Educational Visits Policy

Serenity School

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1. Aims and Scope

Educational visits are activities arranged by, or on behalf of, Serenity School which require pupils to leave the school premises, having been authorised by the Headteacher or another designated senior member of staff.

Educational visits are an important part of Serenity School's curriculum, personal development offer and preparation for adulthood. They provide pupils with opportunities to apply learning in real-life contexts, develop independence, build confidence, access cultural capital and practise communication, social interaction and self-regulation beyond the classroom.

As a specialist SEND school, Serenity School recognises that educational visits must be carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils across all curriculum pathways, including Formal, Semi-Formal, Nurture and EYFS. Visits are planned with due regard to pupils' Education, Health and Care Plans, communication needs, sensory profiles, medical needs, behaviour support plans and individual risk assessments.

All PE lessons take place off site at approved local centres and facilities. These sessions are planned, risk assessed and managed in line with this policy. The school uses EVOLVE to manage all educational visits, including off-site PE provision, and associated risk documentation.

This policy establishes a clear structure for the planning, approval, implementation and evaluation of educational visits, ensuring that risks are managed appropriately and that visits are inclusive and accessible wherever reasonably possible.

Educational visits may include, but are not limited to:

- visits to places of interest in the local area
- PE lessons at approved local centres and facilities
- visits to museums, farms, shops, theatres and cultural institutions
- sporting activities
- adventurous and recreational activities
- outdoor learning
- community access visits
- vocational and careers-related visits
- residential trips
- trips abroad, where appropriate

The aims of educational visits are to:

- enhance pupils' curriculum learning and wider personal development
- provide a wider range of experiences than can be offered on the school site alone
- develop independence, resilience, communication and social interaction
- support pupils to generalise skills learned in school into real-life contexts
- broaden pupils' cultural capital and life experiences
- support preparation for adulthood, including travel awareness, community safety and vocational understanding
- ensure all visits are inclusive, appropriately risk assessed and adapted to meet pupils' SEND needs

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is informed by current national educational visits guidance and the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, where applicable

The school follows current national educational visits guidance and uses EVOLVE alongside Serenity School's internal risk assessment and approval procedures when planning all educational visits.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- approving educational visits
- ensuring that visits are safe, purposeful and appropriate
- ensuring staff, including the Educational Visits Co-ordinator, have received appropriate training
- working with the Proprietary board to approve residential visits of more than 24 hours
- ensuring visits are inclusive and planned with regard to pupils' SEND needs

3.2 Educational Visits Co-ordinator

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- overseeing and guiding staff in planning educational visits
- supporting staff to complete EVOLVE documentation and risk assessments
- assessing the suitability of proposed visits and external providers
- advising the Headteacher and Proprietary board where required
- ensuring visits are reviewed and learning is used to improve future planning

3.3 Trip Lead

Every educational visit will have a designated Trip Lead. The Trip Lead is responsible for:

- planning the visit
- completing required risk assessments and EVOLVE documentation
- ensuring the needs of all pupils are considered
- confirming staffing, supervision and first aid arrangements
- ensuring staff and volunteers understand their roles
- communicating key information to pupils, staff, parents and carers
- ensuring all relevant medical, behavioural, communication and safeguarding information is available during the visit

3.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- following this policy and the agreed risk assessment
- supporting pupils' safety, wellbeing, behaviour and regulation

- maintaining appropriate supervision
- using agreed communication, sensory and regulation strategies
- reporting concerns to the Trip Lead
- ensuring pupils are supported to participate meaningfully and safely

3.5 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- provide accurate emergency contact, medical and dietary information
- return consent forms where required
- share relevant information that may affect their child's participation
- work with the school where additional preparation or support is needed

3.6 Volunteers

Volunteers attending educational visits must follow staff instructions, maintain professional conduct and support pupils only within the role agreed by the Trip Lead.

Volunteers must comply with the expectations set out in **Appendix 1: Volunteer Behaviour and Code of Conduct**.

3.7 Pupils

The school's Behaviour Policy applies to all educational visits. Pupils will be supported to understand expectations in a way that is appropriate to their age, developmental stage, communication profile and SEND needs.

