St. Mark's Catholic School

Educational Visits Policy

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1. Introduction and Aims

St Mark's Catholic School recognises that educational visits and learning outside the classroom are an important part of a broad and balanced education.

Educational visits provide valuable opportunities to enrich the curriculum, develop cultural capital, strengthen relationships, promote independence and resilience, and support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They allow students to apply learning in real-world contexts and experience opportunities that may not otherwise be available to them.

Our mission states that St Mark's is a Catholic community inspired by Gospel values where relationships are rooted in love. At the heart of our mission is a commitment to live out our faith and a dedication to embrace excellence in all that we do. We believe in education that instils possibilities, transforms lives and enables all to fulfil their potential.

"Learning outside the classroom should be a normal and valued part of every young person's education." OEAP

Educational visits play an important role in achieving this mission. They provide opportunities for students to encounter new experiences, broaden their horizons, deepen their learning and develop the knowledge, skills and character needed to flourish both within and beyond school.

We believe that learning beyond the classroom should be accessible to all students wherever reasonably possible. Educational visits should be planned and delivered in a way that promotes inclusion, removes barriers to participation and enables all students to benefit from the opportunities provided.

Educational visits are an integral part of the educational experience at St Mark's and should be viewed as an extension of normal teaching and learning rather than as an additional activity.

The school is committed to ensuring that all educational visits are:

- Educationally valuable and aligned to the curriculum or wider personal development aims of the school;
- Planned and managed effectively;
- Safe and appropriately supervised;
- Inclusive and accessible;
- Financially responsible and compliant with the school's charging arrangements;
- Delivered in accordance with relevant legislation, safeguarding requirements and best practice guidance.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the planning, approval and delivery of educational visits and to ensure that all visits are conducted safely, responsibly and in a manner that maximises educational benefit for students.

2. Guiding Principles

All educational visits undertaken by St Mark's Catholic School will be planned and delivered in accordance with the following principles.

Educational Value

Educational visits should have a clear educational purpose and contribute to the curriculum, personal development, spiritual development or wider life experiences of students.

Visits should enrich learning by providing experiences that complement and extend classroom teaching and contribute to the development of students' cultural capital.

Inclusion and Accessibility

The school is committed to ensuring that educational visits are accessible to all students wherever reasonably possible.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered to support students with special educational needs, disabilities, medical conditions or other individual circumstances. Financial barriers to participation will also be considered in accordance with the school's Charging and Remissions Policy.

Proportionate Risk Management

The school recognises that educational visits involve an element of risk. Effective educational visits are not achieved by eliminating all risk, but by identifying significant risks and managing them appropriately.

Risk management should be practical, proportionate and focused on supporting safe participation and positive educational outcomes.

Safety and Wellbeing

The health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff and volunteers will remain a priority throughout the planning and delivery of educational visits.

Appropriate supervision, safeguarding arrangements, first aid provision and emergency procedures will be established for all visits.

Effective Planning and Communication

Educational visits should be planned thoroughly and approved through the school's established procedures.

Students, parents, staff and other relevant stakeholders will receive appropriate information before visits take place to ensure that expectations, responsibilities and arrangements are understood.

Financial Responsibility

Educational visits should be planned and managed in a financially responsible manner.

The school will seek to achieve value for money while ensuring that educational quality, safety and accessibility are not compromised.

Continuous Improvement

The school is committed to reviewing educational visits and learning from experience.

Where appropriate, feedback from students, staff and other stakeholders will be used to improve future visits and strengthen educational outcomes.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Approving and reviewing this policy.
- Providing strategic oversight of the school's educational visits programme.
- Supporting the school in ensuring that educational visits are safe, inclusive and educationally valuable.
- Approving overseas visits and other visits where governor approval is required by school procedures.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the school's educational visits arrangements.

3.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for educational visits and will:

- Ensure that educational visits support the school's educational aims and mission.
- Ensure that appropriate systems are in place for the planning, approval and monitoring of visits.
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate training and support.
- Approve visits in accordance with the school's approval procedures.
- Ensure that suitable safeguarding, health and safety, insurance and emergency arrangements are in place.
- Support the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) in the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher may delegate aspects of the approval process whilst retaining overall responsibility for educational visits.

3.3 Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is responsible for overseeing the school's educational visits programme and supporting staff in the planning and delivery of visits.

