
- Keep up to date via EVC training events and employer information updates.
- Organise the training of leaders and assistant leaders, including voluntary helpers,
- Ensure off site activities are led by competent leaders and that assistant supervisors are competent to carry out the tasks to which they are assigned.

5.2.3 Inclusion, safeguarding and safety

- Ensure DBS checks are in place when required
- Ensure that there is a 24/7 emergency contact for each and every visit and that emergency arrangements are in place.
- Ensure that medical and first aid issues are addressed.

- Ensure that emergency arrangements include emergency contact access to all relevant visit records, including medical and next of kin information for all members of the party including staff.

5.2.4 Planning

- Have an understanding of the Manifesto for LotC and the supporting rationale,
- Ensure Offsite and LotC activities meet employer guidance requirements,
- Support the Headteacher with approval and other decisions
- Monitor visit planning and arrange for sample monitoring in the field as appropriate
- Provide sufficient guidance to visit and activity leaders regarding information for parents and parental consent.
- Ensure that visits and LotC activities are reviewed and evaluated; this process will require the reporting of accidents and incidents.

5.3 Visit Leaders

The Visit/Activity Leader will:

5.3.1 Staff and training

- Have the overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of the visit. S/he must be an employee and not a volunteer.
- Be competent to take on such responsibilities and tasks as may be allocated or required for the duration of the visit/activity and be formally approved to do so.
- Have attended Watford Grammar School for Girls 'Trip Leader Training' since the implementation of this version of the policy and no less frequently than every 3 years.
- Have undertaken the following Educare Training within the last 2 years to enable them to effectively safeguard students with life threatening medical conditions while on trips and visits:
 1. Understanding Anaphylaxis
 2. Understanding Asthma
 3. Understanding Diabetes
 4. Understanding Epilepsy
- Define the roles and responsibilities of other staff (and young people) to ensure effective supervision and appoint a deputy wherever possible.
- Ensure the visit is effectively supervised; the overarching duty of care remains with the accompanying school staff, even when partial responsibility is shared with a provider. Should the provider run the activity in such a way as causes concern, the accompanying staff should consider stopping the activity at the first opportunity. Such an intervention will need to be used with great sensitivity and discretion to ensure that it does not result in young people being put at greater risk.
- Ensure that where any accompanying member of staff includes someone with a close relationship to a group member, there are adequate safeguards to ensure that this will not compromise group management.

5.3.2 Inclusion, safeguarding and safety

- Plan and prepare for the visit, taking a lead on risk management. The School sees it as good practice to involve all participating staff in the planning and risk management process for any given visit or LotC activity to ensure wider understanding. It is also good practice to involve students in these processes whenever appropriate.
- Ensure that safeguarding issues are addressed e.g. DBS checks.
- Ensure that all staff and any third-party providers have access to emergency contacts and emergency procedure details.
- Make sure there is access to first aid at an appropriate level.

5.3.3 Planning

- Collate, make available and disseminate relevant information to supporting Assistant Visit Leaders, SLT Emergency contacts, parents and young people as appropriate. This must include:
 - Completed 'Visit Leader Emergency Checklist' for all Assistant Visit Leaders (see p.36-37.)
 - A completed 'Establishment Management Emergency Action Card' for the SLT Emergency contact(s) (see p.38-40)
- Arrange pre-visit information meetings where appropriate. A pre-visit information evening must always be offered to parents in the case of residential trips.
- Evaluate all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event.
- Ensure that staff and other supervisors have been adequately briefed on:
 - the young people making up the group, including age, health characteristics, capabilities, special educational needs, mental health issues, behaviour and any other information that seems relevant in the context of planned activities.
 - The nature, location and duration of the activity.
 - Emergency procedures, as per the completed 'Visit Leader Emergency Checklist'
- When abroad, abide by the requisite laws and take local customs into consideration when directing the behaviour of students.

5.4 Assistant Visit Leaders

Staff on school led visits act as employees of the school, whether the visit takes place within normal school hours or outside these hours

An Assistant Visit Leader's role is to:

- Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as a reasonable parent/carer would do in the same circumstances
- Consent and agree that the Visit Leader has full authority to reasonably direct their supervision of students
- When abroad, abide by the requisite laws and take local customs into consideration when directing the behaviour of students.
- Deputise for the Visit Leader in cases of illness or emergency.

5.5 Member of the Trustee Body

There will be a member of the School's Trustee Body who is designated as specifically responsible for Offsite Visits and LotC activities. This is usually, but not exclusively, the Chair.

This person's role is to "enable and ensure" by acting as a "critical friend".

