

Overseas visits – Guidance for schools in Pembrokeshire

1 Context

The Welsh Government has published 'Educational visits – a safety guide for learning outside the classroom', which provides comprehensive guidance and good practice related to all aspects of Educational visits. School staff should refer to this guidance when planning any activity away from the school. Further information and guidance on the procedures schools should follow and the support offered by PCC to those undertaking visits is detailed in PCC's Educational Visits Procedures for Pembrokeshire Schools and Youth Service. Both documents are available on the Educational Visits area of the Pembrokeshire Portal .

The process detailed below is supplementary to the WG guidance and is specific to **overseas** visits, focusing on the extended timescales for planning such visits, and for submitting a proposal for approval.

2 Process

All planned overseas visits should adhere to the timescales below.

- 2.1 15 – 18 months prior to intended departure:** Outline proposal to be made to Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team. No booking should be made before receiving written approval from the Head and/or SLT.
- 2.2 12 - 15 months before intended departure:** If approved by Head/SLT, the proposal must be referred to a committee of the governing body for its approval. If approved, the Headteacher and Chair of Governing Body sign off the proposal.
- 2.3 12 months before the proposed trip (or at the earliest opportunity following approval of the proposal by SLT and GB):** Letters to be sent to parents inviting expressions of interest, followed by an open evening to give information – before deposits are taken. Detailed plans may now be drawn up and provisional bookings made (*NB: it is good practice to seek three quotations, to ensure good value for money is achieved*). *Between now and the departure of the trip, parents must be updated at appropriate intervals about the detailed arrangements.*)
- 2.4 At least 8 weeks before departure:** The online educational visit form with all the relevant attachments, including full risk assessment(s), to be completed and submitted for the Director of Education's approval (*NB: it is possible to revisit the form with updated information after submission, therefore the form should not be delayed due minor omissions*).

3 Questions to be addressed in the outline proposal

Before a school decides to offer an overseas visit to pupils, the proposal must be justified. The following issues should be considered by the staff involved, the headteacher and a committee of the governing body.

3.1 Brief details of trip (provisional): destination, number of pupils, dates

3.2 Educational Objectives

- What are the educational objectives?
- How will they be met?
- Could these objectives be met to a similar degree on a UK based educational visit? How?

A robust case must be made for the educational benefit of the trip, including proper consideration of whether the same or broadly similar educational benefit could be achieved through a UK based visit. If the case cannot be made, the trip should not be sanctioned.

3.3 Costs

- Would the cost be prohibitively expensive for many pupils?
- Could a similar experience be provided at a more affordable price that would be accessible to a wider group of pupils? (see above regarding UK based visits)
- Will the cost of this one trip prohibit a pupil's access to other extra-curricular activities/visits?
- What support will the school offer pupils who cannot afford to go on the trip?

Overseas visits can be elitist, with only the most affluent families able to afford them. For some families, the cost of a trip for one pupil can equate to the cost of a family holiday. If the same or similar benefits could be achieved in the UK at a significantly lower cost, the trip should not be sanctioned.

3.4 Safeguarding

- What safeguarding risks does the trip present?
- How will these risks be mitigated or eliminated?

Proper consideration needs to be demonstrated of the additional safeguarding risks posed by taking young people overseas, taking into account, for example: the cultural differences of the country/ies to be visited, a long and potentially complex journey, and the distance from the support networks provided by the family/school/LA. Robust safeguarding procedures would need to be in place should the trip be permitted to proceed. The age, maturity, experience and behaviour of the cohort for which the trip is intended should be fully taken into account.

3.5 Staffing

- The trip should take place fully outside term time. Is there any disruption to the educational provision for pupils on the trip, or others who will need supply teachers?
- If there is to be an unavoidable overlap into term time, can the impact of any cover be justified in terms of the number of pupils affected compared with the number benefitting from the overseas visit?

3.6 'Down time'

- How much down time would you expect there to be?
- How would down time be organised and supervised?
- How would staff be organised in terms of duties during evenings and overnight?

Of incidents that occur on overseas visits, a significant number happen during down time. Therefore at this early stage there should be proper regard paid to how downtime is used. The suitability, competence and number of staff accompanying the trip are essential considerations. Downtime should be structured to include: briefings on the following day's activities, organised leisure activities, study time. Staff must be aware that the trip is not a holiday for them, and there will be a need to have sufficient staff on duty or on call to ensure adequate supervision at all times. Regard must also be paid to the wellbeing of staff, with provision being made for adequate rest periods.

3.7 The wider experience

- Would the trip offer such a significant cultural, spiritual or sporting opportunity that it would not be achievable through any other kind of trip or activity?

Further guidance and support

Please consult your EVC for advice on any aspects of the proposal.

Advice and guidance on administrative issues is available from:

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