# Aspire Schools Trips and Visits Policy

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| This policy was adopted on | March 2026 |
| Approved by | Executive Headteacher, Aspire Trustees<br>Ratified by Trustees |
| Review date | February 2027 |

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## 1. Purpose and context

Aspire aims to provide a broad and balanced education for some of the most vulnerable students in Buckinghamshire, with a focus on developing social, emotional and mental wellness as well as making progress in academic subjects. Trips and visits are therefore a vital part of our core curriculum offer.

The aims of trips and visits at Aspire are:

- To enable students to have new experiences which broaden their awareness of the world and develop cultural capital
- To support the delivery of the academic curriculum
- To support students' social, emotional and/or mental health

This policy has been written in line with the following guidance and legislation:

- DfE Guidance on Health and Safety on Trips and Visits 2018
- Buckinghamshire Council Guidance and requirements for off-site visits and related activities August 2024

## 2. Types of educational trips and visits

1. **Routine trips**: these involve no more than an everyday level of risk, such as slips or trips, and are covered by a school's current policies and procedures. They only need a little extra planning beyond the educational aspect. They can be considered lessons in a different classroom. Each school or service will outline their Local Learning Area and ensure this is uploaded to linked documents on Evolve.

2. **Trips that need a risk assessment and extra planning**: these are not covered by current policies, due to things like: the distance from school; the type of activity; the location; needing staff with specialist skills. At Aspire, these are approved by the EVC and Executive Team Leader responsible for your school or service.

3. **Residential trips and trips involving adventurous activities**: adventurous activities are defined by Buckinghamshire Local Authority as including the list below. As an academy, Aspire does not need approval from the Local Authority to run these trips. However, the EVC will seek advice on our risk assessment and planning for these trips from the Local Authority.

- Trekking in 'Lowland', 'Moorland' and 'Mountain' country
- Swimming (all forms, excluding publicly lifeguarded pools)
- Camping
- Canoeing/kayaking/sailing/ windsurfing/kite surfing/paddle boarding
- Rafting or improvised rafting
- Use of powered safety/rescue craft
- All other forms of boating (excluding commercial transport)
- Water skiing
- Snorkel and aqualung activities
- Hill walking and mountaineering
- Rock climbing and abseiling (including indoor climbing walls) including
- River/gorge walking or scrambling
- Coasteering/coastal scrambling/sea level traversing
- Underground exploration
- Shooting/archery/paintballing
- Snowsports (skiing, snowboarding, and related activities), including dry slope

- Air activities (excluding commercial flights)
- Horse riding
- Motor sport – all forms
- High level ropes courses
- Cycling – on and off road
- Ice skating (rink)
- Trampolining (parks)
- 'Extreme' sports and other activities involving skills inherent in any of the above

## 3. When to get consent from parents/carers

DfE guidance says *"written consent is not needed for most trips, as they're part of the curriculum. However, it's good practice to tell parents about them."*

On joining Aspire, parents complete a consent form which includes permission for students to be taken on local trips for sporting activities or learning outside the classroom.

Aspire will not notify parents every time students leave the site for activities that are part of their regular timetable, such as PE lessons from CSEC or Forest School at Shortenills.

- If a student is going on a trip or visit that is not part of their normal timetable, but is within the Local Learning Area, and the trip is planned in advance, Heads of School will ensure that parents are notified.
- If a student is going on a trip or visit that is not part of their normal timetable, but is within the Local Learning Area, but the trip was decided on quickly as a reaction to student needs on the day, Heads of School do not need to contact parents in advance, but will ensure that a phone call home is made at the end of the day to explain what happened and why.
- If a student is going on a trip or visit that is beyond their local learning area as described above, Heads of School will ensure that parents are notified and given the opportunity to withdraw their child.
- If a student is going on a residential trip or visit, participating in an adventurous activity, or a new or unusual activity, Heads of School will ensure that parents are notified and given the opportunity to withdraw their child.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

The **member of staff leading the trip** is responsible for:

- Getting initial permission from the Head of School to run the trip before beginning planning
- Planning the trip
- Entering details on Evolve
- Collecting pupil information (including medical information, contact details and individual risk assessments) to take on the trip
- Ensuring that the trip runs according to the risk assessment and commitments made to parents in any communications, and complies with this policy.

