



## **TRIPS AND VISITS POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This policy is a 'Whole School Policy' and informs practice in the Senior School, Prep School and Nursery. This policy has been drawn up in accordance with 'The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide', DCSF (Department for Children, School and Families) guidance 2004 (see [www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk)). All staff taking or assisting on school trips will be aware of the policy and of all specific local requirements. The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (Deputy Head) in the Senior School and Prep Head in the Prep School and Nursery will oversee all trips and visits. This will include the procedures for:

- Planning and preparing for a visit or school trip.
- Assessing the risks associated with a visit or school trip.
- Informing parents, gaining their consent and, where appropriate, involving them in visits and trips.
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of party leaders and other supervisors during visits and trips.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

2. The Head is delegated by the Governing Body to approve all off-site educational visits of a perceived low risk, local, daily or regular nature. The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) ensures that all off-site activities follow the correct procedures. The EVC will approve the group leader for every visit and monitor the written risk assessments to ensure good practice. In addition, the following responsibilities and duties are undertaken:

- Support the group leader in identifying the purpose for the visit and the selection, training and briefing of appropriate supervising adults and volunteer helpers.
- Ensure that DBS disclosures are in place where necessary.
- Arrange Emergency Contact SLT member and draw up proper procedures to be followed in such an event.
- Keep records and make reports of accidents and 'near accidents'.
- Review and regularly monitor procedures.

The Group Leader is responsible for identifying the purpose of the visit and producing an appropriate risk assessment for each off-site visit. Significant risks and their control measures together with a list of pupils attending the trip/visit will need to be filed with the Deputy Bursar.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS**

3. Staff who lead or accompany school trips should familiarise themselves with the DCSF HASPEV (Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational visits) guidance (see <http://publications.education.gov.uk>). The Group Leader is responsible for the planning and organisation of the trip and for taking day to day decisions once the trip is in progress. There must always be a designated Group Leader who is a member of the School staff. The accompanying teachers are in loco parentis (i.e. responsible for taking immediate and appropriate decisions) of the pupils in their charge at any given time.

4. Parents/carers need to give written consent that emergency medical action can be taken by doctors as necessary. This is covered in the medical form completed by the parent/carer and updated annually or when a change in medical circumstance occurs. The group leader would attempt to contact the parents or carers but in an extreme emergency this might not be possible. For journeys abroad, it is a sensible procedure to carry a signed translation of the consent form, which foreign medical staff can understand.

5. The need for first aid should be part of the risk assessment. A trained and qualified first-aider should always be available to administer first aid to groups. In practice this usually means that one member of the supervisory staff should hold a current, basic first aid qualification. Where contracted activity instructors holding a first aid qualification are running a session, there is no need for the group leader or supervisors to be first-aid qualified. Equally, a group going to a leisure centre, where there are first-aiders on site, need not be accompanied by a qualified first-aider, whereas a group working alone on a local common would need to be. It must be noted, however, that first aid should always be a voluntary action; a member of staff cannot be made to administer first aid, unless that is a clear part of their terms of employment.

## **SUPERVISION**

6. **Legal responsibilities.** All the activities covered in this policy take place within a legal framework. Adult supervisors in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure they remain safe and healthy. Adult supervisors in charge of young people during a visit are considered to be '*in loco parentis*'. They have both a duty of care towards those young people and a common-law duty to act as a reasonable, prudent and careful parent would in similar circumstances. Adult supervisors should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation. In exercising the duty of care and interpreting the meaning of 'reasonable, prudent and careful', common sense should be applied. Those involved should:

- Consider whether they would be able to justify what is proposed to professional colleagues whose judgement they respect and, ultimately, a court of law;
- If they are in doubt they should not go ahead until they have sufficient further information and advice to remove the doubt.

7. **Voluntary supervisors and adult helpers.** The principle of *in loco parentis* applies to all who take responsibility for the children of others, but the law would be likely to expect a higher standard of care from professionals because of their training and experience. Where parents and volunteers are used to enhance the supervision of school visits and off-site activities, the group leader must discuss any proposed parents or volunteers with the EVC *in advance* of any parents or volunteers being invited or confirmed. It is vital that the following is taken into account:

- Adequate child protection procedures are in place;
- All parents and volunteers helping on residential visits MUST be DBS-checked;
- Where there is any doubt about the suitability of an adult supervisor, the adult should not be allowed to help supervise the visit. The EVC, in consultation with the Head, will not hesitate to act upon his own judgement, even if someone has been DBS-checked.
- For the protection of both adults and pupils, adult supervisors should ensure they are not alone with a pupil wherever possible.

