NASAT Educational Visits and Trips Policy – SO 0116

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1. Purpose of this document

To outline the NAS Education Directorate's policy for NAS and NASAT schools' approach to the organisation of educational visits and trips.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all schools and children's services within National Autistic Society and National Autistic Society Academy Trust.

3. Approach

Children can derive a great deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits with their school. In particular, they have the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom. Educational visits help to develop a child's investigative skills and longer visits in particular encourage greater independence. This Policy is designed to help staff, governors and others to ensure that pupils stay safe and healthy on school visits.

All staff who are considering the organisation of a school visit, whatever its nature must read the following policy and act on its contents.

The organisation of educational visits has undergone considerable review in the light of avoidable tragic events and the legal ramifications for trip organisers and supervisors. Safeguarding considerations must take priority over all others. Moreover, pragmatism in an increasingly litigious society requires close attention to detail.

One of the stated aims of schools in line with the National Curriculum / Curriculum for Excellence is to prepare pupils for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of adult life. To achieve this, pupils spend time out of school learning to use public facilities,

to behave in a socially acceptable way, to enjoy themselves, to improve their independent living skills, work experience, transition visits and to encourage inclusion.

Pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of PE activities/life skills and leisure activities within the local community as well as activities linked to the curriculum and individual targets. These give our pupils extra opportunities to generalize skills they have learnt in school and develop their independence, resilience & confidence.

4. Operational delivery

4.1 Categories

School trips and visits will be divided into four categories of risk:

A. Frequent/responsive and low risk (A)
B. Infrequent and low risk (B)
C. Any high risk (C)
D. Any offsite residential trip (D)

Frequent/responsive and low risk trips (A) account for aspects of a child's learning and development that require frequent/routine out of school/resident activities. These may include activities such as community access, a low risk response to a sudden change in a child's behaviour, part of the curriculum's routine delivery (e.g. swimming programme) or as a short-term reward.

Low risk infrequent activities (B) account for most planned trips & visits to venues such as museums, sporting events, and leisure activities that are not frequent or part of the curriculum's routine delivery. The principal's permission or their deputy must be obtained.

High-risk activities (C) include any domestic but high-risk activities; day trips require that the Director of Education and Children's services and the Chair of the Local Governing Body should be informed. The principal's approval is required.

Any off-site residential activities (D) require approval from the Principal and the Director of Education and Children's Services. The Chair of the Local Governing Body should be notified of the visit. The activity needs to be risk assessed by both school and provider of Adventurous/High Risk Activities.

Any transport used for students must be risk assessed. Regardless if the transport is school minibus or an external travel company is providing transport

The permission of parents/carers must also be obtained for all categories of school trips and visits, either as part of routine planning for Cat A activities or via discrete permission for Cat B to D trips.

Governors' approval or awareness is likely to come through the designated safeguarding governor being delegate responsibility on behalf of the local governing body (LGB). At least annually and typically in the summer term, all governors should have the opportunity to scrutinise a school's trips for their impact and any lessons learned.

Visits and trips are an essential part of the school's provision. The experiences gained by pupils benefit them for the rest of their lives. The school wants them to operate within a safe framework that has the confidence of staff, pupils and parents / carers.

Evolve System

Some schools use Evolve system for the management and approval of Educational visits. Some schools use this for all trips and some for the category C and D trips. This currently is a matter for local school procedure.

The Educational Visit Coordinator determines whether the trip is risk managed by internal school processes or needs to be considered by the Evolve Local authority team due the type of activity.

Category A trips

School's curriculum planning should incorporate pupils' individual plans, risk assessments and support packages. Off-site activities that are integrated into the curriculum or residential service's provision must be risk assessed. Some schools may keep a series of generic risk assessments which may be used as a basis. However, all visits should be considered in context of the children attending, any change in conditions and situational contexts and a specific risk assessment completed. These trips must be thoroughly thought through and checked by the trip leader's line manager or professional supervisor.

Many venues used by schools carry out their own risk assessments. Schools should ask for these and where they are not available ensure a trained risk assessor visits and completes a risk assessment.

