

THE DUSTON SCHOOL

# Off-Site Visits Policy

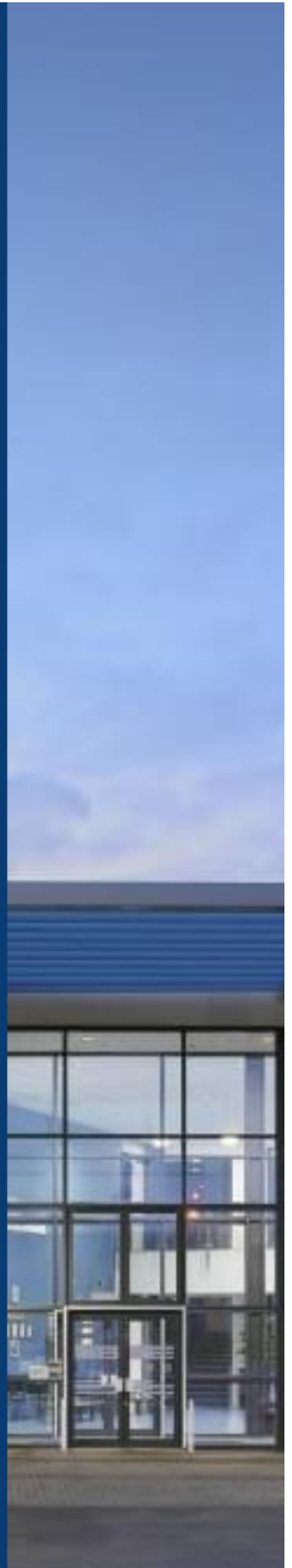
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## Contents

Contents .....	2
1. Aims and scope .....	2
2. Legislation and guidance .....	2
3. Roles and responsibilities .....	3
4. Planning and preparation .....	5
5. Risk assessment .....	6
6. Volunteers .....	7
7. Communication and consent.....	8
8. Emergency procedures and incident reporting .....	8
9. Charging and insurance .....	10
10. Residential visits .....	10
11. Review.....	10
12. Links with other policies .....	11
Appendix 1: proposed visit planning information .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix 2: risk assessment template .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix 3: volunteer behaviour and code of conduct .....	11

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## 1. Aims and scope

Educational visits are activities arranged by, or on behalf of, our school, which require pupils to leave the school premises, having been authorised to do so by the headteacher or other designated members of staff.

Educational visits are a valuable way to further supplement and enhance our curriculum, they expand our pupils' education and provide enriching social and cultural experiences, teaching life skills and promoting independent learning, providing a foundation for lifelong learning, and they form an integral part of our approach to furthering our pupils' education and personal growth.

This policy sets out our approach to planning and operating educational visits, to ensure the health and safety of our pupils and staff, and to make sure that we endeavour to try to ensure that our visits are available to all pupils. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff, pupils and volunteers when it comes to visits.

Off-Site activities play an important part in pupils' education and should be encouraged & supported. They include activities such as: day visits; short & long stay residential journeys; field studies out of school; foreign language exchanges; sports tours in this country & abroad. Off-Site activities do not include work experience (unless involving group travel), usual journey to & from school. All Off-Site activities must serve an educational purpose, which is clearly related to the curriculum, or form part of agreed enrichment programmes. Safety must be a prime consideration and party leaders must be aware of the degree of care expected of them

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's guidance on [health and safety on educational visits](#), and the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- [DFE Charging for School Activities](#)

Sections of this policy are also based on the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#).

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Providing a rich and varied programme of opportunities for children to learn outside the classroom. The programme of visits should be structured and progressive to gradually develop children's confidence, independence and responsibility
- Approving staff requests for educational visits, including having final authority to approve any educational visit of less than 24 hours
- Making sure staff, including the educational visits co-ordinator, have received necessary training
- Ensure that arrangements are in place for informing the governing body about visits
- Ensure that the governing body has approved the education visits policy and receive reports on visits as appropriate
- Seek approval of the governing body to approve a visit/trip that involves adventurous activities, a visit and activities of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay and/or travel overseas (Category C)
- Appoint an Outdoor Education Advisor who has sufficient knowledge, training, experience, sound judgement, and the ability to influence practice across the school effectively
- Ensure that visit arrangements and outcomes are evaluated to inform future visits and staff training needs
- Arrange for the reporting of accidents and incidents as required. Records of these should be reviewed regularly, and the information used to inform future visits