8. **Young people aged eighteen and over.** With young people in this category the principle of *in loco parentis* does not apply as such, but those responsible for them should assume the same duty of care towards them as they would to under-eighteens.

9. **Outside agencies.** Where an activity involves the use of the resources or expertise of an establishment or organisation other than that of the school, the group leader must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the agency involved is competent and any establishment safe.
10. **Contracted staff.** Contracted staff can never be left in sole charge of a group of pupils. Whilst contractors clearly have their own responsibilities towards pupils, the School will always retain a 'duty of care' towards the pupils and can therefore never hand the job of supervision over to a contractor.
11. **Disability Discrimination Act.** It is unlawful for schools to treat a disabled pupil less favourably, because of his/her disability, than his/her non-disabled peers. Schools must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils are not put at substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled pupils.

### **APPROVAL FOR TRIPS AND VISITS**

12. The School has a formal procedure for the approval of all trips and visits. These include day trips, overnight trips and residential visits both at home and abroad. All trips and visits are given approval based on a variety of factors, including the risk assessment undertaken for the trip. The EVC gives formal approval for a visit if the following requirements are met:

- Adequate child protection procedures are in place.
- The EVC has confirmed that the date(s) requested for the visit do not clash with any other school events or would disrupt the routine school day unreasonably.
- All necessary documentation, actions and training have been completed before the visit begins.
- All necessary paperwork has been submitted to the Deputy Bursar.
- A comprehensive risk assessment has been undertaken and completed.
- The appropriate teacher-pupil ratio is met.
- The school's Visit Consent Form has been filled in for each pupil.
- For EYFS trips at least one person on the outing has a paediatric first aid certificate.

The Group Leader must complete a **Trips and Visits Proposal Form** to obtain approval in principle for the visit. All paperwork for any day visit must be submitted to the EVC and Deputy Bursar *at least* four working days in advance of the visit. All paperwork for any residential/hazardous activity visit must be submitted to the EVC and Deputy Bursar *at least* ten working days in advance. The Party Leader must hold a 'Visit Check' meeting with the EVC and Deputy Bursar four working days before a day visit and ten working days before a residential/hazardous activity visit.

### **OBTAINING PARENTAL CONSENT**

13. The following procedure applies to pupils of all ages:
- Visit Information Form. This form, usually in letter format must be sent to parents in advance of all trips to give details of the trip, including timings, any cost involved, kit/clothing required, spending money and an itinerary if appropriate.
  - Visit Consent Form. This must be received for any trip and visit that is not part of the ordinary school day, off-site sports matches are therefore excluded. This will usually form part of the above letter, in some circumstances teachers may allow email consent from parents.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR TRIPS AND VISITS**

15. The Group Leader must ensure the following requirements are met for all trips and visits:
- EVC's and Deputy Bursar's approval.

- Risk Assessment.
- For supervisory purposes, the staff to pupil ratio for non hazardous activities is 1:20 (KS3 and KS4), 1:10 (Prep Years 4 – 6) and 1:6 (Prep Years 1 – 3). A higher ratio may be appropriate for pupils under 5. The Head Teacher will use his discretion for Years 12 and 13.
- The staff to pupil ratio must not be less than one **qualified** adult to 10 pupils during hazardous activities.
- Consideration of the appropriate staff to pupil ratio should form part of the risk assessment, taking into account the nature and location of the visit, activities being undertaken and any special needs of pupils.
- Mixed gender groups will have one male and one female member of staff wherever possible; however, this does not apply to EYFS children
- Parent volunteers can accompany a school trip if their own children are on the trip; however, parents should not supervise groups that include their own children due to the conflict of interest that might arise.
- A School mobile phone must be taken.
- The Party Leader must carry the 'Emergency Procedures' instructions with him/her
- Appropriate back-up arrangements for contacting parents in an emergency must have been made in the event of problems arising both during and out of school hours.
- A detailed budget must be prepared by the Party Leader and approved by the Bursar in order to determine the cost to the pupils or to the school.

16. **Residential Visits.** The Party Leader must obtain contact details of the Head or other member of the SLT who will be available during the visit period for emergency contact purposes. In addition to the mandatory paperwork required for all visits and trips, the Group Leader should prepare a detailed plan of the residential visit which includes the following considerations as part of the risk assessment:

- Does the school's Behaviour Code for the trip cover all relevant circumstances, such as consumption of alcohol?
- If a pupil misbehaves and has to be returned home, how can this be arranged and who could accompany him/her?
- If a member of staff is taken ill or has to return home, what back-up measures are in place?
- Is the communication chain in place for accurate information to be disseminated quickly to parents?
- What arrangements have been made to ensure that pupils and staff are equipped for planned activities?

