

January 2025

Next Review date: January 2026

Educational Visits Policy

This policy applies to all academies managed by Wootton Academy Trust (WAT).



**Wootton
Academy Trust**

Person responsible: Educational Visits Coordinator

Reviewed by: Executive Headteacher

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1. Introduction.

All offsite visits and activities that are organised and undertaken by WAT (apart from work experience, alternative provision or college placements which are dealt with separately) are regarded as 'educational visits'. Whenever children and/or young people leave the school/college site under the direct or indirect supervision of WAT staff, they are undertaking an 'educational visit'.

2. Rationale.

Educational Visits play an important part in the all-round education of every child and young person. The number one priority of the Trust is to safeguard children as well as looking after the health and safety of employees, governors and volunteers.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to provide a rigorous framework that all Wootton Academy Trust [WAT] employees will follow in organising educational visits. The framework is graduated to take account of the different types of trips. All WAT employees must follow the processes – including timescales outlined in the policy and refer to the key employees who have important roles in respect of educational visits, notably the Heads of School/College and the Educational Visits' Co-ordinator.

4. Aims & Objectives.

WAT aims to offer children and/or young people a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for adult life. WAT recognises the value and importance of learning outside the classroom and encourages staff to organise educational visits that enrich the curriculum and enhance the learning and development of our children and/or young people.

5. Types of Visits organised by Wootton Academy Trust.

Routine Visits:

- Local Community Visits
- Short Curriculum-linked visits (e.g. libraries, community centres, sports fixtures etc.)
- Group day visits (e.g. conferences, theatre trips excluding those in London etc.)

Non-Routine Visits:

- Residential visits (UK and abroad)
- Field study/outdoor trips
- Outdoor pursuits
- High risk activities (e.g. skiing, water-based activities etc) which require a higher level of supervision
- Trips abroad
- Visits involving travelling across large urban areas (e.g. London) using public transport
- Visits near water margins

This list is by no means exhaustive and group leaders should, if in any doubt about the nature of any particular activity, consult the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) or Executive Headteacher.

6. Compliance.

WAT's Educational Visits Policy should also be read in conjunction with other relevant WAT policy documents, and legislation for example:

- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding/Child Protection
- Equal Opportunities & Inclusion [including Equality Act]
- Charging and Remission

7. Access to Policies & Guidelines.

Staff involved in the leadership and management of visits should be familiar with all relevant guidelines, policies and planning documents (available via MS Teams – Educational Visits) and should know how/where this information can be accessed.

The '*National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Offsite Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom*' is highly recommended for support and advice and can be found at www.oeapng.info.

8. Roles & Responsibilities.

The Board is responsible for:

- ensuring there is an EV policy in place, all educational visits are organized safely in line with the policy.
- ensuring all individuals with roles and responsibilities for educational visits complete regular training.

The Executive Headteacher [EHT] is responsible for:

- ensuring WAT educational visits are organized in line with the WAT EV policy.
- ensuring an **Educational Visits Co-ordinator** (EVC) is in place and ensuring that the EVC is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- ensuring that responsibility for Educational Visits is delegated to the Lead EVC to lead the management and approval of education visits.
- is responsible for meeting with the **Lead EVC** as necessary to discuss and agree approval for complex educational visits.
- ensuring reviews of the Educational Visits Policy are undertaken.
- updating the board on the number and types of educational visits undertaken.

The EVC is responsible for:

- Reporting to the Executive Headteacher.
- approving educational visits – ensuring their planning and organisation are in line with the policy.
- ensuring all educational visits are open to all children and young people and providing evaluative data to the Curriculum and Standards Committee which demonstrates this.
- ensuring that educational visit CPD training is provided on annual basis to staff.
- providing a report on the training completed by staff and others [e.g. Governor or Heads of College/School];
- providing advice and guidance to staff.
- ensuring that evaluations of Educational Visits are completed by Visit Leaders and summaries and/case studies are shared with the Curriculum and Standards Committee and made available to the governor responsible for educational visits.
- Leading the annual review of the Educational Visits Policy.

