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THE LINKS
PRIMARY SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

NOVEMBER 2026

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Responsible Body: Head of School

Version Control

Review Date	Updates
V1 January 2025	Change of Trust name
V2 November 2026	Review of legislation and guidance, update of format

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Statement of intent

Spark Education Trust 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 Trust 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.

Spark Education Trust, as the employer, is responsible for the health and safety of pupils, members of staff and volunteers and aims to protect them from getting hurt while out on educational visits or school trips.

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) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety on educational visits'
- HSE (2011) 'School trips and outdoor learning activities'
- DfE (2013) 'Driving school minibuses'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Minibus Policy
- DBS Policy

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

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'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

Key roles and responsibilities

The Local Governing Committee is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to: ethnicity or national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Ensuring educational trips and visits positively impact on pupils' lives, teaching them new life skills and providing new experiences.
- Promoting good safeguarding practices to ensure the safety of pupils when partaking in extra-curricular trips and activities.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
- Appointing an appropriate and competent member of staff to be the designated trip leader for each trip.
- Ensuring the designated visit lead is competent to oversee the coordination of off-site education and arranging for training to be undertaken, as necessary.
- Liaising with the designated visit lead and communicating information regarding any planned trips to parents.
- Liaising with the governing committee regarding the organisation of extra-curricular trips and activities, including settling any disputes.
- Being part of the approval process for extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Supporting the designated visit lead in appointing designated staff for each trip.
- Ensuring relevant paperwork, including risk assessments, for extra-curricular trips and activities is completed and approving the documentation.
- Ensuring suitable safety measures are in place prior to each trip or activity.

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- Overseeing the work of the designated visit lead, 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.
- Overseeing all issues and controls regarding extra-curricular activities and trips.
- Ensuring the systems and procedures for dealing with educational visits adhere to the requirements of this policy.
- Organising any relevant trip training so staff and volunteers can feel confident in conducting their duties.
- Partaking in relevant additional training to ensure they remain up-to-date with relevant educational trip information and health and safety guidance.
- Ensuring that any problems are raised in a meeting with the governing committee.

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:

- Checking the schedule is free on the school calendar prior to planning an educational visit.
- Identifying the educational purpose of the extra-curricular trip or activity and presenting its benefits to the headteacher.
- Undertaking any relevant training or courses which are deemed necessary by the head teacher.
- Completing all essential documentation for the trip and ensuring it has been approved by the head teacher.
- Conducting a risk assessment prior to school trips and educational visits to ensure pupil and staff safety.
- 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.
- Distributing permission slips to parents six weeks prior to the trip and chasing up any permission slips that have not been returned two weeks prior to the trip.
- Understanding and operating safeguarding measures throughout the planning, organisation and delivery of the extra-curricular trip or activity.
- Delegating responsibilities to other staff members, including the designated deputy leader, on the school trip.
- Ensuring all adults on the trip are aware of their responsibilities and that the necessary checks have been carried out on volunteers in line with the DBS Policy.

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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 by undertaking training if required.
- Ensuring the safety of the pupils is maximised throughout any educational visit or activity.
- Liaising with the designated leader to understand personal responsibilities and ensuring the smooth running of the school trip or activity.
- Ensuring that any outdoor space visited, e.g. a park and playing field, is kept clean and free from litter during the trip.

Volunteers and/or carers on the trip are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and applying its principles when participating in extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Participating in any relevant checks before the trip in line with the DBS Policy.
- Reading and understanding relevant policies, such as the Behavioural Policy, to enforce the Pupil Code of Conduct while on the school trip.
- Ensuring they are competent and comfortable with their delegated responsibilities by partaking in relevant training if required.
- Supervising and ensuring the safety of pupils by following the procedures outlined by the designated trip leader.
- Assisting pupils with needs during activities, e.g., escorting them to the toilets.
- Attending any relevant meetings or induction evenings before the trip.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Following instructions from staff while on school trips.
- Keeping pride in their presentation, understanding that they are representing the school whilst on an education trip.
- Ensuring that, during visits to outdoor spaces, they keep the area tidy and free from litter.

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- Behaving in a manner which matches the ethos of the school, and for following the behaviour rules set out in the school's Behavioural Policy with regards to this policy.

Planning school trips

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'

A thorough risk assessment will be conducted by the designated visit leader during the planning of the trip, to ensure pupil and staff safety.

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. Where there is a maximum capacity of pupils for a trip, places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. This will be clearly communicated to parents in correspondence home.

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.

Vetting providers

When considering external providers for activities, the designated visit lead will check they are a suitable organisation to work with:

- Their insurance arrangements
- Their adherence to legal requirements
- Their risk assessments
- Their use of vehicles
- Staff competency levels
- Safeguarding policies

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- 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.

