

Educational Visits and College Trips Policy

2023 -2024

St Albans Independent College

Our Values

- To provide individual support to students in every aspect of their education and to help them prepare for their future.
- To provide an environment where students feel safe and their wellbeing is enhanced.
- To provide flexibility in subject choice within a broad, personalised and relevant curriculum.
- To support each individuals' personal development.
- To create an informal environment where students are comfortable in expressing their individuality and having respect for one another.
- To motivate and inspire students to succeed.

Our Approach

St Albans Independent College is built upon the principle that the best way for students to achieve their academic potential is by excellent teaching in small group classes and by structured personal support.

Teaching in small groups allows for the emphasis of the lesson to be on discussion and interaction. This requires students to engage more deeply with the subject matter and ensures that learning is monitored throughout. Students also find that this interactive approach helps them to develop their confidence as well as their knowledge and understanding.

Each student is supported in their studies by a Mentor who will monitor their efforts and achievements and help motivate them to achieve their best. Although there is a strong academic ethos at the College, the environment is friendly and supportive.

St Albans Independent College continues to evolve and grow and is a thriving Independent College that provides over 20 subjects at GCSE and at A-level, to students from 14 to 19 years of age.

To this day we have remained true to our ethos on which the College was founded.

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Statement of intent

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every student to an effective and balanced curriculum. Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment, and so form a key part of what makes St Albans Independent College a supportive and effective learning environment.

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

The College 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 College trips.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has been created with regard to relevant legislation including, but not limited to:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

1.2. This policy has also been created with due regard to the following guidance:

- 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'

1.3. This policy should be used in conjunction with the following College policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- DBS Policy

2. Definitions

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

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

2.3. 'Residential' means any College trip which includes an overnight stay.

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

- Trekking
- Caving
- Skiing
- Water sports
- Climbing

3. Key roles and responsibilities

3.1. The Principal 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/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the College's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 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.

3.2. The Principal is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
- Liaising with subject teachers and communicating information regarding any planned trips to parents.
- Being part of the approval process for extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring the educational visits coordinator is competent to oversee the coordination of offsite education, and arranging for training to be undertaken as necessary.
- Completing relevant paperwork, including risk assessments, for extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring that safety measures are in place prior to each trip or activity.
- Ensuring a whole-College approach is adopted when planning and coordinating extracurricular 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.

3.3. If you do not have an educational visits coordinator, the Principal should undertake their duties until one can be appointed. The educational visits coordinator has overall responsibility for:

- Overseeing all issues and controls regarding extra-curricular activities and trips.
- Liaising between all appropriate parties, including the local outdoor education adviser, during the planning and organising of extra-curricular activities and trips.
- Working with the local outdoor education adviser to help staff assess and manage risks.
- Ensuring the systems and procedures for dealing with educational visits adhere to the requirements of this policy.
- Conducting risk assessments prior to College trips and educational visits to ensure pupil and staff safety.
- Creating an itinerary prior to an educational visit or College trip and distributing it to parents and staff to ensure the day is well organised and safe.
- Appointing an appropriate member of staff to be the designated leader of the trip.

3.4. The designated leader in charge of the 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 College calendar prior to planning an educational visit.
- Identifying the educational purpose of the extra-curricular trip or activity and presenting its benefits to the Principal.
- Completing all essential documentation for the trip, including a risk assessment, with the Principal.
- Informing parents of the proposed extra-curricular trip or activity in advance of the trip.
- Distributing permission slips to parents prior to the trip and chasing up any permission slips that have not been returned.
- Understanding and operating safeguarding measures throughout the planning, organisation and delivery of the extra-curricular trip or activity.
- Delegating responsibilities to other staff members on the College 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.

3.5. Staff are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and applying its principles when participating in extra-curricular trips and activities.
- 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 College 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.

