



# **EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY**

November 2023

# The Serendipity School

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## Version History

Version Information Version No.	Updated By	Updated On	Description of Changes
1	EVC Co-ordinator	24/04/2020	Reviewed and updated with different category descriptions
2	Pip Smith (Head Teacher)	November 2021	Reviewed and updated.
3	Pip Smith	November 2022	Reviewed
4	Pip Smith	November 2023	Reviewed

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## 1 Monitoring and review

- 1.1 In order to ensure that it reflects current best practice, this policy will be reviewed every year by the Education Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) and the Senior Management Team (SMT) who will assess the performance of the policy and will decide on any changes in conjunction with the appropriate staff.
- 1.2 The formal review will determine the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than the review date, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 This document contains The Serendipity Centre Ltd's (TSCL) policy on educational visits and concentrates on the planning and the health and safety aspects of such visits.
- 2.2 For the purpose of this document off-site, educational visits refers to:

*'all academic, sporting, cultural, creative and personal development activities, which take place away from the school and make a significant contribution to learning and development of those participating.'*
- 2.3 This policy has been developed in order to underpin the planning and implementation processes required for the successful and safe completion of educational visits, as defined in this document.
- 2.4 This policy covers the entire period between departing from, and returning to the school, or into the care of parents/carers - which ever happens first.

## 3 References

- [RD1] Off-site Activities and Educational Visits: Regulations and Guidance  
Hampshire County Council (2013)
- [RD2] OEApng.info/evc/2019
- [RD3] Learning outside the classroom. How far should you go?  
Ofsted (2008)
- [RD4] Safety in Adventurous Activities: Working With Children and Young People in the  
Outdoors  
Hampshire County Council (2011)
- [RD5] High Quality Outdoor Learning  
English Outdoor Council (2015)
- [RD6] Educational Visits Form  
The Serendipity School
- [RD7] Rewards and Consequences (Behaviour) Policy  
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[RD8] Health and Safety of pupils on Educational visits  
DfE (2018)

[RD9] Group safety at water margins (2019)

## 4 Introduction

4.1 The Serendipity School recognises its '*Duty of Care*' and statutory responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of students, staff, and other participants in connection with educational visits for which it is accountable.

4.2 In order to achieve and maintain the highest possible standards in this regard The Serendipity School follows the guidelines issued by the Hampshire County Council (HCC) [RD1] and National guidelines [RD2].

4.3 These guidelines will form the basis upon which all off-site activities will be planned, managed and conducted.

4.4 Safely managed educational visits with a clear purpose can help The Serendipity School achieve its aims and develop and reinforce the ethos of the school.

4.5 Visits are a vibrant aspect of the programme at The Serendipity School and an indispensable part of the curriculum.

4.6 Visits are an opportunity to extend the learning of all our students including an enrichment of their understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. They are important for social and life-skills development and can be a catalyst for improved personal performance. As stated by Ofsted (2008) [RD3],

“...learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards and improving pupils' personal, social and emotional development”.

4.7 At The Serendipity School, it must be recognised that due to the difficulties and traumas experienced by many of our students that they may behave in unexpected ways on outings such as these. For instance, they may be extremely risk-averse or even risk/thrill-seeking. It is therefore extremely important that the health and safety guidelines are followed for even the most trivial outing (and especially with regard to the completion of risk assessments).

4.8 All staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must make themselves familiar with the contents of this policy.

4.9 All off-site activities and visits must take place under the terms of these regulations, advice and procedures and must also be approved by the designated EVC or the Head Teacher.

4.10 Due to a number of tragedies over the years both the official guidance from HCC and the DfE, and the policy and procedures here are necessarily lengthy.

4.11 Staff members should always consult with the Head Teacher or the EVC if they are unsure about any aspect of the policy or procedures.

