

Riverstone Academy

Educational Visits Policy

Date of review: September 2026

Date of next review: September 2027

Signed: K. Bowe

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. [Legal framework](#)
2. [Definitions](#)
3. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
4. [Planning school trips](#)
5. [Risk assessment process](#)
6. [Vetting providers](#)
7. [Equal opportunities](#)
8. [Transport](#)
9. [Parental consent](#)
10. [Staffing ratios](#)
11. [Insurance and licensing](#)
12. [Accidents and incidents](#)
13. [Missing person procedure](#)
14. [Pupils with SEND](#)
15. [Finance](#)
16. [Trips abroad](#)
17. [Evaluating trips and visits](#)
18. [Monitoring and review](#)

Appendices

- a. [Annual Consent Form for all Educational Visits and School Trips](#)
 - b. [Consent Form for Specific Educational Visits and School Trips](#)
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Statement of intent

Riverstone Academy understands that visits and trips can be effective ways of motivating pupils, and they can often offer unique educational experiences. The school aims to ensure that pupils are engaged in their learning and are given opportunities to explore this in a more practical setting.

The school takes the health and wellbeing of our staff and pupils very seriously. This policy has been designed in line with DfE and HSE guidance and details our responsibilities for pupils and staff members while out on educational visits and school trips.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety on educational visits'
- HSE 'School trips and outdoor learning activities – tackling the health and safety myths'
- DfE (2013) 'Driving school minibuses'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Administering Medicines Policy
- First Aid Policy
- SEND Policy
- Missing Pupil/Absconding procedures

2. Definitions

'In loco parentis' means that the group leader of any school trip or educational visit has a duty of care over the pupils in place of a parent.

'School trip' means any educational visit, foreign exchange trip, away-day or residential holiday organised by the school which takes pupils and staff members off-site.

'Residential' means any school trip which includes an overnight stay.

Activities of an **'adventurous nature'** include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Trekking
- Caving
- Skiing
- Water sports
- Climbing

3. Roles and responsibilities

The directors are responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy complies with the Equality Act 2010.

- Ensuring educational trips and visits positively impact on pupils' lives, teaching them life skills and providing new experiences.
- Receiving appropriate assurance regarding significant incidents and near misses, higher-risk visits, safeguarding concerns arising from visits and any lessons or actions identified through post-visit evaluation.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
- Appointing an educational visits coordinator (EVC) as part of the school's chosen arrangements for managing and overseeing off-site educational visits.
- Liaising with the educational visits coordinator and communicating information regarding any planned trips to parents.
- Liaising with the Directors regarding the organisation of extracurricular trips and activities, including settling any disputes.
- Being part of the approval process for extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring the educational visits coordinator is competent to oversee the coordination of off-site education and arranging for training to be undertaken, as necessary.
- Ensuring that appropriate documentation is completed for educational visits, including visit-specific written risk assessments where the nature of the activity, location or individual pupil needs indicate that these are required.
- Ensuring suitable safety measures are in place prior to each trip or activity.
- Overseeing the work of the educational visits coordinator, ensuring a whole-school approach is adopted when planning and coordinating extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring there are contingency plans in place in the event of a member of staff being absent on the day of the trip or activity.

The educational visits coordinator is responsible for:

- Overseeing all issues and controls regarding extra-curricular activities and trips.
- Liaising with all appropriate parties and obtaining competent external advice where required during the planning and organisation of educational visits and activities.
- Ensuring the systems and procedures for dealing with educational visits adhere to the requirements of this policy.
- Partaking in relevant additional training to ensure they remain up-to-date with relevant educational trip information and health and safety guidance.
- Overseeing the planning of the educational trips, by ensuring all essential documentation, including risk assessments, is up to date and appropriate for completion by the designated trip leader.
- Appointing an appropriate and competent member of staff to be the designated trip leader for each trip.
- Ensuring the competency of the designated trip leader, in consultation with the Head Teacher, by organising training for staff and volunteers.

