

THOMAS HARDYE SCHOOL

Educational Visits Policy and Procedures



Adopted By:

Signed: *Dr M. Moore*

Date: 16th June 2023

Review Date: _____

Learning outside of the classroom contributes significantly to raising standards and improving student's social, moral, spiritual, cultural and emotional development. Educational visits provide context for learning and are most effective as an integral element of our broad and balanced curriculum. Additionally educational visits have an important role to play in helping young people to develop healthy lifestyles whilst also re-engaging them with their natural environment. Students need to understand, love and respect the natural environment, so that they can develop sustainable ways of living in the future. The school's policy and procedures are formulated in conjunction with the advice, guidance and training provided by Dorset County Council, Hampshire County Council and national guidance from the OEAP.

1. Aims

1.1. There are a wide range of benefits of participating in and leading educational visit activities:

- ☐ Enjoyment/fulfilment
- ☐ Social awareness and confidence
- ☐ Environmental awareness
- ☐ Skills and qualities
- ☐ Health and fitness
- ☐ Motivation for learning
- ☐ Broaden horizons

2. Types of educational visits

2.1. A wide range of educational visit opportunities are open to Thomas Hardy students:

- ☐ Day visits
- ☐ Residential visits
- ☐ Residential visits including time with host families
- ☐ Overseas residential visits
- ☐ Adventurous activities

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Governors should enable and ensure that the school provides quality educational visit opportunities as a 'critical friend'. In a converter Academy they are seen as the 'employer' and retain overall responsibility for health, safety and welfare.

3.2. The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for Educational Visits. The Headteacher will:

- ☐ Ensure arrangements are in place to keep the governing body informed about Educational Visits and that they have approved the school policy
- ☐ Ensure that appropriate systems are in place in order to provide a rich and varied programme of visit opportunities with well trained and competent staff that are fully aware of all charging and emergency procedures.
- ☐ Ensure visit arrangements are evaluated in order to inform future visits and staff training needs
- ☐ Arrange for the reporting of accidents, incidents and near misses with records being reviewed regularly

- 3.3. The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) should ensure a clear policy and procedures are in place and being followed. They should coordinate induction, training, monitoring and record keeping for Educational Visits (See appendix A).
- 3.4. Visit Leaders should follow school policy ensuring they plan and prepare effectively for all educational visits (See appendix B).

4. Organisation and management

- 4.1. Following the guidelines set by Dorset County Council, the advice of Hampshire County Council and national guidance from the OEAP the following process of approval, risk management, supervision and inclusion have been established. Where there appears to be any conflict between national guidance and school policy, then policy must be followed and clarification sought from the Educational Visits Coordinator.
- An Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is always in post and keeps up to date with the latest guidance. The EVC will be suitably qualified and revalidate training regularly.
 - All educational visits are fully integrated into the ethos and culture of the school and all key policies are considered for their relevance and adaptations outside of the school environment, in particular policy on Safeguarding, Behaviour and Learning.
 - Governors are kept informed of the overall policy and programme, as well as being given information regarding specific visits and the monitoring of educational visits across the school.
- 4.2. As an employer The Thomas Hardy School ensures that its employees are provided with appropriate guidance, that there are training regimes in place to support it and that the guidance is understood. This is done by ensuring:
- There are clear policies and procedures (including an audit trail) to ensure that all employees are directed to follow employer guidance.
 - Training is provided to ensure that employees understand the guidance e.g., EVC Training, Visit Leader Training.
 - Supporting information and advice is made available, e.g., there are appropriate resources to support policy implementation and compliance within Evolve.
 - Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that legal duties, such as training, monitoring and guidance, are complied with.
 - Where duties are delegated, the roles and responsibilities of all are clearly defined and specified within guidance documents, cross referencing with relevant job descriptions.
- 4.3. The Thomas Hardy School retains the services of competent and experienced technical advisers to oversee all aspects of their provision of outdoor learning, off-site visits and Learning Outside the Classroom, e.g., Dorset and Hampshire County Councils.
- 4.4. The Thomas Hardy School provides appropriate emergency planning procedures in the event of a critical incident.

