ST PETER'S

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Outdoor Learning and Educational Visits Policy

Updated 21 October 2026
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Approved by Head: 

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1. Rationale 2
2. Scope 2
3. Aims 2
4. Organisation 2
5. Planning and Preparation of Visits and Outdoor learning opportunities 4
6. Risk Assessment 4
7. Health and Safety and Personal Liability 6
8. Supervision 7
9. Communication 7
10. First Aid 7
11. Transport 8
12. Visits Abroad 9
13. Insurance 9
14. Equal Opportunities 9
15. Pupils with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities, Special Educational and Medical Needs 9
16. Illness or minor accidents 10
17. Emergency Procedures 10
18. Evaluation and Reporting 10
19. Management and Development 10
Appendix - Checklist and Guidance for Planning an Overseas or Residential Trip 12

1. Rationale

Learning outside the classroom through trips and visits, both day and residential, as well as around the School site are an integral part of educational life at St Peter's Preparatory School. They serve to provide experiences that will aid the acquisition of new skills and attitudes, and a better understanding of the wider world.

2. Scope

This policy sets out both the academic aspirations for Outdoor learning and Educational visits across St Peter's Preparatory School, including EYFS children and outlines the School's procedures to ensure such activities are well planned and significant risks are identified and managed, that there are contingency plans in place for changes in circumstances during a visit or activity that are reasonably foreseeable, and that those in charge of visits have the necessary competence to manage situations appropriately.

3. Aims

St Peter's Preparatory School aims to provide a high quality curriculum that is engaging, inclusive and cross-curricular with provision in and out of the classroom interchangeably; encompassing all the values and ideas from the St Peter's School Baccalaureate ®, across all faculties of learning in the School's Learning Outside the Classroom Curriculum.

4. Organisation

Outdoor learning is considered and planned through the following areas:

- Wild Woods & Forest School
- Beach School
- Growing and Gardening
- Wildlife Garden
- Outdoor Adventure
- Eco / Environmental focus
- Weekly Activities Program

Visits and learning outside the classroom opportunities within these areas may include activities such as:

- A range of classroom learning opportunities outdoors on School site
- Day trips to historic sites, museums, galleries, natural features, farms, zoos and theatre productions
- Beach School sessions on local beaches
- Engaging with local businesses, such as; Clinton Devon Estate, ExeWake and the RNLI
- Wild Woods and Forest activities in the School woodland area or other locations
- Gardening activities onsite
- Language exchanges abroad
- Field trips to support learning in curriculum studies such as geography, history, art history
- Character building and leadership activities
- Adventure activities such as canoeing, climbing, trekking, horse riding, sailing
- Music and Choral visits and concert tours
- Regular Sports team fixtures and Sports tours
- Leadership, Cross Keys Award and Spirit of Adventure activities programme
- Weekly and Friday afternoon activities on and offsite

These learning opportunities;

- Provide first-hand experiences
- Support and reinforce previous learning
- Develop an understanding and appreciation of our school and its place historically, geographically and scientifically
- Foster an awareness and sensitivity to the natural environment
- Develop cooperation and collaboration skills
- Encourage critical thinking
- Enhance personal organisation skills
- Provide for a range of learning styles
- Maximise every pupil's potential through a variety of learning experiences
- Develop skills of observation, research and recording

Working outside the classroom also demonstrates that life outdoors can be a source of continuous enjoyment and makes a valued contribution to our overall health.

5. Planning and Preparation of Visits and Outdoor learning opportunities

General guidance on planning for visits and learning opportunities outside the classroom is included in the DfE's Health and Safety Advice document.

Each visit, whether it is day or residential, needs rigorous planning. New teaching staff should receive training on planning school visits as part of their induction. All guidance on how to book a trip, residential or visit can be found in the 'checklist - trips, residentials and visits' document produced by the HCC.

Where outdoor learning activities are being planned, consideration should be given to the nature of the activities, and through risk assessments, specific provisions and procedures should be drawn up. For beach school and wild woods / forest activities; activity specific risk assessments should be carried out where there is fire use, tools such as saws or knives, ropework, tree climbing and work with and around natural materials.

Before taking place, all visits need approval of the Head of Co-Curricular (HCC) and the rest of the Middle Management and Senior Leadership Teams (HCC/SLT/MMT). This decision will take into consideration the value and impact on pupils' learning, staffing availability, cost and how such learning opportunities are spread through different age groups across the School, and across the school year. A visit leader should be identified when a trip is proposed.