Education Visit Leaders are responsible for:

- completing CPD training on running an educational visit prior to organising a visit.
- completing paperwork and on-line forms in line with Trust deadlines for the EVC.
- seeking advice from the EVC and others whilst planning visits, including tour operators, exchange visit partner schools, tourist information and activity providers.
- agreeing costs for the visit and drawing up a budget and payment line, seeking support from the EVC as necessary.
- writing all letters to parents/carers in respect of the visit.
- organising and running any parent/carer meetings necessary in advance of the visit.
- preparing the field file before the visit takes place and ensuring that copies of the file are with nominated Local Points of contacts.
- briefing children and young people in advance of the visit.
- ensuring that the visit takes place in accordance with the schedule agreed.
- producing an evaluation of the visit with learning outcomes for the future and benefits that children and young people have gained from the visit.

Other Adult Supervisors are responsible for:

- Supporting Visit Leaders with any parent/carer meetings necessary in advance of the visit.
- Supporting Visit Leaders in briefing children and young people in advance of the visit.
- Attending any briefings planned for staff in advance of a visit.
- Undertaking supervisory duties as requested by Visit Leaders during a visit.
- Contributing to the Visit Leader's evaluation after the visit has concluded.

Local Point of Contacts are responsible for:

- Ensuring they are satisfied they have all the information they need in the Field File.
- Ensuring they carry/are close to the Field File for the duration of the visit.
- For Local Point of Contact 1, supporting and providing assistance in the event of any low-level issues the Visit Leader needs to report, discuss or seek advice on.
- For Local Point of Contact 1, referring on to Local Point of Contact 2 in the event of a serious issue/emergency.
- For Local Point of Contact 2, following the guidance in Appendix 2.

9. Advice & Guidance.

- WAT will ensure that external advice and guidance is funded so that the EVC is able to access independent support from a bought-in professional external advisor.
- Staff are able to access internal advice and guidance from the EVC.
- Staff are also encouraged to access advice and guidance from other experts with specialist/local knowledge (e.g. tour operators, exchange partners, tourist information, activity providers, etc).

10. Staff Training.

The EVC will:

- ensure that educational visit training is scheduled to take place each September.
- identify and engage external trainers where appropriate [e.g. the Trust's independent external advisor, Duke of Edinburgh Central Staff, First Aider Trainers] to provide CPD on the rationale and good practice in visit planning and organization.

- identify internal staff to provide training [e.g. EVC] to provide training on WAT procedures and systems, as well as training on the management, organisation and leadership of educational visits.

Training will be organised for:

- Newly appointed staff at WAT
- Refresher training for existing staff
- Bespoke training for Visit Leaders
- Bespoke training for senior staff who fulfil the function of Local Points of Contact
- Specialist training for individuals with named roles, e.g. EVC
- Bespoke training for Duke of Edinburgh Manager and Co-ordinators

11. Monitoring, Review & Evaluation.

WAT will review all aspects of its educational visit provision. Quality assurance activities may include:

- Questionnaires and surveys and focus groups.
- Meetings with staff who have led an educational visit or been an adult supervisor.
- Discussions with other stakeholders, e.g. parents/carers.
- The EVC and senior leaders accompanying one or more visits annually to monitor the WAT educational visit experience.
- Producing reports using quantitative and qualitative data including on participation by subgroups of children and young people as well as anonymised case studies to the Curriculum and Standards Committee on WAT Educational Visits upon request.
- Receiving feedback from D of E Assessors following expeditions.
- An annual meeting with the Trust's external advisor for comments on WAT practice and documentation.

The cycle of monitoring and evaluation will feed into the review of the Educational Visits Policy.

12. Planning & Approval Procedures.

The following should be read in conjunction with the '*National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Offsite Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom*' and provide additional information and policy statements that are specific to the school and college.

Visits can lead to pressure on parents' purses and stress on staff and staffing and the planning should take place far enough in advance to take these issues in to account.

Educational Visits should be planned as early as possible to enable parents/carers to budget and minimise pressure on staff.

Visits should be recorded, checked and approved in accordance with the following procedures:

12.1 Category 1: Day Visits (Routine)

These are local visits that take place frequently or regularly throughout the year, or over a specific period (for instance, a series of six weekly visits) e.g. visits to local library/away sports matches, etc.

