



CASTLE COURT  
SCHOOL

# TRIPS AND EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

*'The more risks you allow your child to take,  
the better they learn to look after themselves'*  
*Roald Dahl*

Reviewed: September 2022  
Due for review: September 2026

L C Edmond  
Deputy Head

## Ethos of the school:

***At Castle Court we have a passion for excellence in everything that we do. We are fortunate with our facilities and our surroundings, which are beautiful (37 acres of land and woodland). However it is committed and talented staff who can inspire that is of most importance to us. The relationship between pupils and staff and the ability of staff to draw out the most from the children is fundamental. Our desire is to raise self-esteem, whilst providing a broad and academic stimulus with opportunities for the children to excel, in and outside the classroom. There is so much that we do to ensure that the children are happy, "if they are not happy they will not learn" and our pastoral system is tailored to keep the communication between children and their tutors and home the very best it can be. Children grow up too quickly and we want those at Castle Court to have a real childhood.***

***After over 75 years, Castle Court's governance and leadership remain committed to our founders' intention of providing all our pupils with a first class, all-round education firmly rooted in Christian principles. These aspirations and values underpin all we do as we seek to encourage every member of the school community, whatever their faith or background, to strive for excellence. We want our girls and boys to be considerate, good friends to each other and grow in confidence as they interact with the modern world. Above all, we want everyone to feel part of a warm and welcoming family in which we all care for one another.***

## Aims and Objectives

In support of the ethos of the school, this policy seeks to define, control and encourage educational visits and trips to support, enrich and extend the wide-ranging curriculum offered at Castle Court. It is acknowledged that well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good practice within our school and enhance our pupils' curricular, sporting, cultural and linguistic experience.

Pupils will learn more when they are in their 'stretch zone': this policy aims to facilitate the planning and execution of trips and educational visits that take children out of their comfort zone, including them in the risk assessment/management process, while avoiding unnecessary risk and ensuring that pupils (and staff) are not in their 'panic zone'. At Castle Court School we are not risk averse: we understand the role that risk plays in enabling children to rise to new challenges, make the most of more opportunities and develop through problem-solving, decision-making, managing stress, teamwork and adventure.



This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the requirements stipulated by the DfE document *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits* and nationally approved advice from the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel.

## Procedures

A successful educational visit or trip has its root in the hours of planning that are necessary by the staff who undertake to lead such trips. The following guidelines and procedures seek to support the planning, implementation and review of all such trips to ensure that the very highest standards are observed throughout to improve the educational experience of pupils while away from the school grounds.

The responsibility for a successful trip does not rest with one person, but should be seen as a wide-reaching responsibility that affects anyone involved in the trip. The centrality of teamwork among those listed beneath cannot be underestimated:



## **Legal Responsibilities**

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1998, the governing body retains overall responsibility for the health and safety of all pupils, staff and visitors at Castle Court School, including during all school visits. It is expected to ensure that the Head and other staff are supported and monitored in matters connected with educational visits. The Head also has extensive responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of pupils on visits, even when tasks have been delegated to other members of staff. Group Leaders have responsibility for the group at all times during the visit and are therefore also responsible for informing other accompanying staff of their duties. All staff supervising a pupil on a visit are said to act '*in loco parentis*' and as such are expected to apply the same standards of care as would a 'reasonable parent' acting within a range of reasonable responses, within the extent of their competencies and the agreed scope of the trip/visit.

The courts do not rush to find schools and teachers negligent – they accept that accidents do happen. However, schools must be able to show that they have taken reasonable steps to plan visits thoroughly and assess and manage risks, and individual teachers must be able to demonstrate that they have followed the school's policy and that their responses to an incident were within the range of the reasonable responses of a parent.

