



Off-Site Activities and Educational Visits Policy

General Statement

West House School and Nursery is committed to providing a broad range of educational opportunities for its pupils. Educational visits and off-site activities form an important part of the rounded education offered and typically include Geography field trips, historical visits, farm visits and theatre trips.

However, all off-site activities must be carefully planned with appropriate risk assessments in place. This policy is relevant to all staff and pupils, including those in the EYFS, and has been devised with regard to DfES Guidance 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide 2002.

Additional information relating to overseas and residential trips appears in Appendix B of this policy.

Aims and Objectives

Every educational visit should fulfil a clear aim and purpose. The Party Leader must determine the aim and purpose of the visit, whether it accords with the school's curricular aims, which pupils it would benefit, whether the aims could be achieved in a different way, and whether the proposed venue is best for the purposes.

Responsibilities

The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that all visits and activities are properly planned and supervised, that appropriate training has been carried out and the group leader is competent for that type of visit.

Each group should have one overall **Party Leader**, responsible for the planning, supervision and behaviour of pupils on the visit. The Party Leader is responsible for liaising with the Headmaster's PA to ensure that all necessary travel arrangements are made. Generally, Party Leaders should seek the approval of the Headmaster for a trip at least one term in advance, allowing it to appear on the Calendar of Events for the term.

While the employer retains the ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of those on the visit, the Party Leader has the same health and safety responsibility that he/she has during the normal teaching day and is responsible for completing appropriate risk assessments and managing matters relating to first aid.

All Teachers involved in a visit should do all that is reasonably possible to ensure the health and safety of pupils in their charge, along with the health and safety of others and their own health and safety.

Other Accompanying Adults have a general responsibility for the care of pupils. Party Leaders should supply them with detailed information, and should brief them orally, to enable them to carry out their supervisory duties effectively.

Insurance Cover and Transport

Appropriate insurance cover for the visit must be arranged in liaison with the school Bursar. The school insurance policy will cover most visits, but this should be confirmed, particularly when the visit is due to take place outside normal school hours.

Coaches can be booked via the school office and all coaches should be fitted with seat-belts.

When travelling by school minibus, staff should be aware of their responsibilities in checking the vehicle before setting off. For all but the shortest journeys, such as those to the Richmond Hill playing fields, a second adult should be on the bus to supervise the pupils.

The school does not recommend the use of private cars to transport pupils other than in unavoidable circumstances. Where private cars are used, drivers must have Class 1 insurance.

Finance

The Party Leader, in liaison with the school bursar and the school secretary is responsible for the administration relating to the visit. This includes passport information and foreign currency. Financial aspects of the visit are controlled by the school bursar in liaison with the school secretary. A full record of the financial aspects of off-site activities and trips is held by the school bursar.

Informing Parents

For each visit a letter should be sent to parents detailing the destination, means of transport, times for departure and return, the purpose of the outing, clothes to be worn, food requirements and costs. Letters should be approved by either the Headmaster or the head of Pre-Prep and Nursery.

Written Parental Consent

Parental consent forms attached to the letter to parents must be completed and returned to the school prior to the visit. Pupils may not be taken out of school without parental consent. Where appropriate, parents should also be required to highlight any special or medical needs and to give written permission for emergency treatment in the event that they cannot be contacted.

However, visits to Church, participation in school matches and swimming lessons are covered by the annual parental consent form. Further consent is not required as such visits form part of the daily and weekly routines.

Preparing Pupils

The Party Leader should arrange briefing sessions with pupils as necessary. The format of these largely depends upon the nature of the visit, but forms part of the risk management procedure.

Pupils should be made aware of the nature of the visit and its purpose. The expectations regarding behaviour should also be highlighted and they should be warned of any particular dangers. The highest standards of behaviour are required on visits out of school to ensure safety and to uphold the reputation of the school.

Each member of staff or adult helper should be given a list of pupils for whom they have specific responsibility and pupils themselves should be informed.

First Aid

A first-aid kit should be taken on all trips. Minor illnesses and accidents may be dealt with by a member of staff. Parents will be informed of the nature of the problem and details of the treatment given upon return.

If members of the party have specific medical needs, such as Asthma or Diabetes, appropriate provision should be made. Pupils in Pre-Prep should hand inhalers, etc. to the adult directly responsible for their care and welfare on the trip. Pupils in the Prep Department are encouraged to be responsible for the safekeeping of their own inhalers, etc.

In acute cases of illness or accident, emergency medical help must be sought and parents contacted as quickly as possible. The supervision and needs of other pupils must also be taken into account.

Under EYFS requirements, at least one person on outings must have a paediatric first aid certificate relating to a course requiring a minimum of twelve hours training and updated every three years.

Supervision Ratios

The school and nursery has clear guidelines on acceptable ratios for all visits:

- All Visits involving nursery children must adopt the same ratios that exist within the nursery department or better, in line with Ofsted requirements.
- Pre-Prep: one adult for every eight pupils.
- Prep: one adult for every ten pupils.

All adults attending residential trips are required to have undergone appropriate vetting procedures including those carried out by the CRB.

Inspection Visits

Inspection visits are encouraged, especially to new destinations. They form an important part of the risk assessment process, by gaining an advance familiarity with the location, accommodation, etc. Tour Operators may provide all the information necessary in the case of a residential trip.

Risk Assessments

Party Leaders are expected to carry out a thorough risk assessment on every potential risk. They should complete the risk assessment in line with the guidance provide in Appendix C unless otherwise instructed by a travel company.

Copies of the risk assessment should be forwarded the Headmaster before the trip takes place, handed in to the school office for parents to view, and circulated to all adults involved in the trip.

