

St. Michael's Catholic Grammar School

Educational Visits and Charging Policy (revised May 2015)

A. Planning the Visit

- All educational visits should have a clearly stated educational aim which should be agreed with the Deputy Head who is the Educational Visits Coordinator. Consideration should be given to curricular needs, the skills and competencies of the staff involved and advice should be sought, where necessary, especially with regard to safety issues.
- All school visits that are part of the curriculum, i.e. take place during the school day or part thereof, must be open to all pupils in the appropriate group who would benefit from the visit unless it is considered that a particular student should remain within the stricter control of the school environment. Such a matter should be discussed with the Headteacher before any decision is made.
- "Optional Extras" to the curriculum must not take place during the school day except for the Sixth Form.
- A blue permission form must be completed, signed by the Kitchen Supervisor and passed to the Deputy Head with names of accompanying staff. **Only** when approval has been granted, should the organiser enter the date in the diary in the Cover Manager's office. A letter can then be approved and be sent home at least 6 weeks in advance for day trips and 3 months for residential trips.
- Wherever practicable, organisers should evaluate the suitability of the venue and assess any potential risks by means of a reconnoitre visit or a letter which has been answered to the organiser's satisfaction. This is particularly important when considering visits of a residential/overseas/adventurous nature.
- The organiser should complete a risk assessment form to be attached to the blue "Application to take pupils out on a Visit or Field Trip" Form and ParentPay form and submit it to the Deputy Head.
- From September 2014 all trips should be available to pay for via 'ParentPay'. A white ParentPay form needs to be collected and filled out and handed to the Deputy Head at least one week before the letter is given to the pupils, to allow for the details to be uploaded to ParentPay.
- Please see attached letter for guidance as to the wording in letters requesting payment.
- The trip organiser can follow up payments requesting updated accounts from ParentPay from the Finance Office.

B. Parental Briefing and Consent

- For all trips including for the Sixth Form, parents should be consulted in writing well in advance of the visit – at least 3 months for residential and 6 weeks for day trips. Any letter should include:
 - the educational purpose of the visit
 - the content of the programme - including details of available activities
 - place of visit
 - dates and expected times of arrival and departure
 - code of conduct expected of the students. It needs to be clearly understood that pupils under age in the UK are forbidden to buy alcohol even if the regulations in other countries allow this
 - any special clothing or equipment required
 - mode of travel

and if the visit is residential/overseas/adventurous then also:

- location including address and telephone number
- staffing details - i.e. numbers of adults accompanying the group
- emergency procedure for contacting parents

You should also include the financial category, i.e. part of the curriculum or an optional extra, and a statement of the overall cost and the cost per pupil if the trip is in school time - see section F, iii).

- A Parental Consent Form should be completed for each pupil attending the event. This should include a consent statement and identify the following:-
 - if a pupil suffers from allergies and what type
 - home address and telephone number
 - emergency number

If the trip is residential/overseas/adventurous the following are also needed:-

- special dietary requirements
- if a pupil is taking medication, what dosage and if it is self-administered
- whether there are any activities in which a pupil may not participate
- a final financial out-turn report which agrees the amounts signed off by both the Trip Organiser and the Finance Officer

A sample letter, risk assessment, consent form and Parentpay form can be found in the appendix.

A parents meeting must be held which the Deputy Head will attend.

C. Supervision

- The organiser is responsible for nominating escorts after consultation with the Deputy Head.
- The ratio of adults to pupils is 1 to 20 for low risk activities in the UK, and for medium risk activities in the U.K. it is 1 to 15. A ratio of 1 to 10 should be applied for residential/overseas/adventurous activities. This ratio must be maintained at all times, even on the transport to and from the destination. Pupils must never be left alone with members of the public e.g. security staff, police or bus drivers.
- Adults other than teachers (eg support members of staff or parents) may be asked to act as escorts but the organiser should be careful not to let the ratio of teachers fall unreasonably low especially on a residential/overseas/adventurous activity. If in doubt, the organiser should consult the Deputy Head.
- Teachers accompanying trips organised by their own subject department may be **directed** to act as escorts by their Head of Department. Teachers from other departments **invited** to act as escorts need to seek the permission of their Head of Department. Unfortunately, the School is not able to remunerate part-time teachers who accompany visits on a day when they are not normally in school, however, often time in lieu can often be agreed at the discretion of the Headmaster.
- Members of the support staff accompanying trips organised by their subject Department may be **directed** to act as escorts by their Head of Department. Members of the support staff from other departments **invited** to act as escorts need to seek the permission of their line manager and to inform the Office Manager they will be off site on that day. Those members of the support staff who have care of the pupils need to seek the permission of the Head because of the Health and Safety implications of their absence. These are the Welfare Officers, the Catering staff, Mealtime Assistants and First Aiders. Unfortunately, the School is not able to remunerate part-time staff who accompany visits on days or during hours when they are not normally in school.
- It is essential that each adult is briefed fully as to the educational purpose of the trip and the extent of their responsibilities.
- The organiser must know where all pupils are at all times and make each accompanying adult responsible for a specific group of pupils. In hazardous situations (e.g. mountains, water, coastlines, after dark) pupils must be within sight and control of a specified adult at all times. **School mobile phones should be taken with the staff on the trip to contact the school or parents or pupils.**
- Contingency plans must be drawn up covering the withdrawal of 1 or more adults due to illness or unforeseen circumstances. In this case readjusted responsibilities must be made clear to all in the party.
- Pupils must be aware of rendezvous procedures.