S/he will ensure that:

- S/he has a clear understanding that because the trustee body is the direct employer of establishment staff, the trustee body has the same responsibilities as a Director of Children's Services.
- S/he has an understanding of how outdoor learning supports a wide range of learning outcomes.
- S/he has access to employer guidance as well as establishment policy, and a training package to support it.
- Establishment policy clarifies his/her involvement in the visit approval process.
- There is an EVC in place that meets the employers requirements.
- There are formal notification and approval procedures in place that meet with employer recommendations and requirements.
- The establishment visit policy supports the principles of inclusion.
- There are monitoring procedures in place.

6. Competence

Competence is a combination of experience, training/qualifications and common sense.

The competence of the visit leader is the single most important contributory factor in the safety of participants.

Consideration will be given to the following when assessing the competence of a member of staff to lead a visit:

- What experience has the leader in leading or accompanying similar or other visits? (check Visit History on 'EVOLVE').
- Is the leader competent in planning and managing visits?
- What are the leader's reasons for undertaking the visit?
- Is the leader an employee at the establishment?
- Does the leader have the ability to manage the pastoral welfare of participants?
- Does the leader exhibit sound decision making abilities?
- What experience has the leader of the participants he/she intends to supervise?
- What experience has the leader of the environment and geographical area chosen?
- If appropriate, what is the leader's personal level of skill in the activity, and fitness level?
- Does the leader have sufficient physical capacity to lead the trip?
- Does the leader possess appropriate qualifications, especially if leading adventurous activities? (See Appendix 1 of HCC Employer Guidance)
- Is the leader aware of all relevant guidelines and able to act on these?

Any qualifications, for example Minibus driver's license, First Aid and Mountain Leader qualification can be uploaded onto 'EVOLVE' to provide the EVC with evidence to inform decisions about competence.

Watford Grammar School for Girls operates a process of apprenticeship and succession for all staff likely to be involved in organising, leading or accompanying offsite visits and LOtC activities.

The School undertakes to ensure that all such staff, will undergo an induction process that typically entails “Visit Leader Training” in-house, access to (and training where required) the establishment’s ‘EVOLVE’ site and practical experience of accompanying visits and LOtC activities *before* being tasked with leading a visit for themselves.

7. Sporting fixtures

In line with DfE recommendations, the intention is not to limit any activity which may enrich the curriculum by insisting upon excessive health and safety restrictions. However, it is important that staff are aware of the medical and contact details of any students taken out of school to participate in a sporting fixture. Staff taking fixtures must inform parents/carers of the venue, the time of departure and return and provide parents/carers with an emergency staff contact number. This information should also be communicated by means of the school on the website and updated on a regular basis. There is no need for sporting fixtures to be logged on ‘EVOLVE’.

The procedure for organising and ensuring the safe running of sporting fixtures is included as an appendix to this policy.

8. Planning

Visits organised by the school need to be approved by the EVC and in the case of residential visits, the Headteacher, meeting predetermined criteria:

All visits and LOtC activities must:

- Enable all relevant students to participate, regardless of financial constraints if the activity is directly linked to the curriculum.
- Meet all statutory guidelines with regard to the health, supervision and safety of students, in addition to guidelines set down by the school.
- Be included in the school calendar and be notified to colleagues in good time in order to minimise disruption to the school day.
- Have due regard to the impact that the visit will have upon other subjects in the students’ curriculum and the impact that the trip has upon the workload and well-being of colleagues.
- If taken during the school day, be directly related to the students’ formal curriculum, or have an outcome which supports the Aims of the school.
- If an extended visit of more than one day, usually take place during the school holidays or non-curriculum time in order to minimise disruption to the students’ formal learning.

9. Regularity of whole cohort trips

In order to minimise excessive time being lost from the curriculum and excessive pressure being placed upon members of staff to make up for the time taken, departments should run no more than the following number of trips during curriculum time:

- 2 trips in KS3
- 1 trip in KS4
- 1 trip in KS5

9.1 Inclusion of year 11 students in a visit

Where a trip is planned that will not take place until the following academic year, Year 11 students cannot be included. This is because it cannot be guaranteed that Year 11 students will return to the Sixth Form.

10. Procedures and protocols

Dates of proposed visits should be submitted to both the EVC and EA to the Headteacher by email as follows:

- Day visits: 8 weeks prior to the visit date.
- 1 term in advance where the visit is directly related to the curriculum and will involve the whole year group. This is in order that it can be cancelled, without incurring a financial penalty, if the school is not in receipt of sufficient parental contributions.
- Residential visits: 11 months prior to the visit date.
- Residential visits costing in excess of £2000: 18 months prior to the visit date.

If the visit is agreed, then it can be entered on the school calendar and trip leaders will be notified by email. Once it has been agreed that the visit can be accommodated in the school calendar, the Visit Leader may proceed in creating the visit on 'EVOLVE'.

Trip leaders need to complete full trip details on 'EVOLVE', giving full information with regard to the students to whom an invitation is extended, costings, and staffing and attaching the relevant risk assessments, itineraries and parental letters. No communication may be sent to parents and students until the trip has been approved by the EVC on 'EVOLVE' and the letter has been approved by the member of EA to the Headteacher. If the proposal is for a trip in less than eight weeks, then the EVC, if she/he feels that there is not sufficient time in which to organise the trip in an efficient of appropriate manner then he/she may withhold their approval.

