

Educational Visits and Journeys



1. Rationale and Aim

Samuel Whitbread Academy (SWA) recognises the immense benefits that educational visits and trips can bring to all of our students. They can be some of the most memorable times of a student's education and are of a great benefit academically and socially. Any supervised activity where students are not on the school site is classed as an Educational Visit or School Trip.

2. Policy

SWA subscribe to the Central Bedfordshire policy on Educational Visits and Journeys (2024), which is available from Central Bedfordshire Council via EVOLVE.

SWA use EVOLVE, an online system for recording all information related to a visit, and a library of resources including national and local guidance for running educational trips and visits. The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) can provide access to EVOLVE and direct staff to appropriate documents.

The website is www.centralbedfordshirevisits.org.uk.

SWA has a trained EVC who is responsible for ensuring all administration and documentation is received on EVOLVE and that it meets required standards and deadlines. The contact details for the EVC can be obtained from the academy office. The EVCs are Elle Rees Rinaldi and Thomas Rowell.

3. Procedure

Outline Approval

Staff who wish to apply to take students on an educational visit must follow the Central Bedfordshire guidance on running an educational visit and journey.

Staff should plan trips as far in advance as possible, and they should, on the whole, form part of a planned educational provision. It may not always be possible to book trips in advance, and opportunities will inevitably present themselves throughout the academic year. It is best practice to get all trips into the school calendar (even in draft form) in the summer term for the following year.

Initial outline approval for all Educational Visits and Trips must be obtained from either the trips team consisting of the EVC, Finance Officer and Cover Manager. It is important to note that all trips on EVOLVE are subject to the Principal's approval.

It is important to establish which category of visit the trip would fall into. To identify which category a trip falls into, staff should use the flow diagrams in the BEST Charging and Remissions Policy which can be found on the BEST website. If it is deemed that the trip is a "Necessary Educational Visit", the cost of the trip must be calculated and the necessary visits budget holder must be informed of cost.

The outline approval will consider the educational merits and impact of each trip and check for conflicts with calendar, other trips, exams, staffing levels etc. The Principal or SLT member with responsibility for Educational Visits has the right to prioritise and if necessary, refuse approval without prejudice / recourse.

A designated, trained and competent group leader will be appointed, who must be a member of staff at SWA. Competency should be assessed by a suitable member of staff using the BEST Competency Assessment Form. This can be found in the "SWA-Trips" Google Shared Drive.

The outcome of the request will be notified back to the group leader as soon as practicable.

This is only outline approval and the trip may still be subject to refusal once entered onto EVOLVE – it is essential therefore that the group leader does not commit to any financial undertaking at this stage.

Final Approval

Once outline approval has been granted, the finance office must be consulted with details of the visit before it can be entered onto EVOLVE. Training and guidance on using EVOLVE can be obtained from the EVC.

Approval Deadlines

The deadline for all required information to be uploaded depends upon the nature and classification of the trip:

- For those visits which are residential, overseas or adventurous (as defined in the CBC policy), 12 weeks advance notice will be needed to process the paperwork on EVOLVE. Significantly longer will be needed for trips run jointly across more than one Academy.
- Occasionally a unique and valuable opportunity presents itself - this would have to be approved by the Principal or member of SLT with responsibility for Educational Visits before any booking/financial agreements are undertaken.
- For all other lower risk and routine trips and visits, a minimum 4 weeks' notice is required.
- Final approval is conditional on these deadlines being met, and again no firm bookings or financial commitments can be undertaken until FINAL approval is confirmed on EVOLVE or approval is received from the EVC. If an advance deposit is required, the financial risk to the Trust must be minimal.
- Any changes to the trip after final approval must be communicated via the EVC, and EVOLVE updated.

Charges for visits are made in accordance with the BEST Charging and Remissions Policy, which can be found on the school website.

For routine sports fixtures, a generic risk assessment, can be found in the H&S Google Shared Drive Group Leaders must be aware of this and should updated by the Group Leader as necessary to reflect the unique hazards to their fixture. The generic risk assessment, covering all fixtures should be provided and reviewed at the start of each academic year. Written parental permission for students to participate in fixtures, as required, should be obtained and stored with the PE department, this may be obtained for the whole academic year with suitable briefing made to parents/carers & students ahead of each fixture including location and timings. Routine sports fixtures do not need to be

processed through EVOLVE.

Staffing and Supervision

The Group Leader is responsible for selecting a team of trained and competent supervisors. Competency should be assessed by a suitable member of staff using the BEST Competency Assessment Form. This can be found in the "SWA-Trips" Google Shared Drive.

Supervisors should be members of staff, although it may be appropriate to take volunteers. These volunteers must be known to the Academy and subject to all safeguarding checks, including DBS checks where applicable, and must be assessed as competent to supervise a trip.

Cover requests for staff has to be sought in the usual way.

Parents should, wherever practicable not routinely attend visits that their own children are on (the exception to this is staff-parents). Where this is unavoidable, appropriate considerations should be made in the visit risk assessment.

Group leaders are responsible for the whole trip including organisation, administration and supervision. They must therefore be present at all times during the visit. It is advisable to appoint a deputy in order to enact any contingency plan in the event of the group leader becoming incapacitated for residential, high risk or international visits. The deputy should be of suitable competence and experience for the nature of the visit.

On all visits there must be an appointed person for First Aid. Chapter 2 of the CBC guidance, available in the resources section of EVOLVE, gives further details.

In line with the CBC guidance, all members of the staff team must be briefed about the trip, and roles and responsibilities allocated.