The HCC will facilitate the organisation and documentation of trip details including costings, transport and catering arrangements. The Director of Operations & Compliance will support with documenting risk assessments and details of any accidents or incidents, or provide information from previous visits or occasions.

6. Risk Assessment

All visits and activities will involve consideration of any dangers or difficulties (risks). A formal assessment should be made with the aim of preventing/reducing/managing risks. As per the School's Risk Assessment policy each visit leader will carry out a risk assessment, record it, provide all accompanying staff with copies and save a copy for internal use/checking on the shared system. The School Risk Assessment template should be used.

The risk assessment should identify potential hazards of the location being visited and activities planned. It should:

- List the groups of people who are at risk from significant hazards
- List control measures that are in place
- Make allowance for hazards which may not yet be fully understood due to lack of information
- Make provision for monitoring hazards during the visit

Copies of risk assessments from professionally operated licensed activity centres and tour operators should be requested at the planning stage. These will form part of the overall school risk assessment.

Risk assessments from previous visits can be used as a starting point for a revised assessment, but they must never be adopted without checking for changes which may have occurred.

A catalogue of generic risk assessments relating to sports activities, regular school visits and theatre / museum visits are also kept within the staff trips, visits and activities folder for reference.

The visit leader is responsible for all aspects of the planning and carrying out of the visit, including pupils' behaviour. Parents are expected to support the School in ensuring that pupils follow instructions given by those in charge on the trip. Those in charge of the trip may send home early any pupil who declines to follow reasonable instructions.

Written consent from parents for pupils' participation in visits or specific learning outside the classroom is sought on an annual basis, so is not requested for individual activities organised by the School.

However, parents must be told where their children are at all times, and what extra safety measures are required.

Written consent from parents may be requested for higher risk activities, those that require additional costs, and those that take place outside school hours.

When planning an activity involving caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports, a check must be made that the provider holds a valid AALA license. The HCC should pass the Director of Operations & Compliance details of the AALA the certificate to keep on file.

All off site visits for EYFS children require parental consent.

The School calendar will list the trips, visits and relevant outdoor learning activities that are due to take place over the coming term, together with planned home and away sports fixtures.

Parents will be notified in advance of:

(a) selection of a child for a sports team where they will be given a list of fixtures as per the Sports Department Team Selection policy
(b) a child attending a day out on a trip / visit, including details of any extra charge and details of visit duration and any change in collection times or venue
extends beyond the normal school day
(c) planned trips and visits for year groups. Parents of pupils attending residential trips will be offered a meeting at school giving a full briefing of the visit.

7. Health and Safety and Personal Liability

It is essential that the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and staff be of paramount importance during all trips and visits. Specific guidance on this is encompassed within St Peter's Preparatory School's overall Health and Safety policy documentation.

When in 'loco parentis' all teachers must take the same care that a reasonably prudent and careful parent would take in the same circumstances.

The Head and MMT/SLT must be satisfied with the competence (training and experience) of staff to undertake and supervise the various activities. The lead member of staff will brief all accompanying staff about all aspects relating to the health and safety of pupils accompanying the educational visit or outing. This may include designating staff with specific tasks. All supervising staff should be as well-informed about the proposed visit as the visit leader. They will need preparation before the visit.

Where a visit is arranged to a location where third party providers will be leading the activities, the Head and MMT/SLT must be satisfied that the individuals leading have the relevant qualifications, experience and insurance (PLI). The member of St Peter's staff organising the visit must receive evidence of certificates and risk assessment documentation prior to the trip being signed off by MMT/SLT. St Peter's staff will always be present and act in a supervisory capacity when third party activity leaders are utilised.

The Head and MMT/SLT decide what trips will take place at School. The Head will inform the Proprietor and Board of Reference in writing of trips on a regular basis.

The HCC will advise the Head of any issues which may cause concern regarding a decision on whether a trip should be sanctioned.