## 5 Categories of Educational Visits

- **Category 1**  
Visits which take place on a regular basis (non-hazardous) and occur largely within school hours e.g. sporting activities and swimming pool visits.
- **Category 2**  
One-off day / evening excursions (non-hazardous) e.g. field study trips, theatre visits, and award ceremonies.
- **Category 3**  
Residential visits of one or more nights within the UK or Ireland (non-hazardous) e.g. visits to residential centres, field centres, and award bearing schemes (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh).
- **Category 4**  
Residential visits outside the UK or Ireland (non-hazardous) e.g. sporting events, cultural activities and international community work.
- **Category 5**  
Hazardous Activities – residential and non-residential which includes examples such as: hill walking, cycling / mountain biking / orienteering, rock climbing / abseiling, caving and potholing, kayaking, open canoeing, windsurfing, dingy sailing, sub-aqua, skiing / snowboarding, horse riding, angling, water-skiing, rafting, rowing.

## 6 Aims

6.1 The aim of the educational visits policy is to

- Ensure that every student has the opportunity to benefit from educational visits.
- Ensure that all visits are safe, purposeful and appropriate to the needs of the students taking part.
- Enable The Serendipity School to identify and assign the required responsibilities, training, support and monitoring for the senior management team, staff, assistants, students, and providers involved in educational visits.
- Ensure that, whenever appropriate, further advice is sought from the LA and from other technically competent sources.

6.2 **Ten outcomes of high quality outdoor education (as outlined by High Quality Outdoor Education [RD5])**

- 6.2.1 **Enjoyment/Fulfilment:** Students enjoy participating and adopt a positive attitude to challenge and adventure.
- 6.2.2 **Confidence:** Students are gaining personal confidence and self-esteem through taking on challenges and achieving success.
- 6.2.3 **Social Awareness:** Students are developing their self-awareness and social skills, and their appreciation of the contributions and achievements of themselves and of others.
- 6.2.4 **Environmental Awareness:** Students are becoming alive to the natural environment and understand the importance of conservation and sustainable development.

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- 6.2.5 Activity Skills: Students are acquiring and developing a range of skills.
- 6.2.6 Personal Qualities: Students are demonstrating increased initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, perseverance and commitment.
- 6.2.7 Key Skills: Students are developing and extending their key skills of communication, problem solving, leadership and teamwork.
- 6.2.8 Health and Fitness: Students are learning to appreciate the benefits of physical fitness and the lifelong value of participation in healthy leisure activities.
- 6.2.9 Motivation for Learning: Students are displaying an increased motivation and appetite for learning that is contributing to raised levels of attainment in other aspects of their education.
- 6.2.10 Broadened Horizons: Students are broadening their horizons and becoming open to a wider range of employment opportunities and life chances.

## 7 Responsibilities for Visits

- 7.1 General responsibilities for the overseeing of off-site activities (including educational visits) fall to the Head Teacher, the senior management team (SMT) in the school, and the designated Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC).
- 7.2 The level of involvement of the EVC and Head Teacher will vary depending on the type of activity proposed.
- 7.3 For any given off-site activity, the accompanying adults will include, as a minimum, a Group Leader and a Deputy Group Leader along with Accompanying Staff and Volunteers as appropriate.
- 7.4 The *Group Leader* organises and takes overall responsibility for the visit and for all staff and students.
- 7.5 The *Deputy Group Leader* supports the Group Leader and can take responsibility for the group in the absence of the Group Leader.
- 7.6 *Accompanying staff* under the direction of the *Group Leader* assist with the organisation of the activities and supervision of the students.
- 7.7 *Volunteers* may not be employed by TSCL. In the case of a non-staff member a valid enhanced DBS certificate should be obtained.
- 7.8 Health and safety of the group is the responsibility of all the adults supporting the group.
- 7.9 **The Head Teacher's role**
  - 7.9.1 Ensure that all educational visits will be linked to the objectives of The Serendipity School and planned sufficiently well in advance in accordance with good practice and effective planning procedures.
  - 7.9.2 Be responsible for the approval of all visits but may delegate the approval of local routine and low risk visits (Category 1 activities) to designated members of staff.

7.9.3 In conjunction with the EVC will approve all higher risk visits including adventure activities, residential experiences and foreign travel. For residential and overseas trips will also consult with SMT and, if necessary, the LA before sanctioning the activity.

