

Educational Visits Policy

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Introduction

Mill Hill Education Group (the 'Group') is the trading name of The Mill Hill School Foundation. It is a group of independent mainstream Schools which together educate girls and boys aged 6 months to 18 years. This Policy relates to Abbot's Hill School, one of the Group's Schools, including its EYFS pupils.

The Court of Governors (the Governors) of the Group recognise the value to pupils of educational visits. At Abbot's Hill, learning outside the classroom is an essential component of the curriculum. Educational visits have the clear purpose of offering students unique opportunities to develop resourcefulness and initiative, the chance to extend their learning and to spend time with peers and adults in an informal setting.

Such visits should:

- enhance students' understanding of curricular activities (for example language or history studies);
- provide opportunities to practise skills (for example, relating to sports);
- develop pupils' social skills (for example meeting pupils from other countries and cultures).

The Governors also recognise and accept that such visits present challenges to the health and welfare of pupils. Educational visits will therefore be planned and operated in accordance with this Educational Visits Policy and the School's Educational Visits Handbook, so that everyone involved understands his or her responsibility to ensure that pupils can participate fully in educational visits in reasonable safety.

The School's planning and running of Educational Visits will have regard to the ten important areas listed below:

1. Responsibility for visits, including pupils' behaviour
2. Planning visits, including risk assessments and first aid
3. Supervision, including ratios and vetting checks (for example, DBS checks for volunteers on overnight stays)
4. Ensuring that the trip is inclusive
5. Communication with parents, pupils and staff
6. Planning transport
7. Insurance
8. Types of visit
9. Visits abroad
10. Emergency procedures, including contact details and permission for emergency medical treatment if the parents cannot be contacted.

Types of Educational Visits –

In their 2018 'Guidance: Health and Safety on Educational Visits' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits> the Department for Education (DfE) identifies two main types of trips:

- Routine visits
- Trips that need a specific risk assessment and additional planning

"Routine visits" or "Local Area Visits" are fully defined in the School's Educational Visits Handbook.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will determine if a specific visit requires additional levels of planning and assessment, and where this is not the case, the visit can be recorded as a Local Learning Area Visit. This ensures that all visits are recorded but that the process for approval is appropriately reduced for visits that "...involve no more than everyday level of risk, such as slips and trips and are covered by a school's current policies and procedures".

Responsibilities

1. Employers

- 1.1 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 etc, employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employers are also under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. This includes everyone involved in off-site visits (teachers, volunteers, helpers and pupils).

Employers must ensure that their employees are provided with appropriate guidance.

The Court of Governors is the employer of staff at The Mill Hill Education Group.

- 1.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, made under the 1974 Act, require employers to:
- assess the risks of activities
 - introduce measures to control those risks
 - tell their employees about these measures

2. Employees

- 2.1 Also, under the Health and Safety legislation, employees must:
- take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety
 - co-operate with their employers over safety matters
 - carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
 - inform the employer of any serious risks

These duties apply to all Educational Visits. Teachers and other staff in charge of pupils also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

Although the employer is responsible for health and safety, decisions about visits are usually delegated to the Head. The Head's agreement must be obtained before a visit takes place.

3. Court of Governors

- 3.1 The Court of Governors will satisfy themselves, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the Head has effectively implemented this Policy and ensured that risk assessments have been carried out, that appropriate safety measures are in place and that training needs have been addressed. This will be undertaken by an Annual Report from each School's Educational Visits Co-ordinator to the Pastoral Committee of the Court of Governors
- 3.2 The Governors delegate to the Head, who delegates to the EVC, the following responsibilities to:
- ensure that the visit has a specific and stated objective
 - ensure that the Head/Trip Leader shows how their plans comply with regulations and guidelines, including the school's health and safety policy document
 - ensure that they are informed about less routine visits well in advance
 - assess proposals for certain types of visits, including visits involving an overnight stay or travel outside the UK