### 3.2 Governing Body

The Governing Body are responsible for:

- Enabling and ensuring high quality visits and outdoor learning through support and challenge as a 'critical friend'
- Ensure there is formal notification and approval procedures for visits, and the governing body agree on the types of visit it should be informed about.
- Challenge the nature of an activity or visit when the educational objectives are not clear or where the means to meet them do not appear to be realistic.
- Ensure there are procedures in place to monitor the safety, quality and effectiveness of off-site visits and outdoor learning.
- In cases where a trip involves adventurous activities, a visit and activities of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay and/or travel overseas (Category C), the Principal will seek approval of the governing board
- The governing body retains overall responsibility for health, safety and welfare.

### 3.3 The educational visits co-ordinators (EVC)

James Barker (secondary phase) Sonja Pragnell (primary phase) are the appointed EVC's at our school. Their role is to:

- Oversee and guide other staff to arrange and organise educational visits
- Assess the ability of other staff to lead visits and designate a suitable trip lead for each visit
- Assess outside activity providers
- Advise the Principal and governing board when they're approving trips
- Access the necessary training, advice and guidance
- Evaluate all visits once complete, from planning to the visit itself, and use this to improve future arrangements

### 3.4 Educational Visits and Outdoor Education Adviser

The Educational Visits and Outdoor Education Adviser is responsible for:

- Promoting educational visits
- Advising about compliance with relevant legal requirements
- Advising the headteacher and governing body about the appointment of EVCs, and supporting the induction of newly appointed EVCs;
- Providing advice and support to those involved in outdoor learning and off-site visits, especially to the EVCs;
- Monitoring the work of EVCs and supporting the school to ensure that their EVCs' training needs are identified and met;
- Providing advice on appropriate leader competence for all types of outdoor learning and off-site visits, and ensuring that this is appropriately assessed;
- Providing advice on safeguarding during outdoor learning and off-site visits, including about requirements or Disclosure and Barring Service checks;
- Engaging actively with appropriate networks and organisations such as OEAP, so as to have access to advice about areas in which they are not personally knowledgeable;
- Maintaining and sharing knowledge of national requirements and initiatives, and of national schemes such as the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, national governing body accreditation schemes and AALA licensing;
- Approving (or disallowing) plans for residential or adventurous activities and visits on behalf of the school,
- Monitoring the provision of outdoor learning and off-site visits, including whether risks are appropriately assessed and managed
- Provide support as part of the visit emergency support network
- Contribute to the investigation of serious accidents and incidents

### 3.5 Visit Leader

Every educational visit will have 1 member of staff designated as the visit leader. The visit leader will:

- Ensure that the planned visit and activities are suitable for the group,
- Obtain the Principal's/SLT approval for the visit according to this policy.
- Plan the proposed visit, taking into account the health and safety risks to pupils, staff and volunteers
- Complete diligence checks on the provider, seek appropriate assurances from providers and ensure that there is a clear contract/agreement in place about what they are responsible for.
- Conduct a pre-visit where possible
- Make sure the school has accurate and up-to-date information about the trip destination, to be used in risk assessments
- The visit leader has the responsibility for preparing the visit risk assessment/s identifying and recording significant hazards and the safety measures required to reduce the risk to a tolerable level.
- Make sure the needs of everyone taking part are considered, including co-ordinating any additional support needed
- Make sure parents and carers are given accurate information about educational visits, including any costs or necessary equipment not supplied by the school or a third party
- Communicate key details about the visit and all locations to staff, pupils and parents/carers, including roles and responsibilities and expected behaviour
- The visit leader will obtain informed consent from parents/guardians
- Ensure the ratio of staff to children is appropriate for the environment/activities and the needs of the group
- Assign staff and volunteer roles, as needed
- Make sure staff are capable and able to fulfil their roles at all times while responsible for pupils and others

- Have sufficient information about the children attending to assess their suitability for the visit or be satisfied their suitability has been assessed and confirmed
- Carry out dynamic risk management while the visit takes place. Consider modifying or stopping the visit if the risk to the health and safety of the children/those attending is unacceptable and have in place procedures/alternative plans for such an eventuality
- Make appropriate and adequate preparations for emergencies in conjunction with the EVC and ensure all accompanying leaders are familiar with these.