7.9.4 Ensure that all staff and others taking part in the visit have appropriate training and are sufficiently competent and experienced.

## 7.10 Senior Management Team (SMT)

7.10.1 Support The Serendipity School's policy and procedures for educational visits including the reporting of visits.

## 7.11 Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC)

7.11.1 A named EVC will be appointed by the school and will be given the relevant training.

7.11.2 Support the SMT and the Head Teacher with approval, decisions and the management of educational visits in accordance with [RD1, RD2 and RD4].

7.11.3 Review the planning, documentation and competence of the Group Leader and consult with the Head Teacher on approval for the activity.

## 7.12 Group Leader

7.12.1 There will be a named and approved Group Leader and Deputy on all educational visits. The Group Leader will normally be a member of staff employed at the school and will be appointed by the EVC/Head Teacher.

7.12.2 Working with the EVC as necessary, the Group Leader will be responsible for all aspects of the planning, risk assessment and organisation of the visit. The Group Leader will assume full responsibility during the visit, including ongoing risk assessment.

7.12.3 The Group Leader will ensure best value principles are used when purchasing goods and services, that appropriate checks are made, and that health, safety, insurance, and financial procedures have been followed.

## 7.13 Parents and Carers

7.13.1 For Category A, off-site activities undertaken within normal school hours, parents/carers will be asked to sign a general letter of consent for participation in these activities when the student enters the school.

7.13.2 For any other activity parents/carers (including social services, if appropriate) will be given sufficient written and supplementary information about the educational visits to enable them to make informed decisions and they will be required to give written consent together with medical and emergency contact details.

7.13.3 Whenever appropriate for high risk, residential and overseas visits a briefing meeting with parents/carers will be arranged.

7.13.4 Expectations with regard to behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents/carers.

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7.13.5 This information will include the necessity of meeting any additional costs and making collection arrangements in certain circumstances.

## 7.14 Students

7.14.1 Wherever possible students should be involved with the planning of an educational visit, establishing codes of conduct, assessing and managing risk and evaluating their own learning, development, attitudes and behaviour.

7.14.2 Students should be adequately briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all educational visits. Ongoing briefings are an important element of learning and safety.

7.14.3 Students should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities.

7.14.4 During the visit they should not be coerced into activities they fear.

7.14.5 The school has a clear code of conduct for school visits based on [RD7].

7.14.6 Severe breaches of acceptable behaviour will result in the student being escorted home.

7.14.7 Other breaches of acceptable behaviour will be dealt with by the Group Leader and may be reported to the Head Teacher upon completion of the visit.

7.14.8 Further action may then be taken according to [RD7]. The safety of all members of the school is a priority.

## 8 Planning Visits

8.1 Off-site activities and educational visits complement and enhance the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would be impossible within the school boundaries.

8.2 The Serendipity School encourages off-site activities and educational visits for many good educational, curricular and social reasons.

8.3 However, whenever a student or staff member leaves the school site on such a visit the school must be assured that the following criteria apply:

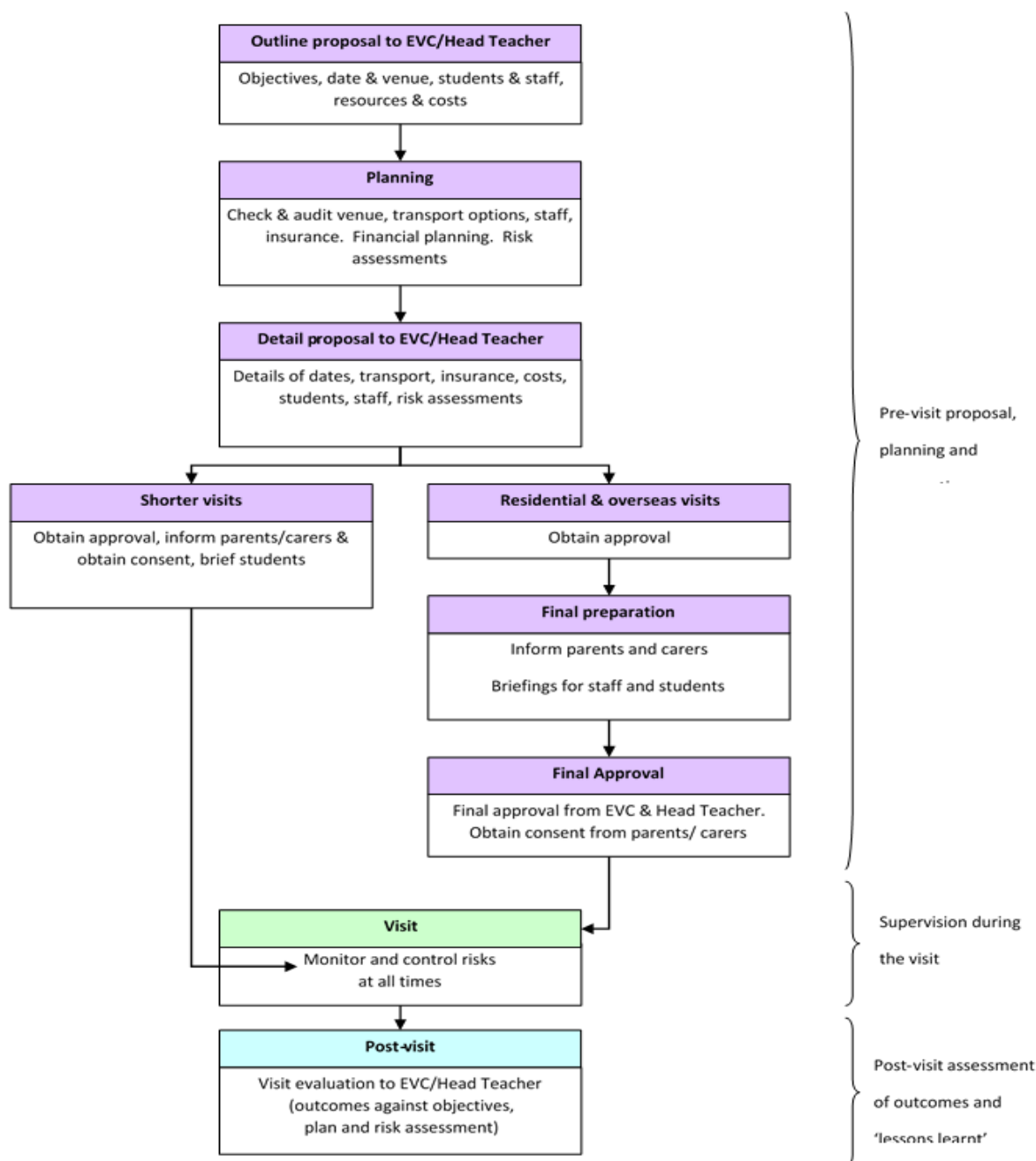
- the activity serves a clear purpose
- the safety of all participants has been considered by appropriate assessments
- the visit is financially sound
- the participants are adequately and properly insured.

8.4 Whenever an off-site activity or educational visit is proposed, a Group Leader and Deputy will be assigned and agreed by the EVC.

8.5 The Group Leader will be responsible for planning and managing the venture.



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- 8.6 Having identified a suitable off-site activity or visit, the Group Leader should complete and submit the Educational Visits Form [RD6] to the EVC. This is a summary of the objectives, date and venue, students and staff, resources and costs.
- 8.7 If the EVC initially approves the visit the Group Leader can then research the visit. The Group Leader will:
- check and audit the venue by completing a risk assessment
  - assess the resources the school requires such as first aid kits and safety equipment
  - assess transport options (see **Planning Transport** on page 12)
  - decide on the composition of the group including the students and the necessary **Supervision** (see page 11)
  - check and arrange **Insurance** if necessary (page 12)

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- prepare a **Financial Plan** (page 10)
- performed detailed **Risk Assessments** (page 9).

8.8 The Group Leader will then compile and submit detailed information to the EVC containing the results of the above assessments.

## 8.9 Shorter visits (Category 2 and 5)

8.9.1 The Group Leader can then obtain approval from the EVC and/or Head Teacher, inform parents/carers and obtain their consent using forms and brief the students.