5. Outline approval and the Planning Process

- 5.1. The Thomas Hardy School uses an online system called EVOLVE for the planning, approval and management of educational visits. This is to reduce paperwork, simplify procedures, produce self-review and inspection preparation data, and improve staff confidence in that they automatically follow both employer, and National Guidelines.
- 5.2. Using Evolve visit leaders can submit an initial visit proposal to be approved by their Curriculum/Subject leader, the Cover Manager and then finally the EVC.
- 5.3. Once a visit has outline approval the visit leader is asked to complete more detailed planning on venue and transport etc. Adventure activity providers that do not hold the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge must be asked to complete a Provider Form which the visit leader should ensure is uploaded onto EVOLVE.
- 5.4. All planning documentation including letters, Risk assessment and itineraries are to be uploaded to Evolve prior to final approval being granted by the EVC. Ideally final approval must be sought at least two weeks prior to the visit occurring. In the case of residential, overseas or adventurous activities final approval must be sought at least 4 weeks prior to the visit going ahead.

6. Inclusion

- 6.1. The Thomas Hardy School is an inclusive school that ensures;
 - An entitlement to participate for all
 - Accessibility through adaptation or modification (where necessary and appropriate)
 - Integration through participation with peers
- 6.2. Educational visit activities are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, disability or protected characteristics of individual students. The school ensures that when visits are being planned all reasonably practicable measures are taken to find venues and activities that are suitable and accessible allowing the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved. As stated within the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.3. In the event that it may not be possible to make reasonable adjustments to include a student, nor to provide the rest of the group with a suitable alternative it would not be necessary to deprive the whole group of worthwhile opportunities. Instead, the school will take into consideration the impact of excluding any individual student from a visit and ensure a suitable alternative is provided (for compulsory trips and visits). All those that have responsibility for the student must be fully consulted.
- 6.4. Although rare, it may be reasonable to exclude a student from an educational visit where their behaviour presents a significant, unmanageable and unacceptable risk. However, if this occurs the school would provide an alternative way of achieving the same learning outcomes. Where there is doubt whether or not a student should be excluded from a visit on these grounds the following process should apply;
 - Early identification of possible issues at the planning stage
 - Involvement of all interested parties
 - Attempt to establish a behaviour management plan
 - Establishment of behaviour targets with timescales to be met to allow inclusion

- Consideration of using an additional adult on the visit as support to manage behaviour issues
- Consideration of what is expected of staff is reasonable and within their competence

7. Safeguarding

- 7.1. It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader, Group Leaders and all other staff involved, to safeguard and promote the welfare of students during an educational visit. It is important that Visit leaders ensure they are informed of any student who may be particularly vulnerable or have specific safeguarding needs, and ensure that other staff are made aware as necessary.
- 7.2. The School's Child Protection policy, the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education April 2014' and the OEAP national guidance for Safeguarding provides further clarification of expectations whilst on an educational visit.
- 7.3. Mobile communication and social media can be a useful tool in organising visits. For example, they can be used for disseminating information such as keeping parents informed about the progress of a residential visit. However, the school encourages staff to be aware of the following:
 - Comments and/or photographs shared on social media can appear very different when seen in another context.
 - Any personal information about vulnerable individuals being shared on social media could pose a risk (such as details of where they are spending a residential visit)
 - Smartphones may give students access to unsuitable web content
 - Individuals may be vulnerable to cyber-bullying

8. Risk and benefit assessment

- 8.1. As part of planning any educational visit a clear process is followed:
 - Analysis of the benefits of the activity translated into clear objectives and expectations
 - An assessment of the risk of harm and its likelihood is made, followed by putting clear control measures in place so that they can be satisfactorily managed
- 8.2. Whilst visit leaders may make use of or refer to generic or pre-prepared risk assessments the school expects a site-specific risk assessment to be uploaded to EVOLVE for each visit this should take into consideration specific factors such as the nature of the group of students which generic and pre-prepared documents would not take into account. The school 'Risk Assessment and Risk Management Form' (Appendix C) can be found in the resources area of EVOLVE.
- 8.3. Visit leaders need to be aware of the increased prevalence of severe allergies and asthma conditions amongst students. Awareness of specific student conditions by all visit staff and external providers should allow dynamic risk assessment with medical steps that need to be followed should a student experience an allergic reaction.