The designated trip leader selected to be in charge on an individual trip is 'in loco parentis' and has a duty of care to all pupils on the trip. They are also responsible for:

- Identifying the educational purpose of the extra-curricular trip or activity and presenting its benefits to the Head Teacher.
- Undertaking any relevant training or courses which are arranged by the educational visits coordinator.
- Completing all essential documentation for the trip and ensuring it has been approved by the educational visits coordinator.
- Ensuring proportionate risk assessment and planning are completed before educational visits, including a visit-specific written risk assessment where additional or significant risks are identified.

- Creating an itinerary prior to an educational visit or school trip and distributing it to pupils, parents and staff to ensure the day is well organised and safe.
- Informing parents of the proposed extra-curricular trip or activity in advance and distributing permission slips to parents.
- Implementing safeguarding measures throughout the planning, organisation and delivery of the extra-curricular trip or activity.
- Ensuring all adults accompanying the visit are appropriately briefed and that volunteers have undergone appropriate safeguarding and vetting checks in accordance with the school's safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures.

The designated deputy leader supports the designated trip leader and will assume the designated trip leader's responsibilities if the designated trip leader is no longer fit to lead the trip, e.g., is unwell at short notice. They are also responsible for supporting the designated trip leader in completing all their relevant responsibilities by assuming any delegated tasks.

Staff are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and applying its principles when participating in extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring they are competent and comfortable with their delegated responsibilities, undertaking training where necessary.
- Ensuring the safety of the pupils is maximised throughout any educational visit or activity.

Volunteers on the trip are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and applying its principles when participating in extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Supervising and ensuring the safety of pupils by following the procedures outlined by the designated trip leader.

4. Planning school trips and activities

Prior to planning a school trip, the following guidance will be read by the organisers:

- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety on educational visits'
- HSE (2011) 'School trips and outdoor learning activities'

Educational visits will be planned using a proportionate approach to risk. Routine local visits involving no more than everyday risks may be managed through the school's existing policies, procedures and established risk controls. Visits involving additional or significant risks, including adventurous, residential, overseas or unfamiliar activities, will be subject to a specific written risk assessment and appropriate approval.

When partaking in adventure trips, activities will always be identified at the planning stage and never added during the trip. When planning water sport activities, the need for instructors and lifeguards will be taken into account, particularly when using facilities which may not have a trained lifeguard present.

The school will do everything in its power to ensure that all pupils are given an opportunity to participate in school trips, for example, organising two trips with a smaller group size or finding a venue which can cater for all pupils. Where a visit has a maximum capacity, places will be allocated using a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory process determined in advance. Allocation arrangements will take account of the educational purpose of the visit and the school's equality duties.

5. Risk assessment process

Our risk assessment process is designed to manage risks when planning trips, while ensuring that learning opportunities are experienced to the fullest extent. The individual carrying out the risk assessment process will have the skills, status and competence needed for the role, understand the risks involved, and be familiar with the activity.

The process is as follows:

- Identify the hazards.
- Decide who might be harmed and how.
- Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions.
- Record findings and implement them.
- Review assessment and update if necessary.

Risk assessment will be proportionate to the nature of the visit. Routine local visits may rely on established school procedures and existing risk controls. A specific written risk assessment will be completed for visits involving additional or significant risks and where individual pupil needs require additional controls.

Safeguarding risks will be considered alongside health and safety risks, including risks associated with members of the public, venue staff, transport providers, volunteers and other adults encountered during the visit.

Staff will continue to assess risk dynamically throughout a visit and may modify, postpone or stop an activity where circumstances change. Dynamic risk assessment does not replace appropriate pre-visit planning or any written assessment required for foreseeable significant risks.

6. Vetting providers

When considering external providers for activities, the educational visits coordinator will consider whether they hold the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge or another appropriate recognised accreditation. Such accreditation may provide useful assurance but does not remove Riverstone Academy's responsibility to satisfy itself that the provider, activity and safeguarding arrangements are suitable for its pupils.

If a provider does not hold the badge, the educational visits coordinator will check the following to ensure they are a suitable organisation to work with:

- Their insurance arrangements.
- Their adherence to legal requirements.
- Their control measures.
- Their use of vehicles.
- Staff competency levels.
- Safeguarding policies.
- The suitability of their accommodation.
- Any sub-contracting arrangements in place.
- The presence of necessary licences.