## **The Role of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)**

The role of the EVC is to assist the Group Leader in the planning and organisation of visits. Group Leaders should involve the EVC from an early stage, following the procedures laid out in the Standard Procedures document. The EVC will help ensure that the visit meets the school's requirements in terms of following this policy, educational objectives and risk assessment. The EVC will also review systems and monitor practice. In such instances where planning or risk assessments are deemed not to be satisfactory, the EVC will request further evidence of appropriate planning from the Group Leader. In cases where this is not forthcoming, the EVC has the responsibility (in conjunction with the Head) to call the trip off. The EVC should be given opportunity to go on school trips (without being part of their delivery/organisation) to observe as a critical friend and to offer feedback where appropriate.

In line with **Guidance on Health and Safety on Education Visits (2018)** the EVC should:

- be an experienced visits leader
- have the status to be able to guide the working practices of other staff
- be confident in assessing the ability of other staff to lead visits
- be confident in assessing outside activity providers
- be able to advise headteachers and governors when they're approving trips
- have access to training, advice and guidance

## Planning

If the proposed trip is new to the calendar or overseas or overnight then using the Approval Form for new, overseas & overnight trips the Group Leader should apply to the EVC for permission in principle for the trip to go ahead (ideally to be in place by half term of the term preceding the trip). The EVC will seek the Head's approval and confirm permission.

If the proposed trip is a day trip undertaken previously by the school, the Group Leader should seek approval from the EVC for the trip to go ahead (ideally to be in place by half term of the term preceding the trip). The Group Leader may be asked to produce documentation from previous visits. The EVC will seek the Head's approval and confirm permission.

Where trips are arranged during the term of the proposed visit and therefore not in the school calendar, permission must be sought from the EVC and Head.

All proposals will be assessed not only on the details of the trip but also the impact of the trip on the taught curriculum at school (both in terms of pupils being away from school and staff being unable to teach their timetabled lessons). The Head will liaise with other members of the SLT before giving approval to proposed trips.

Once a proposed trip has been approved in principle an exploratory visit would normally be carried out. If a visit is not possible information must be gathered from as many other sources as possible.

At this stage, the Group Leader should also have read the 'Handbook for Group Leaders' and be considering how best to incorporate the ideas, guidelines and suggestions of this handbook into their planning.

The following planning documents / activities need to be carried out:

### For Day Trips

*At least 10 days before trip, complete:*

- Trips & Visits Management Form (with orange banner on front page and updated transport costings for 2024-5)
- All Trips & Visits Risk Assessment Form (including specific risk assessments) – making use of 'new' RA form, including severity x likelihood = risk rating.
- Parental Consent / information letter
- Programme / Itinerary

### For Overnight or Adventure Trips

*At least 4 weeks before undertake:*

- Parental Consent / information letter

*At least 3 weeks before trip, complete:*

- Trips & Visits Management Form (with green banner on front page)
- All Trips & Visits Risk Assessment Form (including specific risk assessments) – making use of 'new' RA form, including severity x likelihood = risk rating, and details of generic RAs to be referred to.
- Complete Emergency Contact sheet.
- Programme & Itinerary
- Meet with EVC to ensure appropriate plans in place.

### For Overseas Trips

*At least 6 weeks before undertake:*

- Parental Consent / information letter

*At least 4 weeks before complete:*

- Trips & Visits Management Form
- All Trips & Visits Risk Assessment Form (including specific risk assessments) – making use of ‘new’ RA form, including severity x likelihood = risk rating, and details of generic RAs to be referred to.
- Complete Emergency Contact sheet.
- Programme / Itinerary
- Meet regularly with EVC to ensure appropriate plans in place.
- Meet with parents to outline trip

Important aspects of the planning that must not be overlooked include the following:

Any colleague organising a trip involving **water** (whether sea, lake or river) must familiarise themselves with the document entitled ‘**Group Safety at Water Margins**’ (available in the ‘Essential Reading for Group Leaders’ folder). Group Leaders are expected to have given a hard-copy of this document to other staff on the trip.

**Farm visits** are special cases and must follow the current age group related guidance from the Government’s Chief Medical Officer (see Handbook for Group Leaders in staff/all staff/admin/trips and educational visits/essential reading for group leaders).

**Alcohol** – trips that include visits to alcohol production facilities (such as breweries, vineyards and cideries) will not be approved due to the age of the children in the school.