### **3.6 Staff**

Staff have a responsibility to make sure all pupils and staff who take part in visits are kept safe and understand the proper way to prepare for trips, as well as how to act while taking part. Staff will:

- Seek and obtain approval for all educational visits from the Principal
- Carry out any required risk assessments and work with the trip lead
- Communicate with parents and carers and make sure trips are inclusive of all pupils' needs
- Look out for the health and safety of themselves and those around them
- Help manage pupil behaviour and discipline as required while on the visit
- Share any concerns or worries with the trip lead and others, as appropriate

### **3.7 Parents and carers**

By agreeing that pupils can take part in educational visits, parents/carers agree that they will:

- Provide all information required, such as emergency contact details and health/medicine information if applicable
- Sign and return consent forms and any other documentation required in a timely manner
- Share any concerns or information about the pupil that may affect or impact their ability to safely take part in the trip

### **3.8 Volunteers**

Volunteers attending school trips, including parent volunteers, agree to:

- Follow the directions of staff and act accordingly
- Behave appropriately and model good behaviour for pupils
- Report any concerns to the trip lead or other staff present as soon as possible
- Make sure pupils under their supervision are acting safely and appropriately, and raise any issues with staff as soon as possible
- Undergo all necessary safeguarding and HR checks as required by the school.

### **3.9 Pupils**

Our school behaviour policy also applies to all educational visits. This includes the expectation that pupils will:

- Follow instructions given to them while on the trip
- Dress and behave as expected for the length of the trip
- Take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others, reporting any concerns to a staff member or trip supervisor

Pupils will always be reminded of our behaviour expectations before going off-site for a visit, and will be expected to uphold the school's behaviour policy at all times.

## **4. Planning and preparation**

Off-Site activities and visits should be executed with due regard to their legal context & good practice, the school adopts OEAP National Guidance. It is essential that relevant sections are familiar to, & understood by, all those planning to be involved in any Off-Site activity.

The decision on whether or not a day visit will take place will be made by the Principal and SLT team, based on the STAGER variables:

- **Staff** Experience/training? Competent? Vetted? Approved? Staff/participant ratio? Know each other?
- **Timing** Time of year? Daylight hours? Likely weather/travel conditions? Availability of facilities? Curriculum constraints? Religious days/festivals? Term time/holiday? Day/evening/weekend? Cost variation? Staffing issues? Availability of support/emergency response?
- **Activity** Suitability? Complexity? Adventure activities? Residential? Transport? Staff/participant training? Equipment? External provider?
- **Group** Age? Gender? Number? Behaviour? Individual needs/abilities? Experience/training? Known to staff? Consent?
- **Environment** Weather? Ground conditions? Water levels? Tides? Pandemic? Accommodation? Other hazards? Disabled access?
- **Remoteness** Travel distance/time/cost? Routine/emergency communications? Emergency access? Overseas? Language?

In cases where a trip involves adventurous activities, a visit and activities for more than 24 hours, an overnight stay and/or travel overseas (Category C), the Principal will seek approval of the governing board. These visits are referred to the Educational Visits and Outdoor Education Adviser for endorsement.

Once the risk assessment has been approved by the Principal, and the governing board where relevant, staff will communicate with parents/carers and provide trip information. The school will seek informed written consent from parents/guardians for all trips.

We will evaluate each visit after its conclusion, from the planning through to the visit itself, to continually improve the planning and experience of our future visits.

#### 4.1 Approval & Monitoring:

Approval and monitoring arrangements for all off site activities are centralised using the Longtown Outdoor Learning Trust 'Evisit' online resource system.

The Duston School categorises school trips in line with LA categories A, B and C.

The approval procedure for each is as follows:

Cat A: SLT approval. (EV1 form to SLT member in charge of trips and visits)

Cat B: SLT – Principal

Cat C: SLT – Off-Site & Adventurous Activities – Governing Body. Approval should be sought before financial commitment to a venture. Longtown Outdoor Learning Trust Educational Visits Advisor to endorse.

