



## **Isaac Newton Academy Educational Visits Policy Policy and Procedures for Off-Site Visits**

At Isaac Newton Academy we aim to enrich the lives and experiences of our students, and to inspire them by providing a wide range of learning opportunities outside of the classroom, including educational visits. We recognise the immense value of educational visits in broadening and enhancing the knowledge, skills and social experience of students and in supporting the development of character traits and learning dispositions that are fundamental to success in life. Well-planned visits that have sound and clearly defined educational aims are therefore encouraged. Such enrichment activities might include sports events and fixtures, cultural visits, music and theatre performances, adventure activities, educational conferences, and subject-related trips and competitions.

All students at Isaac Newton Academy should have the opportunity to experience learning through participation in educational visits. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all off-site visits are correctly planned, managed and supervised so that students can safely participate in the opportunities that are offered.

### **Procedures for Organising Off-Site Visits**

#### **Prior Approval for Visits**

All matters regarding an educational visit, including viability, dates and timing, planning, safety and staffing require the prior approval of the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). The Visit Leader should discuss initial plans with the EVC, and agree dates prior to any provisional booking being made, and complete the INA visit application form EV1. Visits that are either overseas, residential or involve an adventurous activity require the approval of the Principal.

The EVC is responsible for ensuring the safety of students and staff participating in an educational visit by assessing the Visit Leader's competence to lead before approval for the visit is given and for providing them with advice and support during the planning stage.

#### **Parental Consent to Off-Site Visits**

Written consent from parents/carers is not required for students to take part in the majority of off-site activities organised by a school as most of these activities take place during school hours and are a normal part of a child's education at school. However, parents are told where their child will be at all times, the intended form of transport, and any extra safety measures required.

As part of the induction process in Year 6 (and for any mid-year entrants) parents are asked to sign to show that they give permission for their child to be taken off-site for PE activities, off-site sporting fixtures during the school day, and other local activities. For all other visits the Visit Leader should send a letter home, giving details of the visit with a reply slip for parents to sign and

return. Parents must be informed in advance of each activity and must be given the opportunity to withdraw their child from any particular school trip or activity covered by the form.

When informing students of a specific school visit, parents and carers should be made fully aware of the likely risks and their management, so that consent or refusal can be made on a fully informed basis. In addition to the above, for residential and overseas visits, the pre-visit parents' meeting should provide an opportunity to provide further details of the accommodation, meals, evening activities, bedtime arrangements, behaviour expectations and times when students will be allowed to use their mobile phones to call home. A member of the Leadership Team will attend the pre-visit parents' meeting.

### **Risk Assessment**

It is important that staff running school trips act responsibly by:

- putting sensible precautions in place and making sure these work in practice
- knowing when and how to apply contingency plans where they are necessary
- heeding advice and warnings from others, for example those with local knowledge or specialist expertise (especially in respect of high risk activities)

There are 3 levels of risk assessment:

- i) **Generic Risks (normally already in place)**  
These are normal risks attached to any activity out of school. These will be covered by careful consideration of the EV3, Guide to Organising an Educational Visit.
- ii) **Event Specific Risk Assessment (carried out before the visit takes place)**  
This considers any significant hazard or risk relating to the specific activity taking place and should take into account the venue, activities, group, transport, Plan B. These should be recorded on the EV2, Risk Assessment form.
- iii) **Ongoing Risk (monitoring risks throughout the actual visit as circumstances change)**  
This is the responsibility of all those involved in the visit. An activity should only take place if, in the professional judgement of the group leader, the residual risk following implementation of control measures is deemed to be low.

The risk assessment process should identify the hazards, their likelihood, identify who might be affected by them and identify the control measures and precautions necessary in order to reduce risks to a level which, in the professional judgement of the assessor (visit leader or EVC), is deemed to be acceptable. Travel arrangements should be included in the risk assessment. If public transport is to be used, students and supervising adults must be fully briefed as to procedures on platforms, at bus stops, on busy streets etc. If travel is by coach or minibus, all passengers must wear a seat belt. Staff must ensure that students comply with this rule. If any students are to travel by car, the driver must complete Form **EV6**. This applies to both staff and parents' cars. A new form must be completed every academic year. Relevant aspects of the risk assessment should be shared with staff, students and other adults involved in the visit. Students who are well prepared will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk.

There is no requirement to carry out a risk assessment every time staff undertake an activity that usually forms part of the school day, for example, taking students to a local venue that is frequently visited such as a swimming pool, park or place of worship as any risks would have already been considered within the academy's health and safety policies and procedures.

Despite the most detailed and careful pre-visit planning, issues may arise on the day such as staff absences, transport problems, or adverse weather conditions. To avoid having to make important decisions under pressure, it is important that the Visit Leader plans in advance to cater for any foreseeable eventuality i.e. Plan B.