3.6. Pupils are responsible for:

- Following instructions from staff while on college trips.
- Keeping pride in their presentation and behaviour, understanding that they are representing the College whilst on an education trip.
- Ensuring that, during visits to outdoor spaces, they keep the area tidy and free from litter.
- Behaving in a manner which matches the ethos of the College, and for following the behaviour rules set out in the College's Behavioural Policy with regards to this policy.

4. Training of staff

4.1. Staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.

4.2. Staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their CPD.

5. Planning College trips

5.1. Prior to planning a College 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'

5.2. A thorough risk assessment will be conducted by the educational visits coordinator during the planning of the trip, to ensure pupil and staff safety.

5.3. Adventure activities will always be identified at the planning stage and never added during the trip.

5.4. 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.

5.5. The College will do everything in its power to ensure that all pupils are given an opportunity to participate in college trips, for example, organising two trips with a smaller group size or finding a venue which can cater for all pupils.

5.6. 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 a letter home.

6. Risk assessment process

6.1. Our risk assessment process is designed to manage risks when planning trips, while ensuring that learning opportunities are experienced to the fullest extent.

6.2. 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.

6.3. The process is as follows:

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

6.4. A generalised risk assessment form is available in Appendix 3 – it may be appropriate to use a trip specific risk assessment depending on the potential risks of the trip.

7. Vetting providers

7.1. When considering external providers for activities, the educational visits coordinator will check whether they hold the 'Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge' to indicate they meet nationally recognised standards.

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

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

7.3. If it is deemed appropriate to engage with an external provider, a written agreement will be created outlining what each party is responsible for.

7.4. If an organisation does not meet the College's standards, they will not be considered.

8. Equal opportunities

8.1. The College promotes values of equality and does not discriminate against any individual or group of pupils when organising a trip.

8.2. The extra-curricular trips and activities offered to pupils will provide new experiences and develop life skills.

8.3. Extra-curricular trips and activities are organised, managed and conducted in accordance with the College's Equal Opportunities Policy.

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

8.5. 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.

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

8.7. College trips will be a reasonable cost.

9. Parental consent

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

9.2. Written consent is required for:

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

9.3. If preferable and appropriate, parents may complete an annual consent form at the start of any academic year which gives consent for their child to be involved in any and all activities, both on and off-site, that take place at any time, including the College holidays.

9.4. Separate consent will be sought for trips which require payment.

9.5. Parents will be informed of activities by letter and will have the opportunity to withdraw their child from taking part.

10. Staffing ratios

10.1. There will be sufficient staff to cope in an emergency.

11. Insurance and licensing

11.1. When planning activities of an adventurous nature in the UK, the educational visits coordinator will check that the provider of the activity holds a current licence.

11.2. Insurance will be organised for every trip, no matter how short, to ensure adequate protection and medical cover is in place.

11.3. Parents will be informed of the limits of any insurance cover.

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

11.5. Medical expenses will be recorded and stored in the College office.

12. Accidents and incidents

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

First Aid

All accompanying adults must be familiar with the college's first aid and medication policy, a copy of which should be included in the group leader's information file.

On departure the group leader must collect the First Aid kit for college visits from the reception. This must be returned to the reception after the visit together with details of any items used.

The group leader must also ensure that any special medical equipment or medication to meet individual student needs, such as inhalers, Epi-pens, etc, are taken on the trip.

The regulations for the reporting of accidents (RIDDOR) apply to educational visits and can be found in the school's first aid and medication policy.

When the trip involves the use of a venue which provides first aid facilities, the group leader must ensure that all adults are aware of the arrangements and the location of first aid points.

12.2. In the case of accidents and injuries while on a College 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 Principal 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.

12.3. The Principal will keep written records of any incidents, accidents and near misses.

12.4. Media enquiries will be referred to the principal or, if they are not available, the deputy Principal or the clerk to governors.

12.5. Staff will use guidance as set out in the Critical Incident Policy, in particular the 'after a critical incident' section, to ensure the safety of pupils and staff should anything happen, e.g. a terrorist attack.