Pupils are expected, with appropriate support, to:

- follow instructions
- stay with their allocated adult or group
- behave safely and respectfully
- engage positively with the visit
- communicate concerns to an adult where they are able to do so

4. Planning and Preparation

The decision on whether a visit will take place will be made by the Headteacher, taking into account:

- educational purpose and value
- timing within the school year
- cost and affordability
- staffing and supervision requirements
- health and safety considerations
- inclusion and accessibility
- pupils' SEND, medical, sensory and behavioural needs
- disruption to the normal running of the school

Planning will include consideration of:

- destination and travel distance
- transport arrangements
- staffing and supervision

- first aid and medical needs
- communication and sensory support
- behaviour and regulation planning
- emergency procedures
- cost and insurance
- resources and equipment
- accessibility of the venue
- suitability of activities
- arrangements for food, drink, personal care and medication

Visits involving activities for more than 24 hours, overnight stays or overseas travel require approval from the Headteacher and Proprietary board.

Written parental consent will be obtained for visits outside normal school hours, residential visits, overseas visits, higher-risk activities and all off-site visits involving nursery-age children.

All visits will be evaluated after completion to inform future planning.

4.1 Inclusion and Pathway Considerations

All pupils should be supported to participate in educational visits wherever it is safe and reasonably possible to do so.

Visits will be planned with careful consideration of pupils' curriculum pathway and individual needs.

For pupils in the **Formal pathway**, visits may support subject knowledge, qualifications, careers education, cultural capital, independence and preparation for further education, employment or training.

For pupils in the **Semi-Formal pathway**, visits will often focus on communication, independence, life skills, community access, problem solving and applying learning in practical contexts.

For pupils in the **Nurture pathway**, visits will be planned with particular attention to emotional security, sensory regulation, trusted adult support, predictable routines and social communication. Visual timetables, social stories, pre-teaching, familiarisation activities and planned regulation strategies may be used where appropriate.

For pupils in the **EYFS**, visits will reflect the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and support communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development, curiosity and understanding of the world.

Provision may include:

- additional staffing
- smaller group sizes
- adapted travel arrangements
- shorter or phased visits
- visual supports
- communication aids
- quiet or low-arousal spaces
- familiar adults
- pre-visit preparation
- differentiated activities
- individualised supervision

4.2 Behaviour, Regulation and Individual Risk

Serenity School recognises that behaviour can be a form of communication, particularly for pupils with complex SEND, communication difficulties, sensory needs or emotional regulation needs.

Educational visits will be planned with reference to each pupil's Behaviour Support Plan, Risk Assessment, known triggers, regulation strategies and required level of adult support.

The school will consider all reasonable adjustments to enable pupils to participate safely. In exceptional circumstances, where a visit cannot be made safe despite reasonable adjustments, the Headteacher may decide that a pupil should not attend a particular visit. Such decisions will be made on an individual basis, clearly recorded, communicated sensitively to parents/carers and kept under review.

5. Risk Assessment

A full risk assessment will be completed before all educational visits and recorded through the school's agreed systems, including EVOLVE where required.

Risk assessments will consider:

- destination risks
- transport risks
- activity risks
- staffing and supervision
- medical needs and allergies
- first aid provision
- safeguarding arrangements
- communication needs
- behaviour and regulation needs
- emergency procedures

For pupils with SEND, risk assessments will also take account of:

- EHCP outcomes
- communication profiles
- sensory profiles
- medical plans
- intimate care needs
- behaviour support plans
- individual risk assessments
- transition needs
- known triggers
- absconding risk
- regulation strategies
- staffing and supervision requirements
- understanding of danger
- mobility needs
- ability to seek help
- vulnerability in unfamiliar environments

One copy of the approved risk assessment will be taken on the visit and one retained by the EVC.

5.1 Staff Ratios and First Aid

Supervision levels will be determined by risk assessment and will reflect the needs of the pupils attending.

The school will ensure:

- appropriate staff-to-pupil ratios are in place
- at least one supervising adult able to administer first aid is present
- for EYFS pupils, at least one qualified paediatric first aider is present
- appropriate first aid equipment is taken
- supervising adults are aware of relevant medical, communication, sensory and behavioural needs
- adults without appropriate checks are not left alone with pupils
- regular headcounts and rollcalls are completed

5.2 Transport

Transport will be organised by the school and planned in line with pupils' supervision, medical, sensory, communication and behavioural needs.

Unless otherwise agreed with parents/carers, transport will leave from and return to the school site.

5.3 External Organisations

Where external organisations provide activities or facilities, the school will check that they have appropriate safety standards, insurance and safeguarding arrangements.

Where relevant, the school will check whether providers hold the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge or equivalent assurance. Where this is not held, additional checks will be completed before the provider is used.

6. Volunteers

Parents, carers or other volunteers may support educational visits where appropriate.

Volunteers will be selected based on the needs of the pupils, the nature of the visit, safeguarding requirements and the skills and suitability of the volunteer.