11. Trips shared with Watford Grammar School for Boys

The school organises several joint trips a year with Watford Grammar School for Boys (WGBS).

- If our students are on a WGBS trip, then they must be accompanied by at least one member of WGBS staff. Exceptions to this can be made with the permission of the Headteacher.
- If the trip is organised solely by WGBS then it is governed by the WGBS Educational Visits Policy.
- If the trip is organised solely by WGBS then it is governed by the WGBS Educational Visits Policy.

12. Risk Assessment

Risks are expected to be reduced to an acceptable or tolerable level, and not necessarily eliminated. Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

An activity can become dangerous when certain factors, or a combination of factors occur: these could include elements such as weather, geographical features, the inexperience of young persons, indiscipline, the nature of the selected student body, unexpected equipment failure, lack of effective safety controls, lack of training and experience with regard to leaders or even interference by other parties.

Due to the complex nature of off-site visits, conventional 'risk assessment' as a stand-alone tool is not particularly useful and can on occasion be misleading. It is of greater benefit to consider the overall 'risk management' of visits by taking all aspects of visit planning and management into account. This can be achieved effectively through a combination of the 'EVOLVE' form itself, and where appropriate, any event specific notes or attachments.

Visit planning includes consideration of the questions: 'What are the really important things we need to do to keep us safe?' It should focus on those issues that are specific to the individual event, taking into account the needs of the group (including special and medical needs, the experience and competency of the staff team, and the leader in the context of the event. Significant issues must be recorded in a risk assessment form and uploaded on 'EVOLVE'.

This planning process by the leader may be compared to the expectation of a teacher to plan a lesson which is relevant to the needs of the group.

Planning that includes adventurous activity commonly involves delivery by an external provider and the provider will have responsibility for risk assessments and managing the activity. As such, the provider's risk assessment is not the concern of the establishment leader, does not need to be requested from the provider, and does not need to be attached to 'EVOLVE'.

It is good practice to involve participants in the planning and organisation of visits, as in doing so they will take more informed decisions, and will become more 'risk aware' and hence less at risk. They will also have greater ownership of the event.

12.1 Use of generic risk assessments

A selection of generic risk assessments is available in Word format from the Health & Safety pages on Herts Grid for Learning through the resources section on 'EVOLVE'.

Whilst not exhaustive, the control measures contained within this selection are probably sufficient to cover most eventualities likely to be encountered in the course of most offsite visits and LOTC activities.

Staff are encouraged to compile their own "event-specific" risk assessments which can then be reviewed and re-used as required.

12.2 Plan B

Alternative arrangements should be included within the planning process where appropriate, for example, where weather conditions or water levels might be critical, or where an overcrowded venue might necessitate an alternative option.

Where appropriate, all alternative activities should be fully considered and risk assessed beforehand.

13. Seeking assurances from provider/use of a provider assessment form (OV6)

Hertfordshire County Council provides the OV6 'Provider Assessment Form' to help provide an audit trail for arrangements and checks if required. It enables the visit leader to be confident that the provider has appropriate health and safety management procedures in place. This form is optional and will only need to be used where a 'Trip Leader' pack is not provided containing such information or where such information cannot be found on an organisations website.

The OV6 can be downloaded from 'EVOLVE.'

The OV6 is a generic form, for use by all kinds of providers, so if one is sent to a provider, it should be specified that they only need to complete the parts applicable to their service.

Once the OV6 has been received, signed and dated by the manager or person in authority, it is not always necessary to send a new one to the same provider each time you use them. It is sufficient to annotate the existing form already held by the establishment to show the school has checked back with the provider that there has been no major or significant change since the form was originally signed; this will not apply if the time interval is more than 12 months.

To reduce bureaucracy for both Visit Leaders and Providers, leaders should take advantage of national schemes that have been established to eliminate the need for questionnaires and forms as advised in Local Authority guidance e.g. LOtC Quality Badge, AALS Licence and 'Adventuremark.'

Holding one of the above is a credible assurance of Health and Safety and Visit Leaders should seek no further verification. The LOtC Quality Badge also covers learning quality.

Visit leaders should not ask for copies of risk assessment documentation but may seek assurance of a provider's competence to deliver their activities safely by means of a Safety Management statement if this is not already provided.

National Institutions and Public Buildings: - by their very nature these venues and providers are extremely unlikely not to conform to current Health and Safety legislation so it should not be necessary to require them to complete an OV6 or send out copies of their risk assessment documents.

HCC Providers and establishments – OV6 forms are not required for Hertfordshire County Council run providers such as Herts Young Mariners Base or Hudnall Park.