Group Leaders and Supervisors should be following CBC guidance on supervision, available in the resources section of EVOLVE, at all times during the visit and remember that they have a 24/7 duty of care towards the students on the trip. Down time and allocation of specific tasks for all supervisors should be well managed by the Group Leader. Staff should maintain the highest level of professional conduct and be reminded that they are subject to the BEST Staff Code of Conduct, available on the school website.

It is good practice to provide a job description for all Leaders and Supervisors on trips or assign clear roles prior to departure.

It is important to brief students attending a trip about the potential risks, and safety measures. Dependent on the nature of the visit, it may be necessary to involve parents in this briefing as well.

Expectations of behaviour for students should be made explicit.

Use of social media and other methods of communication should be carefully managed by the group leader. Group leaders will want to carefully consider the implications of allowing students to send messages home, or to share information via social media. Students should be encouraged to follow best practice in relation to good e-safety, details of which can be found in the e-safety policy on the school website. It is essential that in the event of an emergency or critical incident that CBC procedures are followed.

Any students whose behaviour has been a cause for concern may lose the right to participate in a trip where their actions or behaviour could jeopardise the safety and enjoyment of other students. Students and parents must be made aware that the school reserves the right to withdraw a place. The decision is to be made by the Head of Year and Group Leader in consultation with the parents and student concerned.

There must be complete equality of opportunity for students in taking part in educational visits. Learning Support and Teaching Assistants should attend trips where they are needed to support young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and ratios should be adjusted accordingly. Risk Assessments must take into account the needs of the group.

There are some visits with limited availability. In these instances selection criterion must be made explicit to students and parents in advance. Every effort will be made to minimise the disappointment suffered by students who are not selected. "First come, first served" will be avoided wherever possible in accordance with our equality policy and values.

Supervision Ratios

Supervision ratios are followed as per the Central Bedfordshire Educational Visits and Journeys Policy Document, available in the resources section of EVOLVE.

Visits will only be authorised if the Academy has capacity to cover absent teachers and/or support staff.

Only staff assessed as 'competent' will count in the supervisory ratios

Field File and Emergency contacts

The Group Leader must leave a field file with the school based emergency contact (Local Point of Contact), EVC and/or SLT. Details of what to include in a field file can be found in the CBC policy available in the resources section of EVOLVE & SWA-Trips Google Shared Drive. Group leaders should take at least 1 additional copy of the field file both on the trip and leave one further copy with the school contact/EVC. A Field File can be shared as an online folder in Google Drive, shared with all necessary parties.

In emergencies Group Leaders should contact the Emergency Point of Contact (designated SLT Member) who will follow the guidance for emergency and critical incidents as outlined in the CBC policy.

In cases of delayed return, or non-emergency situations, the group leader should contact the designated Emergency Point of Contact. It may be appropriate to set up a contact tree in advance of the visit in order to share information with parents and carers.

Transport

School minibuses can be booked using local arrangements. CBC guidance on staffing and supervision should be followed, available in the resources section of EVOLVE.

The use of staff cars for travel on trips and educational visits is **not** permitted. If an emergency situation exists and the need to use private cars for travel is unavoidable, e.g. emergency situations when the alternative would be that students are stranded, the following must be in place (copies will be required by the EVC retrospectively):

- A Full UK driving license
- A Current MOT certificate
- Valid Car registration documents
- Valid vehicle excise duty
- Fully comprehensive car insurance certificate including business cover

Students will not be covered by Academy's insurance if travelling in a private staff car. Similarly, if students are to meet at a designated destination e.g. airport or train station, they will not be covered by Academy's insurance until they are with the group leader. The point at which the Academy's duty of care starts must be made clear to parents in advance, in writing. Further information on insurance can be obtained from the Academy contact / EVC.

Point of Origin / Out of School Hours Drop-off/Collection

Unless otherwise arranged, visits will begin and end at SWA. No other drop-offs will be authorised, unless these are made clear in writing to parents and appropriately risk-assessed. The point at which the Academy's duty of care begins and ends should be made explicitly clear to parents in writing.

Finance/Budgeting

Please see BEST's Charging and Remissions Policy, on the school website for more information on this aspect.

After outline approval is obtained, a budget proposal must be completed by the Group Leader and returned to the Finance Office for consideration and approval. Payments and collections must ensure that there is no liability to the Academy should individuals cancel or withdraw, and tour operator conditions must not expect more payment (at any stage) than has been collected from students.

Details regarding the collection and payment mechanism for students may only be confirmed to parents and students after they have been agreed with the local Finance team. Ideally payments must be made using Parentmail online payments.

Parental Consent Letters

The CBC policy templates of Parental Information and Consent forms, available in the SWA-Trips Google Shared Drive, must be used and their content should not be reduced.

4. Monitoring & Evaluation

It is the responsibility of the Principal, or designated member of staff, and the Local Governing Body to monitor this policy and ensure that the Academy implements it fully.

5. Implementation & Review

This policy will be made known to all staff, parents/carers and governors, and it will be published on the Academy website. Copies will also be available upon request from the Academy office. This policy will be reviewed two yearly, or as required, in response to changes to Government Policy etc.

6. Author & Date

Assistant Principal (Thomas Rowell) – September 2015
 Updated (TR) - January 2016
 Updated (TR) - June 2016

Updated (TR) – November 2018
Updated (TR) – January 2019
Updated (TR) – February 2021
Updated (TR) – February 2023
Updated Operations Manager (BW) – January 2025

Date ratified by Governors – February 2025
Next review date – February 2027