

Educational Visits Policy

Section 1 - Vision Statement

Thomas Hall School aims to offer a broad and balanced range of exciting and stimulating educational visits. The opportunities have a positive impact on raising standards, as well as allowing our pupils the opportunity for growth as individuals and demonstrate respect, integrity, courage, humility, empathy, gratitude and self-discipline.

They serve to:

- Bring breadth to the learning experience
- Stimulate enquiry
- Encourage tolerance and quality in relationships between all involved
- Extend, enlighten and enrich the curriculum and the student's learning experience

Thomas Hall School is committed to providing all students, including those with special needs, opportunity to experience enriching educational visits, which may include residential visits.

Thomas Hall School, as a new school, has the intention of ensuring educational visits are essential additions to our curriculum. All members of the school community (students, staff, parents and the Improvement Board) have a right to be informed of the many and varied opportunities available and should anticipate a broad, balanced and exciting offer. Students will not be barred on financial grounds from any courses/visits considered a necessary part of the curriculum. When additional funding is necessary, the school will endeavour to source appropriate funds.

Visits should be consistent with the aims of the school and be fully researched, approved, clearly targeted and reviewed.

Visits can lead to pressure (on parents' purses) and stress (on staff and students). All visits should follow an agreed pattern, to be part of the school calendar and of the annual planning schedule.

The scope of this policy covers a very wide range of potential activities, whether a short trip to a local museum or travelling long distances for a specific activity at a specially selected location. The same principles will also be applied to those types of visits that are purely for enjoyment and enhancement of life experiences, such as swimming and sporting activities. The benefit for students visiting venues and gaining first-hand experience and/or partaking in activities is absolutely invaluable in their educational and personal development.

We also recognise that the selection of appropriate venues that can enhance the experience and enjoyment without compromising the health and safety of those who are involved, are crucial to the success of the visit. Equally crucial in the success of educational visits is the need to involve parents and to gain from their support and enthusiasm.

The purpose of this policy is to therefore ensure that all educational visits, irrespective of their nature and duration, are well planned and co-ordinated and take into account the health and safety issues that may foreseeably arise during any visit. Only competent persons and organisations will therefore be selected for the purpose of planning and organising any visits and all and any venues visited will be carefully assessed beforehand.

1. The primary functions of the EVC are to co-ordinate and oversee all issues and controls regarding educational visits and to liaise between all appropriate parties during the planning and organisation.
2. This includes the need to ensure that the requirements of this policy are carried out and that any problems or difficulties in meeting these requirements are reported.

3. In particular, the EVC has responsibility for ensuring that any systems and procedures laid down for dealing with educational visits and the selection of suitable persons and organisations involved, follow the principal requirements of this policy and are fully in place prior to the commencement of any educational visit.
4. In addition, the EVC is responsible for ensuring that feedback is obtained from all educational visits and utilised, where practicable, to both enhance and improve any future arrangements and selection processes.
5. The EVC can delegate specific tasks to other staff members and is responsible for ensuring that such delegation is appropriate and clearly understood.

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

Purpose of the Policy

- To ensure that the purpose of any educational visit is clearly understood and is the focal point for any arrangements made.
- To ensure that all visits have prior approval before going ahead.
- To not exclude any student with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act (2010).
- To ensure adequate provisions and arrangements have been included for all students with special needs during educational visits.
- To categorise each educational visit and to plan and organise accordingly. (Note: visit categories are summarised at the end of this policy document.).
- To co-ordinate all educational visits through our appointed Educational Visits Co-Ordinator (EVC).
- To ensure a suitable Trip Leader is appointed for each type of visit, irrespective of the nature and duration.
- To ensure that any selected Trip Leader has the relevant qualifications (where appropriate), skills, experience and abilities suitable for the responsibilities placed upon them.
- To select only appropriate venues and locations that are well-known and/or have been adequately assessed beforehand.
- To select only competent persons for supervisory roles and to ensure they have been suitably vetted and cleared in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.
- To select only competent and assessed travel and/or tour operators for means of transportation to and from venues and locations.
- To arrange educational visits only where the risks have been assessed and reduced to as low as reasonably practicable beforehand.
- To provide effective levels of supervision at all times appropriate to the numbers and age group(s) of the students.
- To ensure that all parents are fully informed of any plan to organise an educational visit and that formal consent has been obtained beforehand.
- To assist, wherever possible, those parents who may have difficulties in meeting all the costs of any specific visit.
- To exclude those whose behaviour represents a threat to the health and safety of themselves and those around them.
- To ensure that trips that are compulsory trips/fieldwork as a statutory part of the course have staff cover costs supported by whole school.

The Arrangements

The following arrangements and activities are in place in order to meet the above policy requirements:

- A comprehensive risk assessment system and procedure to identify risks to the health and safety of all those who attend an educational visit and to determine the necessary precautions required to adequately control the risks
- A set of procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency or any unpredicted event that may threaten the health and safety of anyone during the visit (see end of this document).
- A reporting procedure for any accidents or incidents that may occur on the educational visit and for observed conditions that may lead to such incidents
- A system for providing feedback on the experiences of all educational visits that enables improvements and enhancements of future visits to be considered.
- First aid provision and trained first aiders appropriate to the assessed needs of any educational visit (all trips must have first aid cover).
- Adequate insurance arrangements appropriate to the nature of the visit covering (where appropriate):
 - Luggage and equipment
 - Accident and medical cover
 - Cancellation
 - Provision of relevant, more detailed and updated internal guidelines, checklists and procedures to ensure a safe and successful visit (in this policy).
- Checklist systems to ensure the following are accounted for:
 - Names of all students on the visit and accountability during the visit
 - Emergency contact details of parents
 - A list of provisions and equipment required for the visit, including specific medical and first aid provisions
 - Itineraries and schedules for all proposed travel and activities
 - Appropriate and adequate provision of information and instruction to all those who require them
 - Appropriate mobile communication methods, systems and equipment
 - Additional specific requirements based on the nature and location of the visit
 - The assessment and provision of a licensed transport provider and adequately maintained transport vehicles wherever and whenever required.
 - The assessment of appropriate modes of travel and provisions for alternative arrangements in the event of an emergency

