DOROTHY STRINGER SCHOOL

EDUCATION FOR LIFE

Offsite Activities & Educational Trips Policy

DATE ESTABLISHED: Autumn term 2026

DATE FOR REVIEW: Summer Term 2028

www.dorothy-stringer.co.uk

Rationale

The school places a high value on fieldwork, excursions, visits and organised holidays. Such trips are of enormous benefit to students and it is a central part of the ethos of the school to provide the opportunity for educational visits and school excursions.

Safely managed educational visits with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of the broad and balanced curriculum that is offered at the school. They are an opportunity to extend students' learning and enrich their appreciation and understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. They can be the catalyst for improved academic performance or a lifetime interest and as such we encourage and support their role in the life of the school. Where possible we aim to enable as many students as possible to participate in the range of visits offered by the school.

Students' physical and moral safety is of paramount concern. The School accepts that trips, visits and outdoor activities cannot be completely without risk, and this policy is designed to ensure all ventures are as safe as they can possibly be, whilst allowing the rich experiences for students.

Types of visits and ventures

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will agree the programme of visits and activities in advance of each academic year. Wherever possible, we give details of visits and activities to parents at the beginning of the academic year via the school website, although additional visits may be added as the year progresses.

At Dorothy Stringer School, we offer a wide range of activities:

- On site, out of classroom activity
- Local ventures
- Away from base, day or part day ventures (both regular and occasional)
- Residential ventures
- Visits abroad
- Host family exchanges

These activities can be categorised as follows:

Category 1 - Routine visits to other local schools and facilities
Category 2 - Non-hazardous day visits such as museums, theatres, workshop events, geography field trips or college visits.
Category 3 - Non-hazardous residential trip in the UK
Category 4 - Non-hazardous trip abroad, residential and non-residential.
Category 5 - Hazardous activity such as:

- Adventure activities using licensed providers
- Adventure activities using non-licensable providers
- School-led adventure activities
- Remote supervision during adventurous activities
- Visits to coastal or mountain areas
- Swimming in the sea or other natural waters

Organisation and Management

An Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) is always in post and keeps up to date with the training offered by the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service. A Deputy Head has SLT oversight of all trips and EVC.

Many visits are managed entirely in accordance with these policies and, apart from simple additional considerations (e.g. to the site, to transportation of students), are managed as they would be in school contexts. We aim to take the ethos, culture and challenge to learning in school into all our outdoor learning and off-site contexts.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors	Approve, monitor and evaluate the Off-Site and Educational Visits Policy
SLT	- Senior Deputy Head gives approval to all trips and visits - Ensures that Risk Assessments, etc are completed - Ensures that suitable staff (with experience) are running any visits - Support the EVC in their role - Agree all the off-site and residential trips that are included on the school calendar - Support trip leaders in their planning and preparation for trips as appropriate - Act as emergency contacts for residential trips - Support all staff involved in trips and residential trips with regard to upholding the highest standard of discipline, health and safety and safeguarding
EVC	- EVC will approve financial viability of trips and provide advice and guidance on charges to parents and funding available, including any financial assistance parents/ carers may be

	entitled to. - Chase payments and collect monies - Ensure that all proposed trips are planned using the school documentation - Raise any concerns with SLT immediately - Support trip leaders in ensuring that all procedures for trips are followed - Assist in the induction of new staff to the trips planning procedures - Keep up-to-date with DfE and LA guidelines for off-site trips and acts as staff advisor of same - Attend regular training on the area of educational visits and updates EVC training once every three years - Ensure that an up-to-date record is kept of staff qualifications relating to off-site and educational activities and facilitates the appropriate CPD for staff as required.
Trip Leaders	- Follow the trips guidelines for planning and running any trip. - Discuss and submit for consideration every proposed activity / trip with SLT line manager - Complete the 'Evolve' on-line booking forms in good time adhering to deadlines for those trips requiring LA approval - Ensure that charges for the trip are in accordance with school policy and liaises with the EVC for approval - Liaise with EVC to ensure letters to parents are consistent and appropriate for trip and submit to SLT Line Manager for approval prior to sending home, along with school medical form - Liaise with finance office regarding dates for payments to allow parents sufficient time to spread the cost of larger trips - Submit full risk assessments and complete other documentation as required by the EVC, by the timescales outlined in the trips - Work closely with the EVC to ensure all aspects of safety detailed through the school documentation are considered and all areas attended to in full - Ensure all staff not currently employed by school who are participating in the trip are DBS checked as appropriate to their role - Attend all meetings called in order to ensure good planning and safety - Provide guidance to accompanying staff and parents on all safety matters in full - Put the health, welfare and safety of students on trips first at all times - Maintain high standards of discipline on trips in order to

	enhance safety - Communicate fully with parents on all trip matters - Where appropriate (e.g. residential activities overseas) organise an information evening for parents in the term preceding the trip - Be jointly responsible for reminding students of outstanding payments and deadline dates along with Finance staff - Check with the Finance Office that all trips/activities are paid for in full at least 1 week prior to commencement.