The EVC will:

- Provide guidance and support to staff planning educational visits.
- Ensure that visits are planned and approved in accordance with school procedures.
- Review visit documentation, including risk assessments and visit plans.
- Advise visit leaders on risk management, safeguarding and operational arrangements.
- Ensure that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place.
- Maintain records of educational visits.
- Maintain an overview of educational visits taking place across the school, including associated costs where appropriate.
- Coordinate approval processes where required.
- Ensure that suitable emergency and home contact arrangements are established.
- Monitor the effectiveness of educational visits procedures and recommend improvements where appropriate.
- Maintain and develop their professional competence through appropriate training and professional development.

3.3.1 Home Contact

For residential, overseas and other visits where appropriate, a designated Home Contact will be identified. The Home Contact will act as the school's point of contact during the visit and provide support in the event of emergencies or significant changes to plans.

3.4 Visit Leader

Every educational visit will have a designated Visit Leader who has overall responsibility for the planning and management of the visit.

The Visit Leader will:

- Ensure that the visit has a clear educational purpose.
- Plan the visit and complete all required documentation.
- Ensure that an appropriate risk assessment is in place for every visit. Risk assessment should be proportionate to the nature and complexity of the visit and may make use of existing generic or previously approved assessments where these remain appropriate and are reviewed in relation to the specific circumstances of the visit.
- Ensure that appropriate staffing and supervision arrangements are in place.
- Liaise with the EVC throughout the planning process.
- Ensure that safeguarding requirements are met.
- Ensure that parents and students receive appropriate information.

- Hold an appropriate pre-visit briefing or meeting with accompanying staff and volunteers to ensure that relevant information, roles, responsibilities, safeguarding arrangements and emergency procedures are understood.
- Ensure that all participants understand behavioural expectations.
- Lead the visit and make decisions in the interests of safety and wellbeing.
- Report and record incidents in accordance with school procedures.
- Participate in post-visit evaluation where appropriate.

3.5 Accompanying Staff

Staff accompanying educational visits will:

- Support the Visit Leader in the safe and effective delivery of the visit.
- Act in accordance with the school's safeguarding and behaviour policies.
- Supervise students appropriately.
- Follow agreed procedures and instructions.
- Raise concerns promptly with the Visit Leader.
- Promote positive behaviour and represent the school professionally at all times.

All staff remain responsible for safeguarding students throughout the visit.

3.6 Volunteers

Volunteers may support educational visits where appropriate.

Volunteers will:

- Work under the direction of school staff.
- Follow instructions provided by the Visit Leader.
- Support the supervision and wellbeing of students.
- Follow safeguarding requirements and the school's Volunteer Code of Conduct.
- Report concerns immediately to a member of staff.

Volunteers will not be given sole responsibility for groups of students unless appropriate checks, training and arrangements are in place.

3.7 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Provide accurate and up-to-date emergency contact information.
- Inform the school of any medical, behavioural or other information relevant to the safe participation of their child.
- Return consent forms and requested information within required timescales.
- Support the school's expectations regarding behaviour and conduct on visits.
- Ensure that students arrive appropriately equipped and prepared for the visit.

3.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- Follow the instructions of staff and other responsible adults.
- Behave responsibly and in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Act in a manner that promotes their own safety and the safety of others.
- Treat staff, volunteers, members of the public and venues with respect.
- Follow any additional expectations communicated before or during the visit.
- Understand that they represent St Mark's Catholic School whilst participating in educational visits.

Serious breaches of behaviour expectations may result in a student being withdrawn from a visit or excluded from future visits.

4. Categories of Educational Visit

Educational visits vary considerably in their nature, complexity and level of risk. In order to ensure that planning and approval arrangements remain proportionate, St Mark's categorises visits according to their level of complexity and risk.

The category of a visit will determine the level of planning, approval and documentation required.

4.1 Standard Visits

Standard visits are routine educational visits that involve no more than the level of risk normally encountered in everyday life and can be managed through established school procedures and generic risk assessments.

Such visits should require minimal additional planning beyond that needed to maximise the educational benefit of the visit.

Examples may include:

- Local visits and walks
- Museums and galleries
- Places of worship
- University and college visits
- Careers events
- Theatre visits
- Sporting fixtures
- Educational conferences and exhibitions

These visits are generally regarded as learning activities taking place in a different environment and should be planned using proportionate procedures.