Visits to venues covered by the three points above may not be added to a trip’s itinerary after it has begun, even with dynamic risk assessment and/or appropriate briefing to children.

### **Risk Assessment**

At Castle Court we acknowledge that there is no such thing as a risk-free trip or educational visit, understanding that children learn most effectively when exposed to managed risks within their ‘stretch zone’ (that is, where they are not exposed to too high a risk that would make the trip or activity dangerous, or too low a risk as to make the trip or activity too straightforward).

Risk assessment (RA) is not only a legal requirement but also forms the basis for much of the planning required for a successful visit. It does not need to be complex but it must be comprehensive; safety must remain the number one priority of any visit. Risk Assessments must be completed by the Group Leader if the visit involves any activity which may present a greater hazard than is encountered in normal school life at Castle Court. These forms must be countersigned by the EVC to indicate that he is satisfied that suitable arrangements have been made.

	1 Likelihood IMPROBABLE	2 Likelihood POSSIBLE	3 Likelihood LIKELY
1 Severity MINOR	1	2	3
2 Severity MAJOR	2	4	6
3 Severity FATALITY or ABDUCTION	3	6	9

All risk assessment forms should make use of risk ratings (=likelihood x severity). RAs with risk ratings of 6 or 9 will not be signed off by the EVC without evidence of additional control measures in place to limit the likelihood and/or severity, or input from an external outdoor education advisor. All risk assessment forms should acknowledge that, even with control measures in place, there is still a residual risk; those with Low (1 or 2) or Medium (3 or 4) residual risks should be approved internally with the understanding that these are the sorts of activities (in the 'stretch zone') that support, enrich and extend pupils' learning.

All trip Group Leaders must complete the 'All Trips & Visits Risk Assessment Form' (with green banner on front page) which must be available to both read and have input into by all trip staff, prior to the visit. On this form specific trip risks should be identified and reference should also be made to other relevant risk assessments (eg minibus RA, Overnight Hotels RA) which are available in the 'Trips and Educational Visits' folder on the school network. This can be done by highlighting – on the trip's RA form – the generic RAs that need to be referred to: it is the GL's responsibility to share these with other adults on the trip.

As part of a Risk Assessment, particularly when visiting an outdoor education centre or undertaking hazardous activities, Group Leaders should include as a matter of priority checks on the qualifications of staff leading those activities. Group Leaders should also make contact with outside organisations to ensure that their staff have been suitably DBS checked ahead of the visit. Group Leaders should retain evidence (e.g. emails) of having satisfied this requirement for subsequent scrutiny if required.

### **Staffing**

The visit must not take place unless suitably experienced Group Leaders are available. The EVC will advise the Head on the competency of Group Leaders with regard to specific trips and activities at the pre-planning stage. Such decisions should take into account the experience, qualifications and confidence of the colleagues involved.

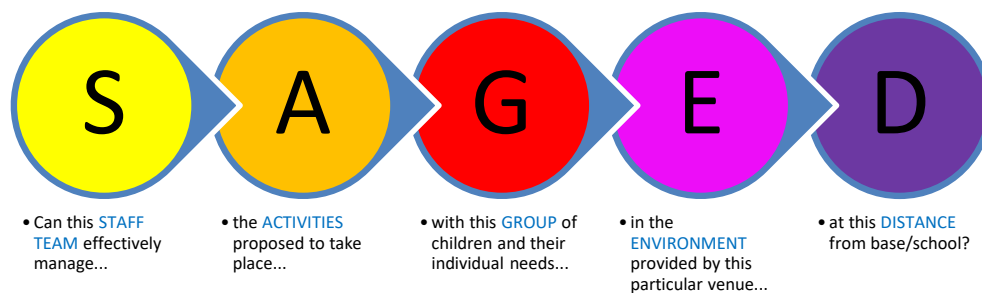
There are no legal requirements for supervision ratios on educational visits. Supervisors may include other school staff, activity provider's staff or parent volunteers. The supervision needed on a particular visit will be largely influenced by the educational objectives and the results of the risk assessment. Other factors that need to be taken into account are the nature of the visit and activity, the experience of the supervisors, the needs, including any

special educational needs, and age of the group, the environment and conditions in which the visit will take place and the nature of the venue. Current guidance suggests that for activities such as visits to local historical sites and museums or for local walks, the following ratios are accepted guidelines:

- 1 adult for every 3-4 pupils in Badgers and Reception
- 1 adult for every 6 pupils in years 1 to 3
- 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in years 4 to 6 (1:10 for overnight)
- 1 adult for every 15 – 20 pupils in year 7 to 8 (1:15 for overnight)

These ratios are minimums, but all Group Leaders should take a **SAGED** approach when considering the number of adult leaders on their trips.

#### A SAGED APPROACH TO EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION SHOULD ASK THIS QUESTION:



**Group leaders are encouraged to ask for additional staffing if they don't have a SAGED confidence in the trip. The EVC retains responsibility for ensuring that trips are effectively 'SAGED'. (See Appendix 1 for further explanation)**

At Castle Court, we acknowledge that 1 member of staff in a minibus will have responsibility for up to 16 pupils and this is deemed reasonable in most cases with pupils in year 4 and above (e.g. a rugby team on an away match). In most non-hazardous situations this is acceptable, but care should be taken in the preparation of risk assessments in activities that contain elements of greater risk.

All Group Leaders must take account of possible emergencies when planning their staffing. It must always be possible to release one member of staff to deal with an incident without compromising the supervision of the remainder of the group. The minimum number of staff on any visit will normally be 2. All staff must be clearly briefed on all aspects of the visit. They must also be clear of any special responsibilities that they have been assigned.

Parents (or other adults not employed by the school – eg. spouses of staff) accompanying school trips need not be DBS checked unless they are regularly used by the school for such purposes, left in sole charge of pupils or on overnight trips. Group Leaders should seek clarification on this from the EVC on a case-by-case basis. Where staff have their own child on the trip, further consideration should be given to the staff to pupil ratios. This consideration may include the nature of the trip, the age of the children, pastoral, medical or learning development needs.

Wherever possible – and especially in Pre Prep and below – there should be 2 adults in a minibus. Higher up the school, Group Leaders should use their professional judgement – based on their knowledge of the children involved and the length of the proposed journey – to ascertain whether two members of staff should be required. Clarification should be sought from the EVC on this if there is any doubt.

Much more important than the number of staff on a trip is the attitude with which they undertake their responsibilities. Group Leaders have a responsibility to brief other staff

accordingly, to set the right tone on the trip and to have high expectations of staff in terms of personal conduct and appropriate supervision.

### **Remote Supervision**

Supervision can be close or remote but it is always constant. Children must never be unsupervised: the staff continue to be in charge. It is essential that when supervision is remote, for example, on a fieldwork trip or during 'shopping time', that:

- pupils are set clear boundaries both physically and in terms of the behaviour expected
- pupils are familiar with and have details of rendezvous points
- pupils carry 'lost and lonely cards' giving contact details of their supervisors
- supervisors remain in the area and are readily on hand
- down time before, during or after activities should be treated in the same way as times of remote supervision; it is not time off.

### **Informing parents and parental consent**

Parents are required to give informed consent whenever a pupil is to be taken off-site. Informed consent means that the parent must be informed, in writing, in advance, of departure and return times, all the activities to be included in a visit, transport arrangements, staffing levels, any additional costs and any details concerning aspects of the trip that involve a higher degree of hazard/risk than daily life at Castle Court.

As a general rule, parental consent is only required for the following types of trips or educational visits:

- Overnight Trips
- Overseas Trips
- Trips involving a higher degree of hazard/risk than daily life at CC
- Trips involving pupils from Badgers or Reception
- Trips that involve additional cost to the parents.