Communication with Parents and Carers

Parental consent must be obtained for all off site trips, activities and educational visits.

One parental consent and medical form may cover a programme of similar activities over a maximum of one year, e.g. sporting fixtures. The onus is on the parent / carer to update the school in the interim if there have been any changes regarding medical information. Student SLG and the school website will be the main vehicle for communicating these types of activity where providing information too far in advance is not feasible.

Parents must be supplied with full information regarding the visit. This must be sufficiently comprehensive for parents not to be in a position to claim after the event that they were misled or uninformed about any of the following:

- Venue(s) and travel arrangements (particular mention must be made if staff cars are to be used as a mode of transport)
- Dates and times of departure and return where visits exceed beyond the school day
- The nature of activities planned
- Kit list
- Arrangements for supervision
- Code of conduct or standard of behaviour expected during the visit
- Financial contribution expected from parents and dates when payments due
- Insurance arrangements
- Contact system in case of emergency
- Any expectations placed on parents, for example to resume responsibility for their child in the event his or her conduct requires sending home from a visit outside of school hours.

Cancellations and Withdrawals

In the event that a student cancels their participation on a visit, any monies due to be refunded should be returned either by cheque or via online account to the parent/carer who made the payment. **The amount of refund is dependent on how late the student is withdrawn from the activity, whether a replacement student can be found and what costs have already been met by the school which cannot be reclaimed.** Unless a replacement student can be found, the deposit payed will not be refunded.

Where the trip has been organised through a tour operator or other external supplier, the cancellation charges which are described in the booking conditions / terms of the insurance will apply, and will be met by the student. Where costs have already been met by the school (e.g. they have been already been paid to a travel company), this amount will be deducted from the trip cost before any refund is issued.

The school reserves the right to withdraw any student from a visit or trip if the student repeatedly displays poor standards of behaviour in school, and it is considered that this behaviour would pose a serious Health and Safety risk whilst away from school. The school also reserves the right to withdraw any student where their attendance at school is poor, unless this is as a result of medical reasons with Doctor certification (Inclusion section below may also apply). Prior to withdrawal, the school may agree a ‘contract’ with the student which will allow them the opportunity to demonstrate good behaviour/attendance (this is not required).

The list of students who wish to go on a trip will be shown to the Head of Year for approval prior to a place being offered. The criteria above will be applied when making this decision.

If the decision is made not to allow a student on a trip for any reason, and if money has already been paid, the school will not refund any payments to parents already made to the tour operators or external suppliers.

Where a trip is not paid for in full one week prior to the date of the activity, the school reserves the right to withdraw any student from an Educational Trip / Visit.

Supervision

Supervision strategies are taken from *Off-site activities and educational visits* and include agreements on ratios, which are never exceeded and frequently improved. Strategies include:

- Direct
- Indirect
- Remote

The strategies to be used are dependent on typical risk factors of the group or individuals concerned, the site or location, the leaders present (including ratios) and other factors such as transport or weather etc. These are agreed as part of the planning process and can be adapted to changing circumstances, for example ‘Plan B’ where we always plan clear alternatives when it is necessary or prudent to do so.

All staff in a supervisory capacity will have been selected for their competence, qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge of the students. All will have been subject to a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check (see trip leaders’ responsibilities). Staff must be allocated with regard to the age and sex balance of the students attending the trip /visit. When an exact sex match is impossible: parents should be informed in advance (with option to withdraw), the trip organiser should provide phone access to staff of the opposite sex, conduct room checks strictly in pairs, and maintain open-door conversations.

Staffing must meet the required ratios for any school trip /visit.

Staffing for any trip should be as balanced as possible to allow for younger or inexperienced staff to be included and to learn about educational visits / activities from more experienced and / or senior staff. There must, therefore, be equality of opportunity for staff to participate in trips / visits.

Where necessary, schools may carry spare, non-prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs) and salbutamol inhalers for emergency use.