4.2 Enhanced Visits

Enhanced visits require additional planning, oversight or visit-specific risk management because of factors such as:

- The nature of the activity
- The environment or location
- The age, needs or characteristics of the group
- Travel arrangements
- Residential elements
- Specialist supervision requirements
- Higher levels of risk

Examples may include:

- Residential visits
- Duke of Edinburgh expeditions
- Adventurous activities
- Water-based activities
- Visits involving specialist instruction
- Overseas visits
- Activities taking place in remote environments

Enhanced visits will require additional planning and may require more detailed risk assessments, specialist advice, additional approvals or specific staff competencies.

4.3 Residential Visits

Residential visits are visits involving one or more overnight stays away from home.

In addition to the requirements outlined elsewhere in this policy, residential visits must include:

- Appropriate safeguarding arrangements
- Suitable accommodation arrangements
- Clear supervision plans
- Emergency procedures
- Appropriate staffing arrangements
- Home contact arrangements
- Additional information for parents and carers

Residential visits require approval through the school's established procedures before any commitment is made.

4.4 Overseas Visits

Overseas visits require additional planning and approval due to the increased complexity of travel, safeguarding and emergency arrangements.

When planning overseas visits, the school will consider:

- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) advice
- Travel and medical insurance arrangements
- Emergency procedures
- Travel documentation requirements
- Medical needs and healthcare provision
- Safeguarding arrangements
- Accommodation standards
- Local laws and customs
- Financial and contractual arrangements
- Location-specific security risks;
- Repatriation arrangements;
- Emergency evacuation and critical-incident arrangements;
- Reliable communication with the school and families;
- Appropriate assurance regarding third-party providers, including safeguarding arrangements, competence, insurance and relevant checks.

All overseas visits must be approved in accordance with the school's educational visits procedures. Specialist advice and approval will be sought where an overseas visit involves particularly demanding or higher-risk activities.

4.5 Educational Purpose

Regardless of category, all educational visits must have a clear educational purpose and demonstrate how they contribute to the curriculum, personal development, spiritual development or wider educational experiences of students.

The level of planning and risk management required should be proportionate to the nature of the visit whilst ensuring that educational benefit remains central to decision-making.

5. Planning and Approval

All educational visits must be approved through the school's educational visits procedures before any bookings, financial commitments or communication with parents takes place.

The school operates a staged approval process designed to ensure that educational visits are educationally valuable, appropriately planned and safely delivered.

5.1 Initial Proposal

Staff wishing to organise an educational visit must submit a visit proposal through the school's educational visits process.

The proposal should provide sufficient information to allow consideration of:

- The educational purpose of the visit;
- The students involved;
- Proposed dates and timings;

- Financial implications;
- Staffing requirements;
- Potential cover implications;
- Safeguarding considerations;
- Any significant risks or operational issues.

The proposal should be submitted sufficiently far in advance to allow appropriate review and planning.

5.2 Review and Approval

All visit proposals will be reviewed by the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

The review process may include consideration of:

- Educational value;
- Calendar implications;
- Staffing and supervision arrangements;
- Cover implications;
- Financial viability;
- Risk management requirements;
- Safeguarding considerations;
- Accessibility and inclusion;
- Insurance requirements;
- Any other operational considerations.

Where necessary, the EVC will discuss proposals with the Headteacher and other relevant members of staff before approval is granted.

Approval will only be granted where the school is satisfied that the visit is educationally appropriate, operationally achievable and capable of being delivered safely.

5.3 Visit Planning

Once a visit has been approved in principle, the Visit Leader will be responsible for completing all required planning and preparation.

This may include:

- Financial arrangements;
- Communication with parents and carers;
- Consent procedures; Parental consent must be obtained for all educational visits, either in writing or through an approved electronic trip management or consent system. Disclaimer clauses must not be used.
- Risk assessments;
- Staffing arrangements;
- Transport bookings;
- Venue liaison;
- Emergency planning;

- Medical and safeguarding arrangements;
- Completion of required school documentation.

Parents and carers will be informed of all educational visits in writing or through an approved electronic communication system, with clear information about the visit and any requested financial contribution.

The EVC will provide guidance and support throughout this process where required.

5.4 Risk Assessments

An appropriate risk assessment must be in place for every educational visit. The level of detail should be proportionate to the nature and complexity of the visit and should focus on identifying and managing significant risks. Risk assessment should take account of relevant location-specific security risks and current official advice where appropriate.