If it is deemed appropriate to engage with an external provider, a written agreement will be created outlining what each party is responsible for. If an organisation does not meet the school's standards, they will not be considered.

7. Equal Opportunities

The school promotes values of equality and does not discriminate against any individual or group of pupils when organising a trip. The extra-curricular trips and activities offered to pupils will provide new experiences and develop life skills. Extra-curricular trips and activities are organised, managed and conducted in accordance with the school's Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Where places are limited, they will be allocated using a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory process which takes account of the educational purpose of the visit and the school's equality duties. Any individual, staff or

otherwise, shown to be taking preference over one pupil or a group of pupils will be subject to formal disciplinary action.

Where possible, pupils will be given the opportunity to contribute to the planning and organisation of extra-curricular trips and activities.

For school trips that require additional payment, the fee will be reasonable and help will be provided where possible for pupils who cannot afford the initial fee.

8. Transport

The Head Teacher or designated competent person will ensure that any school-operated minibus is appropriately maintained, insured, taxed where required, tested and roadworthy.

Any person driving a school minibus must hold the appropriate driving licence entitlement for the vehicle and circumstances in which it is being used and must meet all applicable legal, insurance and school competency requirements. Section 19 permit requirements will be complied with where applicable.

Any required permit, including a Section 19 permit where applicable, will be obtained and displayed in accordance with legal requirements.

Start and finish mileage, along with any potential risks, defects or damage identified, will be reported upon return to the school.

The school will maintain a separate, current record of staff authorised and competent to drive school vehicles, including evidence of appropriate licence entitlement, insurance requirements and any required training.

Transport planning will also consider seat belts and appropriate restraints, pupil-specific transport and mobility needs, safe boarding and disembarkation, emergency evacuation arrangements, the need for passenger assistants or additional supervision, driver fitness, journey length and safeguarding arrangements for any external transport provider.

9. Parental consent

Parents/carers will be informed of educational visits and off-site activities in accordance with the nature of the activity and the school's consent arrangements. Routine local visits may be covered by general or annual consent where appropriate. Specific written consent will be obtained for residential visits, visits abroad, adventurous activities, visits outside normal school hours where required, and other visits where the nature of the activity, level of risk or individual circumstances make specific consent appropriate.

If preferable and appropriate, parents may complete an annual consent form at the start of any academic year which gives consent for their child to be involved in any and all activities, both on and off-site, that take place at any time, including the school holidays. Where annual consent is used, this will form part of Riverstone Academy's pupil information and consent arrangements. Separate consent will be sought if in the unlikely event trips require payment. Parents will be informed of activities by letter and will have the opportunity to withdraw their child from taking part.

10. Staffing ratios

There is no single universal statutory staffing ratio for educational visits. Staffing levels will therefore be determined through the visit-specific risk assessment and will take account of pupils' age, developmental level, SEND, communication needs, behaviour, medical needs, mobility, absconding risk, the nature of the activity, venue and environmental risks. Any ratios stated below are minimum planning guidance only and will be increased where individual needs or the risk assessment indicate this is necessary.

- Abroad: **1:4**
- Other residential: **1:4**
- High risk: **1:2**
- Day trip visits: **1:8**

11. Insurance and licensing

When planning activities of an adventurous nature in the UK, the educational visits coordinator will check that the provider of the activity holds a current licence. The school will ensure that appropriate insurance cover is in place for educational visits and activities and will obtain additional or specialist cover where required. Parents will be informed of the limits of any insurance cover.

Where a crime is committed against a member of the party, it will be reported to local police as soon as possible.

Medical expenses will be recorded and stored in the school office.

12. Accidents and incidents

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

- Organisers will cooperate fully with local emergency services and understand that any injury or death of a member of staff or pupil outside of Great Britain may be subject to the law of the land where the accident occurred.
- The first point of contact within the UK will be the Head Teacher who will contact the family of the injured person.
- Pupils will be asked not to contact friends or parents in the UK until the family of the injured person can be contacted.
- The British Embassy/Consulate will be informed.
- The insurer will be notified.