Category 1 visits should be recorded once using Evolve and the documents found in MS Teams.

Risk Assessments should be updated when necessary but should be reviewed at least annually as a matter of good practice.

Category 1 visits should be checked and approved **INTERNALLY** by the EVC who will look at the educational objectives

and the impact on learning before approving.

Category 1 visits should be submitted for approval at the beginning of the academic year to obtain 'blanket approval' for the year.

12.2 Category 2: Day Visits (Non-Routine)

Category 2 are one off, or occasional visits.

Category 2 visits should be recorded for each visit or trip using Evolve and the documents found in the Resources Section.

Category 2 visits should be checked and approved **INTERNALLY** by the EVC who will look at the educational objectives and the impact on learning before approving.

In addition, Local Governing Boards should be informed of visits that have taken place on a termly basis.

Category 2 visits should be submitted for approval preferably four, but never less than two term-time weeks before the visit takes place.

12.3 Category 3: UK Residential Visits

Category 3 visits involve one or more nights away from home in the UK or overseas.

Category 3 visits should be recorded using Evolve and the documents found in the Resources Section.

Category 3 visits should be checked and approved:

- **INTERNALLY** by the EVC who will look at the educational objectives and the impact on learning before approving
- **EXTERNALLY** by The Physical Education Hub

Category 3 visits should be submitted for approval, if possible, at the **beginning of the academic year**, but never less than eight weeks in advance of the visit.

12.4 Category 4: Overseas Visits

Category 4 visits are residential or day visits to any place outside of the UK.

Category 4 visits should be recorded using Evolve and the documents found in the Resources Section.

Category 4 visits should be checked and approved:

- **INTERNALLY** by the EVC who will look at the educational objectives and the impact on learning before approving
- **EXTERNALLY** by The Physical Education Hub

Category 4 visits, as with Category 3, should be submitted for approval, if possible, at the **beginning of the academic year**, but never less than eight weeks in advance of the visit. For visits with significant financial commitment, 'outline approval' should be obtained before firm bookings are made.

12.5 Sub-Category R: High Risk Activities or Environments

If any of the above four types of visit involve what may be regarded as 'high risk activities or environments' they MUST be given an additional sub-category 'R' classification:

All day visits, or residential or overseas visits, which involve hazards that are significantly different or more serious (in terms of severity and/or likelihood) to those that might normally be encountered in everyday or school/college life will fall into this sub-category, e.g. a weekly climbing day visit (1R), a day visit to a ski slope (2R), a residential stay at an

outdoor centre (3R) or an overseas trekking expedition (4R).

For visits with significant financial commitment, 'outline approval' MUST be obtained before firm bookings are made.

Only essential (i.e. examination related) trips will be approved during the period from Easter until May half term as this is such an important time in terms of preparation for examinations and assessment.

13. Visit Objectives.

All educational visits should have a defined purpose, with clearly stated, justifiable education objectives, or else they may not be approved and may not be covered for insurance purposes.

14. Selection of Young People.

Every effort is made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, sex or religion or other protected characteristic. Any concerns regarding Equality of Opportunity and how best to support children and/or young people with different needs may be addressed to the EVC. Finance should not restrict individual opportunity and colleagues should discuss issues that may arise with our appropriate senior staff including the PP Co-ordinator.

15. Visit Leader.

The overall Visit Leader must be assessed and approved as suitable and competent to fulfil their role and responsibilities by the EVC via the Initial Authorisation request.

Leaders of Category 3 or 4 visits should normally have been Assistant Leaders on at least one similar visit.

Leaders of any sub-Category R visits should normally have been Assistant Leaders on at least one similar visit.

The Trust EVC will require Overall Group Leaders of more complex and demanding visits (e.g. ski visits or overseas expeditions) to have much broader leadership experience.

Visit Leaders should consider carefully the implications of family members being present and the possible complications that might arise.

16. Assistant Leaders.

Category 2 visits (occasionally) and all Category 3 and 4 visits require a member of staff who can assume the role of Assistant Leader and is able to deputise and take full responsibility for the Visit Leader if necessary.