Visit Leaders should make use of existing school risk assessment templates and previously approved risk assessments where appropriate, adapting them to reflect the specific circumstances of the visit.

Additional risk assessments may be required for:

- Students with medical needs;
- Students with SEND;
- Higher-risk activities;
- Residential visits;
- Overseas visits;
- Any circumstances where additional controls are required.

Risk assessment should form part of the planning process rather than being treated as a separate administrative exercise.

5.5 Final Approval

Prior to departure, Visit Leaders must complete all required school procedures and provide any final information requested by the EVC.

This will include confirmation that:

- Appropriate risk assessments have been completed;
- Emergency arrangements are in place;
- Required documentation has been completed;
- Staffing arrangements have been confirmed;
- Student information has been reviewed;
- Parental consent has been obtained.

The EVC and Headteacher reserve the right to withdraw approval for a visit if concerns arise regarding safety, staffing, safeguarding, finances or operational viability.

5.6 Evaluation

Following the visit, Visit Leaders will participate in the school's evaluation process.

The purpose of evaluation is to:

- Identify good practice;
- Improve future visits;
- Review any incidents or concerns;
- Assess whether intended educational outcomes were achieved;
- Share learning with colleagues where appropriate.

The school is committed to using evaluation and reflection to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of educational visits.

6. Staffing and Supervision

Appropriate supervision is essential to the safe and successful delivery of educational visits.

The level of supervision required for a visit will be determined through the planning and risk assessment process and will take account of:

- The nature of the visit and activities being undertaken;
- The age, maturity and needs of the students involved;
- The size of the group;
- The environment and location;
- The experience and competence of staff;
- Medical, behavioural or safeguarding considerations;
- Any specific requirements identified through risk assessment.

There is no prescribed staff-to-student ratio for educational visits. Staffing arrangements will be determined according to the needs of the visit and the level of risk involved.

6.1 Visit Leadership

Every educational visit must have a designated Visit Leader who has overall responsibility for the planning and management of the visit.

The Visit Leader must be satisfied that:

- Staffing arrangements are appropriate;
- Staff understand their roles and responsibilities;
- Suitable safeguarding arrangements are in place;
- Appropriate first aid provision is available;
- Emergency procedures are understood by accompanying adults.

6.2 Accompanying Staff

Accompanying staff must:

- Be suitably experienced and competent for the role they are undertaking;
- Understand the expectations and arrangements for the visit;
- Act in accordance with school policies and procedures;
- Maintain appropriate supervision of students at all times;
- Report concerns promptly to the Visit Leader.

6.3 Volunteers

Volunteers may support educational visits where appropriate.

The Visit Leader will determine whether volunteers are suitable for the role and whether any safeguarding checks are required.

Volunteers:

- Must work under the direction of school staff;
- Must follow the school's safeguarding procedures;
- Must not undertake duties beyond those agreed by the Visit Leader;
- Must not be given sole responsibility for students unless appropriate arrangements and checks are in place.

6.4 First Aid

Appropriate first aid provision will be available on all educational visits.

The level of first aid provision required will be determined through risk assessment and will take account of:

- The nature of the visit;
- The activities being undertaken;
- The needs of participants;
- The location of the visit;
- Access to emergency medical assistance.

All staff will be made aware of relevant medical information and emergency procedures before departure.

6.5 Headcounts and Supervision Procedures

The Visit Leader will establish appropriate supervision procedures for the visit.

These may include:

- Regular headcounts;

- Register checks;
- Grouping arrangements;
- Meeting points;
- Buddy systems;
- Procedures for free time or remote supervision where appropriate.

Students must know who is responsible for their supervision and how to seek assistance if required.

7. Inclusion and Accessibility

St Mark's Catholic School is committed to ensuring that educational visits are accessible to all students wherever reasonably possible.

Educational visits form an important part of the school's curriculum and wider personal development programme. The school will seek to remove barriers to participation and ensure that students are not disadvantaged because of disability, special educational needs, medical conditions, financial circumstances or other protected characteristics.

7.1 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The school will make reasonable adjustments to enable students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to participate in educational visits wherever reasonably possible.

When planning visits, consideration will be given to:

- The individual needs of students;
- Accessibility of venues and transport;
- Medical requirements;
- Additional staffing requirements;
- Personal care needs;
- Communication requirements;
- Risk assessments where appropriate.

