



European School LLC

შპს ევროპული სკოლა

# International Visits Policy



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Sophio Bazadze  
Director



2 I. Skhirtladze Str. Tbilisi, 0177, Georgia  
Tel: (032) 239 59 64,  
info@europeanschool.ge  
www.europeanschool.ge  
ს/კ: 205172917

# Contents

Purpose.....	3
Role of the group leader .....	3
A working timeline .....	3
2 - 3 months before the visit takes place .....	3
1 - 2 months before the visit takes place .....	3
1 month before the visit takes place .....	4
One week – 1 months before departure .....	4
During the visit .....	4
Post visit.....	4
Toolkit appendices .....	4
Appendix 1 .....	5
Appendix 2a .....	7
Appendix 2b .....	8
Appendix 3 .....	9
Appendix 4 .....	11
Young people and parents/carers can expect the following:.....	11
The school expects the following: .....	11
Appendix 5 .....	12
Appendix 6 .....	13
IMPORTANT INFORMATION .....	13
Appendix 7 .....	14
Appendix 8 .....	15
Bibliography:.....	16
Works Cited: .....	16

## Purpose

International Visits Policy applies to the safety and well-being of the students of the European school LLC (hereinafter referred as "school") during international visits.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- a) Govern the organizational issues before visit takes place, during the visit and post visit;
- b) Ensure safety during the whole visit;
- c) Be in compliance with the conditions set out in the Appendices.

## Role of the group leader

The group leader must gain approval from the School principal for the visit to go ahead. They also inform the students's parents / legal guardians (hereinafter referred to as the Parents) about the nature of the visit and gain their consent. The group leader is responsible for undertaking a robust risk assessment and continually assessing risk during the visit to ensure the safety and well-being of students.

## A working timeline

### **2 - 3 months before the visit takes place**

- The first step is to consult with the partner school and agree scope and theme for visit, discuss to determine where the students will stay, what costs may be involved and to share information about safeguarding.
- Permission will need to be granted for the visit by the school's headteacher with input from the group leader and with due regard for the school calendar. It is advisable to agree the calendar one year in advance. A risk assessment should begin to be prepared to answer all the questions raised by the group leader.

### **1 - 2 months before the visit takes place**

- Inform students about the visit using a draft programme with explanations to show an expectation of the visit.
- Inform parents of the opportunity and invite expressions of interest (**Appendix 2a**), purpose of visit and destination, details of accommodation, programme and costs are taken into account.
- Confirm participation and arrange for signature of form of consent and indemnity (**Appendix 3**).

When these forms are received, the disclosed medical conditions, allergies and dietary requirements need to be factored into the risk analyses. All this information must be shared with home stay hosts and other accommodation providers.

Regard will need to be given to also arranging necessary travel documentation. Holders of passports / travel documents in some countries may need a visa to travel to a partner school, and the school must verify this at the embassy / consulate of the country where the visit is to take place. Applying for a visa can take some time - including deadlines for applications, visits to embassies, etc. A power of attorney / consent issued by the student's legal representatives, which gives them permission to travel abroad, may also be required.

If staying with host families, students should complete a separate pro forma (**Appendix 2b**), which can be shared with hosts and for which parents/carers have given specific authority for this information to be shared. Appropriate travel insurance must be secured. Attention should be given to whether or not the insurance provides cover for delay, travel cancellation or disruption at ports and airports due to delay or

strike action.

All payment rules should be agreed in advance.

### **1 month before the visit takes place**

All parents and students should get confirmation of where the group will be staying and have contact with the host family if possible. A meeting will be held for all parents/carers and students. An expectations agreement (**Appendix 4**) will be signed by all parents/carers and students. A person accompanying a student who is not a school employee should not be a convicted person, nor a person convicted of a crime against sexual freedom and inviolability under the Law of Georgia on Combating Sexual Freedom and Inviolability, regardless of whether the conviction has been annulled or expunged. The purpose of the visit will be established and prepared how these will be evaluated during and after the visit/project.

### **One week – 1 months before departure**

A cultural briefing note will be provided to all students explaining how to get the most out of the visit (**Appendix 5**). This is particularly important when travelling to countries where cultural norms are often quite different to those in the Georgia. Also, **Emergency contact** details and **Kit list** will be shared with students – what they should take will be dependent on destination, activity, weather and programme. Students will be instructed to put these numbers into their own telephones (**Appendix 6 and 8**).