If an external provider or tour operator is being used for a residential or overseas visit or an adventurous activity, they must also provide a risk assessment. National guidance from the DFE should also be consulted.

### **Staffing**

A professional judgement must be made by the EVC as to the staffing level required for each visit to ensure that there is an appropriate supervision level at all times. The level of supervision for a visit is based on a risk assessment of the individual visit and will be determined by:

- the type, duration and level of activity
- the needs of individuals within the group
- the experience and competence of staff and accompanying adults
- the nature of the venue
- the prevailing weather conditions
- the nature of transport involved

Additional staffing provision should be made for a student with disabilities, depending on the specific needs of the student. In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (2002) the Visit Leader, in consultation with the SENCO, should make 'reasonable adjustments' to avoid a student with a disability being placed at a disadvantage.

### **Supervision of Students**

Students must be supervised throughout all visits. However, there are circumstances when they might be unaccompanied by an adult, for instance 'remote supervision' in a town on a cultural trip. The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on a risk assessment and must take into account factors such as the prior experience and age of students, the experience of supervising staff and the environment/venue. Parental consent must be obtained prior to the remote supervision of students.

On residential visits a duty rota for supervision of students should be organised so that there is always a designated member of staff on duty and so that the time when staff are not on duty is clearly demarcated.

Supervising parents/other adults must be fully briefed on the programme, venue, activities, supervision arrangements and their responsibilities. They must also be given a written list of the pupils in their immediate care and ensure that this information is used to make regular head counts.

### **First Aid**

The level of first aid provision should be based on a risk assessment. On all visits there should normally be a member of staff who has a good working knowledge of first aid appropriate to the environment. A First Aid kit (appropriate to the visit) should be carried. These are available from

the First Aid Coordinator. The Appointed Person First Aid Certificate is the minimum requirement for residential visits.

### **Visits Abroad**

For all overseas visits it is essential that consideration is given to the following:

- a) Culture: food and drink, local customs, religion, expected behaviour/dress, gender issues, sanitary arrangements, political stability, local financial information
- b) Accommodation: checked for suitability, security, safety precautions and emergency evacuations. Visit Leaders must ensure that health and safety procedures are communicated to students on arrival at the venue
- c) Transport systems assessed as safe for use

The Visit Leader should also consider the relevant country information from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk).

### **Water Margin Activities**

Where pupils might participate in learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along a riverbank or seashore, collecting samples in ponds or streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow water, staff and other supervising adults should refer to guidance contained in DfE 'Group Safety at Water Margins' prior to the visit.

### **Student Behaviour**

Exemplary student behaviour and personal discipline is expected during educational visits at all times to ensure that students gain maximum learning and enjoyment from the visit and represent the academy positively in the wider community. The letter to parents and a pre-visit briefing for students should make this clear and draw attention to any additional rules. Students should also be reminded that they are not permitted to film or photograph other students or adults on the visit without their knowledge or permission. Any inappropriate behaviour should be followed up by the Visit Leader on return to school using the consequences outlined in the Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy. In advance of residential and overseas visits it is good practice for Visit Leaders to ask students to sign a behaviour contract.

### **Collecting and Recording Financial Contributions**

#### ***DfE Policy on Charging***

*Headteachers may not impose a charge on parents for any visit that occurs during school hours. They may however ask for a voluntary contribution. Parents should be made aware that the contribution is not compulsory and that parents who do not contribute may not be discriminated against. The Headteacher may however charge parents for board and lodgings on residential visits as well as full costs when the visit is deemed to be an optional extra because it falls wholly or mainly outside school hours; does not form part of the National Curriculum; is not part of an exam syllabus or is not in the scope of the statutory requirements for religious education.*

The Visit Leader should ask for a voluntary contribution from parents for trips with a National Curriculum focus that take place during the school day and which involve a financial cost. The parental letter should make it clear that insufficient contributions may affect the viability of the trip. The letter to parents should make it clear how and when contributions and reply/consent forms will be collected, what the deadline for each contribution is and the cancellation fees which will be levied should a student cancel after the deposit is paid.

In advance of booking all trips which incur a cost, the Visit Leader should complete an **EV5** trip costings form outlining the various costs and any revenue which will be used to reduce the cost to students. This should be submitted to the EVC along with the EV1.

#### Financial Arrangements for Residential Visits

Following approval of the visit the Visit Leader should meet with the Finance Officer to discuss the financial arrangements for the visit including:

- the budget heading for the visit
- a breakdown of the costings (transport, accommodation, meals, entrance fees etc) as shown on the **EV5**
- the amount of float required and the currency
- method of payment overseas
- students' pocket money
- the various deadline(s) for payment and the cost to each student
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The Finance Officer should be provided with a copy of the parental letter and a register of students. If applicable, students will be issued with a Payment Card by the Finance Officer to record their payment of instalments.