4. Head

- 4.1 The Head will appoint an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), to act on behalf of the Head and will ensure the employee is specifically competent and appropriately trained. The level of competence required will relate to the types of Educational Visits proposed. Evidence of competence will be through the experience of practical leadership over many years of outdoor education and the completion of training in risk assessment and a thorough knowledge of this part of the Policy. Whilst the administration of such tasks can be delegated overall responsibility for Health and Safety cannot.
- 4.2 If the Head takes part in the visit as a group member/supervisor, he or she will follow the instructions of the Trip Leader who will have sole charge of the visit.
- 4.3 The Head will also ensure that:
- they are never 'non-contactable' for a prolonged period of time and, when off site, a deputy is named who will lead during an emergency situation in his or her absence.
 - a detailed risk assessment has been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place
 - any relevant qualifications claimed by the Trip Leader or other relevant members of the group have been checked and verified
 - there is adequate and relevant insurance cover
 - he or she has the address and phone number of the visit's venue and a contact name (if appropriate)
 - there are systems in place to ensure that all pupil information (contact details, medical information and consent) is up to date.
 - a suitable member of staff has been appointed as the EVC and that the designated person meets their employer's requirements, including undertaking EVC training as recommended or required.
 - sufficient time has been assigned to the EVC and staff to organise activities and visits properly.
 - a succession planning culture is in place to ensure sustainable activities and visits and the development of competent leaders and EVCs

- the School has an Emergency Plan for off-site visits, including procedures to assemble the team and ensure that parents are appropriately informed in the event of a serious incident.
- serious incidents are reported to the employer as required by the employer's guidance, meeting the requirements of RIDDOR.
- the safety and suitability of exchanges and homestay visits is reviewed for each relevant trip each time they occur. At a minimum, each person aged 16 and over who will be present in the house during the stay/visit must undergo a DBS check. Reciprocal checks must be made in the relevant country.
- to ensure that there is an establishment procedure for recording "near accidents/near misses", including any resulting learning points and actions.
- Group staff are available to cover/support Emergency Management Teams in other Schools in the case of an emergency.
- The Education Visits Handbook outlines the guidelines on the consumption of alcohol that is relevant and adhered to during Educational Visits.

5. The Educational Visits Co-ordinator

5.1 The responsibilities of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator are as follows:

- to have attended EVC training as recommended or required by the employer.
- to co-ordinate Educational Visits with Group Schools across the annual calendar to avoid clashes with other School activities and to ensure an even spread of visits, as far as possible, across the School.
- to check that all Educational Visits comply with the School's Educational Visits Policy and follow the Handbook for the organisation and running of an educational visit, working with Trip Leaders to ensure that the School's expectations are met.
- to assess the educational value of visits based on post-trip evaluation (this may be in written format depending on individual School's guidance) in conjunction with the Trip Leader and agree whether a trip should be repeated.
- to review the School Policy and Handbook on Educational Visits annually and update, as appropriate, to meet current national guidelines or changes to agreed practice specifically at Mill Hill Education Group, and to ensure that Trip Leaders are aware of changes in legislation or 'best practice' that may affect the planning and organisation of Educational Visits.
- to review systems and monitor practice and make recommendations for change, where appropriate.
- to identify staff training needs relating to the organisation of educational visits and ensure that all trip Leaders receive regular Trip Leader training.
- to ensure that medical and first aid issues are addressed.
- to ensure that individual activities and visits are reviewed and evaluated and that this process includes reporting of accidents and incidents, complying with Employer requirements and Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation (RIDDOR).

- to ensure that policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. A review should follow any serious incident or systems failure
- to establish a list of multiple 24/7 Emergency Contacts who have suitable trip experience, training and status and ensure the availability of the Emergency Management Team for every visit.
- to ensure Trip Leaders have the financial support/capacity to deal with unforeseen or emergency situations.
- ensure that there has been pre and post trip meetings between the Trip Leader and the EVC and a handover meeting to the lead Emergency Contact for the trip.