14. Safeguarding

Whilst engaged in learning outside the classroom activities and educational visits, school safeguarding procedures continue to apply. There are likely to be additional safeguarding measures in place and these will have been dealt with in the risks assessment.

Should a member of staff have a safeguarding concern whilst on an educational visit, their immediate actions will be determined by the severity of the concern:

- If the student has been subject to serious harm or is at risk of serious harm, the DSL or a Deputy DSL should be telephoned at school if during the school day to discuss the concern and how to proceed. The incident must then be logged on CPOMS at the earliest available opportunity to ensure that all relevant information is available to the DSL.
- If the student has not been subject to serious harm and is not at risk of serious harm, the concern should be logged on CPOMS at the earliest available opportunity and before the end of the day on which the concern arises. Where the visit leader or member of staff raising the concern does not have internet access, he/she should telephone the school to report the concern to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.
- Where a concern is raised outside of school hours the Emergency Contact should be telephoned to inform them of the concern. The emergency contact will then ensure that contact is made with the DSL or Deputy DSL, who will make contact with the visit leader to discuss the concern.

15. Preliminary Visits

Wherever reasonably possible, it is good practice for the Visit Leader to make a preliminary visit to a venue or provider beforehand in order for them to familiarise themselves with the layout and surroundings, and any site-specific procedures or issues which may have an impact on the visit or members of the group. Within the UK, highest priority for preliminary visits will be where no serving member of staff from the school has visited before, then when the Visit Leader has no experience of the venue/activity.

For overseas visits, advantage should be taken of any offers by tour operators for “leaders orientation” type visits.

The cost of any preliminary visit must be factored into the total cost of the trip.

16. Outcomes

Clarity regarding the intended outcomes of the visit will help to ensure that the potential benefits can be achieved. Up to four ‘intended’ outcomes may be recorded on ‘EVOLVE’ during the planning process, for subsequent evaluation.

Preparatory work should take place in advance of the visit where appropriate. This, in conjunction with activity that will take place during the visit, should feed into any follow-up work.

17. Checklist

Visit Leaders may find the 'Visit Leader Check List' provided by the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel National Guidance a useful document in undertaking planning. This can be found in the appendices to this policy.

18. Staffing and supervision

18.1 Staff: student ratios

Schools are required to ensure there is an **appropriate level of supervision at all times** for all visits and that such supervision is '**effective**'. This must have been approved by the EVC or Headteacher.

The visit leader, EVC and Headteacher will make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of staffing on an individual visit basis after consideration of the following factors:

- The type, level, and duration of the activity;
- The nature and requirements of individuals within the group, including those with additional needs;
- The experience and competence of staff and other adults;
- The venue, time of year and prevailing/predicted conditions;
- The contingency 'Plan B' options.

A visit must not go ahead where any of the Visit Leader, EVC, or Headteacher is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision exists.

The organisation and participation in trips is a voluntary activity.

Unless the trip involves only sixth form students, no trip should have fewer than two employees of the school so that there is always adequate insured cover in the event of staff or student illness.

Requirements for further adult supervision can be met by using support staff, trustees, parents and volunteers. It is important to remember that the duty of care of students cannot be handed over to a third party and so off-site instructors cannot be used in any considerations of ratio.

Acceptable ratios are:

- 1 adult to 20 students – UK day trips within 30 minutes journey of the school
- 1 adult to 15 students - UK day visit more than 30 minutes journey from the school
- 1 adult to 15 students – UK residential visit
- 1 adult to 10 students – Overseas visits

A useful starting point for consideration is 1 adult to 15 students. Where departing from this starting point results in fewer staff, the justification should be recorded as a note on 'EVOLVE'. All visits must have a maximum ratio of 1 adult to 20 students. Visit leaders must however consider how the group would be managed if one adult were unavailable to assist in running the visit, e.g. if a student was hurt and that member of staff needed to stay with the student, or if a student experienced problems at immigration and a member of staff were required to wait with them while the rest of the group travelled onward.

During a pandemic, such as COVID-19, the EVC may require an additional member of staff to be in attendance on residential visits to enable pupils to be adequately supervised if they have to self-isolate as a result of symptoms or testing positive, or if another member of staff has symptoms or tests positive.

Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group.

Staff and volunteers who work frequently or intensively with, or have regular access to young people, must undergo an enhanced DBS check as part of their recruitment process. For the purpose of this policy:

- Frequently is defined as once a week or more
- Intensively is defined as 3 times in a 30-day period, or overnight (2am-6am)

18.2 Family members on visits

Where a Visit Leader, accompanying member of staff or volunteer has a child on the visit, they should not normally be responsible for the group containing their own child. This is to avoid any conflict between the duty of care of a parent and that of a teacher for the wider group.

Family members (e.g. partners and children who are not members of WGGS and in the year group to whom the visit is offered) are not permitted to participate in school visits.