Contributions for residential visits are collected via Wisepay.

- The visit leader should ask the FRD to set up the trip on Wisepay. The deadline for payments and penalties for non-payment should be clearly outlined in the initial parental letter
- The visit leader should inform the Finance Officer of any invoices that will need to be paid
- Parental reply slips should be collected by the visit leader.
- The visit leader can request student reception to send a text reminder to any parents prior to the deadline for each payment
- The visit leader should check that payments have been made on a monthly basis immediately following the payment deadlines and follow up any non-payments.
- If by the deadline for payments insufficient payments have been made, the visit leader must discuss the financial viability of the visit with the EVC and FRD.

#### Financial Arrangements for Day Visits

- Contributions for day visits are collected via Wisepay
- The visit leader should ask the FRD to set up the trip on Wisepay. The deadline for payments should be at least a week in advance of the visit and/or the deadline for the invoice
- The visit leader should inform the finance officer of the invoices that will need to be paid
- Parental reply slips should be collected by the visit leader. The reply slip should include the following *'I can confirm that I have made the payment for the visit via Wisepay'*
- The visit leader should check payments made on a regular basis and make a final check 10 days prior to the visit date
- The visit leader can request student reception to send a text reminder to any parents who have not paid
- If by the deadline for payments insufficient payments have been made, the visit leader must discuss the financial viability of the visit with the EVC and FRD

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) should:

- support the Principal with approval for visits
- approve delegated visits
- approve competent people to lead or otherwise supervise a visit
- support the visit leader with advice and guidance on risk assessments
- review and approve the risk assessment produced by the visit leader and team for each visit
- check the emergency arrangements are adequate and ensure there is an emergency contact for each visit
- Sign off the **EV7** checklist either on the day of the visit or the day prior to the visit for early departures.
- Review procedures annually.

The Finance Officer should:

- Support the visit leader with managing deadlines for payments and any financial paperwork
- Provide the visit leader with a monthly print out of payments made following each payment deadline
- Support the visit leader in following up non-payments and with insurance claims when a student is unable to attend a residential visit for medical reasons

The Visit Leader should:

- obtain the approval of the Principal before any off-site visit or activity takes place
- complete an EV application (EV1) and submit a cost breakdown to the EVC and the FRD at least half a term prior to booking the visit
- ensure that the arrangements for collecting financial contributions outlined above are followed
- assess the reasonably foreseeable risks involved and draw up or amend as appropriate any previously recorded risk assessment
- oversee the safe conduct of each visit, paying particular attention to on-going risk assessments and changing circumstances, and arrange a pre-visit if appropriate
- sort staffing and cover arrangements with the EVC well in advance of the trip
- ensure that all other members of staff and voluntary helpers are made aware of their responsibilities and have the appropriate training and experience to undertake their assigned roles
- consider the planning checklist to ensure that all procedures have been followed
- inform parents/carers about the visit and gain their consent, where appropriate
- inform students of their responsibility on the visit for their own health and safety and that of the group and remind them of the school's expectations of their behaviour and conduct whilst on the visit
- Ensure that accompanying staff and volunteers are familiar with the arrangements and procedures for the visit.

- Give the signed **EV7** Checklist to the EVC either on the day of the visit or the day prior to the visit for early departures.

Additional members of staff and volunteers on the trip should:

- familiarise themselves with the arrangements for the visit and their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in the visit or activity
- assist the party leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the young people on the visit.

Students should:

- follow instructions of the visit leader and other members of staff and not take unnecessary risks
- behave in an exemplary manner, according to the school's code of conduct
- inform members of staff of any significant hazards during the visit.

Parents/Carers should:

- play a role in deciding whether any visit or off-site activity is suitable for their child
- inform the visit leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit
- provide emergency contact numbers
- provide the party leader with arrangements to resume care of their child should this be necessary
- sign the educational visit consent form.

### **Insurance**

The Academy has standard public liability cover in place which provides personal accident cover/travel insurance for all visits at home and abroad. In addition all participants must carry a valid EHIC (European Health Insurance Card). For all other visits, particularly those involving residential or adventurous activities, it is the responsibility of the Principal and EVC to determine whether additional insurance should be taken out.

### **Useful Written Guidance and Websites**

- DFE Health and Safety 'DFE advice on legal duties and powers for LAs, Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies'
- HSE School trips and outdoor learning activities – tackling the health and safety myths
- DFE Group Safety at Water Margins

[www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk).

[www.tfl.gov.uk/establishmentparty](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/establishmentparty)

[www.mi5.gov.uk](http://www.mi5.gov.uk)

*All forms and publications referred to in this policy are available from the EVC or can be found in the Educational Visits folder on the VLE.*

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