9. Communicating with parents/guardians

- 9.1. Parents (or persons with parental responsibility) are informed at the start of the academic year that Sports fixtures and local visits during the school day will occur with blanket consent being sought through the return of the 'Personal Information Data Collection sheet'. This is then recorded on SIMS.
- 9.2. Medical information is collected at the start of the academic year with a request to parents to keep us updated with any changes. All Visit consent forms remind parents to update changes in medical information. Only residential visits require detailed specific medical forms to be completed.
- 9.3. Letters to Parents regarding proposed Educational visits should/could include:
- The school's standard address and details.
 - The purpose of the trip.
 - The date and timings of the trip.
 - Details of transport arrangements.
 - Details of food/drink provision or what students should bring with them.
 - Special clothing requirements: school uniform, waterproofs, warm clothing, sports kits etc.
 - Details for collecting the students at the end of the trip.
 - Details of charges to be made, including the paragraph stating this is a voluntary contribution.
 - An invitation to parents to notify you as the organiser of any special dietary requirements, etc.
 - A Reply form for parents to give their consent, with a space for parents to print the student's name, restating the date, times and venue for the trip, confirming payment of any voluntary charges, leaving a space for a date and signature.
- 9.4. For visits away from school, detailed information will be sent to parents on transport, residential and overseas issues, and their specific consent requested. In the case of residential and overseas visits parents would usually be invited to an information evening.

10. Supervision

- 10.1. Visit Leaders must ensure that young people are supervised in accordance with the principles of "Effective Supervision", requiring them to take account of:
- The nature of the activity (including its duration).
 - The location and environment in which the activity is to take place.
 - The age and gender (including developmental age) of the young people to be supervised.
 - The ability of the young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs).
 - Staff competence.
- 10.2. The strategies to be used are dependent on typical risk factors of the group or individuals concerned, the site or location, the leaders present and other factors such as transport or weather. These are agreed as part of the planning process and can

be adapted to changing circumstances, for example 'Plan B' where we always plan clear alternatives when it is necessary or prudent to do so.

- 10.3. Ratios are a risk management issue and should be determined through the process of risk assessment. It is not possible to set down definitive staff/student ratios for a particular age group or activity. There will be sufficient staff to cope in an emergency and generally. Ratios of staff to pupils will depend on the nature of the students attending the trip and the type of activities that pupils will be undertaking. Trips organisers should refer to the EVC if uncertain about the number of staff required.
- 10.4. Some guidance documents do set out ratios, but these should be regarded as starting points for consideration rather than being definitive, as they may only be appropriate where the activity is relatively straightforward, and the group has no special requirements. For example, the DfES publication HASPEV (1998) suggested the following "starting points" for school years 7 onwards, 1:15/20. However, without special safeguards or control measures, these ratios will not be adequate to meet the needs of most residential or more complex visits.
- 10.5. Supervision strategies are taken from OEAP National guidance on Group Management and Supervision and include:
- Direct - the group remain within sight and contact of a leader.
 - Indirect – occurs when a group is given the freedom to explore an environment or engage in an activity away from direct adult supervision but within clearly identified and agreed boundaries
 - Remote - occurs when a group works at such a distance that direct supervision would take some time to be re-established (e.g., during a remotely supervised adventure walk; young people travelling independently to a venue; a Duke of Edinburgh Award expedition).

11. Emergency procedures and incident reporting

11.1 A serious accident or incident is defined as:

- An accident leading to a fatality, serious or multiple fractures, amputation or other serious injury
- Circumstances in which a group member might be at serious risk or have a serious illness
- Any situation in which the press or media are or might be involved.

11.2. The school provides guidance for staff on emergency procedures and incident reporting. This is available in the resources area on EVOLVE and disseminated through staff induction and annual training.

11.3 In the case of accidents and injuries while on a school trip in the UK, the school's accident reporting process will begin, as detailed in the Health and Safety Policy. In the case of accidents and injuries while on a school trip abroad:

- Organisers will cooperate fully with local emergency services and understand that any injury or death of a member of staff or pupil outside of Great Britain may be subject to the law of the land where the accident occurred.