All vaccinations should be organized if required. Students will be briefed on what to do in emergency situations; In case of becoming lost, being distressed or in case of trouble with police or authorities.

Student will be informed about reiteration of school behavior code and any further visit expectations, including use of social media (**Appendix 7**). A parents' group will be set up (social media, WhatsApp etc.) for communication during the visit. Group leaders will need to understand how to report any incidents of concern with the school safeguarding lead and any accidents using the school's reporting guidance.

### **During the visit**

During the entire visit the school is obliged to provide:

- reiterate behaviour expectations;
- guidance about any free time – make sure that students carry emergency contact cards. If students are in families, suggest nightly check in by text and suggest a curfew;
- Listen to what students tell you about free time activities and intervene if appropriate;
- Mindful of issues with social media, suggest regular updates about visit to a parents' group on Facebook/WhatsApp;
- Regular review of risk assessment; including terrorist threat (**Appendix 8**). Encourage reflection and learning through the visit, from participants and group leaders.

### **Post visit**

The post-visit period should be dedicated to evaluate the project, measuring outcomes against project objectives. Plans should be made to share the project's learning outcomes with the whole school and with parents/carers. School must follow-up the learning with the young people, providing support for future opportunities and next steps, to capitalize on the exchange, promote the visit to local press.

### **Toolkit appendices**

The toolkit contains a number of appendices which offer practical advice and sample letter templates and forms which school uses. They are listed below:

- Appendix 1** Planning checklist;
- Appendix 2a** Sample letter to parents/carers – visit to residential centre;
- Appendix 2b** Sample letter to parents/carers – homestay;
- Appendix 3** Example form of consent;
- Appendix 4** Expectations agreement;
- Appendix 5** Cultural briefing note;
- Appendix 6** Emergency contact detail advice;
- Appendix 7** Social media guidance;
- Appendix 8** Emergency situation protocols and advice.

### Appendix 1

#### **Planning checklist**

Once school has agreed project objectives and dates with partner school, it is useful to make checklist below to keep track of school project/visit progress.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date completed</b>	<b>Further actions</b>
	Permission for visit to take place requested and given		
	Risk assessment begun and reviewed at regular intervals		
	Invitation for expressions of interest (from students)		
	School visit risk assessment and visit details		
	Travel and accommodation arranged, and providers checked for compliance with health and safety legislation		
	If homestay.... (what should they do extra/different?)		
	Information evening for parents/carers arranged		
	Form of consent collected		
	Record of medical conditions/allergies/dietary requirements compiled and shared where appropriate with partner school		
	Information compiled about students' passports and nationalities		

Collective passport applied for, if applicable		
Information about need for visas for travel shared with students and families, if applicable		
If necessary, power of attorney is obtained from the legal representatives, which will allow the students to leave the country		
Information shared with partner schools and with potential host families, where applicable		
Travel insurance arranged and medical information disclosed to insurance company		
Expectations agreement completed by students and their carers		
All accompanying staff to have satisfactory checks completed and recorded		
Cultural briefing note shared with students and accompanying staff		
Information about need for vaccinations shared and record of completed vaccinations taken		
Emergency situation briefing held for students and accompanying staff and emergency contact details shared with parents/carers		
Information about how to react in emergency to be given to all students		
Share kit list with all students		
Up to date contact information to be collected from all students		
Social media account established to share information with parents/carers		
Emergency cash/access to credit arranged with school office		
Post-visit report any safeguarding concerns to schoolsafeguarding lead		
Prepare post-visit report and invite student reflection		
Sharing of learning and development within school, and with others in local community		

## Appendix 2a

Sample letter to parents/carers (residential centre)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Our school has a strong link with x school in Germany. Working with our teacher colleagues at (Name of partner school), we would like to organise a project to involve students from both schools in collaborative working and investigation.

We would like to take a party of up to 20 students from Year 10 to the partner school from\_\_ to\_\_. This represents a great opportunity for our students to work in partnership with children from another country and develop important life skills. The students will also be able to experience a different culture and practise the language, which they have been learning in school in real life situations.

Travel to Germany will be by luxury coach and by Eurostar. The journey will take approximately 12 hours. Once in Germany, the group will be accommodated in a residential centre called\_\_\_\_\_. The full address and weblink is shown below:

Address:

Weblink:

Students will share single-sex multi-bedded rooms, with an average of four beds per room. There will be private single-sex washing facilities and toilets for the students to use. We will also organise a cultural programme for our students and a draft outline is attached.