18.3 Unaccompanied Year 12/13 visits

As a result of the present security climate, unaccompanied visits for 6th Form Students are not able to run. Students may travel to and from the venue unaccompanied provided this does not involve travel in TfL Zone 1. This will need to be made clear in the letter to parents to enable them to give informed consent.

Opportunities for enrichment, such as theatre trips, lecture and exhibitions taking place outside of school time may be advertised to students and their parents via an appropriate letter. It must be made clear in such letters that school staff will not accompany students and that this will not be run as a school trip.

18.4 Remote supervision

Young people must be supervised **throughout** all visits. At times they may be unaccompanied by a member of staff or other responsible adult, e.g. D of E expedition, 'downtime' in a shopping centre etc, this is defined as remote supervision.

'Remotely supervised' activities can bring purposeful educational benefits, and the progression from dependence to independence is to be encouraged.

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on professional judgement, taking into account such factors as:

- Prior knowledge of the individuals (including their maturity and levels of responsibility);
- Venue and conditions;
- The activity taking place;
- Preparatory training;
- The competence of the supervising staff;
- The emergency systems in place

Where remote supervision is planned, the management of this risk must be included in the risk assessment.

Planned remote supervision must be made clear in the letter to parents so they can give informed consent for this.

18.5 Use of volunteer helpers

The use of parents and other adults with a clear association with the school, as helpers or supervisors on offsite visit or LOtC activities, is seen as a valuable means of encouraging or maintaining closer links with the local community and accessing a wider set of skills and experience than may exist amongst school staff.

Such volunteers will need to understand and consent to the fact that they will be answerable to the visit/activity leader.

Volunteers will not be accountable through a legal audit trail (as would exist were their involvement based on a contractual relationship) and it is therefore the case that a volunteer cannot be appointed as a Visit Leader.

It is good practice that all adult helpers and volunteers are subject to DBS checking; however, this may not be required where no possibility for unsupervised direct contact exists.

Clear DBS checks must have been returned before a volunteer adult helper may participate in a residential visit or activity.

18.6 Adult supervision in cases of foreign exchange visits

When a foreign exchange visit takes place, all adults living in the home where the exchange student will stay must have DBS checks carried out. Clear DBS checks must have been returned before the exchange visit takes place. In order to ensure this, HR must have been informed of the names of all hosting adults a minimum of 8 school weeks prior to arrival of the exchange group.

19. Costing the visit

All visits must be fully self-financing and it must be clear that this will be the case at the planning stage. Costing must be outlined on the 'EVOLVE' form, taking into account insurance, administrative costs and contingency funds. The Finance Office can advise on the costs of insurance for visits.

For residential visits, the Finance Office is able to set up staged payments for parents on ParentPay. Parents/carers should be given sufficient time to finish making reasonable staged contributions by no later than 12 weeks before the visit.

Where a student is in receipt of Pupil Premium funding subsidy may be provided if the parent informs the Visit Leader that they cannot meet the cost of the visit. This applies to visits that are part of the curriculum as well as enrichment activities. Applications for Pupil Premium funding for visits should be made to the Deputy Headteacher who oversees Pupil Premium funding.

Families not in receipt of Pupil Premium but still experiencing financial hardship may apply to the Headteacher for financial support where trips are curriculum-based and take place during the school day. The Headteacher will manage the 'Service Fund' to provide financial assistance for a proportion or entire cost of a trip. Trip leaders should include text that states that financial support is available for curriculum-based trips.

Staff subsistence should not be included in the costings for day trips that take place within the school day. Reasonable costs for staff subsistence may be included in the costings for day trips that extend at least one hour beyond the start or end of the school day. Trip Leaders must keep a record of all money spent and obtain VAT receipts.

20. Emergency procedures

Staff involved in a visit must be aware of, and adhere to, the establishment's policy on emergency procedures.

The school maintains a number of mobile phones specifically for use during offsite visits which should have all relevant contact details pre-programmed into them. It is each Visit Leader's responsibility to ensure these phones have:

- The correct details programmed into them beforehand;
- Fully charged batteries (and chargers available if necessary);
- Sufficient credit available for the duration of the visit.

For all 'out of hours' and residential visits there will be 2 nominated person(s) that can provide 24/7 cover as an Emergency Contact and that the person(s) so nominated will have 24/7 access to all details of the visit. This will include medical and next-of-kin information regarding staff as well as young people. Emergency contacts must be members of SLT

Consideration will be given to the following:

- Criteria for identifying the nominated Emergency Contact(s); this should normally be the SLT line manager for the department leading the trip;
- For residential visits, there must always be 2 emergency contacts, both of whom must be members of SLT.
- Have procedures been tested?
- Is it possible to demonstrate a proactive response, to any pattern that can be recognised within incidents?

Visit Leader should print and carry with them the 'Visit Leader Emergency Checklist', as downloaded from 'EVOLVE' and included in the appendices to this policy. Copies must also be given to all other adults participating in the visit in order that appropriate action may be taken in case of an emergency if the group is separated.