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 Ethos and Values.

Due to the popularity of some extra-curricular trips and activities, the school offers places on a first come, first served basis. 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.

Safe use of minibuses and seatbelts

Minibuses will be used in accordance with the minibus policy.

Parental consent

Parental consent is not generally required for off-site activities that take place during school hours.

Written consent is required for:

- Activities of an adventurous nature.
- Residential trips.
- Foreign trips.
- Trips outside of school hours.

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Separate consent will be sought for trips which require payment. Parents will be informed of activities by letter and will have the opportunity to withdraw their child from taking part.

Staffing ratios

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Age and ability of group
- Special needs pupils
- Nature of activities
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision
- Duration and nature of the journey
- Type of any accommodation
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

As general guidelines, the following ratio of adults to children should be used:

Nursery and Early Years, visits off-site may be as low as:	**1:2 or 3**
Years 1 to 3	**1: 6**
Years 4 to 6	**1:10** (could be as high as 1:15, depending on assessment of risk)

Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits.

Insurance and licensing

When planning activities of an adventurous nature in the UK, the designated visit lead will check that the provider of the activity holds a current licence. Insurance will be organised for every trip, no matter how short, to ensure adequate protection and medical cover is in place. 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.

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Medical expenses will be recorded and stored in the school.

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 headteacher 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.

Written records of any incidents, accidents and near misses will be taken and logged.

Media enquiries will be referred to the headteacher or, if they are not available, the deputy headteacher or the chair of governors.

Staff will ensure the safety of pupils and staff should anything happen, e.g. a terrorist attack. Staff will be briefed on how to react and respond should an emergency situation occur, e.g. a terrorist attack. Relevant risk assessments will be undertaken before the trip, including for points of interests such as museums and hotels. Pupils and staff are informed of an evacuation plan before entering trip venues; this should include an agreed rendezvous point, to ensure everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

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 section 5 of 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.

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When travelling with a pupil with SEND, the designated visit lead will ensure an adult is with them at all times and that the visit is adequately modified to suit the pupil's needs in accordance with section 14 of this policy.

If a member of the party travelling has allergies, a risk assessment will be conducted and accompanying staff will be briefed on care of the pupil/ staff member in accordance with the Allergen and Anaphylaxis Policy.

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.

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 immediately identify at least one adult to start looking for the person and another adult to contact them via phone, these people will look for the person until, where necessary, the police arrive.
- Where possible, the venue will be notified of the missing person to help ensure the person is found quickly.
- If the person cannot be contacted or located within **10 minutes**, the local police or relevant authorities, e.g. the British Embassy, will be contacted.
- If the police are called, the trip leader will contact the headteacher, or other available person, 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 designated visit lead 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 designated trip leader will:

- Review the group sizes and staffing ratios to ensure no one becomes separated from their group.

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- 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 head teacher to ensure similar incidents can be avoided in the future.

Pupils with SEND

Where possible, activities and visits will be adapted to enable pupils with SEND to take part.

Where this is not possible, an alternative activity of equal educational value will be arranged for all pupils. Pupils with SEND will be accompanied by a responsible adult during the extra-curricular trip or visit if required.

Finance

The financial procedures outlined in the school's Charging and Remissions Policy will always be followed when arranging trips.

The school will act in accordance with the DfE's guidance document 'Charging for school activities' (2018) and, therefore, will only charge for trips which are classed as an 'optional extra'. This is education provided outside of school time which is not:

- Part of the national curriculum.
- Part of a syllabus for an examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.
- Part of religious education.

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 headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

In the event that a pupil cancels their place on a trip, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The headteacher will consult the governing committee 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. Where a pupil has previously cancelled a space on a school trip and

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received a full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

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.

Foreign trips

When planning school trips abroad, the school will consider the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's guidance 'Safer adventure travel and volunteering overseas' (2015) and, where an activity poses significant risks, the school will also consult the British Standard for adventurous activities outside the UK.

Validity of passports and visa requirements will be 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.

Staff and pupils will be made aware that they must not have spent over 90 days in the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein, within a 180-day period if they intend to participate in any trips within these countries.

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

Pupils and staff will be informed if they need to apply for a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to ensure they can access state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in the EU.

Before the trip, staff are briefed 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.

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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.

When using external providers abroad, the school will make checks prior to agreeing to use the provider.

Evaluating trips and visits

Following an educational trip and/or visit, the head teacher 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.

Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the headteacher. The governing committee will review this policy **annually**. The scheduled review date for this policy is November 2027.

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