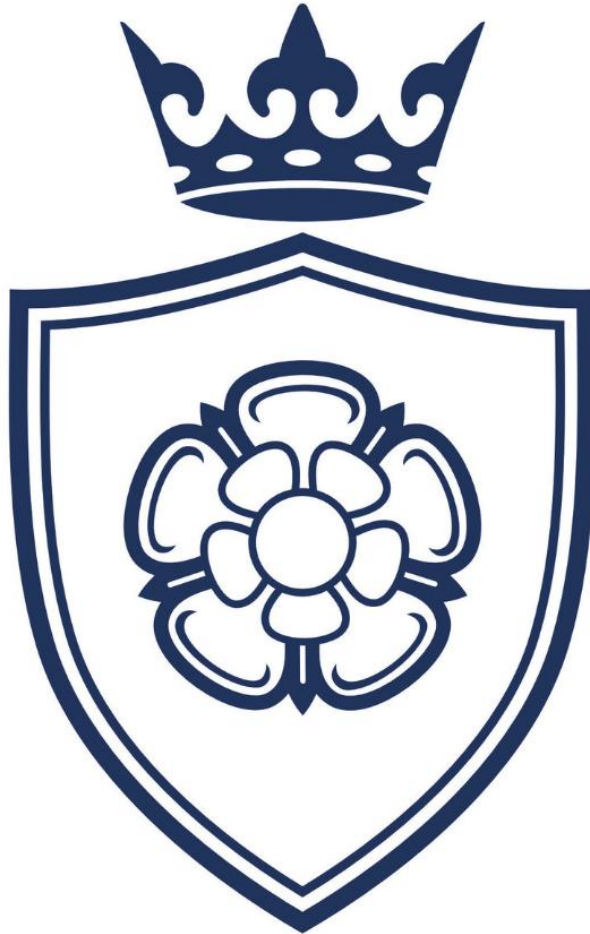




Mercia
Northridge School



Visits Policy

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed every year. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

Definition of a Visit

For the purpose of this Policy, a school visit is defined as “any occasion when pupils take part in learning activities which are carried out beyond the boundary of the school.”

Why Visits?

The Learning Outside the Classroom [LOtC] Manifesto (DCSF, November 2006) states:

“We believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.”

And also:

“Learning outside the classroom is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what is learned but importantly how and where we learn.”

Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations

Key responsibilities are outlined below, but it is important to read the Local Authority Guidelines to ensure awareness of all responsibilities detailed there for each role.

<http://www.thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk/educational-visits.php>

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places overall responsibility for health and safety with the employer.

For community schools, the employer is the Local Authority.

Responsibility Chain

1. Employer
2. Governing Body (if not employer)
3. Headteacher
4. EVC
5. Visit Leader
6. Other staff supporting the visit
7. Other adults accompanying the visit
8. Pupils

Mercia Learning Trust, as employers, have duties to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- the health, safety and welfare of all employees.
- the health and safety for all young people for whom TSAT is responsible under the Children Act 2004
- the health and safety of volunteers involved in TSAT activities, including off-site activity and visits.

The Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that:

- members have read/have access to, the LOtC Manifesto www.lotc.org.uk
- have access to LOtC guidance and the employer's guidance Sheffield Educational Visits Guidelines available at: <http://www.thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk/educationalvisits.php>
- the School Policy clarifies governors' involvement in the visit approval process
- there is an appropriately trained Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) in place
- a commitment to ensure that those staff who need it (EVC, Headteacher, Visit Leaders, in particular, and all staff accompanying visits) receive appropriate training
- there are notification and approval processes both at school level and between the school and the employer

- governors are made aware of any visits requiring LA approval (going abroad; residential (including overnight camping); to hazardous locations (mainly coast/beaches or natural inland waters); involving adventurous activities (climbing, sailing, canoeing, abseiling etc.) and approve such visits in advance
- the school visit policy supports the principles of inclusion
- there are monitoring procedures in place, and the Governing Body receive regular (appropriate) reports about visits - especially about those requiring Local Authority approval and anywhere there are relatively serious incidents or near misses

The Headteacher

- Must formally approve all visits and has overall (day-to-day) responsibility for their safe planning and execution.
- To undertake this and other aspects of the function s/he should refer to the relevant section of the National (currently HASPEV via lotc link given above) and LA guidance (see reference page 2 – Thornbridge website link).
- In particular, s/he must be satisfied that all visit leaders have the correct qualifications (if appropriate) training, experience and personal qualities to undertake responsibility for the planned visit. Ensure appropriate training, where necessary.
- In order to help facilitate sufficient leaders with the above qualities/experience etc. an “apprentice” approach to visits is recommended
- Ensure that a qualified first aider accompanies every visit.
- Ensure that Visit Leaders (as well as other appropriate staff) are aware of the procedures for Critical Incidents and that Visits Emergency Procedures are in place for each visit and are understood by all staff involved.