1. A situation is deemed an emergency if an event occurs which involves the health, safety and well-being of students and/or adults where school and/or parents/carers should be told or where an incident occurs which is beyond the normal coping mechanisms of the Visit Leadership Team.
2. The trip leader is responsible for decisions and action taken in an emergency situation. It is therefore the responsibility of accompanying staff to keep the leader informed of any situation which might be deemed an emergency.
3. Should a critical incident arise, the procedures on the 'Visit Leader Emergency Checklist' should be followed.
4. If a problem arises during school hours where advice is needed or information needs to be given, the trip leader should ring the school and ask for a member of SLT or the EVC.
5. If a problem arises out of school hours, unless it is a simple delay, the trip leader should ring the Emergency Contact. The emergency contact should make other SLT members aware where appropriate.
6. If a problem arises and students have access to telephones, the trip leader should try to ensure that students do not telephone parents/carers, unless instructed to do so. All contact with parents/carers should be made via the school or the emergency contact number.
7. It is the responsibility of SLT, the EVC and trip leader to follow the school's 'Establishment Management Emergency Action Card' which can be downloaded from 'EVOLVE' and can be found in the appendices to this policy.

21. First Aid

It is not always necessary that a qualified First Aider accompanies an offsite visit or LOfC activity. First Aid issues for any trip/activity should be considered as part of the risk management process and the exact requirements should be determined by ensuring that first aid support is available at an appropriate level. What is 'appropriate' will be determined by:

- The nature of the activity;
- The nature of the group;
- The likely injuries associated with the activity;
- The extent to which the activity will isolate the group from normal ambulance support, or a known point where a qualified first aider will be available and the group is competent to use it.

A basic level of first aid support must be available at all times. This will require at least one or more members of staff leading the activity to:

- Know how to access qualified first aid support;
- Have a working knowledge of simple first aid and is competent to use the first aid materials carried with the group.

For some activities (most commonly defined as adventure activities) there is a good practice expectation that requires those leading such activities to hold a current first aid 'qualification'. To be a 'qualification', the first aid course must include a formalised assessment process; otherwise any certification will have the status of a certificate of attendance. In practical terms, the course will be a minimum of 16 hours.

It is a legal requirement that all minibuses carry a first aid kit.

22. Approval of Visits

Approval is given by the Headteacher for the following categories of visit:

- Overseas (anywhere that involves crossing a substantial area of open sea, including Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Hebrides and the Channel Islands)
- Residential
- Those involving one or more adventurous activities to be led by a member of school staff.

All other categories of visit are approved by the EVC.

There should always be a clear, unambiguous audit trail for arrangements with clear evidence of approval. Such evidence will usually be recorded on 'EVOLVE' but where this is not the case, a signature of endorsement on a lesson plan (for example for scientific fieldwork on the school site) will suffice.

The process for approval has three main stages:

1. Visit/activity proposed and planned by Visit Leader and accompanying colleagues;
2. Arrangements scrutinised by EVC until satisfied to recommend approval;
3. Arrangements re-scrutinised by Head and, when satisfied, approved.

For adventurous activities led by staff or overseas residential visits, stage 3 will be completed. For all other activities the visit will be approved by the EVC at stage 2.

An offsite visit or LOtC must not proceed without clear evidence of approval. Visit Leaders will receive email notification from 'EVOLVE' when this stage has been completed.

Trustees do not need to be informed of visits or to approve them but there will be a Visits Link Trustee, whose role is to monitor the organisation of visits. He/she will review at least one visit at random, to include a range of day visits, UK residential and overseas residential visits to ensure that procedures are being adhered to and value for money achieved.

23. Additional monitoring

In its evaluation of LOtC, "How far should you go" – 2008, Ofsted recommends that it is good practice to sample monitor offsite visits and LOtC activities by means of field visits.

From time to time the EVC may recommend, or the Headteacher or Trustees may decide to sample monitoring by field visit as an additional means of ensuring safety of participants and quality of provision.

24. Communication with parents and carers

24.1 Letters to parents

A draft letter should be prepared for parents/carers. The letter must then be submitted for approval by the appropriate member of SLT and when checked, sent out to parents via Bromcom. All letters should follow the standard format given in the appendices for either day or residential visits. Example letters are included in the appendices to this policy and can be downloaded from Evolve.

Where parental contributions are requested/required, parents and carers will need notice of at least:

- Two months to pay £100 or above.
- Four weeks to pay £50 or above.
- Two weeks to pay under £50

When there is no charge, parents and carers must still be notified and their permission sought and recorded in the same manner. Parents should be informed a minimum of 2 weeks before any visit takes place. Finally, parents will need to be notified that in the case of oversubscription, students will be selected on a random basis to ensure equality of opportunity

24.2 Consent

Section 35 of the Education Act 2004 states: “Where a visit is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time, then parental consent is not necessary although it is recommended good practice to ensure that parents are informed”.