Initial Request for Cat B-D trips

The visit or trip organiser must submit an initial request to the principal for permission to organise the trip, including an outline risk assessment that will enable the principal to make an informed decision. This request should be made at least a week before any category B trip and at least a half term before any category C and D trips. This request must include full details including rationale (linked to pupils' learning), destination, planning, itinerary and levels of supervision. The reply will include a decision on whether the trip is category B-D. In all cases, trip organisers and leaders must consult https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits.

All trips will require a written risk assessment pack. A risk assessment pack must contain contextual, activity and individual pupil risk assessments. The assessments will be reviewed annually and every time the trip runs. Permission is required from Governors for Category C and D events, so plenty of time must be allowed in submitting the information to the designated governor.

For visits and trips designated as Category C and D trips, the supervision ratios must be suitable and reflect pupils' risk assessments, personal plans and staff's knowledge of the attending pupils.

On returning the visit, where there is a concern or specific issue to feedback the lead member of staff must complete an evaluation form (school's own) and return to the Principal. Near miss, accident and incident data must also be completed. This is for Health and Safety reasons and partly so that the school can build up a record of risk assessments which will make the risk assessment procedure both easier and more effective over time.

4.2 Considerations

Principals and designated staff (trip leaders, DSL) will ensure that:

a. the group leader who has sole charge of the visit is competent to monitor the risks throughout
b. there are adequate safeguarding procedures in place
c. risk assessments have been completed and the appropriate safety measures are in place
d. training needs have been assessed and the needs of the staff and pupils considered.
    i. An appropriately trained and competent group leader and deputy has been appointed.
    ii. The ratio of appropriate staff to pupils is in line with individual risk assessments.
    iii. Adequate first aid provision is available.
    iv. the specific special and medication needs of pupils are known and arrangements have been made to ensure all needs are met
    v. volunteers and/or agencies supporting on or accompanying pupils during the trip have the required vetting checks and training to support autistic pupils.
    vi. training will include but not be limited to reading: DfE (2018) 'Health and safety on educational visits' and HSE (2011) 'School trips and outdoor learning activities'
e. There is adequate and relevant insurance cover
f. Parents/carers/responsible person should be provided with sufficient written information of the trip and asked to sign a consent form and indemnity form as appropriate, completing all necessary emergency information. For category A & B visits a general consent form may be sufficient but a parent should always know that the trip is taking place. For category C &D visits separate specific consent should be obtained. Parental/Guardian/Responsible Person permission does not diminish the responsibility of the trip's organiser.
g. Voluntary contributions may be sought but parents/carers should be aware these are not compulsory and the children of parents who do not contribute will not be discriminated against.
h. A school contact has been nominated who has been given full details of the proposed visit, including travel out and return times.
i. The group leader and supervisors have written details of:
    i. Emergency procedures for educational visits (see section 4.6)
    ii. Names of all pupils and adults travelling in the group
    iii. Personal pupil profiles containing contact details
    iv. Guidance to support the SEND and medical needs of pupils
j. The group leader will have access to a mobile phone in good working order.
k. It will not be common practice for anyone to be left with sole responsibility for a group unless documented in a risk assessment and signed off by the school principal. However, in an emergency the group leader will weigh up risks and make decisions based on current circumstances and safest option. Pupils will be advised

of the aims and objectives of the visit/activity, with background information provided.

l. Where appropriate, pupils will be advised in advance of the visit of appropriate actions, should they be approached by anyone from outside the group, or separated from the group. They should also be provided with emergency procedures and a list of any other relevant information. This information should be provided using an appropriate means of communication.
m. If at any time there is a change to the planned schedule, new activities should be assessed, pupils provided with the appropriate information and the school contact informed.
n. If appropriate each pupil/pupil will carry a discreet card with details of their name, contact phone number, and any urgent medical factors e.g. epilepsy, diabetes (if any)
o. First aid should form part of the risk assessment. Before undertaking any off-site activities, the Principal or the group leader should assess what level of first aid might be needed. On any kind of visit a first aid box should be taken and there should be at least one trained first aider within the staff team supervising the visit.
p. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Drivers and Vehicle policy. The principal is ultimately responsible for the school minibus; however, the driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit. If alternative school transport is required, the group leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. When booking transport, the group leader should ensure that seat belts are available for pupils.
q. The use of public transport will need to be individually Risk Assessed with careful consideration given to the increased need for pupil/pupil supervision at all times.