6. Trip Leader

- 6.1 The Trip Leader will have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and will have regard to the health and safety of the group. The Trip Leader will have been appointed or approved by the Head/EVC. The Trip Leader will:
- obtain the Head's prior written agreement before any off-site visit takes place and, as appropriate, the completion of any other forms in accordance with their School's Educational Visits Handbook.
 - follow the relevant regulations, guidelines and Group and/or School policies, as set out in this Policy and the School's Educational Visits Handbook. For example, ensure any residential trip has been booked through a reputable external provider, with due diligence having been carried out.
 - ensure that all trip staff are aware of the Emergency Action Plan should something unforeseen occur, which will include the roles and input from external providers (if relevant).
 - On residential visits, where the number of pupils participating in the visit is large or have specific medical needs it may be appropriate to have more than one accompanying first aider. It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader to discuss this with the EVC as necessary.
 - On residential visits, particularly abroad, it may be necessary to have more than one Visit Leader, this could be due to the number of pupils participating in the visit. It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader to discuss this with the EVC or the Head as necessary.
 - undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents, including the completion of a comprehensive risk management procedures for all activities to be undertaken on the trip.
 - ensure that the School has the most up to date information in regard to pupils taking part in the trip and methods of communication.
 - ensure there are contingency arrangements in the event of unfavourable weather conditions, transport breakdown, other failure or in the event of a pupil having to be sent home in accordance with the School's Educational Visits Handbook.
 - be aware of insurance procedures as set out in the school's Educational Visits Handbook
 - ensure there are adequate safeguards so that this will not compromise group management, if the staff team includes someone with a close relationship to a member of the group.
 - ensure that safeguarding issues are addressed as prescribed in the Group's Safeguarding and Protecting the Welfare of Pupils Policy. (e.g. best safeguarding practice is followed and adults are appropriately vetted and checked)

- ensure that informed parental consent has been obtained as necessary. For all residential trips, this will include a registered parental meetings and briefings.
- make sure there is access to first aid at an appropriate level, which is likely to include an up to date First Aider for each trip. Where a First Aider is not present, the Head/EVC must be content that sufficient alternative arrangements are in place such as venue-provided first aid or urgent treatment centres identified nearby. This will be assessed through the trip planning and risk assessment process. In the case of trips involving pupils at EYFS, a paediatric First Aider is present.
- Evaluate all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event.
- report any accidents, incidents or near misses.
- ensure that recruitment checks are in place for all persons involved - involving the HR department as necessary
- ensure that additional communicable disease and winter sports insurance cover is in place if relevant.

7. Teachers and Non-Teacher Adult Volunteers

- 7.1 Teachers and Non-Teacher Adult Volunteers on school-led visits act as employees of the Governing Body, whether the visit takes place within normal working hours or outside those hours, by agreement with the Head.
- 7.2 Teachers and Non-Teacher Adult Volunteers (i.e. persons over the age of 18 years who are not employees of the School but who accompany or take part in trips and visits) whether or not acting as a supervisor will assume a duty of care towards Group employees, pupils, other children and Non-Teacher Adult Volunteers who are on the trip or visit. They will do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances. They will comply with the instructions of the Trip Leader who will have sole charge of the visit and the implementation of the detailed Risk Assessment for the trip. They will have read the detailed Risk Assessment for the trip before departure of the trip or visit and comply with it.
- 7.3 The use of Teacher and Non-Teacher Volunteers on school-led visits will comply fully with The Mill Hill Education Group recruitment and safeguarding policies.

8. Non-Teacher Adult Volunteers

- 8.1 Non-Teacher Adult Volunteers will follow the instructions of the Trip Leader and teacher supervisors and help with control and discipline. A Non-Teacher Adult Volunteer should not be left in sole charge of pupils unless/except where either:
 - an enhanced DBS disclosure check and other requisite compliance checks in accordance with the ISI guidelines have been completed and received by the School and is considered to be satisfactory and it has been previously agreed as part of the Risk Assessment for the trip or visit that the Non-Teacher adult volunteer may be placed in sole charge of pupils;
 or
 - in exceptional circumstances that may be determined to be an emergency by the Trip Leader or a teacher supervisor and when appropriate authority has been sought and obtained from the Head or member of the Senior Leadership Team emergency contact. a Non-Teacher adult volunteer may be placed in sole charge of pupils;