17. **Exchange visits.** Exchange visits differ from other visits in that young people are not directly supervised by teachers whilst they are with host families. In addition to the mandatory paperwork required for all visits and trips, the Group Leader should prepare a detailed plan of the exchange visit which includes extra considerations and further details as part of the risk assessment. See Appendix A.

18. **Risk Assessment.** The Group Leader must produce a visit specific risk assessment for each visit. However, risk assessment is an on-going dynamic process which must continue throughout the visit and it should not be regarded as a paper exercise. Specific factors to consider when completing trip and visit risk assessments are:

- Activities and activity venue(s).
- Accommodation.
- Weather conditions.
- Age and experience of the pupils.
- Qualifications and related experience of accompanying staff and/or instructors.
- Travel and transport arrangements.
- Alternative arrangements for failed planned activities.
- Injury and illness contingency arrangements.

When use of staff cars is unavoidable in transporting pupils, staff must have clean driving licenses, current comprehensive and business use insurance, an MOT if the vehicle is over 3 years old, and parental consent must be obtained.

19. **Emergency Procedures.** These procedures are based on those contained in DCSF Circular 22/94 and should be used in the event of serious or fatal injury. An emergency is unlikely to occur in circumstances where these procedures can be carried out to the letter, but staff accompanying the party should be so familiar with them that they are able to adapt them to the situation in which they find themselves. The Party Leader (or person in charge of the discrete group involved) should:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency.
- If there are injuries, immediately establish their extent, so far as possible, and administer appropriate first aid.
- Establish the name(s) of the injured and call whichever emergency services are required.
- Make sure all other members of the party are accounted for and safe.
- Advise other party staff of the incident and that emergency procedures are in operation.
- Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies casualties to hospital.
- Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout and arrange for their early return to base.
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services.
- Control access to phones until contact is made with the Head Teacher/designated SLT member.
- Contact the Head Teacher / designated SLT member and give full details of:
  - Names and phone numbers of those involved.
  - Nature, location, date and time of incident.
  - Details of injuries if known.
  - Action taken so far.
  - Phone numbers for future communication.

The Group Leader and other accompanying staff must not talk to the media. Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.

## EXCHANGE VISITS

### PREPARATION AND PLANNING

#### 1.1 Legal and Cultural Differences

The legal definitions of what constitutes a 'child' and a 'criminal offence' vary across European countries, not to mention global differences in such definitions. Research should be undertaken by the trip leader and young people should be made aware of any significant differences.

#### 1.2 Risk Management

In order to reduce the possibility of harm it will be necessary to consider additional control measures to that of other types of trip.

- Are families and young people carefully matched with due regard to gender, diet, religious belief, special needs etc.?
- Are families known to the host school/establishment, have they been affirmed as suitable, and is there a hosting agreement form which includes a question regarding criminal convictions or other contra-indicators?
- Has consideration been given to the safety and well-being of the young people during travel, and does this include appropriate drivers and transport whilst with the host family?
- Are young people and host families aware of a 24-hour contact number and fully briefed as to procedures should problems arise?
- Do leaders have daily contact with all young people and do young people have an agreed 'keyword' that they can use which means '*I want you to visit me immediately*'?
- Will young people have access to a phone and/or can they use a mobile phone if necessary to call or text messages to staff?
- Have young people been briefed about personal safety?
- Have acceptable and unacceptable activities on 'family days' been discussed and if necessary has parental agreement been sought prior to the visit? For example: is there an opportunity to go skiing, cycling or horse riding with the host family, or a visit to a beach and thus swimming? **If so, parental consent is required.**
- Do you have a Contingency plan in place that considers unforeseen events, such as emergencies, severe weather or the requirement to find alternative accommodation if it becomes necessary to move a young person from their host family?

#### 1.3 Pre-visits

Where a visit is arranged for the first time or involves a significant number of new staff, a preliminary visit is strongly recommended. This will serve as a control measure in itself as well as being an opportunity to consider a specific risk assessment first hand.

### STAFFING

#### 2.1 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

The exact equivalent to DBS checks are unlikely to be available in all countries, therefore the visit leader in this case must ensure that the host school or agency has a vetting procedure in place to assess the suitability of home placements and obtain confirmation of this in writing.

### LEADER AND STAFF COMPETENCE

#### 3.1 Language Capability

It is important that there is someone who can act in the interests of the group who is available 24 hours and able to communicate fluently. Visit leaders should ensure this is in place prior to the visit.