8.9.2 Compile emergency contact information for the students, leaving a copy with the EVC and the Head Teacher.

## 8.10 Longer residential and overseas trips (Category 3 and 4)

8.10.1 The Group Leader will obtain secondary approval from the Head Teacher.

8.10.2 Inform parents/carers.

8.10.3 Hold briefings for staff and students as appropriate.

8.10.4 Obtain final approval from EVC and the Head Teacher.

8.10.5 Obtain consent from parents /carers.

8.10.6 Compile emergency contact information for the students, leaving a copy with the EVC and the Head Teacher.

## 9 Risk Assessments

9.1 The safety of the party, and especially the students, is of paramount importance.

9.2 Educational visits cannot be entirely risk-free. The aim, therefore, must be to contain risks within acceptable levels. This is achievable provided that organisers give careful consideration to this policy document.

9.3 Fundamental to the planning process of any educational visit is the process of risk assessment.

9.4 Therefore, a risk assessment should always be completed (consult with the EVC and the Head Teacher if necessary).

9.5 For any activity off-site the Group Leader must make a proper assessment of its suitability, bearing in mind the student's behaviours, the age of the students, the size of the group, any medical needs, the time of year (and probable weather conditions), potential risks to the students, and the suitability of the facilities.

9.6 Staff must also be familiar with the EHCP, Individual Health Care Plan and Individual Risk Assessment of each student who will be involved, to ensure that high-risk behaviours are planned for.

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- 9.7 For residential visits, the staff planning the activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue in order to familiarise themselves with it.
- 9.8 The Group Leader should understand that risk assessment is a dynamic process and therefore must carry out on-going risk assessment during an educational visit and ensure that appropriate action is taken as necessary to ensure the safety of the group.
- 9.9 If, during an activity, the Group Leader feels that the behaviour of an individual student is likely to compromise the safety of others, then they should (if necessary) exclude the student from the activity.

## **10 Financial Planning**

- 10.1 At The Serendipity School off-site activities and educational visits are normally wholly funded by the school.
- 10.2 The costing of off-site activities should include any costs associated with the visit which would normally fall on the school e.g. transport, entrance fees, insurance, provision of any resources or equipment specific to the activity.
- 10.3 This should include the costs related to the staff accompanying the visit.
- 10.4 The costs of risk assessment visits may be reclaimed and should be included in the overall cost of the activity.
- 10.5 The EVC/Head Teacher will require a rough estimate of the costs along with the Educational Visits Form [RD6] and detailed estimate of the costs.
- 10.6 These costs must be agreed with the EVC/Head Teacher before the visit can proceed.

## **11 First Aid / Medication**

- 11.1 First aid and medication should form part of the risk assessment.
- 11.2 Before undertaking any off-site activity, the Group Leader should assess the level of first aid required and ensure appropriate first aid kits are taken with the group.
- 11.3 All staff are qualified in first aid where necessary.
- 11.4 If medication is required during an educational visit, a named member of staff, with the necessary training, will be responsible for the safe storage and administration of the medication.

## 12 Supervision

- 12.1 TSCL recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety on a school visit.
- 12.2 The selection of staff will therefore be a key priority in the initial approval of any proposed visit.
- 12.3 An activity should have a sufficient number of adults taking part to provide a minimum ratio of two adults to five students. This is a **minimum** requirement, and should not automatically be taken as providing appropriate supervision.
- 12.4 Risk assessment in the special schools sector is of particular significance as it will include the risk assessment of individual young people. This will have a direct influence on supervision ratios.
- 12.5 Each young person will have an allocated member of staff who is responsible for their welfare and safety.
- 12.6 Some students may require one-to-one adult support to ensure their safety.
- 12.7 Where appropriate, the school will ensure that enhanced DBS screening is available for volunteer adults assisting with educational activities and visits. However, the school does not normally support additional people accompanying educational visits who are not students or staff employed by TSCL. Group Leaders should consult with the Head Teacher in such cases.