The Head Teacher will keep written records of any incidents, accidents and near misses.

Media enquiries will be referred to the Head Teacher or, if they are not available, the Proprietor.

Staff will be briefed on how to react and respond should an emergency situation occur. Before departure, the trip leader will have access to a clear school emergency contact, escalation procedures, pupil emergency and medical information, emergency medication, and contingency arrangements if the group cannot return as planned. Relevant risk assessments will be undertaken before the trip, including for points of interest such as museums and hotels. Pupils and staff will be informed of an evacuation plan before entering trip venues where appropriate; this should include an agreed rendezvous point so everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

Where appropriate and identified as a suitable control measure, pupils will wear school-branded clothing or another appropriate means of identification to support group safety and identification.

13. Missing person procedure

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

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

The level of supervision provided to each pupil will be determined by the visit-specific and individual risk assessments, taking account of the pupil's SEND, EHCP, communication needs, behaviour, medical needs and known risks, including any history of absconding.

The trip leader and sufficient accompanying staff will carry appropriate school communication devices and emergency contact information. Communication arrangements will be identified within the visit-specific risk assessment. Pupils will not be expected to carry personal mobile phones as part of the school's missing-person procedure.

Upon arriving at every venue, the designated trip leader will identify a rendezvous point where pupils and adults should go if they become separated from the rest of the group. Pupils and staff will wear school branded clothing, in order to make them easily identifiable.

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

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

- The designated trip leader will ensure the safety of the remaining pupils and staff by taking a register to identify who is missing.
- The designated trip leader will initiate the agreed missing-pupil response without compromising the supervision or safety of the remaining pupils. Search arrangements will reflect staffing levels, the venue's procedures and the missing pupil's individual risk profile. Where it is safe and appropriate, a member of staff may begin a search while another member of staff maintains supervision and communications.
- Where possible, the venue will be notified of the missing person to help ensure the person is found quickly.
- The police or other emergency services will be contacted immediately where the circumstances indicate that the missing pupil or person is at immediate or significant risk of harm. In all other circumstances, escalation will take place promptly in accordance with the school's Missing Pupil Procedure, taking account of the individual's age, SEND, vulnerability, location, environmental risks and individual risk assessment.
- If the police are called, the trip leader will contact the Head Teacher or designated senior leader, back at the school and inform them of what has happened.

If the police, or another authority, is called to an incident where someone is missing, they will oversee locating the person and will advise on factors including, but not limited to, when to contact next of kin.

If the missing person cannot be found, the group will return to school. If this is not possible, e.g. when a trip is taking place abroad, the educational visits coordinator will make arrangements to ensure the group's safety, e.g. by changing venues or cancelling visits.

If a member of the party has gone missing and is subsequently found, the trip leader will:

- Review the group sizes and staffing ratios to ensure no one becomes separated from their group.
- Review whether more registers should be conducted throughout the day.
- Assess which venues they attend to ensure they are suitable for the group.
- Make recommendations to the educational visits coordinator to ensure similar incidents can be avoided in the future.

14. Pupils with SEND

The school will make reasonable adjustments to enable pupils with SEND to participate in educational visits wherever this can be achieved safely. Planning will take account of the pupil's EHCP, individual risk assessment, healthcare needs, Behaviour Support Plan, communication and AAC needs, sensory regulation, mobility, toileting or intimate care, medication, emotional regulation, transition anxiety, absconding risk, transport requirements and the pupil's ability to understand and follow safety instructions.

Where, exceptionally, reasonable adjustments cannot enable an individual pupil to participate safely, an appropriate alternative of comparable educational value will be considered for that pupil in consultation with parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Pupils will receive the level of adult support identified as necessary through their individual needs and the visit-specific risk assessment. Medicines administered during a visit will be recorded in accordance with the Administering Medicines Policy, and emergency medication such as inhalers and adrenaline auto-injectors will remain immediately accessible to the pupil and/or responsible staff as appropriate.