Assistant Leaders should be chosen carefully and must be assessed and approved as suitable and competent to fulfil their roles and responsibilities by the Visit Leader.

17. Staffing Selection & Supervision Ratios.

WAT has an overriding legal duty to ensure that all adults involved in the supervision of children and/or young people during school-related activities (including visits) are suitable people to work with children and pose no threat to the young people in their care.

All concerns about poor practice by a member of staff, volunteer or other adult must be reported immediately using WAT safeguarding and child protection procedures. Young people on educational visits should always have ready access to a competent adult who has an appropriate level of first aid training.

On a Category 3 or 4 visit this normally requires at least one of the group's leaders to have an appropriate and current

first aid qualification. (6–8 hours of emergency aid training is the minimum recommended for leaders on educational visits.)

Every member of staff or adult supervisor MUST have a valid DBS certificate-

Effective supervision is of the utmost importance in maintaining the safety and welfare of the children on educational visits. The *'National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Offsite Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom'* provides recommended minimum staffing ratios, but the choice of staff and the decision regarding ratios is still a matter of judgement for the EP via delegated responsibility to the EVC. This will often be after consultation with the Visit Leader and external advisor if necessary.

It is generally good practice to have at least two adults accompanying any offsite experience so that there is some flexibility and reserve capacity, in case of unforeseeable circumstances arising. For overseas visits, at least three adults should normally accompany the group, as additional reserve capacity and flexibility are often vital in these circumstances. Additional consideration should be given to staffing levels and qualifications required for visits that involve adventurous/high risk activities and those with indirect or remote supervision.

18. Selection & Suitability of Accommodation or Venues to be Visited.

As part of the overall risk assessment process and, in keeping with their legal duty of care, the Visit Leader must take reasonable steps to check that any accommodation used (e.g. youth hostel) and any venues that the group plan to visit (e.g. castles or museums) are suitable, satisfactory and acceptably safe. Many organizations now have websites or supply teacher information packs that provide all reasonable assurances regarding standards or have obtained a *'Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge'*. However, if necessary, the "external provider contract" can be sent to the manager of the accommodation to be used or venue to be visited requesting signed, written assurances regarding their safety management systems and operating procedures. When planning a visit, the Visit Leader should, wherever reasonably practicable, undertake an exploratory visit to inspect and familiarize themselves with the accommodation to be used and venues to be visited.

19. High Risk Activities & Environments.

Leaders who organize visits involving high risk activities and environments must be aware that such visits normally require a greater degree of planning and preparation by virtue of their complexity and unpredictability. All Category 1 & 2 (day), Category 3 (UK residential) and Category 4 (overseas) visits which involve high risk activities and environments are classified as Sub-Category 'R' and must be recorded on Evolve and approved by the EVC and external advisor.

Visit Leaders and other supervisors must be sufficiently competent to supervise children and/or young people in the activity/environment. Competence derives from knowledge, experience, training and personal qualities and may be evidenced by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) Award, where appropriate.

Visit Leaders should plan alternative activities and venues to cater for possible changes in circumstances (e.g. worsening weather or rising river levels) and all staff should be aware of these possible contingencies. The EVC will sometimes ask to see and check these plans.

20. Risk Assessments & Management.

WAT has a legal duty of care for children and young people in its academies and must therefore give careful consideration to the hazards involved during an educational visit and ensure that risks are managed at reasonable and acceptable levels. The Visit Leader should undertake an appropriate risk assessment for each visit, and this should be shared/discussed/agreed by all accompanying staff before the visit takes place. Appropriate written evidence of this process MUST be provided online via Evolve.

The process of risk assessment should be a positive means of raising awareness of hazards and prompting constructive discussion regarding the best means of risk management – it should therefore be of real practical value to the leaders

and group members, not just a paper exercise. Risk Assessments completed for previous visits must not be resubmitted without due consideration about possible improvement.