- Non-Teacher Adult Volunteers must report to the Trip Leader or teacher supervisors any concern about the health or safety of pupils at any time during the visit or if they have any safeguarding concerns.
 - be aware of potential conflicts of interest if their own children are members of the group and discuss this beforehand with the Trip Leader.
- 8.2 Non-Teacher Adult Volunteers who accompany or take part in trips and visits which involve an overnight stay must have an enhanced DBS disclosure check and other requisite compliance checks in accordance with the ISI guidelines which will have been completed and received by the School prior to the departure of the trip or visit. Details should be included in the detailed Risk Assessment for the trip or visit.
- 8.3 Trip organisers should be aware of the time required (which is normally around 4 or 5 weeks and may be a matter of months) to obtain a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.
- 8.4 Non-Teacher adult volunteers accompanying a trip with the School will receive a briefing from the Trip Leader and the EVC. The volunteer will be required to sign a document stating that they have received this advice.

9. Responsibilities of pupils

The Trip Leader will make it clear to pupils that they must comply with the School Rules which govern the trip and any other duties or responsibilities given in their School's Educational Visits Handbook. Students and parents sign a Code of Conduct Agreement annually which details the behaviour required. A pupil whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to himself or herself, or to the group, may be stopped from going on the visit. In addition to any formal sanction that may be imposed, the School reserves the right to withdraw a pupil from any activity or trip where there are concerns about a pupil's trustworthiness. In such circumstances, there will be no refund due of monies paid towards the activity or trip.

10. Parents

- 10.1 The Trip Leader will ensure that parents are given sufficient information, in writing, that they are invited to any briefing sessions for residential trips and they have full information about the visit so as to make an informed decision as to whether their child should go on the visit. This should include proposals for alternative activities where, for example, adverse weather conditions prevent the intended activity taking place. Reasonable adjustments will be made for children with disabilities.
- 10.2 The Trip Leader will also inform parents as to how they can help prepare their child for the visit, the arrangements for sending a pupil home early (for which parents will normally be required to meet the costs of such arrangements) and arrangements for communicating with parents (including emergency arrangements).

11. Learning Difficulties, Disability and Medical Needs/Conditions etc.

- 11.1 Mill Hill School Education Group welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. The Group maintains and drives a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people and those with learning needs in all the activities of the Group and will not treat a pupil less favourably on these grounds without justification. Each School will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with any type of disability, learning difficulty or medical need/condition to enable their participation on Educational Visits, whilst maintaining the safety of that individual and everyone in the group.
- 11.2 Special needs of any kind, (including such medical conditions as sleepwalking and epilepsy) will be taken into consideration in the risk assessments and planning undertaken in advance of the trip or visit and appropriate measures to address the risk identified.
- 11.3 Where reasonable adjustments are not possible to enable a pupil with a disability or learning difficulty or medical need/condition to participate in a trip or visit, that pupil might not be permitted to take part in that trip or visit.

12. Risk Management Procedures

- 12.1 The School must check that external activity providers have appropriate safety standards and liability insurance.
- 12.2 All external activity providers must be assessed prior to booking any residential or day trips. Guidance can be found in the Educational Visits Handbook.
- 12.3 Risk assessment is an essential part of fulfilling health and safety responsibilities. Risk assessments must be completed for all activities undertaken on the trip, the outward and homeward journey and any periods of free time. In addition to the Visit Leader's competency, all risk assessments must be completed well in advance of the residential or day trip and must cover all eventualities, including if an alternative activity needs to be arranged whilst on the residential. This may mean updating a risk assessment whilst on the residential or day trip due to a change in weather conditions for example. This is known as a 'dynamic risk assessment' and guidance can be found in the schools Educational Visits Handbook.

13. Review

This review: Autumn Term 2026

Next review: Autumn Term 2027

This Policy was approved by the Mill Hill Educational Group.