The cost of the visit; including travel, insurance and visits programme is £\_\_\_\_\_and can be paid in instalments. The final payment for the balance is\_\_\_\_\_. Payment for the visit can be made by Parent mail.

I will be holding a meeting for all parents/carers and students to answer any questions which you may have and to share our approaches to risk and safeguarding.

To request a place for your child, please return the attached pro forma.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on\_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix 2b

Sample letter to parent/carers (Homestays)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Our school has a strong link with x school in Germany. Working with our teacher colleagues at (Name of partner school), we would like to organise a project to involve students from both schools in collaborative working and investigation.

We would like to take a party of up to 20 students from Year 10 to the partner school from \_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. This represents a great opportunity for our students to work in partnership with children from another country and develop important life skills. The students will also be able to experience a different culture and practise the language, which they have been learning in school in real life situations.

Travel to Germany will be by luxury coach and by Eurostar. The journey will take approximately 12 hours.

Once in Germany, the group will be accommodated by the families of students who attend our partner school and with whom we will work during our time there. The families have been selected by our German partner school, which is satisfied that they have no reason to doubt their suitability to host a child from our school. Students will be partnered with a child who shares similar interests wherever possible. There will be one UK pupil per German household. With your permission, we will share dietary and other requirements with the host family. Students will be able to contact the group leader at all times by telephone if they are unwell or are troubled or distressed.

We will organise a cultural programme for our students and a draft outline is attached. The cost of the visit including travel, insurance and visits programme is £ \_\_\_\_\_. Payment for the visit can be made by Parentmail.

I will be holding a meeting for all parents/carers and students to answer any questions which you may have and to share our approaches to risk and safeguarding.

To request a place for your child, please return the attached pro forma.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on \_\_\_\_\_.

### Appendix 3

Example form of consent

<b>Visit to Delhi – 10 – 17 May</b>	
Name of pupil	Date of birth
Home address	Home telephone (landline)
Name of emergency contact 1	Contact number
Name of emergency contact 2	Contact number
Name of family doctor, address and contact telephone number	
Dietary requirements	Medical conditions and medication used
Allergies	Mobility issues
Other considerations; including religious observance	
Consent and agreements	
Please tick each applicable box and sign where indicated	
<input type="checkbox"/> I consent to my child taking part in the visit detailed overleaf.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I consent to my child receiving emergency medical or dental treatment; including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by a medical practitioner.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I will ensure that my child will carry two sets of certain medications; epipens, inhalers etc. and that he/she is confident in their use, storage and care.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I will inform school of any prescribed medications being taken by my child and give these to the group leader for safe keeping in clearly marked containers which shows prescribed dosage. (Only medicines prescribed by a doctor can be carried by the staff member).	
<input type="checkbox"/> I will provide school with certificates of all vaccinations, which are considered necessary for the visit.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I consent to my child being photographed during the visit for school use and in line with school photo policy.	

<input type="checkbox"/> I consent to school sharing information about my child with the partner school where appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my son/daughter to take part in water-based activities and confirm that my child can swim without flotation aids.
<input type="checkbox"/> I agree to meet any costs and expenses reasonably incurred by the school on behalf of my son/daughter which cannot be covered under the terms of the insurance policy (policy excess, emergency care, damage to property belonging to a third party etc.).

Name of pupil \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/carer \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 4**

Expectations agreement

This agreement sets out the expectations of everyone involved in international visit

**Young people and parents/carers can expect the following:**

- a member of staff can be contacted at any time should you have a problem or concern;
- parents will be able to contact the group leader if they have any concerns whilst the group is abroad.
- the school's first and foremost concern is the safety of the participants, therefore all activities carried out will comply with current health and safety regulations;
- transport organised by the school for use during the visit will be checked to ensure it meets stringent health and safety regulations;
- participants are comprehensively insured by the school's insurance policy whilst taking part in the visit.

**The school expects the following:**

- young people, who take part, will follow all instructions given by the group leader, teachers, accompanying adults and in case of homestays, by the host family's parents;
- young people and their families/carers will inform the group leader immediately of any concerns about their welfare;
- behaviour of the young people will be exemplary; young people who are in breach of school's behaviour policy may be sent home at the expense of their parents/carers;
- no pupil will consume alcohol, smoke or engage in inappropriate or criminal activity;
- a contribution of £ xx per pupil towards travel and accommodation will be made by (date).

Signed:                      .....                      .....                      .....  
Participant                      Parent/Guardian                      Group leader

Dated                      .....