### **3.2 Experience**

It is important that visits include 'succession planning' and any future visit leader has the opportunity in the first instance to learn as much as possible by acting as an assistant leader.

Visit leaders should ensure that 24-hour access is available to a competent person who has all necessary background knowledge of the host culture.

## **PREPARATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE, PARENTS AND STAFF**

### **4.1 Host Families**

Trip leaders must ensure the safety and well-being of visiting young people when they stay with families in our country. Vetting of host families is crucial to ensuring the safety and protection of young people.

The vetting of host families should include:

- DBS Checks
- Verification of family structure
- Code of Conduct
- Information sharing and gathering
- Sleeping arrangements
- Family activities
- Transportation including drivers

**The form EV1:** Exchange/Home Stay Visits: Host Family Information should be used to gather information about the host families.

**The form EV2:** Exchange/Home Visits Organisers Checklist can be used by Heads/EVCs (page 1), Visit Leaders (page 2), the young people involved and the parents/carers (page 3).

### **4.2 Parents Evening**

It is important that parents are fully informed about the visit in order to make their consent decisions including 'plan B' arrangements. This should include:

- Expectations regarding behaviour of young people, including circumstances in which parents should be prepared for their children to be sent home early, or to be responsible for the collection of their children (Code of Conduct)
- A detailed programme of the entire visit, including family days and acceptable activities that may be provided by host families, e.g. skiing, swimming, night clubs, etc.
- A document that explains how and when young people may, or may not be directly supervised by accompanying staff and how they can communicate with those staff.
- Expectations regarding, downtime, 'curfew' times, bed times, alcohol, smoking, etc.
- Procedures in case young people are not happy in their host family homes.
- Frequently asked questions at parents' evenings include the following:
- Who is hosting my son/daughter and have the family hosted before and what assurances have been made on their suitability?
- What is the policy regarding alcohol, smoking, drugs, videos, curfews, bedtimes etc.?
- Can I contact my son/daughter and can I contact the visit leaders if necessary?
- Can they contact me?
- If my child has a problem, how do they contact leaders and how long would it be before they were visited?
- What experience do the leaders have of this particular visit and visits in general?
- What are the travel arrangements and what are the supervision details during travel periods?

## **4.3 Personal Safety**

### **4.3.1 Staff**

Staff should also be aware of issues relating to personal safety and professional protection, especially in order to avoid situations that could lead to accusations of improper conduct.

### **4.3.2 Young People**

The Travel Scenario Cards, produced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, provides some useful scenarios for young people who are planning to travel overseas. The cards are designed to present different scenarios for young people and it is recommended that the scenarios are discussed in line with general personal safety between young people and parents/teaching staff who may also have experience of or are planning to attend the same trip.

### **4.3.3 Bilingual Help Cards**

It is recommended that young people are supplied with a small pocket sized laminated card with bi-lingual information to include useful phrases in an emergency.

## **4.4 Issues Relating to Censorship**

Visit leaders will need to establish clear policies regarding acceptable cinema, theatre, DVD, video along with Internet usage and access.

## **4.5 Additional Considerations for those with SEND**

It is now widely recognised that young people with special needs have been more vulnerable to abuse than others and therefore face additional risks whilst visiting abroad. These individuals, however, also have the right to have their horizons expanded through travelling abroad. In order to make such exchanges possible, the same general guidelines apply but in addition the visit leader will have to put into place more stringent checks and balances. The following additional procedures and advice are recommended over and above those detailed in the previous section:

- An advanced planning visit is essential for trips involving young people with SEND.
- A higher ratio of adults/carers is required and there must also be an appropriate ratio of male/female adults.
- As part of the risk assessment process, it should be considered whether an appropriately trained person be part of the staff team.
- All teachers supervising visits should be aware of young people's medical needs and medical emergency procedures.
- Check whether travel insurance covers pre-existing health conditions. If not, insure with a company which specialises in policies for these young people.
- Assess suitability of host family - ramps, lifts, wide doorways, adapted toilets etc.
- Housekeeping arrangements for disposal of soiled dressings, pads etc.
- In some cases bunk beds may not be appropriate.
- Contact to be made with young people whilst with host family.
- Availability of interpreter and leader trained if required in the appropriate communication medium i.e. sign language.
- A suitable social area should be available for group meetings etc.

## **USEFUL WEBSITES FOR EXCHANGE VISITS**

Foreign & Commonwealth Office <http://www.gov.uk/fco>

Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/300309/KCSIE\\_gdnce\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300309/KCSIE_gdnce_FINAL.pdf)