- The first point of contact within the UK will be the headteacher who will contact the family of the injured person.
- Pupils will be asked not to contact friends or parents in the UK until the family of the injured person can be contacted.
- The British Embassy/Consulate will be informed.
- The insurer will be notified.

11.4 The headteacher will keep written records of any incidents, accidents and near misses.

11.5 Media enquiries will be referred to the headteacher or, if they are not available, the deputy headteacher or the clerk to governors.

11.6 Staff will use guidance as set out in the 'Off-site Emergency Plan', to ensure the safety of pupils and staff should anything happen, e.g., a terrorist attack. Staff will be briefed on how to react and respond should an emergency situation occur. Relevant risk assessments will be undertaken before the trip, including for points of interests such as museums and hotels. Pupils and staff are informed of an evacuation plan before entering trip venues; this should include an agreed rendezvous point, to ensure everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

12. Missing person procedure

12.1 The school places pupil and staff safety as its top priority when participating in school trips, either domestically or abroad.

12.2 Before embarking on the trip, extensive risk assessments are undertaken in accordance with this policy. The educational visits coordinator will communicate with the venues of the school trips to ensure the correct group sizes are planned for each setting.

12.3 When travelling with a pupil with SEND, the educational visits coordinator will ensure an adult is with them at all times (if appropriate for the student and their level of need) and that the visit is adequately modified to suit the pupil's needs in accordance with this policy.

12.4 Everyone on the trip will be provided with the trip leader(s) phone number(s) for that trip, in the event they are unable to locate their group. All staff members and pupils will be required to carry mobile phones with them at all times. If a pupil doesn't own a mobile phone, they will be paired up with a pupil who has a mobile phone.

12.5 Upon arriving at every venue, the designated trip leader will identify a rendezvous point where pupils and adults should go if they become separated from the rest of the group.

12.6 Regular head counts of all pupils and staff will take place throughout the day to ensure all persons are present at all times.

12.7 In the event someone goes missing whilst on a school trip domestically or abroad:

- The designated trip leader will ensure the safety of the remaining pupils and staff by taking a register to identify who is missing.

- The designated trip leader will immediately identify at least one adult to start looking for the person and another adult to contact them via phone, these people will look for the person until, where necessary, the police arrive.
 - Where possible, the venue will be notified of the missing person to help ensure the person is found quickly.
 - If the person cannot be contacted or located within 10 minutes, the local police or relevant authorities, e.g., the British Embassy, will be contacted.
 - If the police are called, the trip leader will contact the headteacher, or other available person, back at the school and inform them of what has happened.
 - If the police, or another authority, is called to an incident where someone is missing, they will oversee locating the person and will advise on factors including, but not limited to, when to contact next of kin.
 - If the missing person cannot be found, the group will return to school. If this is not possible, e.g., when a trip is taking place abroad, the educational visits coordinator will make arrangements to ensure the group's safety, e.g., by changing venues or cancelling visits.
- 12.8 If a member of the party has gone missing and is subsequently found, the trip leader will:
- Review the group sizes and staffing ratios to ensure no one becomes separated from their group.
 - Review whether more registers should be conducted throughout the day.
 - Assess which venues they attend to ensure they are suitable for the group.
 - Make recommendations to the educational visits coordinator to ensure similar incidents can be avoided in the future.

13. Trips Abroad

- 13.1 When planning school trips abroad, the school will consider the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's guidance 'Safer adventure travel and volunteering overseas' (2022) and, where an activity poses significant risks, the school will also consult the British Standard for adventurous activities outside the UK.
- 13.2 Validity of passports, visa requirements and other entry requirements, e.g., vaccination status, will be researched and dealt with within three months of the initial notification of the trip, to avoid problems when the trip is due to take place.
- 13.2 Staff and pupils will be taught about the culture and values of the country they are visiting, to ensure they understand and respect the values of the citizens.
- 13.3 Before the trip the educational visit coordinator will check the travel advice for each country the trip will visit to ensure no visa or permit is needed and to check any other regulations or time limitations.
- 13.4 Staff and pupils will be made aware that they must not have spent over 90 days in the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein, within a 180-day period if they intend to participate in any trips within these countries.
- 13.5 Before the trip, the relevant healthcare and travel insurance checks (RPA) will be conducted to ensure attendees are covered for medical issues or accidents.