UK host families in regulated activity must undergo Enhanced DBS with Children’s Barred List checks. For overseas exchanges, leaders must verify the hosting school's vetting procedures and obtain written parental agreements regarding homestay supervision.

Insurance

The School has an Insurance Policy, although some trips may have separate cover through a Tour Operator. The trip leader must make themselves aware of procedure on insurance policy in the event of a claim. Parents should be offered a copy of the insurance policy at a parents' meeting.

Brighton and Hove requires external providers and sub-contractors hold £10m Public Liability insurance (or arrange BHCC Top-Up cover) and submit written assurance/External Provider Forms confirming safer recruitment compliance (unless holding a LOtC Quality Badge).

Staff or parents are prohibited from signing external provider liability waivers that attempt to disclaim statutory duty of care or negligence.

Inclusion

Dorothy Stringer School is an inclusive school and all reasonable adjustments will be made to enable students to access educational trips and visits. There is however, a clear distinction between different types of trips and therefore the reasonable adjustments made by the school would depend on whether they were essential to the curriculum.

- An activity provided as part of the National Curriculum or a formal course, a statutory requirement. This should be quite rare (and would normally be funded by the school or course fee). Inclusion for all is required
- Ventures where comprehensive coverage, for example a whole class or group, is desirable but suitable alternatives are available at school. National Curriculum and similar entitlement is not lost as this is an enhancement or enrichment activity. Inclusion of all is desired but not required. Choice or other factors may mean that not all attend
- Enhancement or enrichment activity that is a clear choice or extra – optional. Choice and other factors will mean that not all attend.

It is important to distinguish between these curriculum-focused discussions and those of the health and safety of the child or young person concerned and their effect on other children or young people, as well as staff. Any decision on inclusion when such factors are included must, as normal, take 'every reasonable step' to include that young person. However, if those reasonable steps cannot ensure their safety and/or that of others, then that may be the reason they cannot attend that particular venture. The EVC would seek clarification from the LA if required on equalities considerations.

If a student has already paid for a trip and their situation changes so that reasonable steps can not enable them to go on the trip, the school reserves the right to withdraw the student from the trip. If the school withdraws a student for this reason, any money paid up to that point will be refunded in full. Where possible, a medical letter from a Doctor should be provided which will allow the school to submit a claim on insurance.

If a trip has been oversubscribed, names should be drawn randomly (from a hat). No trip should stipulate ‘first come first served’.

Dorothy Stringer School is committed to ensuring that all educational visits are inclusive, safe, and respectful of the dignity, privacy, and well-being of every student. The school does not discriminate on the grounds of protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Participation criteria and group allocations are applied fairly to all students, and reasonable adjustments will be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and local authority guidance to enable transgender and gender-questioning students to participate fully in offsite trips and activities.

All support arrangements will be made on a sensitive, case-by-case basis through early consultation with the student and their parents/carers, supported by an individual risk assessment and guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the school’s Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). Subject to lawful exceptions under the Equality Act 2010, the school may maintain single-sex arrangements for specific activities (such as gender-affected sports) or facilities - including overnight residential sleeping accommodations, changing rooms, and toilet facilities - where strictly necessary to preserve privacy, decency, and the safety and welfare of all participants.

Shared or multi-occupancy rooms, dormitories, and tents must be organised on a single-sex basis to ensure personal privacy, decency, and comfort for all participants. Where a transgender or gender-questioning student requires alternative sleeping arrangements, or where sharing a single-sex communal space is not appropriate or desired, the school will work proactively with the venue and family to provide suitable alternatives. These options may include a private single-occupancy room, or an en-suite room.

Trip leaders must verify during the pre-visit planning stage that venues and facilities offer appropriate arrangements. Venues must provide distinct single-sex communal facilities alongside accessible, private, single-occupancy unisex cubicles or changing spaces. No student will be forced to use a communal facility where they or others feel uncomfortable. Transgender and gender-questioning students will be supported to access facilities that meet their needs, upholding their right to privacy and dignity without compromising single-sex provision for other pupils.

Any significant adjustments or specialised support plans for a student on a residential or high-risk visit will be planned transparently with the student's parents/carers. The school will maintain sensitivity regarding a student's trans status, ensuring unnecessary disclosures are avoided while upholding statutory safeguarding responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

When planning trips abroad, the trip organiser must review the destination's legal and cultural context via the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice website prior to booking. For countries where LGBTQ+ individuals face legal sanctions, restrictions, or heightened risks of discrimination and violence, trip leaders must consult the OEA and conduct a targeted risk assessment before proceeding.