4.3 Supervision

Professional bodies provide typical supervision ratios guidance for schools. It is unlikely that those typical ratios will be appropriate in most cases, given our children's needs. Trip leaders and approving officers must make sure that supervision ratios are appropriate to ensure that risk is reduced, in light of children's individual risk assessments.

School mobile phones (and chargers for residential or visits abroad including adapters where needed) may be provided to all staff on visits or trips.

If a pupil is deemed to be missing on a trip or visit, the Missing Pupil policy must be followed.

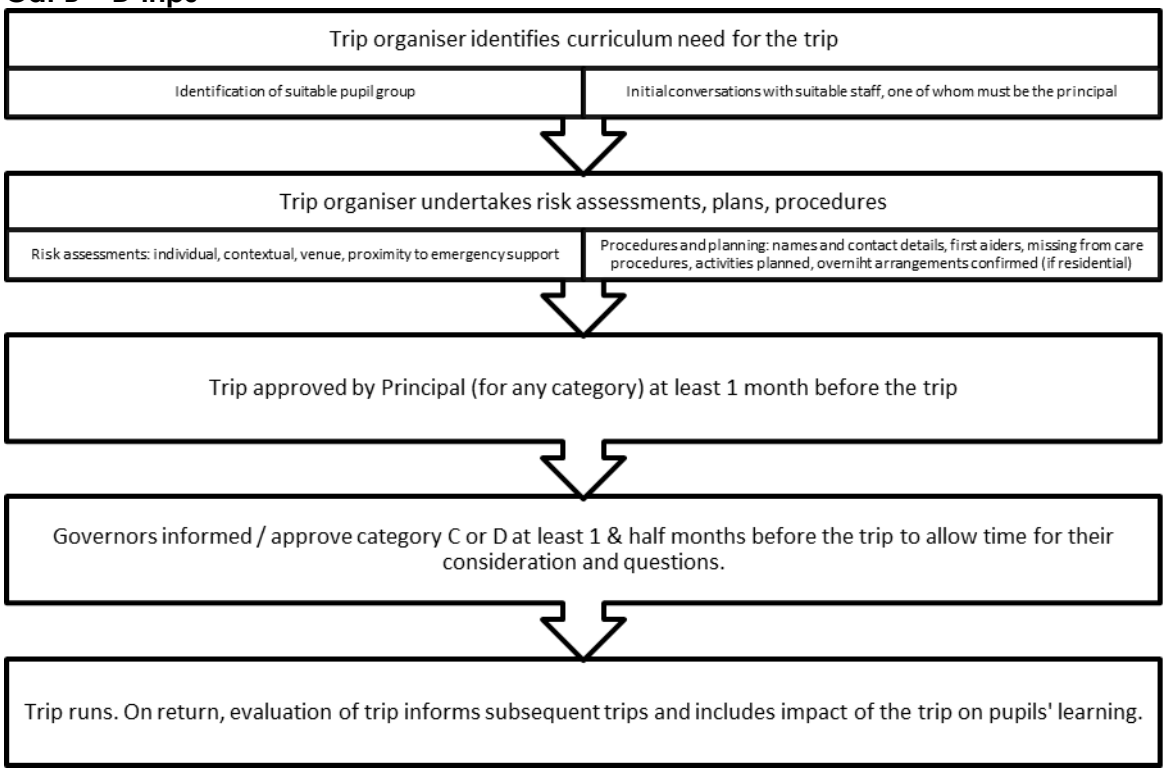
4.4 Approval process

Some NAS and NASAT schools operate an electronic approval system called EVOLVE. It is currently under review as to whether all school's should adopt this system and therefore this policy has been given a shorter review date.

Where EVOLVE is used, the approval process flow chart below for Cat B-D trips should be accounted for.

Cat A trips – approval will be sought prior to the trip's departure with the trip leader's line manager or supervisor. Checks must be made that the trip will run as safely as possible and that any contemporary relevant contextual information is taken into account.

Cat B – D trips



4.5 Vetting providers

When considering external providers for activities, the group leader will check whether they hold the 'Learning Outside the Classroom Quality (LOtC)[1] Badge to indicate they meet nationally recognised standards.