The **Educational Visit Coordinator** is responsible for:

- Giving advice and guidance on visit questions
- Checking trips submitted through Evolve and signing them off.

The **Head of School** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that students in their school go on a wide range of trips and visits
- Ensuring that trips and visits contribute to students' academic curriculum or SEMH provision
- Authorising all trips and visits
- Ensuring that trip leaders have the appropriate competence to lead trips
- Ensuring that parents are contacted in the appropriate way, as above.

The **Executive Team Leader for the school or service** is responsible for:

- Monitoring the quality of trips and visits
- Ensuring that all trips and visits are done in accordance with this policy.

Each school or service will outline the person who holds each of these roles in their handbook.

## 5. Safety procedures for all trips and visits

The following safety procedures must be used on all trips and visits, including those in the Local Learning Area:

- Heads of School will only approve trips where they are confident that the staff leading the trip have the confidence and competence to lead that trip, with the particular group of students attending the trip.
- Heads of School must approve the ratio of students to staff, considering the particular students on the trip and their recent emotional and behavioural state.
- Heads of School must make a dynamic risk assessment as to whether the particular students are safe to be on the trip given their recent behaviour and emotional state.
- The staff member leading the trip has read and understood the generic risk assessment for trips within the local learning area, or has completed their own risk assessment.
- The staff member leading the trip has a list of all students, their contact information, their medical information, and any pertinent information from their individual student risk assessment.
- The staff leader has ensured that students have appropriate clothes considering the weather (e.g., sun hats and sun screen, rain coats) and/or PPE (e.g., gloves, goggles).
- The staff member leading the trip has a school mobile phone. All students have a piece of paper with this mobile phone number and the mobile phone number for the school office.
- The staff member leading the trip has the mobile phone number for the Head of School and the Executive Team Member responsible for their school or service.
- Students are briefed on what to do if they get separated from the group.
- Staff inform the site administrator of which staff and students are offsite, and leave an approximate time of return, and the school mobile phone number for the staff lead.

## 6. Competency to lead a trip

The Head of School must consider the following when considering whether a member of staff has the competence to lead a trip:

- What experience has the leader in leading or accompanying similar or other visits?
- Is the leader competent in planning and managing visits?
- Does the leader exhibit sound decision making abilities?
- Is the leader an employee?
- Does the leader have the ability to manage the pastoral welfare of participants?

- What experience has the leader of the participants to be supervised?
- What experience has the leader of the environment and geographical area chosen?
- Is the leader appropriately qualified?
- If appropriate, what is the leader's personal level of skill in the activity, and fitness level?
- Is the leader aware of all relevant guidelines and able to act on these?

Qualified first aiders are not required on all trips. However, someone on each trip must:

- Have a working knowledge of simple first aid
- Be competent to use the first aid materials carried with the group
- Know how to access, and be able to access, qualified first aid support.

## 7. Planning and use of Evolve

All trips and visits should be logged on Evolve.

**Local Learning Area Visits** can take place with the verbal approval from the Head of School (or, if they are not onsite, from the Deputy Head of School or member of the Executive Leadership team responsible for the site that day).

- These trips can be uploaded onto Evolve before or after the trip
- Use the shorter "local area visit" form in Evolve.

**Other trips and visits (not including residential or adventurous activities)** can only take place when permission is granted from the EVC and Headteacher through Evolve.

- These trips should be logged on Evolve 2 weeks before the trip
- Use the full "visit form" in Evolve
- Complete an Aspire Trip Risk Assessment and upload this to Evolve
- Upload any other trip paperwork e.g., letters home.

**Residential trips or trips involving adventurous activities** can only take place when permission is granted from the EVC and Headteacher through Evolve. For these trips, the EVC will seek advice from the Local Authority before granting approval.

- These trips should be logged on Evolve 4 weeks before the trip, to enable Local Authority advice to be taken and responded to
- Use the full "visit form" in Evolve
- Complete an Aspire Trip Risk Assessment and upload this to Evolve
- For adventurous activities, confirm that the provider holds a Learning Outside the Classroom badge. If they do not, they must complete a Provider Statement Form, and must have Public Liability insurance of £10 million.