Annual consent is appropriate for regular routine activities that take place during normal school hours. For all other visits, consent should be obtained on an individual visit basis. Information provided to parents prior to granting consent should include full details of the activities and any other significant information.

When parents issue consent, they should also submit contact details and dietary and medical information. This can be done through ParentPay for visits for which there is a cost or voluntary contribution, via prior arrangement with the Finance Team. This information should be downloaded and printed from ParentPay/’EVOLVE’ by each trip leader, circulated amongst accompanying staff and taken on the trip.

25. Insurance

Watford Grammar School for Girls Travel Insurance Policy is available from the Finance Office. Visit organisers should ensure that any high-risk activities they are planning are included in the cover provided by the policy.

The Finance Office are able to provide visit leaders with the cost of insurance for a trip. This should be included on the ‘EVOLVE’ form.

Parents should be informed of how to obtain a copy of the insurance policy via the parent letter so that they are able to check coverage in advance and consider the purchase of additional cover for items not covered, e.g. the loss of their child’s mobile phone on a visit.

Our insurance company have advised that no claims will be considered as a result of the impact of coronavirus. This includes refund for a child who is showing symptoms or tests positive and is unable to participate, modification, curtailment or cancellation of the visit as a result of restrictions imposed locally, nationally or internationally and the inability of the school to run the trip or visit due to insufficient staffing as a result of coronavirus. All visits for which there is a cost much include the following paragraph:

“Our insurers have informed us that they will not accept insurance claims for any COVID related cancellations, curtailments or modifications, either for an individual or for a trip as a whole. We therefore advise that you take out an individual insurance policy for your child specifically to cover trip cancellation, curtailment or modification as a result of COVID.”

For some visits and trips, it may be that the provider is able to provide insurance covering cancellation, curtailment or modification as a result of coronavirus. Where this is the case, a copy of the policy should be requested in advance of booking. This should be passed to the Finance Department who will be able to advise whether the policy provides adequate cover. The policy must also be shared with parents and a copy uploaded to ‘EVOLVE’ as an additional document. In such circumstances, the letter to parents must clearly explain that insurance cover in cases of COVID cancellation is through the trip/visit provider.

26. Inclusion

Watford Grammar School for Girls policy endorses the following principles:

- A presumption of entitlement to participate
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- Integration through participation with peers.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled participants because of their disability, without material or substantial justification.

Visit Leaders are required to make reasonable adjustments to avoid participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage.

However, the Disability Discrimination Act does not require responsible bodies to place employees or participants at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises.

It is also the case that the adjustments made to include a disabled young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them (to include a given young person) is within their competence and normal working practices.

In the instance of specific students for whom there are generally safeguarding concerns, the trip leader should involve the appropriate Director of Key Stage in determining as to how risks can be best managed to ensure that the particular student is safe at all points.

Where there are fewer places available on a visit than the number of students likely to wish to participate, an initial letter must be sent to parents and carers and a random ballot held to select participants.

27. Codes of behavioural conduct

All students and staff who participate in trips and visits that are organised in the confines of this policy, are governed by the same rules with regard to conduct and behaviour as those staff and students who remain in school. As such, any behavioural incidents must be logged and reported to the Headteacher and appropriate Director of Key Stage.

Where students might have opportunities to behave in a way that is different to the way they would in school, a code of behavioural conduct should be considered. This provides the opportunity to clarify behavioural rules and expectations and thus avoid behavioural misconduct on the visit.

Exemplar codes of conduct can be found as appendices to this policy and downloaded from 'EVOLVE'.

28. Transport

28.1 Private cars

It is not permitted for students to travel in vehicles privately owned by staff.

28.2 Coaches

The Local Authority does not provide a list of 'approved' coach companies. Whilst UK legislation ensures that coach companies are fit for public use, the facilities available on coaches may vary. Liaising with other establishments or with colleagues in other departments will help to determine the level of service that may be provided by different companies.

It is recommended that at least 2 quotes are obtained to ensure best value.

28.3 Minibus/minibus light

All drivers of minibuses and minibus lights must follow the 'School Minibus Rules of Use.' These are located in each minibus and in the shared drive policy folder.

Each driver must undertake a test that can be arranged with the Site Manager and must also meet the following qualifying conditions:

- Drivers are aged 21 years of over
- They have held their category B driving licence for at least 3 years if driving a minibus
- They have held their category A driving licence for at least 3 years if driving a minibus light
- The minibus is being used by a non-commercial body for social purpose, but not for hire or reward
- Drivers are not being paid to drive the minibus, other than out of pocket expenses
- The minibus does not exceed 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if specialised equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers is included) gross vehicle weight
- No trailer is towed

28.4 Public transport

For public transport within the Greater London area contact 'Transport for London', who offer special arrangements for school parties on London buses, Underground, Tramlink, and Docklands Light Railway, to cultural destinations. See TFL website for details.