The school will work collaboratively with parents, carers and relevant staff to identify appropriate support arrangements.

7.2 Medical Needs

The school recognises that many students with medical conditions can participate fully in educational visits with appropriate planning and support.

Visit Leaders will ensure that:

- Relevant medical information is available;
- Medication arrangements are understood;
- Appropriate staff are aware of medical needs;
- Emergency procedures are established where required;

- Individual healthcare plans are considered during the planning process.

Additional risk assessments may be completed where necessary.

7.2.1 Allergies and Anaphylaxis

The planning of educational visits must take appropriate account of pupils with allergies in accordance with the school's Allergy Safety Policy and the Department for Education's statutory guidance Allergy safety in schools.

Where a pupil has a known allergy, the Visit Leader must ensure that relevant information from the pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan is reflected in the visit risk assessment and arrangements. Consideration should include potential exposure to allergens, food and catering arrangements, access to prescribed medication including adrenaline auto-injectors where applicable, staff awareness and emergency arrangements.

Pupils should not be excluded from educational visits solely because of an allergy. Reasonable and proportionate measures should be taken to enable safe participation wherever possible.

For pupils prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors, their own devices must accompany them on the visit. The risk assessment should also consider whether school-held spare adrenaline auto-injectors should be taken, taking account of the nature and location of the visit and access to emergency medical assistance.

7.3 Financial Accessibility

The school recognises that financial circumstances should not unnecessarily prevent students from accessing educational opportunities.

Educational visits will be planned in accordance with the school's Charging and Remissions Policy.

Where appropriate, the school will consider available support mechanisms to help students participate in educational visits.

7.4 Behaviour and Participation

The school expects all students to meet the standards of behaviour outlined in the Behaviour Policy when participating in educational visits.

In some circumstances, a student's behaviour history may indicate that additional support, planning or supervision is required in order for them to participate safely.

Where concerns exist, the school will consider:

- Additional support arrangements;
- Reasonable adjustments;
- Alternative supervision arrangements;
- Additional risk control measures.

A student will only be excluded from a visit where reasonable adjustments and alternative arrangements have been considered and the school concludes that participation would present an unacceptable risk to the student, other students, staff or members of the public.

Any decision to withdraw a student's place on a visit will be made fairly, proportionately and in consultation with relevant staff.

7.5 Equality and Inclusion

Educational visits will be planned and delivered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The school will seek to ensure that all students are treated fairly and are given equitable opportunities to participate in educational visits and learning outside the classroom.

8. Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains a priority throughout all educational visits.

All educational visits will be planned and delivered in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the Staff Code of Conduct and any other relevant safeguarding procedures.

Educational visits provide valuable opportunities for students but may also present additional safeguarding considerations due to travel, unfamiliar environments, residential arrangements and increased interaction with external organisations.

The welfare of students will remain paramount at all times.

8.1 Safeguarding Responsibilities

All staff participating in educational visits have a responsibility to safeguard students and promote their wellbeing.

Staff must:

- Remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns;
- Follow school safeguarding procedures;
- Report concerns promptly in accordance with school procedures;
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- Act in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct;
- Promote a culture where students feel safe and able to raise concerns.

Safeguarding responsibilities apply throughout the duration of the visit, including travel, activities, free time, evenings and overnight stays.

8.2 Risk Assessment and Safeguarding

Safeguarding considerations must form part of the planning process for all educational visits.

Risk assessments should consider factors such as:

- The nature of the activity;
- The location and environment;
- Supervision arrangements;
- Travel arrangements;
- Accommodation arrangements;
- Medical needs;
- Behavioural considerations;
- Access to emergency support;
- Contact with members of the public or external providers.

Additional safeguarding measures may be required where circumstances warrant them.

8.3 Volunteers and External Adults

All volunteers and external adults participating in educational visits must operate under the direction of school staff.

The school will determine whether safeguarding checks, including DBS checks, are required based on the nature of the visit and the role being undertaken.

Any volunteer accompanying an educational visit must have completed the safeguarding and vetting checks required by current statutory guidance and the school's safer recruitment procedures before participating in the visit. From 1 September 2026, volunteers helping on an overnight school trip are undertaking regulated activity and must have an enhanced DBS check including children's barred-list information. Occasional volunteers on day visits will be checked in accordance with current statutory guidance and the nature of the role they will undertake.