Volunteers will receive information about their role, responsibilities, expected conduct, safeguarding expectations and emergency procedures before the visit.

Volunteers who have not had appropriate safeguarding checks will not be left alone with pupils or given sole responsibility for any pupil.

All volunteers must follow **Appendix 1: Volunteer Behaviour and Code of Conduct**.

7. Communication and Consent

Parents and carers will receive information about educational visits in advance. This will include, where relevant:

- date and times
- destination
- purpose of the visit
- travel arrangement

- staffing arrangements
- clothing and equipment required
- food and drink arrangements
- expected behaviour
- cost, where applicable
- consent requirements
- medical and emergency contact information needed

Where pupils require additional preparation, staff may use visual supports, social stories, photographs, communication aids, now-and-next boards, pre-visit discussions or familiarisation activities to support understanding and reduce anxiety.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to share any information that may help staff prepare pupils effectively.

8. Emergency Procedures and Incident Reporting

Emergency planning will include consideration of:

- serious and unexpected risk
- serious injury or illness
- pupils going missing
- absconding
- medical emergencies
- safeguarding concerns
- dysregulation or distress
- pupils who are non-verbal, pre-verbal or unable to communicate distress in conventional ways

For non-speaking/non-verbal pupils, accompanying staff will know, before the visit, how the pupil indicates distress, pain, refusal or a need for assistance, so that this can be recognised and responded to promptly while off-site.

The Trip Lead will ensure that key emergency contacts, medical information, communication strategies and individual risk information are available throughout the visit.

In an emergency, the Trip Lead or supervising adult will contact the school office. The school office will contact parents/carers and other agencies as required.

One member of staff will always accompany a pupil seeking medical treatment.

If a pupil is unaccounted for, the Trip Lead will follow the agreed missing pupil procedure, ensuring that remaining pupils are supervised safely while the search and escalation process takes place.

All incidents, accidents and near misses will be recorded and reported in line with the school's Health and Safety Policy, safeguarding procedures and statutory reporting requirements.

9. Insurance

The school will ensure that appropriate insurance is in place for educational visits, including cover for travel, cancellation, accidents, medical needs, personal belongings and activities where applicable.

10. Residential Visits

Residential visits require approval from the Headteacher and Proprietary board.

The planning and preparation requirements in this policy apply to residential visits. In addition, the **Trip Lead will ensure that:**

• staff have received any necessary training
• medical and consent forms are obtained in advance
• safeguarding checks are completed for all relevant adults
• sleeping arrangements are safe and appropriate
• pupils' personal care, medical, sensory and regulation needs are planned for
• parents and carers receive detailed information about the visit

Information shared with parents/carers will include:

- departure and return times
- destination and contact details
- planned activities
- accommodation arrangements
- staffing arrangements
- meal provision
- clothing and equipment required
- costs and payment arrangements
- health and medical requirements

For overseas visits, the school will follow current government travel advice and ensure appropriate checks are completed.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and shared with the Proprietary board.

12. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Accessibility Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Intimate Care Policy, where applicable

Appendix 1: volunteer behaviour and code of conduct

This code of conduct sets out the expected behaviour for volunteers attending school trips. Volunteers should read and sign this form, showing that they understand and agree to follow this code while acting on behalf of the school. If you feel you cannot agree with this code, please speak to the EVC at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from the trip.

A copy of this form will be kept in the school office, and you may ask for a photocopy to keep for yourself.

This volunteer code of conduct will be used alongside the school's parental code of conduct, which can be found on the school's website.

Volunteers agree to:

- Remain professional and respectful with staff and pupils at all times
- Listen to and act on instructions from staff
- Dress appropriately for the trip
- Arrive at the agreed time and remain until the trip is concluded and they are told they may leave by staff
- Pay attention to potential dangers and raise concerns with staff
- Act responsibly and demonstrate good behaviour to pupils
- Report any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a pupil to staff as soon as possible

Volunteers agree not to:

- Exchange contact details with pupils unless asked to by a member of staff
- Engage in physical contact with pupils unless appropriate or required
- Share inappropriate personal information (i.e. personal beliefs, religious views, relationship status)
- Use demeaning, offensive, abusive or insensitive language
- Smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs (other than those required for medical reasons) or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (other than those required for medical reasons) for the duration of the visit
- Allow themselves to be left alone with a pupil unless previously agreed with staff
- Take photographs or record pupils without the permission of pupils and staff

As a volunteer, I have read and agree to this code of conduct, and will follow the rules set out above.

Signed:

Date: