



## **Educational Visits Policy**

### **General Statement of Policy**

1. It is the policy of the School that educational visits should be conducted in such a manner as to safeguard and promote the Health and Safety of all pupils and staff involved in the visit. If the party leader is doubtful about any aspect of safety, then the visit or associated activity should not proceed. All staff involved in the trip are to have read this policy and any relevant specific activity policies before departure. A safety checklist is at **Annex A**, which should be of use when carrying out initial planning. This policy replaces the Out of School Visits Policy dated 21 May 2002 and the Educational Visits Policy dated 17 December 2003. There is a policy specific to skiing, but the provisions of this policy override it in the event of any conflict.

### **Health and Safety Frame Work**

2. In formulating this policy, note has been taken of the advice in DCSF publications and that provided by specialists in the field.
3. The Education Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) (Mr Lewis) is to be involved in visits that involve pupils leaving the School. The only exceptions are sporting activities organised by the Games Department, pupil collections from airports, medical appointments or some boarding pupil activities. The EVC can advise on such cases.
4. No visit (exceptions apart) is to take place without a member of staff completing the appropriate paperwork and obtaining approval, in writing, from the Headmaster or Headmaster of the Preparatory School, as appropriate. The Headmaster of the Prep School is to endorse any visit that involves both Prep and Senior School pupils prior to final approval by the Headmaster.
5. The EVC is to inform the Bursar of any concerns he may have during the planning stage of a visit. The Bursar will advise the appropriate Headmaster if matters remain unresolved, not withstanding approval may have been given.

### **Definitions**

6. **Outing:** A trip that does not involve an overnight stop.
7. **Residential:** A trip that does involve some form of overnight stay.

## **Actions Prior to Departure**

### **8. Risk Assessment**

A Risk Assessment should always be carried out before school visits. The completion of a risk assessment is a vital part of the planning process. However, it is not a once and for all

requirement. During the planning process the Risk Assessment should be constantly reassessed. Furthermore during the visit it may be necessary to carry out a Risk Assessment before a particular activity, or in the light of the prevailing situation. A Risk Assessment Pro Forma and two examples are at **Annex B**. Further examples of Risk Assessments from previous visits can be obtained from the EVC. For major visits, those involving an overnight stay, or a hazardous activity, a draft Risk Assessment should be sent to parents prior to approval, for comment. Factors that may affect risk levels include:

- a) the pupils' age, maturity, competence and fitness. (Children under 5 must not visit farms);
- b) any pupil with special needs;
- c) the location;
- d) the activities planned during the visit;
- e) the expertise and competency of supervising staff;
- f) weather factors (this will be appropriate prior to the start of any session once on site);
- g) the requirement for mobile phones;
- h) the need for first aid materials to be carried.
- i) the risk assessment of any organisation providing activities and supervision.

## 9. **Tour Operators**

Only reputable fully bonded Tour Operators are to be used. They are to be fully experienced in the organisation of the activity in question and meet nationally agreed standards for the available activities. Where Activity Centres are involved they are to be licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) and a copy of their risk assessment provided prior to the visit. See **Annex C**. Tour Operators are also to comply with best practice as regards the provision of transport both in the UK, en-route and overseas. (See **Annex D**)

## 10. **Staff Competency**

Qualifications alone do not ensure competency. Experience in respect of many of the educational visits that are undertaken is appropriate. However, where an activity has a high risk factor and it would be expected that an appropriate qualification would be needed, e.g. skiing, mountain climbing, canoeing, then the supervising member of staff must have it. Where pupils are under the control of external instructors, e.g. ski instructors, activity centre instructors, then they equally must be appropriately qualified and this confirmed prior to the visit. At **Annex E** is guidance issued by Durham county Council.

## 11. CRB Clearances

Any adult on the trip, regardless of whether they are a spouse of a staff member, or parent, must have been cleared by the Criminal Records Bureau. This includes any spouse who is just going along on the trip as against having supervisory responsibilities.

## 12. Staff / Pupil Ratios

The School adheres to the minimum guidelines set out by the DCSF Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational visits as follows:

Years 1 – 3	1 adult per every 6 pupils (higher for under 5's)
Years 4 – 6	1 adult per every 10 – 15 pupils
Years 7 →	1 adult per every 15 – 20 pupils

The adult numbers required for Reception aged pupils are subject to review by the Headmaster of the Prep School, depending on the proposed visit. In all cases they are to be in excess of the adult numbers for years 1 – 3. The variation in pupil numbers in respect of Years 4 – 6 and Year 7 onwards will depend on the type of visit. Party leaders will need to justify to the Headmaster / Headmaster of Prep School the requirement for a low ratio within the guideline numbers.

In many cases these numbers will be exceeded in response to the particular activity/trip being undertaken. To be taken into account, for example, are the following:

- ◆ the sex, age, ability of the group;
- ◆ the nature of the activities;
- ◆ the experience of leaders/teachers;
- ◆ duration and nature of the journey;
- ◆ type of accommodation;
- ◆ competence of staff on any specific activities;
- ◆ requirements of the place(s) being visited;
- ◆ competence and behaviour of pupils;
- ◆ first aid cover.

If minimum staffing is not available the trip **cannot** take place. The exception to the guideline is sports teams, where pupils are travelling to another school by coach and will not be alighting en route other than in an emergency. The Head of Prep School will authorise the staffing level for the Reception Class, which is to be higher than that for years 1–3.

Where the school party comprises both boys and girls the staff numbers should ideally include male and female staff. In the case of girls, exceptions will be allowed where there are only male teachers leading the trip, as follows:

- ◆ For girls in years 7–11, where an Upper 6<sup>th</sup> girl is part of the group and willing to take on some responsibility for younger girls, if it would not be appropriate for a male member of staff to do so;
- ◆ For 6<sup>th</sup> Form girls, as long as there is more than one girl;
- ◆ As above if another suitably CRB cleared female is included in the party.

In the case of boys, exceptions will be allowed where there are only female members of staff on the trip, as follows:

- ◆ For boys in years 7–11, at least one of the staff is an experienced teacher and is comfortable dealing with boys and their potential problems;
- ◆ For 6<sup>th</sup> Form boys as long as there is more than one boy in the party.

In all of the above exceptions other than the “another suitable female”, parents are to be told of the situation and given the opportunity to withdraw their child.

Prep School, if taking a mixed group of pupils, is always to have at least one male and one female member of staff within the staffing numbers. Parents and Upper 6<sup>th</sup> pupils can be included within the supervisory numbers (see also the minibus policy). Staff includes teachers, teaching assistants and secretarial staff.

For any overnight trip or hazardous activity a staff member who has a child within the party cannot be included in the numbers described above.

Where the standards are not achievable, the trip **must** be cancelled. In such cases the Headmaster should be consulted before the final decision is taken.

### 13. **Parental and School Consent**

At **Annex F** is a pro forma consent form and medical questionnaire for visits, which is to be completed prior to carrying out the risk assessment. The appropriate Headmaster has to give his permission in writing before the trip can be organised, having satisfied himself that the member of staff is competent/qualified to lead the activity or visit.

No pupil is to be taken out of School (sporting activities, medical appointments and some boarding activities excepted) without parental/guardian approval in writing. Such consent is not to be requested from parents/guardians until the Headmaster, or Head of Prep School, has given permission for the visit to be organised. For major trips, including those abroad, meetings are to be held for parents to be briefed on all aspects of the trip and the draft Risk Assessment discussed.

### 14. **Pupil Behaviour**

Pupils need to be briefed about behaviour, attitudes and risks prior to the visit going ahead. This is done most appropriately when the whole group comes together to check final details of the trip. The Headmaster or his Deputy should be present on such occasion. Pupils must be informed that they are subject to the same School Rules on an educational visit trip as they are in School and that they must co-operate fully with members of staff on the trip. They must be told they will be sent home, at their own cost, if they do not behave responsibly and in a co-operative way. Travel arrangements will be the responsibility of their parents. A decision relating to this must be taken by the party leader in consultation with all members of staff present on the educational visit.

## 15. **Insurance**

Where appropriate, insurance must be arranged using a reputable company. The School has a travel policy, which in most cases will be cheaper than that available on the open market. If insurance is “obligatory” through a tour operator, or is purchased on the open market, a copy of the certificate and terms are to be included with the paperwork prior to the final approval by the Headmaster.

## 16. **Other Policies**

All staff involved in a visit are to read this policy, specific related policies and the Emergency Policy. The latter policy requires there to be a point of contact whilst the visit is underway. The party leader should carry a copy of the Emergency Policy and the Risk Assessment whilst on the visit, however short the duration. On overseas trips all staff are to hold a copy of the Emergency Policy.

## 17. **Notification**

Details of the trip, Tour Operator, pupil and staff numbers, itinerary and contact phone numbers, if overnight stays are involved, are to be left with the General Office Staff and the front cover pro forma completed by the Headmaster. Either the party leader should take one of the School mobile phones or have their own with them to facilitate contact (and for emergency use).

## **On Site Procedures**

18. The party leader is to review the Risk Assessment (see para 8) to ensure that it remains valid. Failure of an activity centre to provide qualified instructors, concern about the safety of travel arrangements, change in the weather or staffing problems would be examples of when a complete reappraisal would be necessary.

## **Water Activities**

19. Involvement with water, be it swimming, gorge walking, sailing etc, brings its own particular risks. These are to be identified in the Risk Assessment. Guidance in the DCSF “Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits” is provided at **Annex G** in respect of swimming pools. Recent accidents involving pupils and water were avoidable.

## **Accident Procedures and Notification**

20. The following procedures will be followed in respect of an accident (and illness) involving any member of the party. All Staff should be fully aware of the procedure in order that they can take over in the event that the party leader is unavailable, victim of an accident, or is ill.
21. **Contact** – A contact person should be agreed with the party leader, ideally one who is prepared to be continuously available at an agreed phone number for the duration of the out-of-school visit. This may be onerous for the contact person, but is essential for the effective support of the party. The contact person must have duplicate party lists and a list of all the contact details for pupils’ parents or guardians and a copy of the School’s Emergency Policy. Support is available from the School during office hours and through the use of the answer phone for less serious and routine occurrences. The Emergency Policy provides

guidance, particularly in respect of serious incidents, including the telephone numbers of senior staff. The group leader, if travelling during School holiday periods, should establish which senior members of staff will be available. Reputable tour companies also have emergency contact procedures.