If a provider does not hold the badge, the group leader will check the following to ensure they are a suitable organisation to work with:

- Each activity has an appropriate risk assessment
- Their insurance arrangements (and that they do not use insurance or third-party disclaimers as part of their risk assessment)
- Their adherence to legal requirements
- Their control measures
- Their use of vehicles
- Staff competency levels
- Safeguarding policies
- The suitability of their accommodation

[1] Any venue or attraction can apply for the LOTC quality badge.
The LOtC Quality Badge is the *only* nationally recognised indicator of good quality educational provision AND effective risk management.
The Department for Education guidance on Health & Safety on educational visits recommends that schools look for the LOtC Quality Badge when choosing external providers of educational visits.
The award of the LOtC Quality Badge indicates that the provider understands schools' needs and can tailor their offer to fit in with both current curriculum requirements and any specific requirements of the school.

- Any sub-contracting arrangements in place
- The presence of necessary licences

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

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

4.6 Emergencies on Educational Visits - Procedure

It will be the group leader's responsibility to ensure the following actions are taken:

1. Establish and assess the nature of incident, the extent of any injury and risk to others.
2. Call 999 if emergency assistance is required.
3. Ensure all other members of the party are accounted for and safe, adequately supervised, and arrangements made for an early return to school.
4. Appropriate emergency services are called.
5. If injuries have occurred, first aid should be administered where possible, by appropriately trained staff members. As soon as emergency first aid has been given, medical assistance must be sought.
6. No over the counter medicines should be administered.
7. A member of staff should accompany any pupil/pupil casualties to hospital, and contact the Principal and establish what immediate action should be taken.by the Principal will inform the Director of Education. The Principal will also, if necessary, inform the Head of PR and Media on 0207 903 3539 (office hours) or 07435 753385 (out of hours). In the event that Head of PR and Media cannot be reached, the Media Team should be contact on 020 7903 3593 (office hours) or 07787 124792 (out of hours).
8. A member of the leadership team should inform the Chair of the Local Governing Body.
9. For schools that use Evolve system: All Local Authority Evolve teams also have contact arrangements for managing critical incidents involving schools and these would also need to be contacted.
10. All Media enquiries regarding the incident must be referred to the PR and Media Team.
11. If appropriate, one adult should remain at the site of the incident to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all children are accounted for.
12. As soon as possible, notes should be made of the incident and a record taken of the names and addresses of any witnesses, or any other person involved.
13. Where death or injury has occurred, families should be told in person as soon as possible. This should be done in conjunction with the police and Principal of /designated deputy. The Principal should inform the Director of Education who should in turn inform the NAS CEO.
14. Accident forms should be completed as soon as possible and relevant inspection bodies informed, such as registration authorities, Health and Safety Executive, and any requirements under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) in England.
15. Legal liability should not be discussed.
16. Support should be given to all staff/people we support during/after any incident. This will include debriefing and counselling as required.

4.7 Terrorist incidents

In the event of a terrorist incident, the trip leader must lead the trip through procedures being directed by the local emergency services. The trip leader must attempt to make immediate contact with the principal. If local telephony services are disrupted, contact must be attempted every 15 minutes. In some cases, linking to a local wifi network and sending an email may be more likely than making a call. During any communication, the trip leader must outline:

- Their location
- The condition of staff and children
- Their plan in response to the incident

The principal will coordinate communication with parents.
If a trip is impacted by an incident occurring elsewhere, for example delaying travel, then the trip leader must contact the school as soon as possible to coordinate alternative travel arrangements, regardless of the time at which the incident occurs.

4.8 Local authority

Schools should also consult and liaise with the local authority, to ensure they are working within operation of local authority guidance

5 Roles and responsibilities

The responsibilities of the NAS(AT) Board of Trustees

- Ratify and regularly review this policy to ensure it conforms to relevant law and guidance

The responsibilities of the Local Governing Body

- Ensure local procedures are in place to effectively implement this policy within the school
- To keep themselves informed through regular meetings with staff and visits to the school
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and advise the board of any necessary amendments
- Appointing a governor who will review the effectiveness of implementation and report back to the LGB on a regular basis
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to: ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Ensuring educational trips and visits positively impact on pupils' lives, teaching them new life skills and providing new experiences.

- Promoting good safeguarding practices to ensure the safety of pupils when partaking in extra-curricular trips and activities.