12.6. Staff will be briefed on how to react and respond should an emergency situation occur, e.g. a terrorist attack.

12.7. Relevant risk assessments will be undertaken before the trip, including for points of interests such as museums and hotels.

12.8. 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.

13. Missing person procedure

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

13.2. Before embarking on the trip, extensive risk assessments are undertaken in accordance with section six of this policy.

13.3. The educational visits coordinator will communicate with the venues of the College trips to ensure the correct group sizes are planned for each setting.

13.4. When travelling with a pupil with SEND, the educational visits coordinator 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 15 of this policy.

13.5. Everyone on the trip will be provided with a contact sheet for all members of staff, in the event they are unable to locate their group.

13.6. All staff members and pupils will be required to carry mobile phones with them at all times. If a pupil does not own a mobile phone, they will be paired up with a pupil who has a mobile phone.

13.7. Upon arriving at every venue, the trip leader will identify a rendezvous point where pupils and adults should go if they become separated from the rest of the group.

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

13.9. In the event someone goes missing whilst on a College trip domestically or abroad:

- The trip leader will ensure the safety of the remaining pupils and staff by taking a register to identify who is missing.
- The 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, the local police will be contacted.
- If the police are called, the trip leader will contact the Principal, or other available person, back at the College and inform them of what has happened.

13.10. 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.

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

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

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

14. Pupils with SEND

14.1 take part.

14.2. Where this is not possible, an alternative activity of equal educational value will be arranged for all pupils.

14.3. Pupils with SEND will be accompanied by a responsible adult during the extra-curricular trip or visit.

15. Finance

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

15.2. The College 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 College 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 College.
- Part of religious education.

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

15.4. All letters to parents regarding College 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.

15.5. In the event that the trip is cancelled due to unforeseeable circumstances, it is at the Principal's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Principal will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the cost to the College, including alternative provision costs.

15.6. In the event that a pupil cancels their place on a trip, it is at the Principal's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents and whether the space on the trip can be offered to someone else.

15.7. Where a pupil has previously cancelled a space on a College trip and received a full refund, the College has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

15.8. The College will take a common-sense approach to refunds and cancellations, ensuring that all pupils are treated equally.

15.9. 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.

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

15.11. Any excess of expenditure will be subsidised by the College fund.

16. Foreign trips

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

16.2. 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.

16.3. 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.

16.4. Before the trip, staff are trained in spotting suspicious behaviour and remaining vigilant whilst abroad.

16.5. Before the trip, pupils will be taught how to remain vigilant in the country they are visiting, particularly about advances from strangers.

16.6. 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.

16.7. Staff will check the town/city's local news at the start of each day of the trip, to ensure their planned activities are safe to go ahead.

16.8. A minimum of two members of staff attending the trip will have at least an intermediate understanding of the destination country's language.

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

16.10. When using external providers abroad, the College will check whether the provider holds an equivalent of the 'Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge'. If no such equivalent can be ascertained, the College will make checks in the same manner as paragraph 7.2 prior to agreeing to use the provider.

17. Evaluating trips and visits

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

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

Appendix 1 – School Learning Area

General Visits/activities within the 'College Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal college day follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits/activities:

- do not require parental consent
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).

The College Learning Area includes, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues: e.g.

- St Albans Town Hall / Civic Centre
- Verulamium Park

Operating Procedure for College Learning Area

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our College Learning Area:

- Road traffic.
- Other people / members of the public / animals.
- Losing a pupil.
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc.).

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Headteacher, or Assistant Headteacher must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'College Learning Area' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school, and a synopsis is in the College Prospectus.

- There will normally be a minimum of two adults.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practised appropriate group management techniques.
- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- School Learning Area is done in 'buddy' pairs as a minimum.
- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- Staff will deposit in the office a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route, and an estimated time of return.
- A school mobile phone is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is taken when needed (e.g., gloves, goggles)

Monitoring and review

Policy date: 4th September 2023 Review Date: 3rd September 2024

By Assim Jemal (Principal) & the Safeguarding Team