Volunteers and external adults must:

- Follow the instructions of school staff;
- Adhere to safeguarding expectations;
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- Report concerns immediately to a member of staff.

Adults who have not undergone appropriate safeguarding checks will not be left alone with students.

8.4 Photography, Recording and Mobile Devices

The use of photography, video recording and mobile devices during educational visits must comply with school policies and procedures.

Staff must:

- Follow school guidance regarding photography and recording;
- Use approved devices and systems where required;

- Protect personal information and images;
- Ensure that images are used appropriately and in accordance with consent arrangements.

Students will be expected to follow the school's expectations regarding mobile phones, social media and digital conduct during educational visits.

The school's Mobile Phone Policy applies to educational visits.

The normal expectation for day visits is that pupils in Years 7–11 do not bring mobile phones. Any exception must be agreed by the Headteacher and communicated in advance.

On residential visits, pupils will generally be permitted to bring mobile phones, subject to arrangements established by the Visit Leader. Normally, pupils' phones will be collected by staff at an agreed time each evening and securely stored overnight.

Some activities, including Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions and other remotely supervised activities, may require different arrangements for safety, navigation or emergency communication. These will be determined as part of the visit-specific risk assessment and communicated to pupils and parents/carers before the activity.

Where phones are permitted, pupils remain subject to the school's expectations regarding appropriate use, photography and video, social media, online safety and safeguarding.

Staff must not use personal mobile phones or other personal devices to photograph, video or audio-record pupils during educational visits. Where photographs or recordings are required for legitimate school purposes, staff must use school-provided or otherwise school-approved devices and follow the school's photography and consent procedures. Images or recordings of pupils must not be stored on personal devices.

Additional restrictions may be imposed where appropriate to the nature of the visit.

8.5 Residential Visits

Residential visits require additional safeguarding arrangements.

Visit Leaders must ensure that:

- Appropriate supervision arrangements are established;
- Students understand behavioural expectations;
- Sleeping arrangements are suitable and appropriate;
- Staff accommodation arrangements support effective supervision;
- Students know how to seek help if they have concerns;
- Appropriate arrangements are in place for managing medical, behavioural or safeguarding issues.

Particular consideration should be given to privacy, dignity and the wellbeing of all participants.

8.6 Overseas Visits

When planning overseas visits, safeguarding arrangements must take account of the local context and any additional risks associated with international travel.

This may include consideration of:

- Local laws and customs;
- Cultural differences;
- Accommodation standards;
- Transportation arrangements;
- Emergency support arrangements;
- Communication procedures;
- Country-specific safeguarding risks.

8.7 Student Behaviour

The school's Behaviour Policy applies throughout all educational visits.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on themselves and the school.

Where safeguarding concerns arise as a result of a student's behaviour, staff will take appropriate action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all participants.

8.8 Raising Concerns

Students, staff, volunteers and parents should be encouraged to raise concerns promptly if they believe there is a safeguarding issue during a visit.

All safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed and involved in decision-making.

9. Emergency Procedures

St Mark's Catholic School recognises that, despite careful planning and preparation, emergencies and unexpected situations can arise during educational visits.

All educational visits must have appropriate arrangements in place to respond to emergencies and protect the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and other participants.

The nature and extent of emergency planning will be proportionate to the type of visit being undertaken.

9.1 Emergency Planning

As part of the planning process, Visit Leaders must consider how they would respond to foreseeable emergencies and unexpected events.

Emergency planning may include consideration of:

- Serious illness or injury;
- Accidents;
- Safeguarding concerns;
- Missing students;
- Transport disruption;
- Severe weather;
- Changes to planned activities;
- Security incidents;
- Accommodation issues;
- Overseas emergencies;
- Any other risks identified through the planning process.

Visit Leaders should ensure that emergency arrangements are understood by accompanying staff before departure.

9.2 Home Contact

For residential, overseas and other visits where appropriate, a designated Home Contact will be identified by the school.

The Home Contact will:

- Hold key information relating to the visit;
- Be available throughout the duration of the visit;
- Act as a point of contact between the visit and the school where required;
- Support communication with parents and carers during emergencies;
- Assist with decision-making and coordination where necessary.

The Home Contact should not normally be a member of staff participating in the visit. For residential, overseas and other higher-risk visits, the Home Contact should be an appropriately senior member of staff and must have access throughout the visit, where appropriate, to relevant pupil details, medical information, emergency contacts, the visit itinerary, insurance details and staff contact information.