The responsibilities of the Principal:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
- Appointing an educational visits coordinator
- Liaising with the local authority as necessary
- Liaising with the educational visits coordinator and communicating information regarding any planned trips to parents.
- Liaising with the governing board regarding the organisation of extra-curricular trips and activities, including settling any disputes.
- Being part of the approval process for extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring the educational visits coordinator is competent to oversee the coordination of off-site education, and arranging for training to be undertaken as necessary.
- Ensuring completion of relevant paperwork, including risk assessments, for extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring suitable safety measures are in place prior to each trip or activity.
- Overseeing the work of the educational visit coordinator, ensuring a whole-school approach is adopted when planning and coordinating extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring there are contingency plans in place in the event of a member of staff being absent on the day of the trip or activity.

The responsibilities of the educational visit coordinator (EVC):

- Overseeing all issues and controls regarding extra-curricular activities and trips.
- Regularly update their training in line with established protocols
- Liaising between all appropriate parties, including the local outdoor education adviser, during the planning and organising of extra-curricular activities and trips.
- Working with the local outdoor education adviser for the local authority to help staff assess and manage risks.
- Ensuring the systems and procedures for dealing with educational visits adhere to the requirements of this policy.

The responsibilities of the designated group leader (and their deputy)

They are in charge of the trip is 'in loco parentis' and has a duty of care to all pupils on the trip. They are also responsible for:

- Checking the schedule is free on the school calendar prior to planning an educational visit.
- Identifying the educational purpose of the extra-curricular trip or activity and presenting its benefits to the Principal.
- Completing all essential documentation for the trip, including a risk assessment
- Informing parents and ensuring consent
- Understanding and operating safeguarding measures throughout the planning, organisation and delivery of the extra-curricular trip or activity.
- Delegating responsibilities to other staff members on the school trip.

- Ensuring all adults on the trip are aware of their responsibilities and that the necessary checks have been carried out on volunteers in line with the DBS Policy.

The responsibilities of staff:

- Adhering to this policy and applying its principles when participating in extra-curricular trips and activities.
- Ensuring the safety of the pupils is maximised throughout any educational visit or activity.
- Liaising with the designated leader to understand personal responsibilities and ensuring the smooth running of the school trip or activity.
- Ensuring that any outdoor space visited, e.g. a park and playing field, is kept clean and free from litter during the trip.

The responsibilities of pupils: (supported by staff)

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

6 Equality Impact statement

In application of this policy we strive to make educational visits relevant and accessible to all pupils regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or social class. The extra-curricular trips and activities offered to pupils will provide new experiences and develop life skills that reflect the multicultural society in which we live. The organisation, staffing risk assessment and approach will enable all pupils to have equal opportunities to participate in educational visits. Visits must be age and developmentally appropriate. The nature of autism means pupils mature at different rates and that pupils will only benefit from learning about concepts for which they are developmentally ready.

7 Evaluation of policy

The education directorate will review this policy annually, unless new guidance is made available or circumstances change

8 The legal framework

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

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

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

- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety on educational visits'
- HSE (2011) 'School trips and outdoor learning activities'
- DfE (2013) 'Driving school minibuses'

9 Related policies

It is important that this policy and the procedures therein is considered alongside NAS, local authority and Government policies and guidance including (but not limited to):

- Safeguarding, including Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE Trips and Visits Guidance (linked above), venues' safeguarding and safety procedures
- Health and Safety
- Driver and Vehicle policy
- Risk Assessment
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Complaints
- Equal opportunities policy
- Business continuity plans.
- Charging and remission policy

10 Definitions

NASAT - National Autistic Society Academy Trust free schools
LGB – Local Governing Body
LA – Local authority
IN LOCO PARENTIS - the group leader of any school trip or educational visit has a duty of care over the pupils in place of a parent.
SCHOOL TRIP - any educational visit, foreign exchange trip, away-day or residential holiday organised by the school which takes pupils and staff members off-site.
RESIDENTIAL- any school trip which includes an overnight stay.
ACTIVITIES OF AN 'ADVENTUROUS NATURE' include, but are not limited to, the following:
Trekking
Caving
Skiing
Water sports
Climbing
EVC – Educational Visit Co-ordinator