Regarding WAT specific policies/procedures:

- All relevant Category 1 generic risk assessment forms for sports fixtures are reviewed, amended and agreed at the start of each academic year by all relevant staff.
- These generic forms are stored in a clearly marked file in the PE office and with the EVC – staff are encouraged to reference these if unsure about agreed practice or before undertaking visits that they are less familiar with.
- An additional specific risk assessment should be completed by Visit Leaders for each visit to record and share information about potential hazards and precautions that may be particularly noteworthy for that specific group, doing activities, at specific sites on that visit.
- Risk Assessments written by providers, venues etc. may be included, but Visit Leaders should show consideration to other children and young people, transport or WAT academy issues.
- Completed assessments are checked/approved by the EVC.

21. Insurance & Finance Arrangements (including Charging Arrangements)

WAT requires that there are adequate insurance arrangements in place for all educational visits and Visit Leaders should check carefully that the scope and level of cover provided is adequate for each visit. Visit Leaders should also check that any external service providers have sufficient public liability cover (normally at least £5M).

WAT is part of the government's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) which covers all educational visits within the UK and those undertaken abroad (providing the visits are correctly approved).

The Visit Leader and EVC must ensure that:

- Each visit is accurately costed and budgeted for.
- Adequate contingency allowances are made for additional unforeseen costs and changes in circumstances.
- Budgets – especially for more complex visits – are checked and confirmed by the EVC before financial commitments are made.
- For visits that involve substantial financial commitment (e.g. overseas visits), no firm bookings or financial commitments may be made until the visit has been agreed and has received 'Initial Approval' from the EVC.
- The total cost of the visit will be made clear to parents/carers, children and young people, staff and governors.
- Parents/carers will be informed how much they will be required to pay for the EV, or whether they will be invited to make voluntary contributions. Parents/carers will also be informed of the payment schedule. Additionally, parents/carers will be advised whether financial support is available to families and what help is available.
- Money collected for visits is kept in a separate WAT account and secure systems are in place to ensure that money is accessed and accounted for correctly.

Charging Arrangements

(Please see the Trust Charging & Remissions Policy for more details.)

No compulsory charge may be made in respect of any activity which is deemed to take place wholly, or mainly, in school/college hours and for educational reasons.

WAT will not make a compulsory charge for:

- Any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the child or young person is being prepared for at the school/college, or part of religious education.
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school/college accompanying children and/or young people on a residential trip.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip during school/college hours.

WAT may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions towards the cost of these visits, but where this occurs it must be clear to parents/carers that any contribution is genuinely voluntary.

WAT may charge for activities that are provided wholly or mainly outside school hours. However, any extra charge made in respect of individual children and/or young people will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of participating children and/or young people. The costs for the visit should be clear to all concerned, stating how much, if anything, will be funded from other WAT funds and how much parents/carers are expected to contribute.

22. Overseas Visits.

All overseas visits (Category 4) require external advisor approval as well as Trust approval. Due to the additional complexity and financial commitment involved, staff planning overseas visits should seek outline approval for the visit at an early stage from the EVC before parents/carers or the Trust make any commitments.

It is good practice, wherever possible, for the Visit Leader to make an exploratory visit to a location. If this is not reasonably practicable, the Visit Leader should gather sufficient appropriate information and assurances (via a website/teacher pack) about the location and facilities.

The level of staffing required for overseas visits should reflect not only the direct supervision needs, but also the contingency plans made for emergencies. It is not uncommon for a member of staff to need to return home early or to accompany a group member to hospital.

The Visit Leader must ensure that the party is covered by comprehensive insurance which covers all travel and planned activities. It is recommended that children and/or young people carry a note in the relevant foreign language to help reunite them with the group should they get lost. Children and/or young people should also carry their GHIC cards with them when in the EU. Partner schools/colleges abroad are expected to make maximum practicable use of the facilities for vetting that are available in their own country.

New organisers of ski visits, overseas expeditions or other complex overseas visits should obtain specific training and guidance before organising a visit.

23. Transport.

As part of the overall risk assessment process, the Visit Leader must take reasonable steps to check that any transport used during the visit is suitable, satisfactory and acceptably safe and that any specific Local Authority or legal requirements are met. Leaders should refer to the '*National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Offsite Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom*' assessments which give detailed recommendations for all standard forms of transport.