- 13.6 Pupils and staff will be informed if they need to apply for a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to ensure they can access state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in the EU.
- 13.7 Before the trip, staff are trained in spotting suspicious behaviour and remaining vigilant whilst abroad. Before the trip, pupils will be taught how to remain vigilant in the country they are visiting, particularly about advances from strangers.
- 13.8 Registers will be taken at the start and end of each day, as well as before, during, and after events, and at regular intervals whilst on days out to ensure the whereabouts of pupils are known at all times.
- 13.9 Staff will check the location's local news at the start of each day of the trip, to ensure their planned activities are safe to go ahead.
- 13.10 At the start of the trip, all pupils and staff are provided with an emergency card which includes the trip leaders' mobile phone numbers, as well as the name, phone number and address of the accommodation in which students are staying.
- 13.11 When using external providers abroad, the school will check whether the provider holds an equivalent of the 'Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge'. If no such equivalent can be ascertained, the school will make checks prior to agreeing to use the provider using the provider statement in the Resources section of Evolve.

14. Transport

- 14.1 The site team is responsible for arranging the annual maintenance of the minibuses, including MOTs and road tax.
- 14.2 The driver will have a current driving licence, be aged 25 years or over and hold a full licence in at least a category D PCV in order to drive on a domestic school trip. Before driving abroad, the educational visits coordinator will contact the LA for guidance on which licence is required. Drivers will complete the relevant form (available from the site team) and supply a photocopy of their driving licence.
- 14.3 If passengers are paying a charge, the minibuses permit must be clearly displayed in the vehicle. Internal damage to the minibus is the responsibility of the individual or organisation using the minibus. The school will decide who is responsible for covering the cost of any repairs. The minibus will carry strictly one person per seat and seatbelts must be worn at all times. Fines incurred will be paid by whoever was driving the minibus at the time the offence was committed.
- 14.4 Start and finish mileage, along with any potential risks, defects or damage identified, will be reported upon return to the school. The following staff members hold the required licence and have completed specific training which allows them to drive the school minibus (this is subject to change at any time):

P Bendall	G Hughes
L Evans	G Copson
K Lewis	E Long

C Munford	P Norman
S Oliphant	Chip Walker (CCF)
A Richmond	K White
N Williams	R Glennie

15. Monitoring

- 15.1. The 'Report' function within EVOLVE enables staff, school leaders and governors the opportunity to monitor educational visits at any time. In addition, the EVC will report to the governors annually.
- 15.2. On occasion throughout the academic year the EVC/Senior staff will conduct monitoring visits. During their monitoring visits they check;
 - The Employer's guidance and Establishment Policy is made available to all staff and volunteers who are involved in off-site activities and visits.
 - All activities and visits comply with the employer's guidance and are formally approved as required.
 - All staff involved in the visit are specifically competent to carry out such responsibilities as they are allocated.
 - They are assured that transport arrangements are suitable and meet any regulatory requirements.
 - Details related to specific off-site activities (including both participants and staff) are accessible to a designated 24/7 emergency contact(s) at all times in case of a serious incident.
 - A School Risk assessment and Management Form is in place which is suitable, sufficient and based on the 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management'.
 - Staff are aware of appropriate emergency procedures and what to do in the case of other serious incident or 'near miss' situations.

16. Induction, training and succession planning

- 16.1. All new staff will undergo an educational visits induction which includes guidance on school policy, procedure and expectations. Staff will also be training on the EVOLVE system.
- 16.2. The school ensures that the designated EVC is fully trained. All other staff receives annual update training and the EVC ensures workshop style training opportunities throughout the year where appropriate. Staff with specific qualifications and training that allow them to run adventurous activities record this with EVOLVE uploading relevant certification.
- 16.3. The school champions the process of apprenticeships within educational visits where less experienced staff members learn alongside the most experienced visit leaders before taking on the role themselves. This succession planning is actively encouraged.