The Educational Visits Coordinator

- Support the Headteacher in carrying out the above functions.
- Ensures that Visit Leaders are aware of their responsibilities, and support them, especially in organising the visit and informing the employer and GB (if appropriate) well in advance of the visit start date, ensuring all procedures are properly followed.
- To undertake this and other aspects of the function s/he should refer to the relevant section of the LA guidance (see reference above – Thornbridge website link).
- Ensure that visit leaders plan well in advance and that the following notification periods for visits are followed:
 - GB/Headteacher at least 12 weeks for visits abroad (employer requires at least 8 weeks' notice)
 - GB/Headteacher at least 8 weeks for residential, adventurous activities or hazardous locations in this country (employer requires at least 4 weeks' notice)
 - At least 4 weeks' notice for the Headteacher for all other visits. NB. regular, local visits (such as library, swimming, etc.) can be planned for a full term and approval gained from the Headteacher en block.
- Ensures that Visit Leaders know where Event Specific Risk Assessment (ESRA) and LA Generic RA forms can be found and what a good example of an ESRA looks like.
- Ensure that all 'non-school' adults accompanying visits have been CRB checked - if they will be alone with pupils at any point (and essential on residential visits if staying overnight). NB if last minute replacements are necessary, a List 99 check should be undertaken.

The Visit Leader

Plans the visit, with support as appropriate, from the EVC to ensure that:

- the employer's (LA) and GB's Policies/Guidelines and all appropriate procedures are followed
- ensures the safety of all those involved in the visit (pupils and adults) and the general public (where activities/actions of the party may have a potential impact). The Event Specific Risk Assessment, and an appropriate process to draw this up [a pre-visit is highly recommended] is the key to planning a safe visit
- ensures the educational aims of the visit are, as far as possible, relevant to the curriculum and are delivered in practice
- ensures that other adults are appropriately briefed about their duties and responsibilities
- there is a staff maximum ratio of 1:15 staff to students on all trips, and a 1:10 ratio on residential trips or trips that are deemed to be higher risk

- ensures that parents and pupils are adequately briefed and that pupils are aware of the expectations for their behaviour on the visit
- To undertake this and other aspects of the function s/he should refer to the relevant section of the LA guidance (see reference above – Thornbridge website link).
- Have a “Plan B” in case the situation (site/activity/weather/group illness/problem) changes on the day. Make sensible, safe, decisions if changed conditions make this necessary.

Other staff supporting a visit

- Must follow the instructions of the Visit Leader in support of the aims identified above (see Visit Leader – bullet points).
- Ensure they have been appropriately briefed about their role on the visit and about emergency procedures.
- If unsure about this and other aspects of the function, s/he should refer to the relevant section of the LA guidance (see reference above – Thornbridge website link) or seek further guidance from the EVC

Other adults accompanying a visit

Must follow the instructions of the Visit Leader in support of the aims identified above.

Pupils

Visit Leaders and other staff involved should ensure that pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them. For certain types of visits, it may be felt appropriate that they, and their parents, sign a behaviour agreement. In addition, Visit Leaders and/or other staff should explain the importance of safety procedures at specific points on the visit. If possible, pupils should be involved in discussion about these matters and should be encouraged to identify possible hazards and any measures/procedures that will reduce the danger to all concerned.

Dissemination of the Policy

- New staff will be introduced to this policy as part of the induction process.
- All staff will be given a copy of the standard operating procedures for educational visits.
- The policy will be available on the staff pack and on the school website.
- Students will be made aware of the policy as part of the tutor time programme and through assemblies.

Monitoring and Review of the Policy

Monitoring of this policy will be done by the AHT Curriculum. When evaluating the success of the policy, the school will consider:

- To what extent visits have contributed to raising attainment;
- How visits have enhanced the school’s curriculum;
- How visits have contributed to improving the school’s climate for learning.

The AHT Curriculum will provide reports to the relevant committee of the governing body in the summer term. The policy will be reviewed every two years, or in light of new guidance, and will be led by the AHT Curriculum.