## 8. Emergency procedures

Leaders in charge of pupils during a trip have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would.

The trip leader would normally take charge in an emergency and would need to ensure that emergency procedures are in place. However, in certain situations, it may be more appropriate to have a more experienced member of staff on the trip take charge of the emergency and the party leader look after the rest of the party.

All staff involved in a trip should be informed of:

- who will take charge in an emergency
- the named back up cover
- what they are expected to do in an emergency.

Prior to the trip, the name and 24-hour telephone numbers of an emergency contact should be identified. It is advisable to arrange a second emergency contact as a reserve. The emergency contacts should have all the necessary phone numbers and information about the trip. This information and telephone contact numbers should be provided (usually as a laminated small card format) and carried at all times by all staff during the trip.

**Should an emergency occur:**

- establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible
- ensure that the party is safe, accounted for by a roll call, kept together and adequately supervised at all times
- summon the appropriate emergency services
- establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them
- if the party is abroad, notify the British Embassy/Consulate and the local police
- ensure that pupils are accompanied to hospital or police station by a member of staff
- ensure that, although pupils may wish to reassure parents/carers, they should not be allowed to make direct telephone or other forms of contact in the immediate aftermath of an incident. At that stage, full details may not be available and inaccurate information might cause unnecessary speculation and anxiety for relatives and others at home
- as soon as it is practical, the pupil's mobile phones should be collected but left switched on. We should not attempt to prevent parents/carers and children contacting each other; merely try to ensure that incorrect and sensationalised information is not being disseminated. If an incoming call from parents/carers is received, the pupil should be allowed to answer this under staff supervision. After the pupil has greeted parents/carers, staff should speak to them, quoting the statement below. The pupil should then be allowed, in staff presence, to complete the conversation without giving details of the incident.

*"An incident has occurred on the [******] trip. Your child is not involved in the incident. They are unharmed and are not the subject of any disciplinary action. Further details will be given out when all facts are known".*

- later, when the full details are known, supervised contact between pupils and their parents/carers can be made, using the procedure above
- parents/carers of the students directly involved should be contacted as soon as full details are known. Full cooperation should be given if the parents/carers of those directly involved wish to travel to their child, provided that the child is in a place of safety and the emergency services allow
- inform the emergency contact at Aspire
- ensure no one in the party speaks to the media
- the name of any casualty or student involved should not be given to the media
- all media enquiries should be answered by: "any statement will be issued by the CEO in due time"
- collect details of the incident to pass on to the establishment, which should include: nature, date and time of incident; location of incident; names of casualties and details of their injuries; names of others involved so that parents/carers can be reassured; action taken so far, including where casualties have been taken and action yet to be taken and by whom