17. Volunteers

- 17.1. In the case of volunteers being used to support an educational visit (not for DBS) the school requires a completed 'Educational Visit Volunteer Form' to be completed and uploaded to EVOLVE. This can be found in the resources area on EVOLVE.
- 17.2. Volunteers that have regular contact with or will spend overnight with students must be referred to the Headteachers PA for DBS at least 6 weeks before the planned visit. This also includes volunteers for which there are any concerns.

18. Insurance and Finance

- 18.1. Full details of the school's insurance can be obtained from the finance office, including travel, employer's liability and public liability. The finance office will be happy to answer questions on any aspect of insurance by consulting the school's insurer where necessary.
- 18.2. When calculating the cost of an educational visit the Visit Leader should take into consideration the cost of entrance tickets, transport, reprographics, postage, equipment, ParentPay transaction charges and contingencies.
- 18.3. Voluntary contributions can be requested for any of the school's activities. Staff must make it clear that there is no obligation to make a contribution and that no student whose parents/guardian do not make a contribution will be treated differently on this account.
- 18.4. A certain form of words that are legally required when asking for voluntary contributions must be present in all letters requesting a contribution of any kind. All letters relating to educational visits must be processed through the main office where they will be checked before leaving school. Examples of educational visit letters can be found in the resources area on EVOLVE.
- 18.5. A range of arrangements are in place for students unable to afford a visit
- ☐ Students/parents should make contact with Deputy College leaders and request support
 - ☐ Apply for support via the Oldfield Trust (application form available from reception)
 - ☐ Alternatively, parents could write to the Headteacher
 - ☐ Applicable Sixth Form students would qualify for assistance via the discretionary bursary.
 - ☐ All Sixth Form students could make an application for support through the Thomas Hardy Educational Support Grant.
- 18.6. VAT may be reclaimed on expenditure, provided the school did not set out with the intention of making a profit on school visits. However, fortuitous profits, e.g., non-refunded costs for pupils absent on day of visit are quite acceptable. Educational visits will qualify for VAT Avoidance providing they have a clear educational purpose and are not purely recreational or social visits. Invoices showing a clear breakdown of VAT must be supplied prior to payment in order that VAT may be reclaimed.
- 18.7. VAT cannot be reclaimed for School visits abroad. This needs to be borne in mind when budgeting for the cost of the trip. In practice, however, very few foreign trip transactions attract VAT.

- 18.8. It is very important that the school protects itself from loss of funds due to parents/guardians cancelling at the last minute and asking for their money back. Visit leaders should include a paragraph as below stating a deadline for cancellation after which no money will be refunded within letters to parents. (They should only be able to get any money back if the place is refilled). The letter might include the following;
- A deposit/balance is required by.....(date) and can only be refunded if notice of cancellation of your son/daughter's place on the trip is received in writing by.....(date)
- 18.9. It is important that visit leaders bear in mind that all visits have to be self-financing and that any debts incurred will come out of a specific area's capitation.
- 18.10. The Finance Office will order currency for visits abroad. Visit leaders must ensure currency is ordered at least 10 days prior to the visit. Currency will be delivered to the school on the Thursday prior to the visit.
- 18.11. Visit leaders are expected to keep a regular check on each visit account balance. The Finance Office will provide balance enquiries and print outs when required. Once all transactions have been completed the finance office should be informed and will ensure all costs have been covered.

19. Alcohol on School Trips

- 19.1 Students should not consume alcohol on school trips, even if of legal age. If students are caught with alcohol, they should be sent home. Parents will be responsible for any associated costs and may have to collect the student from the trip destination. Teachers should be clear to students of 18 years and older that this will be the protocol.
- 19.2 Staff should not consume alcohol on school trips unless as part of a meal. Consumption of alcohol must be moderate: not more than 1 or 2 drinks.
- 19.3 No member of staff should be intoxicated.
- 19.4 At least one member of staff should not consume alcohol at all (more if a large trip), and this staff member should take charge of any behaviour issues that may arise with students should these occur.
- 19.5 School funds may not be used to purchase alcohol.