15. Finance

Any charges or voluntary contributions associated with educational visits will be transparent, reasonable and consistent with Riverstone Academy's funding, admissions and charging arrangements. No pupil will be treated less favourably because of disability or SEND. Where charging arrangements distinguish between optional activities and provision forming part of the school's curriculum or planned educational provision, the school will apply its charging arrangements consistently and lawfully.

- Part of the school's curriculum or planned educational provision.
- Part of any accredited course or assessment programme for which the pupil is being prepared by the school.
- Part of the school's religious education provision.

Money for school trips will always be paid directly to the school. Under no circumstances should school trip money be processed through personal accounts.

All letters to parents regarding school trips will include a clause explaining what will happen in the event that the trip is cancelled or a pupil cancels their place on the trip.

In the event that the trip is cancelled due to unforeseeable circumstances, it is at the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Head Teacher will consult the chair of the proprietors on the matter, taking into account the cost to the school, including alternative provision costs.

In the event that a pupil cancels their place on a trip, it is at the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Head Teacher will consult the proprietor on the matter, taking into account the pupil's reasons for cancelling their place, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the space on the trip can be offered to someone else.

The school will take a common-sense approach to refunds and cancellations, ensuring that all pupils are treated equally. Any charge made in respect of pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the trip divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Once trip arrangements are booked and confirmed, if contributions to a trip exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil. Any excess expenditure will be subsidised by the school fund.

Where educational visits form part of a pupil's planned educational provision, associated costs will ordinarily be met through the school's agreed funding arrangements, where applicable.

16. Trips abroad

All overseas visits will require specific approval by the Head Teacher and will be subject to enhanced planning and a specific written risk assessment. When planning school trips abroad, the school will consider the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) foreign travel advice for the relevant destination(s) and, where an activity poses significant risks, the school will also consult appropriate recognised standards for adventurous activities outside the UK.

Validity of passports, visa requirements and other entry requirements, e.g. vaccination status, will be researched and dealt with within **three months** of the initial notification of the trip, to avoid problems when the trip is due to take place.

Staff and pupils will be taught about the culture and values of the country they are visiting, to ensure they understand and respect the values of the citizens.

Before the trip the educational visit coordinator will check the travel advice for each country the trip will visit to ensure no visa or permit is needed and to check any other regulations or time limitations.

Current passport, visa, immigration and entry requirements will be checked for each traveller and destination using current official government advice

Before the trip, the relevant healthcare and travel insurance checks will be conducted to ensure attendees are covered for medical issues or accidents.

Appropriate healthcare arrangements will be confirmed before travel, including GHIC/EHIC arrangements where applicable, alongside appropriate travel insurance. A GHIC/EHIC will not be treated as a substitute for travel insurance.

Before the trip, staff are trained in spotting suspicious behaviour and remaining vigilant whilst abroad. Before the trip, pupils will be taught how to remain vigilant in the country they are visiting, particularly about advances from strangers.

Registers will be taken at the start and end of each day, as well as before, during, and after events, and at regular intervals whilst on days out to ensure the whereabouts of pupils are known at all times.

Staff will check the location's local news at the start of each day of the trip, to ensure their planned activities are safe to go ahead. Appropriate arrangements will be in place to enable effective communication in the destination country, including access to translation or interpretation where required.

At the start of the trip, all pupils and staff are provided with an emergency contact sheet, this includes the trip leader's mobile phone number, as well as emergency numbers and phrases for the country they are visiting.

When using external providers abroad, the school will check whether the provider holds an equivalent of the 'Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge'. If no such equivalent can be ascertained, the school will make checks prior to agreeing to use the provider.

17. Evaluating trips and visits

Following an educational trip and/or visit, the educational visit coordinator will meet with any staff members present on the trip to assess the success of the trip in respect of both educational value and safeguarding effectiveness.

Based on this assessment, recommendations will be made to improve future trips and visits.

18. Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Head Teacher and Educational Visits Coordinator. The Directors will receive appropriate assurance regarding significant incidents, near misses, higher-risk visits, safeguarding concerns and actions arising from educational visits. The Directors will review the policy at least annually and earlier where required following changes to legislation or guidance, a significant incident, identified safeguarding concern or lessons arising from educational visits.