8. Supervision

We aim to follow the Department for Education and Skills guidelines for all levels of supervision. This will also be dependent on the risk assessment undertaken in the planning process. The organiser of a visit should liaise with the HCC if they are unsure of the ratios for their visit. As a general guide the following ratios would be adhered to:

RATIOS FOR SUPERVISION							
Types of Party and Undertaking	Min Ratio	Number in Party and Adult Supervisors Needed					
		1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60
Nursery (<4) Category Low/Med Risk	1:4	3	5	8	10	13	15
Nursery (<4) Category High Risk	1:2	6	10	15	20	25	30
Reception (<5) Low/Med Risk	1:6	2	4	5	6	9	10
Reception (<5) High Risk	1:4	3	5	8	10	13	15
Years 1 to 6 Category Low/Med Risk	1:10	2	2	3	4	5	6
Years 1 to 6 Category High Risk	1:6	2	4	5	7	9	10
Years 7 to 8 Category Low/Med Risk	1:15	2	2	2	2	3	3
Years 7 to 8 Category High Risk	1:10	2	2	3	4	5	6

9. Communication

A mobile phone will be taken on all visits. Any delay in return times should be communicated to the School office, and parents will be informed by the School.

Residentials

During the School week

On Residentials that occur within the School week, the School Office will be responsible for communicating with parents once per day via email and include one group photograph if possible. Staff on trips should use a school tablet or a school phone to send one whole group image per day of a trip to the School office for them to send out.

Residentials over holidays and weekends

During those residential trips, over holidays and over weekends, communication with parents will be maintained daily by use of a WhatsApp group for that trip on the School mobile telephone. In this group, the trip leader is responsible for sending one update per day, including one whole group picture. Additional emergency communication is at the discretion of the group leader.

Hand held radios *may* also be utilised for staff communication whilst on visits / during outdoor learning opportunities.

10. First Aid

A qualified current Paediatric First Aider must attend every EYFS visit or outdoor learning activity and at least one member of staff with a general first aid qualification should attend trips from Y1 upwards.

All staff involved in visits should be aware and have easy access to details of any medical issues regarding the pupils in their care.

Medicines relating to particular pupils and information regarding administration should be given to the designated member of staff and administered by an individual with an 'Administration of Medications in Schools' qualification.

Where age appropriate, pupils should carry their asthma inhaler, and those with an Epi Pen should also have it on their person at all times.

For day trips a designated visits first aid kit is available; a more comprehensive kit will be provided for residential visits. Matron will ensure these are kept fully stocked.

Details of any incident and/or accident that may occur during a visit must be recorded on SchoolBase and the Director of Operations advised.

11. Transport

The HCC and Transport Manager will arrange for appropriate transport for offsite learning opportunities, day visits and/or residential visits if these are not provided by the tour operator.

When transporting pupils on School or externally provided transport, the Transport Risk Assessment should be adhered to at all times. Wherever possible, pupils should not sit in the two front rows of the coach, or in the back row of seating. Adults should be seated throughout the coach.

All pupils will wear seatbelts, and sit on booster seats where necessary. Staff must ensure these are secure at the start of each journey and during the journey at reasonable intervals.

Pupils should be made aware of basic safety rules for travel, as well as the school Bus Code of Conduct.

When transportation is through the use of School buses, the School Driving at work policy must be adhered to by all staff drivers.

The use of staff cars for shorter visits and sporting activities may be considered subject to the school's insurance policy cover.

12. Visits Abroad

Travelling abroad can be hugely rewarding for pupils and adults alike, but it is important that careful preparation takes place. Much of the earlier advice in this document applies to visits abroad, but there are some additional factors that need to be considered, not least because the legislation may be different from that of the UK.

Group leaders should always comply with the school policy on visits abroad. Complete guidance on planning an overseas trip may be found as an appendix to this policy.

13. Insurance

All School trips are insured for teachers, supervisors, volunteers and pupils by a blanket policy for the whole of St Peter's Preparatory School. This is provided by AIG. Activities that are deemed 'high risk' may require additional citations on the policy and should be discussed with the Director of Operations when being organised.

14. Equal Opportunities

Every effort will be made to ensure that learning outside the classroom opportunities, visits and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender, religion, etc.

15. Pupils with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities, Special Educational and Medical Needs

Wherever it is feasible, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities should be included in visits or learning outside the classroom opportunities, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone in the group. Any problems/limitations should be considered at the planning stage and when carrying out the risk assessment.

Special attention is made to supervision ratios. Each visit leader, for information, should hold summary sheets containing details of the pupil's/pupils' special needs and provision required.

The group leader should discuss the visit with the parents of those children with special needs to ensure sufficient support is in place for each child and the teacher.

Parents of ALL pupils attending the trip are asked to declare if there are any 'overnight' risks that trip organisers need to be aware of eg. Bedwetting or Sleepwalking so that necessary risk assessments can be put in place.