#### 4.2. Inclusion

We will endeavour to include all pupils, regardless of background or abilities, should be able to take part in every aspect of our school life, including visits. **The Duston School reserves the right to refuse a pupil on a school trip based on concerns that we may have regarding behaviour and/or safeguarding.**

If a pupil with a disability or an education, health and care (EHC) plan, or any other specific needs (e.g. medical conditions including allergies) is participating in the visit, we will endeavour they will have the same support that is available to them during the school day.

We will endeavour to adjust the trip programme where necessary, working with parents/carers to provide additional support, making reasonable adjustments to itineraries, providing additional support staff, and other adjustments as appropriate.

Additional risk assessments may be carried out to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils.

### 5. Risk assessment

We will carry out a full risk assessment for the visit including all elements of the itinerary and providing for supervision of downtime and for overnight stays/residentials. This will be prepared at least 2 weeks before the start of all trips.

The risk assessment will include any specific medical issues and allergies (for staff and pupils), the role of additional support on the visit, specified activities to be carried out, as well as risks associated with transport to and from the destination.

Where practical, staff may make a preliminary visit to the trip destination as part of the planning and risk assessment process, but this is not mandatory.

Trip leads will raise any concerns or questions about potential risks and safety measures with the Principal and, where appropriate, third party vendors.

Every risk assessment will be approved by the EVC coordinator, James Barker (secondary phase), Sonja Pragnell (primary phase), and a copy taken on the visit and another copy left with SLT in school.

## 5.1 Staff ratios and first aid

Risk assessments for each visit will ascertain the safe level of supervision required. On all educational visits, we will make sure:

- At least 1 supervising adult is able to administer first aid is present on all trips and knows how to access qualified first aid support
- For EYFS visits and trips at least 1 qualified paediatric first aider is present on all trips and knows how to access qualified first aid support
- Appropriate first aid equipment will be take on all trips, in accordance with the school's first aid and health and safety policies.
- All supervising adults will be made aware of any medical issues or allergies at the start of the trip
- All supervising adults will have an enhanced DBS check
- The trip lead will take regular headcounts and/or rollcalls

## 5.2 Transport

Transportation for trips will be organised by the school, in line with our safety procedures. We will make sure pupils, staff and volunteers are transported safely and efficiently, with the required first aid provision.

Unless previously agreed with parents, transport for visits will leave from, and return to, the school site.

## 5.3 Use of external organisations

As part of the risk assessment process, we will check that any external organisations providing an activity have appropriate safety standards and liability insurance.

This includes checking that organisations hold the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge. Where an organisation/provider does not hold the (LOtC) Quality Badge we will complete appropriate diligent checks, using the OEAP Provider Template to gather evidence. We will check additional details as outlined in the DfE's guidance on [health and safety on educational visits](#) to make sure it's an appropriate organisation to use.

We will have a written agreement in place with each external organisation outlining what everyone is responsible for during the activity.

## 5.4 Electronic Devices

### Primary Phase

Trackers and Smart Watches – Children are not allowed to have mobile phones, smart watches or other devices on school visits or trips. This includes any tracking devices including apple air tags or android tags.

### Secondary Phase

Guidance will be given by the trip lead regarding electronic devices and those that are permissible on any school visit or trip.

## 6. Volunteers

Where appropriate, parents and carers may be asked to volunteer to attend and supervise pupils alongside staff members on trips. Where more parents/carers volunteer than required on the visit, those invited to attend will be selected as fairly and transparently as possible, whilst taking into consideration:

- The needs of the pupils going on the trip
- The setting and circumstances of the trip



- Volunteers' skills, attitude and past behaviour, including previous volunteer experience

Parents/carers selected to volunteer will be informed at least 2 weeks ahead of the visit, and asked to confirm their attendance in writing. They will also be asked to confirm they agree with the expected behaviour. See **appendix 1** for our volunteer code of conduct for educational visits.

Volunteers will receive a full induction from staff members on the day of the visit, prior to departure, including on their responsibilities, expected behaviour, the process for raising concerns, emergency procedures and contact details, and the expected timetable of the trip.