## 13 Preparing Students

- 13.1 Where appropriate students should be involved in the planning and organisation of a visit, as well as being briefed and prepared beforehand.
- 13.2 Providing information and guidance to students is an important part of preparing for an off-site visit.
- 13.3 Students should understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail.
- 13.4 Students should understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed.
- 13.5 Students should be told of potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.

## 14 Communicating with Parents and Carers

- 14.1 The parents/carers of students taking part in an off-site educational activity should be provided with appropriate information about the activity and appropriate approval should be obtained (see **Approval** on page 10).
- 14.2 The Group Leader will inform parents and carers of all relevant aspects of the visit well in advance of it taking place.

14.3 The information supplied to parents/carers will include

- dates and times
- venues and a summary of the activities
- Group Leader's name
- Group Leader's contact telephone number
- insurance cover
- costs (where applicable)
- mode of transport

## 15 Transport

15.1 The Group Leader is responsible for organising the most appropriate mode of transport for the visit.

15.2 For longer, residential, and overseas trips use of a travel company should be considered.

15.3 In all cases, the Group Leader must satisfy themselves that the transport is safe, cost efficient and meets approved standards.

15.4 The mode of transport must be declared on the Educational Visits Form [RD6] and in the information letter sent to parents/carers. It must also be considered when writing the Risk Assessment.

15.5 For most off-site activities and visits the school's own vehicles should be used (due to licensing issues, TSCL does not recommend the use of minibuses unless supplied with a driver by an external provider).

15.6 Students will be taken back to the school unless parents /carers have signed to say that they agree to their student being dropped at their house.

15.7 If staff members' private cars are used for transport, the individual staff driver is responsible for ensuring that he/she has provided a copy of their driving licence and insurance documents to HR.

15.8 Parents/carers should not be asked to provide transport as part of an off-site activity or educational visit.

15.9 The use of private cars must be included in the risk assessment.

## 16 Insurance

16.1 All visits must be adequately insured.

16.2 The Group Leader must check with the EVC/Head Teacher that TSCL's insurance covers the proposed activities.

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16.3 Visits which involve special hazards or where there is an overnight stay may need additional insurance cover. In these cases the Head Teacher will arrange for additional insurance to cover the visit.

16.4 The cost of this additional cover must be included in the costing of the visit.

## 17 Incident, Contingency and Emergency Procedures

### 17.1 Pre-Visit

17.1.1 For every visit the EVC/Head Teacher will appoint a member of staff as the Emergency School Contact (ESC) and give the Group Leader appropriate phone numbers to use in an emergency. Normally the ESC will be a member of the SMT or SLT.

17.1.2 Each adult in the group should be provided with the emergency telephone numbers and must be made aware, by the Group Leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply.

17.1.3 All major incidents should immediately be relayed to the ESC, especially those involving injury or those that might attract media attention.

17.1.4 The Group Leader will leave full details of all students and accompanying adults on the visit with the ESC, including the contact details of parents and carers, as appropriate.

17.1.5 Contingency planning relates to areas and circumstances which should be anticipated in advance of an educational visit, e.g. unsuitable weather, transportation problems, cancellation of an event, illness or injury etc.

### 17.2 During the Visit

17.2.1 Minor incidents can be dealt with by the Group Leader, who must bear in mind that the safety of the group is paramount and overrides any other objectives of the visit.

17.2.2 Any major incident involving the group should be communicated (as soon as practicable) to the Head Teacher or ESC.

17.2.3 Group Leaders should be aware that the school would have emergency funding available to support them in the event of an emergency.

## 18 Reporting and Recording

18.1 Before a group leaves school the Group Leader, in conjunction with the ESC, should ensure that the emergency contact details are completed and circulated as necessary.

18.2 All visits will be evaluated by the Group Leader with the EVC/Head Teacher against the Educational Visits Form [RD4] to see if the intended objectives were met and if there are any lessons to be learnt.

18.3 As part of this exercise, the EVC/Head Teacher will ensure that any risk assessments on the trip are dated as having been evaluated and/or modified as a result.

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- 18.4 The Group Leader is responsible for presenting a financial account for the visit (along with receipts where appropriate) that will be audited as part of the school's normal financial control.