16. Illness or minor accidents

If a pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill during a visit or outdoor learning activity the member of staff in charge will phone the parents' emergency contact number and arrange for the child to be collected.

If contact can't be made, the child will be taken to the local hospital or if a minor issue, to School Matron on return to School. A member of staff will remain with the child until a parent or carer arrives.

17. Emergency Procedures

If an emergency occurs on a School visit, the main factors to consider include:

- establishing the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible;
- ensuring that all the group are safe and looked after;
- establishing the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them;
- ensuring that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures;
- ensuring that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together;
- notifying the police if necessary;
- notifying the British Embassy/Consulate if an emergency occurs abroad;
- informing the School contact. The school contact number should be accessible at all times during the visit;
- Following specific protocols for a number of possible emergencies such as missing child, road traffic accident, injury or death of a pupil/member of staff, bomb threat, infectious diseases etc may be found in the appendices of the Emergency and Disaster Management manual.

18. Evaluation and Reporting

Verbal feedback regarding a trip or activity should be given to the Head and the HCC as soon as possible on return. Any arising issues should be noted, addressed and/or resolved. Children may also be involved in this process. Any appropriate letter of thanks should be written and sent.

19. Management and Development

The HCC at St Peter's Preparatory School is currently Mr Rob Parker. It is the HCC's responsibility to:

- Communicate, and discuss and enforce school policy in relation to trips/visits
- Provide support for staff planning and organising trips, liaising with other key staff to ensure all logistics are in place.
- Support and/or provide risk assessments, as required, for trips and visits.

Appendix - Checklist and Guidance for Planning an Overseas or Residential Trip

Planning of an overseas or residential trip should be initiated at least two terms in advance of departure.

- ❏ Visit leaders should obtain advice from the HCC and MMT/SLT on suitable dates, previous experience and requirements. Key elements of the visit should be discussed, including purpose, location, transport, accommodation, activities, itinerary, number and age of participants.
- ❏ Calculate the staff to pupil ratio
- ❏ Prepare a draft itinerary
- ❏ Decide the mode of transport for the whole journey
- ❏ Prepare a costing for the visit, remembering to allow a contingency for delays and emergencies
- ❏ If an adventurous activity is involved, ensure that the provider is licensed and individual instructors possess a recognised qualification (such as the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority - AALA)
- ❏ Obtain relevant details from the intended Centre regarding acceptance of responsibility and copies of risk assessments before committing to the visit.
- ❏ Prepare your own risk assessment - this should include all elements of the visit including transportation.
- ❏ Accompanying members of staff should be agreed. Consideration should be given to:
    - male / female ratios
    - language skills if travel is to a non English speaking country
    - medical assistance skills (First Aid qualification)
    - nature of activities

The School may permit parents and office staff to assist with day trips and sports fixtures where needed but where parent volunteers participate, arrangements for DBS checks may be necessary where they will be working in regulated activity.

- ❏ Where an external tour operator is being utilised, check that the tour company / airline is ATOL / ABTA bonded so that cover is provided in the event of the bankruptcy of the provider
- ❏ Undertake a reconnaissance visit to the location if the school has not visited it before, or a reference from another school where this is not possible
- ❏ Establish the minimum and maximum numbers for the visit to be viable
- ❏ Establish any visa requirements if travelling overseas

- ❏ Establish medical requirements
- ❏ Calculate the deposit required from participants
- ❏ Check with the travel advice unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office depending on the location
- ❏ Prepare a written case for counter signing by the HCC and approval by the Head and MMT/SLT.

After permission for the trip has been granted:

- ❏ Write a preliminary letter to send to parents and guardians of the target group outlining: purpose of the trip
    - programme
    - expected maximum cost
    - process for expressions of interest and date by when deposit must be paid
    - parents briefing six weeks before departure
    - restrictions on numbers

- ❏ Brief pupils about the visit, its dates and purpose
- ❏ Collect a list of pupils who have signed up to participate in the trip
- ❏ Check the names of all pupils wishing to participate with Matron. Discuss any requirements with the HCC (including those for special educational needs as outlined in the policy)
- ❏ Arrange for payment of the trip with the Finance Dept, making plans to pay in a timely manner any deposits on accommodation, travel, activity centre etc

- ❏ At least a term before departure

- ❏ Finalise costs with the travel company
- ❏ Where possible check that all coaches are fitted with seat belts
  Finalise the cost for parents (including contingency provision)
- ❏ Inform parents of medical and visa requirements. Any non-British passport holders parents should be advised that it is their responsibility for ascertaining any visa requirements for their child
- ❏ Arrange with finance for parents to be billed for the balance of the cost of the trip on the end of term bill so that the trips are paid for in advance
- ❏ Make plans for final balance to the travel company / airline / hotel etc be settled