For the safe supervision of children and/or young people on coaches/buses, Visit Leaders are required to:

- Ensure staff sit in various locations, spread throughout the coach.
- Sit near emergency exits.
- Carry a first aid kit and a Wootton Academy Trust mobile phone.

For visits that require the use of staff cars, drivers **MUST** have business insurance cover. Carrying children and/or young people in cars is discouraged and should only be done under chaperone when there is no other practical alternative.

24. Parent / Carer Information & Consent.

The Visit Leader must ensure that parents/carers are provided with appropriate and sufficient information about all visits. The amount of information and method of provision will depend upon the type of visit planned and the assessed level of risk involved. Parents/carers of each child or young person on a visit are asked to complete a consent form whether it be an annual 'rolling' consent for routine visits (Category 1), or specific consent for a particular visit/activity (Category 2, 3 & 4). There is no legal requirement to obtain parental consent for visits/activities during normal school/college hours, but it is nonetheless good practice. Therefore, WAT practice is to inform parents/carers to seek consent for any activities about which parents/carers might be particularly concerned. The Personal Information & Consent (PIC) form is undertaken via a MS Form, a copy of which is available in Teams.

Details of any special/medical needs of children and/or young people are collated by the Visit Leader and supervising staff are briefed and trained accordingly. Parents/carers are asked to give consent to the administration of plasters and off-the-shelf first aid/medication, if deemed necessary. Parents/carers should be clearly informed of the arrangements and responsibilities for collecting a child or young person after a visit. The Visit Leader must obtain parent/carer contact details for all children and/or young people on the visit.

Where a trip is residential or involves leaving the UK, it is considered best practice to invite parents/carers to attend a briefing in school or online via MS Teams.

25. Staff Briefing & Emergency Procedures.

It is important that all staff (including volunteers) involved in the leadership of a visit are fully briefed about each visit. Staff should be aware of their expected roles and responsibilities before, during and after a visit. Visit Leaders should be aware of emergency procedures and how to obtain outside assistance or contact the emergency services if required. Part of the planning for emergencies must involve the recording of one or more emergency home contact(s) who should be available at any time during the visit.

The Visit Leader must ensure that staff have immediate access to the emergency contact details of the senior member of staff designated as the 'Local Point of Contact' (LPOC) and the parents of those on the visit. A properly equipped first aid kit is always available to staff during WAT Educational Visits and must be checked and taken on visits. First Aid Kits are stored in the Main Office and are required to be signed out at the beginning of the trip and returned at the end. The Visit Leader is responsible for making sure the First Aid kit is adequately stocked before taking it away from the Main Office.

Local Points of Contact (LPOCs) should be fully briefed before the visit is undertaken and must be left with a full Field File.

Visit Leaders should identify two Local Points of Contact:

- LPOC 1 should be contacted in the event of an incident or accident that does not involve serious injury or fatality, and/or is not likely to attract media attention.
- LPOC 1 should have experience of the type of trip/visit being undertaken. This does not necessarily need to be a member of SLT but should be on any visit undertaken out of school hours.
- LPOC 2 should be contacted in the event of an incident that does involve serious injury or fatality, and/or is likely to attract media attention. LPOC 2 MUST be a member of the Executive Leadership Team

All staff should be made aware of the conduct and behaviour expected of them during the visit, particularly regarding issues such as smoking and alcohol use. Staff are expected not to consume alcohol whilst on a visit and not to smoke in front of pupils

Only Wootton Academy Trust mobile telephones should be used. These can be booked out from Wootton Upper School Finance Office.