All volunteers will be required to undergo safeguarding checks, including DBS checks.

## 7. Communication and consent

We will contact the parents and guardians of pupils invited to take part in an educational visit at least 2 weeks before the proposed date of the trip. Communication will be via Class Charts, and information provided will include the date, travel times, destination, purpose of the visit, and the size of the group attending.

We will also communicate:

- Times and details of travel, including drop-off and pick-up times and location
- Pupil-to-staff ratios and staff qualifications, where relevant
- Clothing and equipment required, and whether this is provided by the school
- Expected behaviour and consequences of pupils' failure to meet these standards

Parents/guardians will be asked to provide written consent for educational visits by signing and dating a form to be returned to the school.

We will always inform parents/guardians about any off-site visits, and give them an opportunity for them to withdraw their child.

Parents/guardians will also be asked to provide current and relevant medical information and dietary requirements, as well as emergency contact numbers where they can be reached.

In the case of overseas trips, they will be asked to provide passport information and European Health Insurance Card or UK Global Health Insurance Card information, if available. From 2025 the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) will be required as the new travel authorisation for visa-exempt travellers to enter Europe.

## 8. Emergency procedures and incident reporting

Generally, emergency planning will be defined as planning for:

- Serious and unexpected risk
- Serious and life-threatening injury
- Individuals going missing
- A serious breach of safeguarding expectations

The Visit Leader will be familiar with these plans for each visit.

### Immediate Action

The Visit Leader/SLT member will take charge of an incident and follow the agreed Emergency Procedures unless and until relieved by the emergency services or by an appropriate member of school/establishment staff. If the Visit Leader is incapacitated, all members of the visit leadership team should be able to take charge and to at least initiate the Emergency Procedures.

### Visit Emergency Procedures

The Visit Leader/SLT member should:

1. Assess the situation, establishing the nature and extent of the problem but ensuring that they do not put themselves or others at further risk.
2. Make sure all members of the party are:
  - a. accounted for;



- b. safe;
- c. adequately supervised;
- d. briefed to ensure that they understand what to do to remain safe;

3. Allocate roles to other leaders and/or suitable participants. An effective emergency response requires several things to happen at once and the Visit Leader cannot attend to casualties, ensure that others in the group are moved to a safe place and kept safe, call for help from the emergency services, instigate the Emergency Procedures and keep notes of the incident all at the same time.

4. If a participant or member of staff is missing, the response will depend upon the circumstances, and the age and other characteristics of the missing person.

The following is a guide:

- a. Stop the activity immediately, or as soon as possible;
  - b. Gather the group, ensure their safety, and keep them together;
  - c. Confirm who is missing;
  - d. Urgently check any hazards nearby, particularly water;
  - e. Check the activity area, and the last place the missing person is known to have been;
  - f. Depending on the circumstances, try to contact the missing person, for example:
    - i. by mobile phone, if they have one;
    - ii. by shouting or blowing a whistle and then listening;
  - g. Alert the emergency services and your Emergency Contact (see below);
  - h. Check any key points (e.g., a previous meeting point; accommodation; your immediate destination) to which the missing person may have gone;
  - i. Consider what the missing person might have done, or what might have happened to them, from the last time and place they were known to have been, and use this to plan further searching;
  - j. Continue the search process until emergency services take over or the person is found;
  - k. In consultation with Principal, decide whether to continue with the visit/activity while the search continues under the control of the emergency services or another member of staff.
5. If there are injuries, take action to establish their extent and administer appropriate first aid. Aim to:
- a. Preserve life;
  - b. Prevent the condition worsening;
  - c. Promote recovery: treat for shock; reassure and keep warm.
6. Contact the appropriate emergency service(s) – in the UK dial 999 or 112 for the police, fire and rescue, ambulance or coastguard (for mountain/cave/mine rescue ask for the police); if overseas, ensure that your Emergency Procedures include the appropriate numbers. They will guide you through the information they need but this will include:
- a. Your name and the name of the group/establishment;
  - b. Location;
  - c. Nature of emergency and number of injured persons;
  - d. Action taken so far.
7. Alert your Emergency Contact. You may be in shock and need support. News travels fast and your establishment/employer will need accurate information.
8. Control any communications by the rest of the group. Rumours spread very quickly and can cause serious and unnecessary upset.
9. Avoid splitting the group – unless it is the only way to get help – and leave nobody on their own.