One important consideration is whether or not to take parental and emergency contact details for each pupil. On day trips for pupils in Years 1 - 6 this is generally not necessary unless there are specific concerns relating to individual pupils. However, for all trips involving EYFS pupils parental and emergency contact details should be taken.

The School Mobile Telephone

The school mobile telephone should be taken on visits out of school to avoid any delay in communication.

Monitor and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Headmaster every two years and in the light of changes in statutory guidance.

Implemented: March 2002
Reviewed: August 2010
Next Review: August 2012

Appendix A
Educational Visits: Off-Site Swimming Pool

General Statement

Pupils in Years 1 – 6 benefit from swimming lessons as part of their educational experience. At present lessons take place at The University of Birmingham and the school adopts their Health and Safety policy for the duration of the visits.

Responsibilities

The Head of PE or his senior representative is responsible for ensuring that pupils are aware of the health and safety issues relating to swimming pool based activities. The Head of PE has regular meetings with representatives from the university to review issues of health and safety.

Staff/pupil Ratios

Under normal circumstances, pupils will be placed in three groups according to ability. Each group will number no more than fifteen pupils to one swimming instructor, with pupils of lesser ability in smaller groups.

Model Checklist

The Head of PE carries out the following checklist annually. It is based on the Department for Education 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' 1998 guidance.

- **Is there regular testing of water?** Yes/No
- **Are accurate signs displayed indicating the depth?** Yes/No
- **Is the depth of water less than 1.5 metres?** Yes/No
(if so, diving should not be allowed)
- **Is there a resuscitator? Are the lifeguards trained in its use?** Yes/No
- **Is there poolside rescue equipment?** Yes/No
- **Is an emergency action plan displayed?** Yes/No
- **Are normal operating procedures available** Yes/No
- **Is there constant pool supervision?** Yes/No
- **Is any indoor pool locked when not in use?** Yes/No
- **Do the supervisors have current National Pool Lifeguard Qualifications?** Yes/No
- **Is the number of pupils/students supervised by one qualified adult to fewer than 20 pupils?** Yes/No
- **Are the changing facilities in keeping with basic hygiene and personal safety?** Yes/No
- **Do the pupils know not to leave any group member alone at any time in the pool?** Yes/No

The Physical Education Policy should be read alongside this appendix.

Appendix B
Additional Procedures for Staff Escorting Pupils on
School Trips Overseas

Members of staff taking pupils on visits abroad must follow the guidelines in the Off-Site Activities and Educational Visits Policy. However, they will be required to make additional preparations and to take additional precautions.

The Package Holiday Regulations (1992) place a duty of ‘due diligence’ (i.e. a duty of care) firmly on the shoulders of **Tour Operators** where they are used. This reduces much of the Party Leader’s responsibility for assessing the suitability of accommodation, travel and other arrangements made for the school journey. The holiday should be booked through ABTA or ATOL travel agents.

Passports and Visas

Arrangements should be made for all members of the party to travel with current passports and visas as required.

Travel Supervision

Travel may be by air, sea or rail in addition to road. Staff will be required to employ additional agreed strategies for supervising pupils in public places such as stations and airports. It is vital that pupils know which adult is supervising them and what to do in the event of becoming separated from the party at any time. Pupils will be given regular safety briefings throughout the holiday.

Injury and Illness

All party members will need medical insurance for trips abroad and E111s for visits to European countries. It is essential that the party leader has up to date and accurate medical information on each pupil.

All residential trips will require one member of staff to be a qualified First Aider. This person should be responsible for the safe-keeping of medical records. They will also be responsible for the First Aid box and logging all illnesses/injuries and the treatment given.

Any situation that requires more than a minimal amount of First Aid should be referred to a doctor or hospital and the parents informed as soon as possible.

The Party Leader should establish how expert medical help can be summoned at each location and inform all adults. Pupils should know which adult is supervising them at all times, as well as how to summon staff for help in the event of becoming unwell or being injured.

Communication

The Party Leader is responsible for ensuring that parental and emergency contact details are taken on any residential trip.

The Party Leader is responsible for updating the school office on the progress of a residential trip. The office will forward a text or email to parents providing general updates or changes to the itinerary.

Appendix C Guidance on Risk Assessments

There are basically three types of risk assessment:

- **Generic** – general school policies on leader qualifications; teacher pupil ratios etc.
- **Specific** - the assessment that takes place before the visit, when leaders must consider and make plans for all the ‘**reasonably foreseeable**’ hazards that might befall the group at each stage of the visit.
- **On-going** - the continuing risk assessment as the visit progresses and circumstances change.

It is important to consider risks after obtaining:

- All the information about the environment that activities will take place in.
- The qualifications and experience of those leading and accompanying them.
- The suitability of equipment, and the age, ability, aptitude and experience of the pupils on the visit.

Having assessed the risks it is important to manage the identified risks in such a way as to:

- Avoid them.
- Do what is reasonably practicable to minimise their effect.

The legislation suggests that a school will have done what is reasonably practicable if it has considered the following aspects:

- Supervision of the pupils.
- Protection.
- Training.

Once the specific arrangements have been determined the Headmaster should be informed, and permission sought.

The Health and Safety Executive has published helpful advice on Risk Assessment. (See HSE A Guide to Risk Assessment Requirements and Five Steps to Risk Assessment available on the internet at www.hse.gov.uk)

Party Leaders should be reassured to know that courts have made it clear over the years that they do not wish to stifle educational visits. Schools are not expected to

second-guess what a court will consider to be the correct response to a risk. Leaders would be expected to make a decision within a 'reasonable range of responses'. This is no more than teachers are ordinarily expected to do in their daily work at the school.

Courts will always consider positively a school's efforts to consider the organisation of a visit having obtained all the available information and using all relevant experience.