However, Group Leaders should consider this as a *minimum* requirement and may wish to seek parental consent for other trips to facilitate and strengthen good feeling among parents, particularly towards the younger end of the school. At the start of each year as part of the Annual Data Collection, parents are invited to give their consent for Day Trips which don't involve 'adventure' activities or additional costs to parents.

Consent may be obtained in a variety of ways depending on the nature of the visit, indeed some visits (e.g. sports fixtures) are covered by consent given to last the duration of a pupil's career at Castle Court, but a signed return slip giving consent must be on file for all visits.

At times, particularly on overnight trips, options may come available for additional activities to be offered that had not been foreseen, even when a proper pre-trip visit has taken place. In such a situation, the Group Leader should contact the EVC or the Head to seek advice on a case by case basis, before proceeding with a substantively different activity. Before the new activity takes place, informed parental consent may have to be sought to allow for it.

### **Preparing Pupils**

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. Teachers must ensure that the pupils understand key safety information. Pupils should be taken through the 'Pupil Preparation Checklist' prior to the trip, with particular reference to pupil conduct where expectations differ to those of life on a 'normal'

day in school. Where there are significantly different expectations (for example on an overseas or overnight trip), a written code of conduct should be drawn up to be signed by the individual pupils ahead of the trip. A blank template for such a code is available on the school computer system. Special consideration should be given to those pupils with an SEN and / or medical need. Where necessary advice should be sought from the relevant Section Leader, the Learning Development Coordinator or the School Nurse to further inform a trip leaders decision making.

### **Transport**

Parents and pupils must be made aware of all transport arrangements including what to do if return travel is delayed. When delays may be significant, for example when returning from an overseas visit, parents should be aware of methods of notification. Pupils should also know what to do if they miss the scheduled departure time.

No trip or educational visit is to take place without appropriately qualified minibuss drivers. Where required, clarification over the appropriate level of qualification can be sought from the Bursar. Early contact with the Bursary is advised to ensure that the cost of transport (including any drivers required) is factored into the recoverable costs of the trip. As a guide, for 2025-2026 the following 'charges' should be recovered (or budgeted for in advance through departmental budgets):

1. *Where pupils are representing the school in a sporting, musical or academic fixture/competition minibuss mileage is not chargeable. If the event is at a weekend buses can be provided but will be charged, parents should be encouraged to transport their child. Charges are applied if a minibuss driver is required.*
2. *Any trip that is within 5 miles of school that does not have another chargeable element to it will NOT be charged for mileage (eg a trip to Canford to use the climbing wall = no charge, a trip to Wimborne model town would be chargeable for transport and the trip). Charges are applied if a minibuss driver is required.*
3. *Charges are as follows:*
  - a. *Mileage*
    - i. *All journeys up to a total of 20 miles = £3 per child*
    - ii. *All journeys between 21 and 200 miles = £50 + 0.58 per mile for each bus*
    - iii. *All journeys over 200 miles to be agreed with the Financial Controller.*
  - b. *Driver costs*
    - i. *The charge to cover the costs of a minibuss driver are £16.75 per hour.*

### **Contact Details**

Contact numbers, addresses, transport arrangements and an itinerary must be provided for all visits using the 'Emergency Contact Sheet' which will be circulated to appropriate parties by the EVC. Next of kin contact details of staff and volunteer supervisors are required as well as those of the pupils. During the normal school day it may be assumed that the school office has all staff and pupil contact details and a list will be sufficient. A 'Home Contact' must be arranged for all visits that take place outside the normal school day and that person must also be provided with full details of the visit. The 'Home Contact' should normally be the EVC or another member of SLT as it is possible that they could be called upon to make decisions and take action on behalf of the school without additional support.

**Emergency Procedures**

It is vital that an emergency procedure is established. The EVC will advise on suitable procedures. Each supervisor must be aware of the procedure and have the necessary contact details. Group Leaders are expected to have read the school's Crisis and Emergency Planning Policy.

Emergency contact must be with the Head or EVC in the first instance. During school hours this should be via the main school office but outside school hours it will need to be at home or via a mobile. Group Leaders must confirm the emergency contact and record it on the Emergency Contact Sheet. It also must be possible for school to contact Group Leaders at all times.