In the case of an emergency, the Visit Leader or other supervising adult will contact the school office. The school office will then contact parents/guardians as required, and inform them of changes to plans or cancellations of trips and/or alternative travel plans. This will form part of a wider communication plan that covers how routine communications should be handled in such situations.

1 member of staff will always accompany a pupil seeking medical treatment.

All incidents and accidents will be reported in line with our health and safety policy, including required reporting to Ofsted and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Smaller incidents, accidents or near misses that do not require external reporting will still be covered by an internal report, to include steps that can be taken in the future to avoid similar incidents.

There will also be a clear process for evaluating all visits and trips once they have been concluded from the planning through to the visit itself. This will help with evaluating whether planning worked and to learn from any incidents that took place. All lessons learnt will be reflected in future trip planning and risk assessments.

## 9. Charging and insurance

We will follow our school's charging and remissions policy at all times together with the DFE guidance for charging for school activities. [DFE Charging for School Activities](#)

We may ask for a voluntary contribution for the costs of educational visits. Whilst we are only able to ask for contributions towards trips, it is important to note that if we are unable to cover costs, the trip may not be able to take place.

We will make sure adequate insurance is in place for all trips, including, but not limited to: cancellation insurance for contracts with external providers, travel insurance, accident and medical cover, and loss of luggage and other personal items.

## 10. Residential visits

The Principal, together with the governing board, will approve all residential trips longer than 24 hours.

The planning and preparation laid out in this policy will apply to residential visits as well as 1-day visits. In addition, the trip lead will make sure:

- Staff have received any necessary training
- All necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained before the start of the trip
- All adults, including volunteers, have had adequate safeguarding checks and enhanced DBS checks

Parents and guardians will be given specific information about the visit and asked for informed consent before the first day of the visit. Information shared with parents will include:

- The dates and time of departure and return to school
- The full address and contact details of the destination
- Planned activities and options
- Meal provision
- Costs and optional charges, including deposits and the date by which this must be received, in line with our charging and remissions policy (this will include information about exemptions)
- Clothing and equipment provided, and what pupils must bring themselves
- Public health requirements, including any required vaccinations
- Accommodation options and arrangements
- The names of staff attending

For visits to principle cities (UK or International) we will include contingency plans for the event of a terror attack.

For visits abroad, we will make sure that any organisation providing activities holds the LOTC Quality badge or similar local accreditation. We will follow the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office's overseas travel guidance](#) and [foreign travel advice](#) when organising these visits.

## 11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Principal and at every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing board.

## 12. Links with other policies

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Health and safety policy
- Critical incident plan
- Charging and remissions policy
- Behaviour policy
- Child protection policy
- First aid policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Special educational needs (SEN) policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Accessibility plan
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

## Appendix 1: volunteer behaviour and code of conduct

This code of conduct sets out the expected behaviour for volunteers attending school trips. Volunteers should read and sign this form, showing that they understand and agree to follow this code while acting on behalf of the school. If you feel you cannot agree with this code, please speak to trip lead at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from the trip.

A copy of this form will be kept in the school office, and you may ask for a photocopy to keep for yourself.

This volunteer code of conduct will be used alongside the school's parental code of conduct.

Volunteers agree to:

- Remain professional and respectful with staff and pupils at all times
- Listen to and act on instructions from staff
- Dress appropriately for the trip
- Arrive at the agreed time and remain until the trip is concluded and they are told they may leave by staff
- Pay attention to potential dangers and raise concerns with staff
- Act responsibly and demonstrate good behaviour to pupils
- Report any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a pupil to staff as soon as possible

Volunteers agree **not** to:

- Exchange contact details with pupils
- Engage in physical contact with pupils
- Share inappropriate personal information (i.e. personal beliefs, religious views, relationship status)
- Use demeaning, offensive, abusive or insensitive language
- Smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs (other than those required for medical reasons) or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (other than those required for medical reasons) for the duration of the visit

As a volunteer, I have read and agree to this code of conduct, and will follow the rules set out above.

**Signed:**

**Date:**