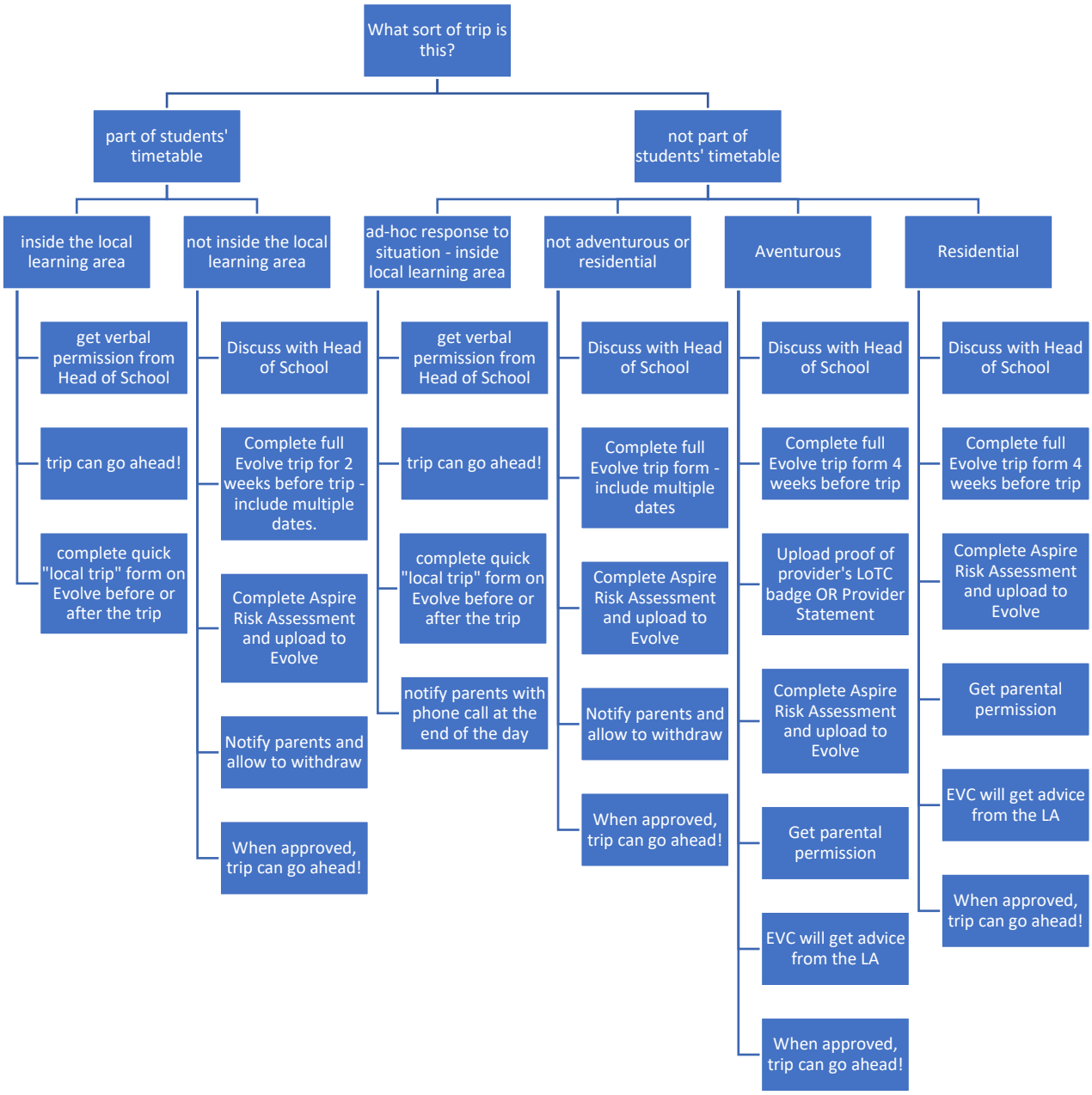
- write down accurately, and as soon as possible, all relevant facts and witness details and preserve vital evidence
- keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident
- complete an accident report form as soon as possible
- liaise with the representative of the tour operator if one is being used
- ensure no one in the party discusses the incident or legal liability with anyone outside the party
- report the incident using appropriate forms, if necessary.

The emergency contact's main responsibilities are to ensure that the party leader is in control of the situation, establish if any assistance is required from other sources and, if necessary, arrange for a senior member of staff to go out to take control or assist, contact parents/carers if required, notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required, and contact any other relevant body.