Behaviour whilst away

All students should observe the highest standards of politeness, courtesy and conduct at all times. Particular care needs to be taken when on public transport or in residential accommodation. Even out of school time students are representing the school and should do everything in a way that reflects positively on them as well as on their school. The expectations of good behaviour must be explained to students before any trip and reiterated as appropriate.

The school maintains a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment, bullying, hazing, and online misconduct during offsite visits. Prior to departure, visit leaders must clearly brief students on behavioural expectations, personal physical boundaries, respectful digital device use, and room access rules.

Staff are required to remain actively vigilant and provide structured supervision during transport, communal downtime, and remotely supervised activities - such as Duke of Edinburgh expeditions - to prevent instances of peer harm, coercion, or isolation.

Staff must ensure that students have accessible, confidential channels to report concerns to a trusted member of staff or base contacts. Trip leaders must conduct regular welfare check-ins, monitor group dynamics, and contemporaneously log any early indicators or disclosures of inappropriate behaviour.
In the event of an incident, staff must intervene immediately to ensure the victim's safety, separate the involved pupils, and contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for formal escalation in accordance with child protection procedures. If an allegation involves illegal behaviour or serious sexual violence, staff should contact local police and follow critical incident protocols. The school will inform parents/carers in consultation with the DSL and reserves the right to send perpetrators home early at their parents' or carers' expense if their continued presence compromises the safety or welfare of the group.

Financial Planning

It is important to ensure that any proposed trips are financially viable, and also that the costs to the parents is kept as low as possible. Trips should therefore not build in surpluses or look to 'make a profit', however a small contingency fund is advisable to cover emergencies or unforeseen needs whilst away. The size of this should be proportional to the type of trip.

Where parents find it hard to pay, flexible timescales can be arranged by contacting the trips coordinator or if further assistance is needed then please contact the school's Financial Support Officer (FSO) on fso@dorothystringer.co.uk. There are also some charities which it is possible to apply for funding from. Again, any such concerns should be brought to the trips coordinator. Where a parent is unable to make the full payment before the students is due to leave, it is usual for the student not to go unless there has been a prior arrangement made. This would be an exception and would have to be agreed by SLT before the trip.

Where trips are a compulsory part of the curriculum the school will fund any student who can demonstrate that they cannot pay the full amount, although they may ask for a contribution towards the total.

Risk Assessments

As part of planning an off-site activity, the process below must be followed:
There must be an assessment of the risk of harm and its likelihood made, followed by putting clear control measures in place so that they can be satisfactorily managed

A pre-visit by key staff is considered an essential part of reviewing the location and its ability to realise the benefits and be managed. Very well-known and used sites may be checked by contacting key personnel prior to re-visiting and web-based information is increasingly available and useful.

Mental health considerations should be integrated into trip risk assessments (especially for visits to emotionally demanding sites like war memorials or concentration camps). The Risk Assessment should include protocols for managing self-harm offsite, consulting SENCOs, Head of Year/Pastoral team prior to travel, and verifying medical repatriation cover.

Incidents and Emergencies

Clear plans must be in place, prior to authorisation of trips, for emergency contact. This should cover parents, but also a link to SLT (ideally 2 members). SLT covering a trip should have emergency details for those on the trip. The trip organiser should be able to contact the DSL (DDSL) if needed at any time.

Where an injury or incident has occurred on a trip, contact should be made with the parents as soon as possible (bearing in mind the need to be able to give a full as possible account, and a balanced assessment of the situation). On return, the trip leader should speak with the parents and discuss the situation, outlining what care has been provided or actions taken.

Any concerns or ‘near-misses’ are discussed with the EVC to consider changing strategies.

Where needed, staff may share the ‘emergency phone’ contact number with students. This must not be a personal phone number, but either be a dedicated phone issued by school or a virtual one that operates through the school system (e.g. 3CX).

Students should be encouraged not to post or make calls in case of emergency, which can lead to confusion and mixed messages being sent.

Review, Scope and Application

This policy should be reviewed and approved by the Governors every three years.