9.3 Medical Emergencies

Where a participant requires medical attention, staff will take appropriate action to ensure that medical assistance is obtained as quickly as possible.

Where appropriate:

- Emergency services will be contacted;

- Parents and carers will be informed;
- The Home Contact will be notified;
- Relevant medical information will be made available to healthcare professionals.

A member of staff will normally accompany a student receiving medical treatment until suitable arrangements can be made.

9.4 Missing Student Procedure

Visit Leaders must ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for managing situations where a student becomes separated from the group.

Students should be briefed before the visit regarding:

- Group meeting points;
- Expectations regarding supervision;
- Procedures for seeking help;
- Contact arrangements where appropriate.

In the event that a student cannot be located, staff will take immediate action in accordance with the visit's emergency arrangements and notify the Home Contact and emergency services where appropriate.

9.5 Communication During Emergencies

In the event of a significant incident or emergency, communication with parents and carers will normally be coordinated through the school.

Staff should avoid sharing unverified information and should follow the agreed communication procedures established for the visit.

The school will seek to ensure that accurate information is communicated in a timely and appropriate manner.

9.6 Incident Reporting

All significant incidents, accidents, near misses and safeguarding concerns occurring during educational visits must be reported in accordance with school procedures.

Where required, incidents will also be reported to relevant external agencies.

Following any significant incident, the school will review the circumstances and identify any lessons that may improve future practice.

9.7 Alternative Arrangements

Visit Leaders should consider alternative arrangements where circumstances prevent a visit or activity from proceeding as planned.

Where appropriate, this may include:

- Modifying activities;
- Changing timings;
- Returning to school;
- Implementing alternative travel arrangements;
- Cancelling all or part of the visit.

Decisions should prioritise the safety and wellbeing of participants while seeking, where possible, to preserve the educational value of the visit.

10. Finance, Charging and Insurance

Educational visits should be planned and managed in a financially responsible manner, ensuring that educational value, safety and accessibility remain central to decision-making.

The school will seek to provide a broad range of educational opportunities whilst ensuring that visits remain affordable and accessible to students wherever reasonably possible.

10.1 Charging and Remissions

The school will operate in accordance with its Charging and Remissions Policy and all relevant statutory guidance.

Where permitted, the school may request voluntary contributions towards the cost of educational visits. No student will be treated differently because a voluntary contribution has not been made.

For visits where charges are permitted by legislation, parents and carers will be provided with clear information regarding costs, payment arrangements and any applicable deadlines.

Information regarding financial assistance and remission arrangements will be provided where appropriate.

10.2 Financial Planning

Visit Leaders must ensure that:

- Visits are financially viable before commitments are made;
- Costs are accurately estimated wherever possible;
- Appropriate approval has been obtained before expenditure is incurred;
- Financial procedures are followed;
- Value for money is considered during planning and procurement.

The school reserves the right to cancel a visit where participation levels or financial circumstances make the visit unviable.

10.3 Refunds and Cancellations

Refunds and cancellations will be managed in accordance with the school's Charging and Remissions Policy and any contractual arrangements with external providers.

Parents and carers will be informed of any significant cancellation terms before committing to a visit.

Where a visit is cancelled by the school, the school will seek to recover and refund costs where possible.

10.4 Insurance

All educational visits will be covered by appropriate insurance arrangements.

The level of insurance required will be proportionate to the nature of the visit and may include:

- Public liability insurance;
- Personal accident cover;
- Travel insurance;
- Medical cover;
- Cancellation insurance;
- Employer liability insurance;
- Any specialist cover required for particular activities.

Visit Leaders must ensure that insurance arrangements are confirmed during the planning process.

Where external providers are used, appropriate insurance documentation should be obtained where required.

10.5 Overseas Visits

Additional insurance arrangements may be required for overseas visits.

Visit Leaders must ensure that overseas visits have appropriate travel, medical and emergency assistance cover in place before departure.

11. Guidance

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following guidance documents:

Trust and National Guidance

- Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust School Trip Principles
- Department for Education: Health and Safety on Educational Visits
- Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) National Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice
- DfE Allergy safety in schools

Staff involved in planning or leading educational visits are expected to familiarise themselves with the relevant guidance and procedures applicable to the visit they are undertaking.