Six weeks in advance

- ❑ Give finance details of any foreign currency / travellers cheques etc and agree collection requirements
- ❑ Arrange a trip briefing with parents, which will cover:
- Itinerary, including meeting and collection points
- contact details for hotels / hostels/ names and addresses of host families
- the number of the school mobile phone
- kit, equipment, dress code of country and money requirements for pupils
- expected rules of behaviour for the trip and the arrangements where such rules are not followed by pupils (including possibility of sending pupils home at parent's expense).
- arrangements for dealing with emergencies and informing parents of them
- arrangements for communicating with parents in the event of return from the trip being delayed
- the need to notify the school of contact with an infectious disease 4 weeks before travelling
- the reasons for why a consent form is essential
- the need for a copy of each pupils passport and the data
- ❑ Arrange for any catering requirements with the catering department
- ❑ Brief pupils on expected standards of behaviour and cultural differences
- ❑ Establish from Parents if there are any 'overnight' issues which trip organisers need to be aware of eg. bedwetting or sleepwalking.
- ❑ Necessary risk assessments to then be put in place.

Two weeks in advance

- ❑ Obtain copies of each pupils passport
- ❑ Check all travel tickets and store in the School safe
- ❑ If collecting currency / travellers cheques etc arrange for storage in the School safe and make a note of any serial numbers etc
- ❑ Meet with accompanying staff members to discuss all practical arrangements for the trip and roles and responsibilities.
- ❑ Prepare packs for the School Office and each member of staff containing:
- the itinerary, with all addresses of locations during the trip etc
- Staff mobile numbers
- mobile numbers of participating staff
- a list of pupils with parental contact details and medical conditions

- copies of all passports and travel documents
- emergency contact numbers for the Head, HCC, SLT
- out of hours contact numbers for school security
- address and contact details of nearest British Consul
- on exchanges contact details / addresses for schools and host families
- copy of travel tickets and insurance documents
- copy of the trip risk assessment
- location of nearest hospital

❏ Ensure staff are aware of their GDPR responsibilities when carrying personal data.

Day prior to departure / day of departure

❏ Collect tickets, foreign currency, travellers cheques etc from the safe
❏ Give trip information packs to nominated persons
❏ Give each pupil the names, addresses and phone numbers of their accommodation
❏ Remind pupils about expected standards of behaviour and sanctions if not followed
❏ Remind pupils to bring passports and ask to see
❏ Collect travelling first aid kit (check contents)
❏ Collect School mobile phone and charger
❏ Collect any catering provisions

During the visit or activity

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with the visit leader. They should take responsibility for amending the itinerary in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions.

They may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out a head count on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving a museum, restaurant, activity centre, hotel etc
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts during transportation
- Checking the fire exits and escape routes at each hotel or hostel.
- Ensuring that every pupil walks through the emergency escape route at each hotel.

- Ensuring that sleeping accommodation is suitable and located together (preferably not on the ground floor).
- Setting times for pupils to be in their rooms at night. Conducting checks.
- Setting agreed times and locations for checking pupils when they work or are allowed out unsupervised in small groups.
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour
- Looking after (or reminding pupils to look after) passports and valuables
- Storing cash, travellers cheques and tickets in the hotel safe
- Keeping an account of all expenditure
- Recording all accidents and near misses

Illness or minor accidents

If a pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill, they will be taken to the local hospital or clinic. If the trip is outside the UK, he/she will contact the relevant personnel at School to make arrangements for the medical bill to be settled.
If the accident is more serious (such as a broken leg when skiing), the School's medical insurers may arrange for the pupil, accompanied by a member of staff, to be repatriated to the UK. The visit leader will liaise with the Head and where appropriate inform the pupil's parents if their child has suffered an accident or injury that is serious enough to require medical treatment - as opposed to minor cuts and bruises.

Revision History		
Date Revised	Changes	Reviewed By
16/09/2025	Section 8: changed the Reception parameters of Reception 31-40 from '7' staff, to '6'	Rob Parker and Dan Morris
17/09/2025	Formatting and capitalisation corrections	Steph O'Connor (Ops Admin Asst)
21/10/2026	No notable changes.	Dan Morris (Dir. of Operations)