D. Insurance

The school has an approved insurance agreement. Forms are available from the Finance Office. Organisers must satisfy themselves that they have cover appropriate to the visit and seek additional cover where required.

The School Mini Bus (which must be booked in the School Office) may only be driven by trained drivers. Staff using their own cars must have the express permission of the Deputy Head.

E. Information to be retained at School

- The Deputy Head should have the following information regarding **every** educational visit:-
This information should also be kept by the organiser.

- a copy of the letter to parents outlining the details of the trip
- a list of the names of the participants

In addition, for all residential/overseas/adventurous activities:

- address, telephone number of Hotel/Field Centre
 - contact names and telephone numbers for an emergency
 - parental consent forms
 - insurance document
 - travel arrangements
 - passport numbers of all participants where applicable.
- If the visit or any part of it takes place when the school is closed, the group leader should have an emergency contact number of a senior member of staff, usually the Deputy Head.

Organisers of residential/overseas/adventurous activities are encouraged to consult the most recent Good Practice Guide published by the DCSF/DFES or the Guidance provided by L.B. Barnet.

F. The Policy on Charges approved by the Governors of St. Michael's following the Education Reform Act 1988

As a result of the Education Reform Act of 1988 it is a statutory obligation laid upon all Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools to produce a policy on "charging" for certain activities. The policy has been agreed by the Governors of St. Michael's.

A: Legal Principles

- i) Pupils of compulsory school age cannot be asked to pay for any visit that is in school hours.
- ii) Pupils cannot be asked to pay for a visit, inside or outside school hours, which is required by a National Curriculum or the syllabus of a prescribed public examination.

- iii) Pupils cannot be asked to pay for transport, materials or equipment required for such visits. Charges can be made for board and lodging on a residential trip, except to parents who are in receipt of Income Support.
- iv) a) Pupils cannot be charged for materials and equipment which are an integral part of the school syllabus. (Equipment does not include clothing).
b) Pupils cannot be charged for ingredients, materials, equipment, etc., needed for practical subjects. Parents who are willing to do so can be encouraged to do so on a voluntary basis. The school may charge for such materials if the parents have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product.
- v) A charge may be made in respect of individual tuition in playing any musical instrument even if such tuition takes place during school hours, except where it is provided to fulfil the requirements for a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Educational visits for which only voluntary contributions can be requested: pupils of compulsory school age

- i) For any residential visit within school time (i.e.: more school "sessions" involved than non-school "sessions"), no charges can be levied except for board and lodgings.
- ii) No charge can be made for any day visit within school time unless it is stated quite clearly to the Parents that their contribution is voluntary. No child eligible to take part can be left out of the visit because the Parent has refused to contribute. Where necessary a proviso can be included to parents which states that if adequate money is not collected the visit may not take place.

School visits for which charges may be made

- i) The 1988 Act allows for "Optional Extra" charges for activities and visits which are not required by the National Curriculum or public examinations syllabuses which fall outside the school day. The cost can then include:
 - material and equipment
 - provision of non-teaching staff
 - teaching staff who are engaged on a contract to provide that specific activity (but not other teachers on a normal LEA contract).
 - any incidental staff costs such as transport, board and lodgings, admission charges etc.
- ii) For any day visit where more than 50% of the visit including travelling time is outside school hours then the whole of the visit is to be counted as outside school hours and for these charges can be made (see above).

- iii) For any residential visit charges can be made for the items listed above if the visit includes more non-school 'sessions' than school 'sessions'. (If there are an equal number no charge can be made).

Necessitous Pupils

- 1. Where a voluntary contribution is sought to make it possible to pursue a part of a course at a more interesting and useful place and that course is part of the school programme then the organiser will receive from the school the appropriate voluntary contribution for each child on Income Support on receipt of a letter of explanation from parents.

The school will continue to pay towards the cost of A level Field Studies and some GCSE Field Studies.

However, in general, for residential visits the charges will be levied for board and lodgings for visits organised both in and out of school time.

- 2. If a pupil is not on Family Credit or Income Support but there clearly is financial difficulty then the school will use discretion in offering support and may ask for a letter of explanation from the parents.

- 3. There will be no necessity for the school to pay for a pupil for 'optional extra' activities for which parents may legally be charged.

C. Activities within the school

a) Music Tuition

The Act does make provision for charging for 'optional' music tuition.

b) Examinations

- i) No charges may be made for entry to prescribed public examinations or transport to take a pupil to an examination for which they have been prepared and entered by the school.

- ii) If the Governors decide to enter a pupil for a prescribed examination not prepared at the school (i.e. private entry) the costs may be charged for.

- iii) The Governors (delegated to the Head) will decide which pupils enter for which exams.

c) School Property

- i) The school can ask for payments for replacement of books, equipment etc. that have been lost and for wilful damage to school property.

- 1. Standard Risk Assessment (for residential and other risk assessments please see risk assessment forms on Staff Area).