**Appendix 1**

# Checklist for staff organising a trip

Can be included in school or service handbooks



**Appendix 2**

## Generic Risk Assessment for all trips and visits, including those in the Local Learning Area

| **RISKS TAKEN ON ALL TRIPS:** | |
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| **Identified risks** | **Strategies in place to manage risk** |
| Exposure to inclement weather, cold injury, over exposure to sun | • Weather forecast will be checked and programme amended in the case of poor weather.<br>• Extra clothing/shoes/sun protection etc. will be taken for children who fail to bring suitable clothing. |
| Children separated from the group | • Trip has adequate staff/children ratio given the nature of the activity/children<br>• Regular head counts at key points<br>• Large groups split into smaller ones with key adults responsible for each<br>• Individual pupil risk assessment for high risk children<br>• Itinerary and what to do if lost explained regularly to students<br>• Students all have emergency phone number card on them |
| llness or injury | • Member of staff on the trip is first aid trained<br>• Member of staff on the trip has reasonable knowledge of basic first aid procedures<br>• Leaders know how to call emergency services and have a phone with them that they can use for this purpose<br>• First aid equipment carried<br>• First aid equipment includes specific equipment for child with specific medical issues e.g., EpiPen, glucose tablets, etc.<br>• Emergency contact at base arranged |
| Behaviour difficulties | • Staff accompanying the trip are Team Teach trained<br>• Staff have positive relationships with the students on the trip<br>• Individual risk assessments and personal handling plans in place for students with particular difficulties |
| **TRAVELLING - WALKING** | |
| **Identified risks** | **Strategies in place to manage risk** |
| Student injured crossing the road | • Students briefed about behaviour and safety before and during the walk<br>• Route planned to avoid crossing dangerous roads wherever possible<br>• Supervision on pavements and crossing fast roads is planned<br>• Individual risk assessments and personal handling plans for high risk students |

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| Student absconds or is separated from the group | • Journey is planned carefully and students made aware of what to do if lost at any point, with frequent reminders given during the journey<br>• Students are briefed and reminded about expectations for walking, particularly at crowded or busy stages<br>• Regular and repeated head counts<br>• Sufficient staff ratios and supervision, depending on the nature of the students on the trip<br>• **Staff follow school policy in the event of a student absconding.** |
| **TRAVELLING - PUBLIC TRANSPORT** | |
| **Identified risks** | **Strategies in place to manage risk** |
| Student absconds or is separated from the group | • Journey is planned carefully and students made aware of what to do if lost at any point, with frequent reminders given during the journey<br>• Students are split into smaller groups with group-leaders<br>• Students are briefed and reminded about expectations for public transport, particularly at crowded or busy stages (e.g., get off the tube and immediately stand against the wall of the platform to wait for the group)<br>• Regular and repeated head counts<br>• Sufficient staff ratios and supervision, depending on the nature of the students on the trip |
| **TRAVELLING – MINI BUS** | |
| **Identified risks** | **Strategies in place to manage risk** |
| Poor behaviour on the bus distracts the driver | • Students are briefed about expectations for travel and given frequent reminders<br>• Students who have displayed unsafe behaviour on the day of the trip will not be allowed to go<br>• All students must wear seat belts at all times, and if students are not wearing seat belts the driver will stop the bus<br>• Staff are seated appropriately on the mini bus so that they can deal with issues as they arise and prevent escalation |
| Student absconds or is separated from the group | • Journey is planned carefully so that students are given limited opportunities to abscond<br>• Staff are seated appropriately on the bus so that students cannot get out without staff accompanying them<br>• Regular and repeated head counts<br>• Sufficient staff ratios and supervision, depending on the nature of the students on the trip |
| Travel accident or breakdown | • Students will be moved from the bus if it is in a dangerous place, e.g., the hard shoulder<br>• An emergency contact person at base has been nominated, and knows that they are on call for the duration of the trip to support |

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| | • Trip leader is aware of the Aspire trips and visits policy, in particular the section on what to do in case of an emergency |
| **TRAVELLING – STAFF CAR** | |
| **Identified risks** | **Strategies in place to manage risk** |
| Poor behaviour in the car distracts the driver | • Students are briefed about expectations for travel and given frequent reminders<br>• Students who have displayed unsafe behaviour on the day of the trip will not be allowed to go<br>• All students must wear seat belts at all times, and if students are not wearing seat belts the driver will stop the car |
| Student absconds or is separated from the group | • Journey is planned carefully so that students are given limited opportunities to abscond<br>• Students who are at high risk of absconding will not be allowed to travel in staff cars<br>• Child lock will be used to prevent students absconding |
| Travel accident or breakdown | • Students will be moved from the bus if it is in a dangerous place, e.g., the hard shoulder<br>• An emergency contact person at base has been nominated, and knows that they are on call for the duration of the trip to support<br>• Trip leader is aware of the Aspire trips and visits policy, in particular the section on what to do in case of an emergency |
| Allegation made against member of staff | • Students will only be allowed to travel in staff cars after careful consideration based on their personal handling plans and individual risk assessments<br>• **Staff are working in line with the Sole Working policy** |