Appendix A: Staff Guidance Planning a Trip

Getting Started

If you are considering organising an educational visit, your first step is to complete the Educational Visit Proposal Form:

Educational Visit Proposal Form:
https://forms.gle/4Hvwg2LtzsHS5Kpm8

The proposal form should be completed before:

- Making any bookings;
- Contacting parents;
- Requesting payment;
- Entering into agreements with external providers.

Once submitted:

1. The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will review the proposal.
2. The proposal may be discussed with the Headteacher and other relevant staff.
3. Factors such as educational value, calendar impact, staffing, cover implications, safeguarding and risk management requirements will be considered.
4. If approved, the Visit Leader will receive a personalised checklist detailing the actions required to prepare the visit.

The EVC is available throughout this process to provide advice and support. Staff are encouraged to discuss visit ideas at an early stage, particularly where visits are residential, overseas, adventurous or otherwise complex.

Educational Visits at St Mark's

Educational visits are an important part of the curriculum and wider personal development programme at St Mark's. They provide opportunities to enrich learning, develop cultural capital, build independence and broaden students' experiences beyond the classroom.

Educational visits should be viewed as an extension of normal teaching and learning rather than as an additional activity.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is available throughout the planning process to provide guidance, support and advice. Staff are encouraged to discuss ideas and raise questions at any stage of the process.

Before Submitting a Trip Proposal

Before proposing a visit, consider:

Educational Value

- What is the educational purpose of the visit?
- How does it support the curriculum or wider personal development?
- Why is this experience better delivered outside the classroom?

Students

- Which students will benefit?
- Are there any SEND, medical or behavioural considerations?
- Are there any accessibility concerns?

Timing

- Is the proposed date suitable?
- Does it avoid significant calendar clashes?
- What will be the impact on lessons and staffing?

Practicalities

- How will students travel?
- What is the approximate cost?
- Are there any unusual risks or requirements?

If you are unsure about any aspect of a proposed visit, please speak to the EVC before submitting your proposal.

Risk Management

Educational visits inevitably involve risk.

The aim is not to eliminate all risk but to identify significant risks and manage them appropriately.

When planning a visit consider:

- Travel arrangements
- Supervision requirements
- Medical needs
- Behaviour considerations
- Environmental factors
- Emergency arrangements

Risk management should be practical, proportionate and focused on real risks.

The EVC can provide support with risk assessment planning, identifying appropriate controls and determining whether additional assessments may be required.

Inclusion

Educational visits should be accessible to all students wherever reasonably possible.

When planning visits consider:

- SEND needs
- Medical conditions
- Accessibility of venues
- Financial barriers
- Additional support requirements

Reasonable adjustments should always be considered before excluding a student from participation.

The EVC can help explore possible adjustments and support arrangements where inclusion presents additional challenges.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains a priority throughout all educational visits.

Staff should:

- Follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Follow the Staff Code of Conduct
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Remain vigilant to concerns
- Report concerns promptly

Additional consideration may be required for residential, overseas or higher-risk visits.

Where safeguarding considerations are complex, the EVC can support planning and liaise with the DSL where appropriate.

Staffing and Supervision

There is no fixed staff-to-student ratio.

Staffing should be determined through risk assessment and should take account of:

- Age and maturity of students

- Group size
- Nature of activities
- Medical and behavioural considerations
- Environment and location

Every visit must have a designated Visit Leader.

The EVC can provide advice on supervision arrangements, staffing levels and first aid provision.

Residential and Overseas Visits

These visits require additional planning and should be discussed with the EVC as early as possible.

Additional considerations may include:

- Accommodation
- Insurance
- Home Contact arrangements
- Medical provision
- Emergency planning
- Travel documentation
- Safeguarding arrangements

The EVC will work closely with Visit Leaders throughout the planning process to help ensure that all necessary arrangements are in place.

Approval Process

All visits must be approved through the school's Educational Visits process before any bookings, financial commitments or communication with parents takes place.

Following approval, Visit Leaders will receive a personalised checklist outlining the actions required for their specific visit.

The EVC will continue to provide support throughout the planning process and is available to answer questions, review documentation and offer advice at any stage.

Remember

The right leaders, doing the right activities, with the right students, in the right places, at the right time.

Educational visits should be educationally valuable, proportionately planned and focused on providing students with meaningful experiences beyond the classroom.

If you are unsure, ask. Early conversations with the EVC often prevent problems later in the planning process.