Responsibilities of the Educational Visit Leader

1. Where so instructed and delegated by the responsible person named in this policy, to plan the proposed visit taking into account the health and safety risks that may arise before, during and after the visit.
2. To appoint, where considered appropriate, any competent deputy or deputies in support of any visit.
3. To ensure that as much relevant information is obtained on any proposed visit, venue and location to enable an appropriate risk assessment to be carried out. This may include an exploratory visit beforehand. Staff cannot be responsible and not liable for a known historical medical condition if information is withheld from the trip leader prior to the visit.
4. To ensure that the needs of all those included on the visit are assessed and provided for.

5. To ensure that the risk assessment(s) also determine the appropriate level of supervision, first aiders and any other specifically trained and/or experienced personnel.
6. Ensuring that all equipment and materials required for the visit are adequate and arrangements are made to store them safely and correctly.
7. To ensure parents are provided with all the necessary information about the educational visit, any equipment etc. they need to provide, and the standards of conduct expected of their child(ren).
8. Where appropriate, invite parents/carers to any briefing sessions. This should take account of any difficulties that parents may have if they have disabilities, if English is their second language etc.
9. To brief all group members, including students and parents, on the main elements of the visit, the standards expected and the roles and responsibilities of all prior to commencing the visit.
10. To finalise all details and arrangements with the responsible person named in this policy.
11. To explore school Code of Conduct and any other relevant rules related to that activity.

Assistant Leader/Teaching staff involved

1. Support the Visit Leader in all requirements and follow instructions.
2. Support the planning of the educational visit.
3. Look out for the health and safety of themselves and those around them and for whom they also have appointed responsibility.
4. Assist in general control and discipline requirements.
5. Inform the Visit Leader of any concerns, observed or otherwise.
6. Do not to force students to partake in any activities during the visit that they may not wish to do.
7. Act as Visit Leader (as directed by Visit Leader) in event of the Visit Leader becoming incapacitated or needing to delegate responsibility.

Parents/Carers

1. Must provide emergency contact details prior to the educational visit.
2. Sign and return a consent form by the stated closing date with the understanding that failure to do so will mean their child(ren) will not be able to participate in the visit.
3. Provide any relevant information known to them regarding the (current) health of their child.
4. To disclose any specific details of concerns for their child that may be appropriate to the nature of the visit and any activities planned.

Students

1. Must dress and behave sensibly and strive to meet the expectations placed upon them.
2. Must follow the instructions given to them by any accompanying adults.
3. Must not take any unnecessary risks or place their fellow students at unnecessary risk.
4. Report to any supervising adult any concerns they may have during the visit and, in particular, if and when they are asked to partake in any activities.

Training

The following training will be undertaken by the organisation:

- All staff will be made fully aware of this policy and the requirements and arrangements laid down within it.
- All staff will be trained in understanding the health and safety requirements of educational visits, particularly in relation to those identified in the relevant risk assessments.
- Key staff, as identified by the EVC, will be trained in any specific role they are required to take in support of this policy.

Summary of educational visit categories: (please refer to Educational Visits Policy Appendix 4)

Category A: Regular visits to venues within the locality that are well-known and of low, assessed risk.

Category B: A visit to a venue that may require significant travel outside the locality and/or may be a rarely visited venue, but is still assessed as low risk.

Category C: Any type of visit in the UK that requires residential accommodation for one or more nights, assessed as low risk.

Or visits abroad that require residential accommodation for one or more nights, assessed as low risk.

Or high risk activities in the UK, (residential or not). High risk activities abroad, residential or not.

Examples of high risk activities:

- All action adventure activities
- Field work

Section 2 - Accountability The Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC)

The EVC ensures that educational visits follow National, Local Authority (LA) and school policies ensuring that all aspects of the 2010 guidelines (section 3.4j) are complied with and that the Visit Leader and accompanying adults are suitably competent to run the visit.

Visit and Activity Leaders

Those formally appointing a designated Trip or Activity Leader should take account of the following:

- Visit/Activity Leader should be formally approved for the event-specific activity
- Visit/Activity Leader **must** be formally assessed as being competent
- Ensure that those leading visits have appropriate understanding of employer guidance. It is good practice for employers to provide formally accredited Trip Leader training.

New Staff will be required to attend Trip Leader training/arrange formal induction with the EVC before they can lead a visit.

- The officially approved and designated Visit/Activity Leader should be: Accountable (being accountable implies being an employee, or legally contracted - and thus part of a chain of specified roles and responsibilities).

- Competent/Confident (a leader who is not confident may not be effective). Competence requires that the leader can **demonstrate the ability to operate to current standards of recognised good practice** and the following indicators of competence should be in place:

Appropriate knowledge and understanding of:

- LA guidance reinforced by formal training
- School procedures reinforced by the Educational Visits Policy
- The group, the staff, the activity and the venue; recent and relevant experience; in some cases, a formally accredited qualification e.g. first aid, adventure activities leadership/coaching award

Where a Visit Leader or Assistant Leader plans to provide their own **adventurous activities** to young people or vulnerable adults, it is recommended that competence is externally and credibly verified.