22. **Party details** – The party leader will carry lists of all staff and pupils who make up the party, including their home addresses and telephone numbers, the school’s address and telephone number, and the address and telephone number of the agreed “home contact” person who will initially co-ordinate base support in the event of a serious problem prior to the involvement of the Headmaster or in his absence the Deputy Head, Chaplain or Bursar. All staff will carry a copy of the Emergency Policy and this document.
23. **Staff** – All staff should be confident of the accident procedures given that the party leader could be one of the victims. To that end, for overseas visits, all staff and helpers are to hold a copy of the Emergency Policy dated 8 June 2007. The tour leader will need to provide those along with the latest telephone list.
24. **Reporting** – The procedures laid down in the Emergency Policy are to be followed. Copies of Incident Report forms are at **Annex H**. The completion of these will make it easier to provide the appropriate information needed by the School and allow maximum assistance to be given. At **Annex I** are the telephone numbers of British consulates who would be able to assist in the event of an emergency.
25. **First Aid Kits** – Party leaders are to carry a suitable first-aid kit(s). Advice on the appropriate pack should be obtained from the Medical Centre Sister.
26. **Mobile Phones** – The School has a supply of mobile phones and, at least, one should be carried by a staff member. If staff members prefer to take their own mobile phones the School will reimburse them for any costs incurred in respect of the visit.

### **Special Needs**

27. Party leaders should establish if any of the party, staff, helpers or pupils, has any particular special needs, including diet, medical and behavioural. These are to be taken into account during the Risk Assessment process and the appropriate responses identified.

### **Post Visit Assessment (Post Incident)**

28. If there are any issues that arise during the visit in respect of Health and Safety, for example, transport arrangements, a post visit performance report should be sent to the EVC.
29. The responsibility for post-incident procedures will initially fall on the party leader and staff on the trip. However, depending on the seriousness, the Headmaster and Senior School Staff will have a role to play (see the Emergency Policy). Actions are likely to fall into the following categories:
  - a) Immediate action to be taken in order to safeguard all pupils and staff - (Party Leader/Staff)
  - b) Summoning outside help from medical and emergency services - (Party Leader/Staff)

- c) Using the available resources to control the incident area and the pupils who have been involved in or have witnessed the incident - (Party Leader/Staff)
- d) Depending upon the circumstances and seriousness, informing the Headmaster or his deputy of the incident and the action that has been taken - (Party Leader/Staff/contact person, either from the resort or upon return). See **Annex H** as per para 23.
- e) Informing the local police and/or the Health and Safety Executive if it is a reportable accident, in the case of the HSE, this will normally be done by the Bursar - (Party Leader/Staff)
- f) Informing parents, guardians or relations following a serious incident:
  - i. of pupils who have been involved in the incident - (Party Leader, if serious pass to a senior member of the School's staff who will act in accordance with the Emergency Policy). (For overseas visits, tour operators normally also have an emergency contact system);
  - ii. of pupils who have been members of the group but not hurt or directly affected - (Party Leader, if serious incident, pass to a senior member of the School's staff as per the Emergency Policy);
  - iii. of teachers who have been involved - (Party Leader, if serious pass to a senior member of the School's staff, as per the Emergency Policy).
- g) The release of information to the media – will normally be undertaken by the Headmaster, *not* the Party Leader in charge of the visit, as required in the Emergency Policy.
- h) Protecting the pupils and staff from the overzealous attention of the media - (Party Leader/Staff/Headmaster on the return to the School)
- i) Arranging the support and counselling of pupils and staff where this is necessary - (Party Leader/Staff initially, but see the Emergency Policy).
- j) Arranging for interviews and the accurate recording of statements from all those who are involved with the incident – it may be necessary to have the parents or guardians present whilst such interviews take place. (Party Leader/Staff out of School, Senior School staff on return)

## Summary

30. Whilst at first glance the paperwork can appear to be onerous, there is little new required than that currently undertaken. Forward planning will ensure that staff are able to avoid pitfalls. The purpose, as always, is to provide a beneficial, enjoyable visit to the pupils and staff within a safe environment.

## Forms

31. Forms are held in the Work Room/Prep School Secretary's Office in respect of obtaining approval for the visit.

A J White  
Bursar

8 January 2010

Annex A	-	Safety Checklist
Annex B	-	Risk Assessment
Annex C	-	Activity Centre Checklist
Annex D	-	Using a Tour Operator Checklist – Firm Selection
Annex E	-	Safety in the Countryside
Annex F	-	Parental Consent Form
Annex G	-	Off-site Swimming Pool Checklist
Annex H	-	Initial Incident Report Form Incident Report Form – Consolidation Phase-Information Major Incident – Pupil/Staff Record
Annex I	-	British Consular Contacts