## Appendix 5

### Cultural briefing note

Dear Student,

I know that you are looking forward to our forthcoming visit to our partner school in .....

To make sure that everyone gets the most out of this experience, we must all agree to follow a sensible and respectful code of conduct.

We respect everyone; our classmates and teachers, the partner school staff and students, host families and all those people whom we may meet during our project.

Travelling is an exciting experience. It is an opportunity to recognise things, which are similar but also it gives us the chance to learn about new things, try new foods and become part of a different culture. Being different does not mean being strange or odd or that something is better or worse than what we might be used to at home. It is good to note down all the things which strike you as being different, in order that we can talk about these when back at school.

Do let me know if you have any questions or concerns about the project or the country we are to visit.

Below is a list of issues, which you may wish to brief students about:

- Importance of saying Hello, Please and Thank You,
- How to greet people; with or without kissing/touching people of opposite/same sex,
- The way students speak to school staff/adults,
- What you are and are not allowed to do at school,
- The way in which boys and girls learn together or learn apart,
- School uniform/what to wear at school,
- How to stay safe at school,
- Meals and which foods might be served and how they ought to be eaten,
- What to say before you eat,
- How to dress in public (short skirts/ bare shoulders/ shorts for boys etc.),
- Whether or not it is acceptable to take photos.

The above list represents only a fraction of what you may wish to discuss with students.

Partner school relationships are built on trust and prosper on respect. It is important that students understand the cultural norms in the country to be visited in order that they do not cause offence or are perceived as being rude or disrespectful.

## Appendix 6

### Emergency contact details

Students should enter the emergency contact number of the group leader into their mobile device. They should also take a laminated card with them, which would have details in English and in the language of the host country. This information should explain what to do if lost and how to call the group leader.

There should be a foreign language translation which would allow a responsible person to call the partner school leader in their language.

An example is shown below. The Hungarian text asks the person to whom the card is presented to call the Hungarian group leader as the child has become lost and is visiting Hungary with his/her school class:

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

You **must**:

- listen to all instructions;
- arrive in good time at all meeting points;
- never go off on your own – your group should be at least 4 strong;
- always make sure that someone in your group has a watch;
- always be clear where the meeting point is;
- call the group leader on 0044 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx if you are distressed or in difficulty;
- show this card to a policeman, shopkeeper or responsible person if you cannot reach your teacher. Always remain in a group when asking for help.

## Appendix 7

### Social media guidance

Young people use mobile technology to communicate with friends and family and as a source of information.

During an exchange visit, mobile telephones can be a very good way to keep in contact with students and for the young people to be able to reach their group leader. The posting of photographs and associated comments on social media sites can, however, create distress for some members of the group and their families as well as causing reputational damage for the school.

Schools may already have guidance on the use of social media, which should be brought to the attention of students and their parents/carers. Good, sensible advice would be:

- Not to share social media contact details with strangers;
- Never to post images of anyone in the group without asking their permission;
- To contribute to a group blog or twitter feed, which is moderated by the group leader rather than to individual social media accounts;
- Only to use appropriate language and content;
- To consider the impact of any comments posted if they were to be read by host families or the host school, (this could cover quality of food, technology, buildings or even the weather);
- To agree to take down any material which is deemed to be inappropriate and brought to the attention of the group leader.

## Appendix 8

### Emergency situation protocols and advice

Schools will have an emergency procedure in place and the group leader should be familiar with this and understand whom to contact in event of an emergency situation. Visit leaders should follow this agreed emergency protocol at all times and consider both potential threats and their remedial solutions.

There is understandable anxiety on the part of staff, students, parents/carers when travelling abroad; especially following any terrorist incident. However, this needs to be kept in perspective and sensible and commensurate actions can mitigate against risk.

When visiting busy places popular with tourists and when travelling at your destination:

- Brief students about what to do in event of an emergency;
- Tell all members of the party to remain vigilant and report anything they consider suspicious to the group leader;
- Identify a safe area to be used as a meeting point in the event of an emergency;
- Make sure that all students and staff can be in touch with each other;
- Ensure that staff have emergency contact details with them;
- Each child should have a contact card with them;
- Make sure that there is a qualified first aider in your party;
- Avoid queuing for long periods of time; pre-book admissions where possible.

Staff and students ought to be familiar with the Government's strategy in event of attack – **RUN, HIDE, TELL.**

Staff must know how to contact emergency services in the partner school country.

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