Appendix 1 – School calendar procedures for Events, Trips and Activities 2026-28

- **ALL events that affect students, including any event out of school hours, MUST be agreed by the Cover Coordinator before arrangements are made. These should be put on the calendar by the start of the year, or as soon as possible.**
- All students should be in school for Open Day (nothing to be arranged on that day).
- With the exception of unpredictable fixtures for PE teams, no Year 11 students should be out of lessons from 22nd February (except Dance Show and Spring Concert).
- Lead person of "subject area" trips should discuss details with their HOD first.
- HODs should be aware of any trips, events etc organised by members of their department and be aware of the number and range of trips/events/activities in their subject area.
- Because of the very high number of events, trips and activities that already exist, any new event, trip or activity should be considered very carefully, and consideration made as to what it might replace. It may not be possible to run every request.
- Lead person should put notification of the event on the SLG 'Students off Timetable' ideally 1 week in advance and is responsible for notifying the Attendance Office of student absence.
- Lead person is responsible for notifying colleagues of operational organisation involving students attending events in school.
- Where SLT support is required, the lead should speak with Richard Baker.

Extra-Curricular Events

At Dorothy Stringer we must consider the student as a whole and it is important to address the delicate balance between students' need to be in lessons and their wider achievements outside of the classroom. Students who are involved in everything the school offers are often those who achieve best and become the most well rounded individuals. The school must recognise and support these students so that they are able to do as much as they can.

Where a student is wanted in more than one place it is important that the members of staff discuss possible solutions. It is not acceptable to put pressure on the student (either directly or indirectly with personal views and comments) or to ask them to be the go between messenger. If a situation is reached where the staff are not able to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution, and HODs have also not been able to do so, students will be able to miss lesson time as long as it is not protected on the calendar. It should also be understood that students have a responsibility to catch up on any missed work, but that they also should not feel pressured into joining extracurricular activities if they feel it would impact on their learning.

Where a student is needed to come out of a lesson for an extracurricular event a clear process should be followed:

1. Arrange a date for the event with the external organisation
2. With the Cover Coordinator, request cover and check the date on the Calendar is clear of exams, etc
3. Publish the list as early as possible on SLG

Any NEW event must be emailed to the Cover Coordinator initially with the following information:

- Lead member of staff & additional staff attending, this is required due to number of staff being agreed
- Year group
- Trip/Activity including 'curriculum value added' content
- Number of students

All trips must be planned with EVC – including costings, letters, medical/consent forms and risk assessment.

Appendix 2 - **Flow chart for Trip Leaders**

Discuss proposed visit with SLT line manager and / or EVC and gain consent

- ☐ Determine which category of visit / activity it is
- ☐ Category 1 and 2 activities must be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to start date
- ☐ Category 3,4 and 5 activities must be submitted at least 8 weeks prior to start date as they require LA approval
- ☐ Complete an application form using the online system EVOLVE
- ☐ Complete a costings form (available in school pool: off-site activities) and submit to the school EVC (with the sole exception of local PE fixtures)
- ☐ Once approval has been received by the EVC proceed with the following

  - ❑ Book tickets and transport
  - ❑ Submit parental letter to EVC and once approved, distribute
  - ❑ Confirm arrangements for payments with Finance Office
  - ❑ Ensure trip is covered by insurance. If in doubt check with Business Manager to confirm cover
  - ❑ Distribute medical forms / information packs
  - ❑ Upload all relevant itinerary, risk assessment and student lists to Evolve
  - ❑ Risk assessments must be signed by SLT responsible for trips
  - ❑ Trip Leaders ensure information packs are given to accompanying staff and briefing meetings arranged where appropriate
  - ❑ Order any currency required 2 weeks prior to date of trip
  - ❑ Ensure all payments made and income received 1 week prior to commencement of trip
  - ❑ Information pack given to Student Services, EVC and emergency base contacts. Trip Leaders must leave at least one mobile contact number as part of this pack
  - ❑ First Aid kit and school mobile phones* collected from the office (currency where applicable).
  - ❑ HCC Emergency procedures cards to be carried by trip leaders
  - ❑ Key to gate is collected if returning after school hours
  - ❑ Clear H&S guidance given to staff and students in accordance with school procedures
    **Refer to Staff Handbook on the use of personal mobile phones for school trips re: safeguarding advice.*

- ☐ Return unused currency, mobile phones, First Aid Kit to finance office
- ☐ After the trip, injuries or accidents to be reported using the appropriate form, which can be obtained from Student Services
- ☐ De-brief with EVC where appropriate
- ☐ Make any insurance claims if appropriate
- ☐ Reclaim any insurance deposits held
- ☐ Hand all receipts relating to trip expenses into finance office to enable final financial reconciliation of trip to be completed
- ☐ Evaluation and key learning points for future trips identified
- ☐ Complete ‘evaluation of trip’ on Evolve
- ☐ Follow up actions as required to any student behaviour issues