29. Swimming

Watford Grammar School for Girls acknowledges the immense educational benefits that swimming activities can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages swimming activities that are correctly planned, managed and conducted.

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

All swimming activities and venues must be included within the visit plan and risk assessment, and life guarding arrangements checked in advance. This is particularly important in respect of visits abroad, where for example, a hotel pool may be available.

Particular consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Unknown locations and hazards, especially overseas.
- Changing environmental conditions.
- Supervisor complacency and lack of transferable knowledge.
- Adherence to local advice.
- Preparation and knowledge of students e.g. is it a planned activity?

Students must be supervised at all times by a competent adult whilst undertaking swimming activities.

29.1 Swimming pools – life guarded

UK swimming pool safety is guided by various Health and Safety at Work acts and regulations. Pool operators have a statutory duty to take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure that teaching and coaching activities are conducted safely.

For publicly life-guarded pools abroad, the trip leader must ensure that appropriate lifeguard cover before permitting students to enter the water.

Unless suitably qualified, trip leaders and accompanying staff should not have responsibility for lifeguarding. However they do retain a pastoral role for participants at all times through direct supervision.

For swimming lessons the trip leader should ensure that the swimming teacher in charge or other pool employees/responsible adults supervising the students are qualified according to current guidelines.

29.2 Hotel and other swimming pools

Trip leaders should check the life-guarding position in advance.

If life-guarding arrangements are not provided at the pool then the trip leader will bear the full responsibility for ensuring swimming safety.

Staff must be aware of the procedures in the event of an emergency, and who at the venue will provide back up. Staff should enquire whether they have exclusive use of the pool, as other pool

users may increase the supervisory role of the lifeguard. This should be taken into consideration in deciding whether and how many students may swim at any one time.

If a student in the party holds an appropriate qualification, then their role should be restricted to emergency lifeguard action, but supervision should remain the responsibility of the school staff.

29.3 Open water swimming

The designated lifeguard must be dedicated exclusively to the group and the location used must fall within the RNLI/RLSS definition of a 'safer bathing area'. Local advice must always be sought.

29.4 Safeguarding in changing areas

In some countries and facilities, expectations with regard to the wearing of swimwear whilst changing and showering are different to in the UK. It is essential that trip leaders ensure they are clear about changing and showering arrangements and the levels of privacy available in advance. To safeguard pupils and staff appropriately, leaders should plan for the group to change together in a location where privacy can be maintained. The trip leader must ensure that staff and pupils are aware of the arrangements to ensure they are safeguarded.

30. Weather, clothing and survival

Where appropriate, the leader must obtain and act upon recent weather forecasts and local advice.

Participants should be adequately clothed appropriate to:

- The time of year, prevailing weather conditions, altitude and exposure to elements;
- Likely changes in weather;
- The experience and strength of the party;
- The nature of the visit and environment.

When venturing away from immediate help, leaders should consider the need for:

- Comfort, insulation and shelter for a casualty;
- Comfort, insulation and shelter for the whole group;
- Provision of emergency food and drink;
- Torch;
- Possible need of signalling equipment and/or mobile phone (NB: mobile phones may not work in remote areas.)
- Possible need of tracking equipment, for example for Duke of Edinburgh expeditions where groups are operating under remote supervision.

It is primarily the responsibility of the visit leader, in consultation with other staff where appropriate, to modify or curtail the visit or activity (e.g. Plan B) to suit changed or changing circumstances – for example, an over-busy lunch area, rain, rising water levels etc.

31. Consumption of alcohol on school visits

- When on school trips prior approval must be gained from the Headteacher before any social consumption of alcohol is undertaken

- There is a strict no alcohol policy on day trips.
- During residential trips, when staff are off duty, with other staff or residential staff on duty it may be acceptable to consume alcohol. eg whilst the children are asleep, staff may drink no more than 3 units of alcohol (2 small glasses of wine).
- In this situation, care should be taken to ensure that staff regarded as 'on duty' understand that they are not permitted to consume alcohol during this time since they have a duty of care over the pupils attending the visit and may be required to make professional decisions or actions.
- In this situation a minimum of two members of staff should be 'on duty' at all times. Another member of staff should act as the 'designated driver' and not drink. Decisions regarding on duty and designated driver staff will depend on factors such as which members of staff have first aid qualifications and can drive available vehicles. Additionally, staff drinking alcohol should be part of the full risk assessment for the visit.
- No alcohol may be paid for using money paid by parents or carers.

Points to consider for staff who choose to drink alcohol on trips. These include remembering that:

- Their responsibility to act "in loco parentis" must take priority over all other considerations
- They need to be able to respond in any emergency or unforeseen circumstances
- Pupils will take the behaviour of staff as an example