26. Briefing & Preparation of Young People.

Providing relevant information and guidance to children and/or young people is an important part of preparing for all school visits. Children and/or young people should be briefed about safety arrangements and what clothing and equipment should be taken. Leaders must ensure that Children and/or young people clearly understand what will be considered unacceptable behaviour or conduct and the consequences of non-compliance. During any time that remote supervision takes place, the Visit Leader must ensure that children and/or young people are aware of the supervision and emergency contact arrangements and that they have the necessary skills, maturity, responsibility, knowledge and equipment to operate safely as an independent individual/group. When considering remote supervision, staff should take in to account the children and/or young people, location, surroundings, etc. Children and/or young people should be briefed what to do in an emergency, or if they become separated from the rest of the group. It is good practice to teach children and/or young people how to recognise dangers and manage risks sensibly. Children and/or young people should always carry an emergency contact card on them (they must do this on a Category 3 or 4 trip) detailing staff and accommodation details contact details. If possible, children and/or young people should have an input in to the risk assessment process.

27. Documentation & Visit Records.

The Evolve online database will store key elements of all visit details securely and indefinitely. If a minor incident occurred during the visit, the Trust disposes of the paperwork after a period of six years. If a significant incident occurs during a visit which could be investigated later, all relevant details are retained until the young person reaches 21 years of age.

The Trust specific policy regarding documentation and visit records states that, in particular, any incident or near miss should be recorded on Evolve using the documentation in Teams.

28. Visit Approval, Status & Feedback.

All visits are submitted for initial and final approval using Evolve. Guidance on how to use Evolve is provided on an annual basis by the EVC via "in-person" training.

Initial and final approvals are given by e-mail via Evolve.

29. Amendments to Visits.

If there are significant late changes to visit plan that have already been approved or submitted for approval, the Visit Leader must notify all relevant approving authorities of these changes and ensure that their additional consent is given.

30. Post Visit Review & Evaluation.

It is good practice for Visit Leader, on returning from a visit, to review the visit and to evaluate and record any examples of good practice and lessons learnt that might assist with the planning and leadership of future visits. In particular, it is important to record and review any accidents, incidents or near-misses. It is important that details are recorded as soon as possible after an incident whilst they are still fresh in the memory, preferably with signed witness accounts.

Visit Leaders should take several blank photocopied pages from the Trust's accident book to record details of any incidents. These can then be copied or added to the Trust's accident book on returning home and are available via Teams.

Serious incidents must be notified to RIDDOR (the HSE's *'Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995'*) and to the Local Authority using the procedures and standard forms (available from the Estates Manager's office).

Post visit reviews and evaluations should be recorded and stored on Evolve.

Post visit reviews and accident/near miss records are reviewed regularly by the EVC. Any lessons learnt are shared with all relevant staff and any necessary changes made to procedures.

After any major accident, the Trust will undertake a review of the incident and their emergency procedures. Staff are encouraged to express any concerns regarding the organization and management of visits in writing to the EVC and Executive Principal; these will be taken seriously and dealt with in confidence.

Appendix A – Critical Incident Plan

September 2024

Next Review date: September 2026

Critical Incident Plan

Guidance for procedures in the event of a critical incident on Off-Site visits across WAT.



**Wootton
Academy Trust**

Person responsible: Educational Visits Coordinator

Reviewed by: Executive Headteacher

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1. WAT critical incident procedures.

The Executive Headteacher must have an agreed emergency plan which can be put into operation in the event of a critical incident.

A critical incident is defined as when:

- a member of Wootton Academy Trust has suffered a life-threatening injury;
- a fatality has occurred;
- a student or staff is in peril;
- a student is considered lost.

The Critical Incident Management Team comprises of;

- WAT Executive Headteacher
- WAT Chief Finance and Operating Officer
- WUS Head of School
- KC Head of College
- EVC

This guidance offers leaders a course of action covering the main basic priorities; additional actions may be required given the nature of the situation. However, it is important that the relevant information is quickly and easily available, especially when groups are off-site and whatever the time of day or night.

- 1 Trip leaders in charge of any venture must have lists of student names, emergency contact numbers and addresses. They must carry a school mobile phone at all times.
- 2 A copy of this information, along with relevant consent forms, must be readily available at school/ college; these must include last minute amendments.
- 3 For trips outside of school office hours, the trip leader must ensure a contact person is nominated to act as the communication link with the group. This would normally be either the Head of School/ College or the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). For overnight trips, it would be preferable that both are points of contact.
- 4 For out of hours or overnight trips, points of contact should have a copy of lists including:
 - The names of all off-site participants, including adults, and details of their emergency contacts.
 - The distribution of staff and student if in separate groups, vehicles or boats.
 - The planned itinerary, including base addresses and telephone numbers in case of emergency.
 - The names, telephone numbers and email of the travel and coach companies.
 - Details of the school's emergency contacts for Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) in the event of an emergency.