Where possible, Group Leaders should set up a WhatsApp group for all adults on their trip and their home contact (usually the EVC).

### **Insurance**

Castle Court carries significant insurance cover but it is the visit leader's responsibility to check with the Bursar that a specific visit or activity will be covered on the policy. Visits abroad will normally involve additional insurance and it is recommended that the tour company's insurance is purchased.

### **Review**

Group Leaders should, as part of their review of any school trip, undertake the 'Post Trip Evaluation' which they should return to the EVC within three weeks of their return from the trip. This may form the basis of a brief review meeting with the EVC to plan ahead for the next time this trip is repeated (where appropriate). Group Leaders should expect the Director of Studies to be involved in the review of their trip to ensure continuing high standards in the educational benefits of the trip in future years.

Group Leaders should also seek to provide the Marketing Officer with a written report on the trip, along with appropriate photos within one school week of their return from the trip for use on the school website and parents portal. This is a vital part of the school's marketing and communication with parents.

### **EVC Training**

The school's EVC should have nationally accredited training. The current post holder's training, accredited by the OEAP, ran out during the Academic Year 2023-2024; the school's insurers are currently looking into appropriate courses for him to attend.

### **Policy Review**

This policy is to be reviewed on an annual basis by the EVC.

## Appendix #1: Notes on a SAGED approach

S	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STAFF SUPERVISION TEAM</b></p> <p>While all trips and educational visits must have a single, designated, competent leader, the competence and constitution of the <b>staff team</b> around that colleague is the single most important factor in the planning of the trip.</p> <p>COMPETENCE is a combination of experiences, skills, knowledge, awareness, judgment and training. It is not age-related or related to the colleague's position/standing in the school community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competence is situational: a colleague with one set of competencies in a particular activity may not be able to transfer them to another activity or setting.</li> <li>• It involves breadth as well as depth – relevant experience is not necessarily gained by repeating the same activity a number of times, but by experiencing a range of different activities and environments.</li> </ul>
A	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ACTIVITY</b></p> <p><b>Activities</b> vary in range and suitability. Both the planned learning activities and any supplementary activities, such as those associated with travelling, 'free time' and accommodation, must also be considered. Some activities may require specific training or qualifications; some may need specialise equipment; and some may require a specific level of competence or prior training of the participants. Outline the <b>SCOPE</b> of the Activity Programme and identify each of the elements that may involve a higher level of risk. Clarify who has the <b>COMPETENCE</b> to lead/supervise each element of the programme.</p>
G	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATIONS</b></p> <p>The age, competence, maturity and behaviour of the <b>group</b> participants must be matches to the other variables, and any individual, medical or special needs addressed. You may need to adjust the <b>SCOPE</b> of your activities to address the needs of the individuals within the Group. It may also be possible for a group of more capable participants with a leader of appropriate competence to experience a more challenging range of activities and/or environments.</p>
E	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ENVIRONMENT AND PREVAILING CONDITIONS</b></p> <p>All <b>environments</b> and venues present their own challenges for the management of a group of young people. Considerations include not only the location, access, physical environment and weather conditions, but also the competency and experience of the leadership team in operating in these environments and prevailing conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether the environment is indoors or out;</li> <li>• within the establishment grounds;</li> <li>• a space with restricted access or a public space;</li> <li>• urban, rural or remote;</li> <li>• The time of day/night, season of the year, local weather conditions, conditions underfoot and even tidal range can also affect the complexity of environment.</li> </ul>
D	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DISTANCE FROM SUPPORT / BASE</b></p> <p>The proximity of the environment and venues will also have an impact on how risks are managed. Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transport logistics to and from school;</li> <li>• ease of communications between the group and base;</li> <li>• access to First Aid;</li> <li>• the logistics of containing the incident and the subsequent transport and supervision arrangements required for the safe return of the whole group to base/school.</li> </ul>

Appendix #2: Flow diagram for trip approval / planning / evaluation