2. Actions to be taken by the Trip Leaders (or by other staff/ instructors) in the event of a critical incident.

- Assess the situation and ensure the group is protected from further injury or danger.
- Administer First Aid.
- Call the emergency services (999) as appropriate and give them as much detail about the incident as possible (what has happened, how many people involved, severity of any injuries and location).
- Ensure an adult accompanies any casualties to hospital.
- Contact the nominated officer from the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) and provide as much detail as possible.
- Remove the remainder of staff and students to a secure location and ensure that the group is under the care of a member of staff who is able to protect them from the any media or public scrutiny. If necessary, ask for police assistance.
- Ensure staff and students remain calm and arrange for their evacuation.
- Do not make any statement to the press or media nor allow any other person in the group to do so.
- Refer all media enquiries to WAT Chief Finance and Operating Officer.

3. Procedures for WAT nominated officer or staff receiving notice of a critical incident.

1. Reassure the caller and then take down the following details:
 - Member of staff making the call and which trip is involved;
 - Nature, date and time of the incident;
 - Details of students involved, their injuries, which hospital they have been taken to and which member of staff has accompanied them;
 - Are all party members accounted for?
 - Action taken so far;
 - Instruct the member of staff that a written log of all actions and conversations must be kept;
 - Ask that anyone involved to write a brief statement of the incident;
 - Determine any other contact numbers that may be used for future communications;
 - Inform the trip leader that they (nor other staff) should not discuss the incident with members of the press or media. Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be divulged to the media.
2. Immediately notify a member of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT).
3. Keep a record of all communication, including times, dates and messages given and received.

4. Procedures for WAT Critical Incident Team (CIMT).

1. The CIMT should be provided with the following information:
 - Name and telephone number of the person making the call;
 - The identity of the trip;
 - Nature, date and time of the incident;
 - Details of injuries, hospital – has a staff member gone with the injured to the hospital? Who?
 - Are all party members accounted for?
 - Names and telephone numbers of those involved;

- Action taken so far;
 - Ensure that a written log of all actions and conversations should be kept;
 - Ask that anyone involved with the trip give a short-written account of the incident;
 - For serious accidents where the media are involved consider alternative means of communication (emails?) or telephone numbers both in school and at the 'off-site' base, as other lines may quickly become jammed. It is not for the trip leader or other members of staff taking the message to discuss matters with the media;
 - Under no circumstances should the names of any casualty be divulged to the media / press.
2. The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) should speak directly with the group leaders to determine the precise details of the incident and to determine the appropriate course of action to be taken by the group and by the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT). This could include sending a member of SLT to the incident site.
 3. Contact with parents/carers/relatives should be agreed with the trip leader;
 4. The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) member will decide who else to inform;
 5. Ensure Health and Safety Executive and Bedford Council have been informed where appropriate;
 6. Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) should consider arrangements to bring the remaining staff and students back to school if necessary;
 7. The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) member will collate and prepare a detailed report, arranging a visit to the site if necessary.

Key Contacts

Wootton Academy Trust		
Wootton Upper School	01234 767123	Office hours
Kimberley College	01234 762890	Office hours
EVC – Iain Stewart	07472 363054	Out of hours, weekends and public holidays
Executive Headteacher – Mark Lehain	07790 012024	Out of hours, weekends and public holidays (If no contact above)
Head of School – Carrie McMorn	07532 144690	Out of hours, weekends and public holidays (If no contact above)
Head of College – Tim Detheridge	07311 378999	Out of hours, weekends and public holidays (If no contact above)
CFOO – Marcin Mieczkowski	07455 890012	Out of hours, weekends and public holidays
Health and Safety Executive	0300 0031747	When necessary
Bedford Borough First Contact Officer	07468 472517	When necessary
BBC – Chief Education Officer	07786 260362	When necessary