



## **Donhead Preparatory School**

### **Educational Visits Policy**

#### **Principles**

At Donhead, in accordance with our Mission Statement, we aim to offer a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all our pupils and prepares them for the opportunities and experiences of adult life. To enrich the curriculum for our pupils, we also offer a range of educational visits – both day visits and residential trips (in the UK and overseas) - and other activities that add to what they learn in school. Visits help to develop a pupil's investigative skills and longer visits encourage greater independence.

#### **Organisation**

A major consideration in the organisation of any visit must be the safety of all participants, and in this, as in all other respects, both the DfES guidelines and the School policy must be complied with. The minimum adult-to-pupil ratio is dependent on the nature of the visit and the age of the pupils - staff must therefore check that they comply with all school requirements and regulations. The organiser must be satisfied that the venue is a suitable one, with all that this entails, and, where applicable, that any officials from the venue who will be involved in the visit, are qualified and dependable. It is the relevant class teacher's responsibility to organise the visit. Within each class's programme of work the teachers plan educational visits and activities that support the pupil's learning. We give details of these visits and activities to parents at the beginning of each school term in our School Calendar. Visits and activities usually take place within the school day and we ask parents to sign a Consent Form for Education Visits when their son starts at the school. The trips and activities covered by this consent include:

- all day visits which take place during term time
- off-site sporting fixtures during and outside the school day

#### **Charging for school activities**

It is the responsibility of the teacher organising the educational visit or activity to cost the outing, get approval of these costs from the Headmaster and to complete a Trip Sanction Form. The letter to parents will give the approximate cost of the trip.

#### **Residential Activities**

Pupils in Year 5 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in one residential visit. A consent form, additional to the standard consent form, is signed by the parents for residential trips. Parents meet the cost of these trips. The charge includes: the method of travel, hotel accommodation, meals, insurance, guides where appropriate, entrance fees and other expenses such as first aid. The Group leader is responsible for costing the trip and collecting the money. A breakdown of expenses must first be cleared with the Headmaster, before letters go out to the parents.

On outings to museums and such that are part of curriculum planning and often repeated every year, after initial clearing from the Headmaster, a fortnight's notice is needed to inform parents. The details are also in the termly school calendar. Residential trips abroad need to be planned at least six months ahead. This allows for the leader to obtain all necessary information from the Tour Provider about itinerary and costs and to put this information to the Headmaster for approval. A letter is then sent out to parents with a week to respond and to return a deposit, securing a place for their son. Once the party leader has the numbers required to make the trip feasible, parents are notified of subsequent payment dates and details. There are occasions, when these time scales may be waived, for example if the school receives free tickets for a performance at the theatre or cinema. Permission however, is still needed from the Headmaster and parents' permission slips obtained.

## Good Practice Checklist

### BEFORE THE VISIT

#### **Exploratory/Preliminary Visits**

All visits will benefit from an exploratory/preliminary visit if the visit is not a regular event. For outdoor activities the exploratory visit is absolutely necessary for safety reasons, but also for reasons of sound educational planning. Exploratory visits contribute to overall planning by ensuring that the venue:

- can be assessed regarding its ability to meet the aims and objectives of the visit;
- can be effectively assessed for risk;
- can cater for the individual needs of the group;
- can direct the visit's itinerary to make the best use of the venue's educational potential.

Many visits are straightforward repeats of a previously successful visit but with a different group of pupils. However, many factors at the venue can alter during the year, e.g. museum displays may change, pollution may appear on a shoreline and the weather is likely to be totally different from a previous year. For these reasons it is still good practice to conduct an exploratory visit in order that planning and risk assessment are effective. If an exploratory visit really is not possible then the Group Leader should obtain written information from the venue, to complete a risk assessment - good practice would suggest that the visit should not take place if this is the case.

#### **Other Considerations**

Other factors to be considered during the initial planning include:

- the facilities/equipment/clothing to be provided by parents for the visit;
- the facilities/equipment/clothing to be provided by the School for the visit;
- the facilities/equipment/clothing to be provided by the venue for the visit;
- transport arrangements;
- information to the provider, e.g. names, ages, genders, special dietary requirements, etc;
- arrangements for communication between the group and the school. On local trips, the leader should have a school mobile phone. On trips abroad, the leader should be contactable by mobile phone.
- contingency measures for enforced change of plan, late return, sending pupils home early or other emergency arrangements;
- on residential trips abroad, the Headmaster plus two parents are needed to liaise with the party;

#### **Supervision Ratios**

- Visits (outside school premises) on foot locally: Years 1- 4 1:10 and Years 5 & 6 1:15
- Visits to museums etc, using coaches: 1:10
- Visits to museums, using public transport: Years 1-4 1:8 and Years 5 & 6 1:10
- Overnight stays in the UK: 1:10
- Day trips abroad 1:10

- Overnight / residential stays abroad: 1:12 (depending on other staffing facilities at the venue)
- Hazardous activities: Years 1-4 1:5 and Years 5 & 6 1:8

### **Financial Planning**

The group leader should ensure that parents are notified as early as possible as to:

- the total cost of the visit and a breakdown of payment schedules for residential trips.
- how much spending/pocket money pupils will reasonably need - especially important for trips, which involve a residential element;
- any surplus funds will be returned to parents or small amounts retained in the school fund.

Early notification of the above is important as this allows parents to make financial preparations. It is helpful for parents in gauging the value of a residential visit, if they have information relating to the constituent costs, i.e. transport, accommodation, insurance, food, entrance fees to museums etc., tour guides if appropriate. The Bursar should be informed of the total cost of the trip and the dates for staggered payments regarding residential trips, so that suitable banking arrangements can be put in place. This is the responsibility of the Group Leader.

### **First Aid and Medical**

First aid considerations must form part of the risk assessment - these considerations should include:

- the numbers in the group and the nature of the activity;
- the nature of any likely injuries and how effective first aid would be;
- the distance to the nearest hospital and availability of transport. N.B. All adults in the group should know how to contact the emergency services.

In all cases a nominated person should oversee the first-aid arrangements, e.g. a fully trained first-aider is required for adventurous activities, visits abroad or residential visits. However, for normal school trips and visits the group leader should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that an adequate first-aid box is taken. It is also prudent to include bottled water, a quantity of sick bags, plastic bags, kitchen roll and tissues. Travel calm tablets may be administered with previous parental consent.

Prior to any educational trip, whether short or extended stay, it is vital that the group leader and staff concerned acquaint themselves with any medical problems by referring to the child's medical records held in the school office, such as asthma, diabetes or food allergies. A full list of parent contact details is taken on the trip.

### **Approval for Visits**

A Trip Sanction Form, giving full details of the proposed arrangements for, and details of, the visit must be signed by the Headmaster before the visit can proceed.

### **Confirming trip**

The parents or guardians must be fully informed about the visit in a letter from the organising teacher (named), which should explain:

- its nature and purpose (to include aims and objectives);
- outline the programme/itinerary referring to issues such as working near rivers or roads;
- how pupils will be supervised;
- the total cost;

When the organisational details of the visit have been confirmed, all relevant forms - most notably those concerned with insurance, and collective passport details on residential trips - must be completed.

- pertinent details of the visit will need to be given to all of those variously involved; to the participating pupils, to any accompanying teachers and any non-teacher supervisors, and, where applicable, to any officials who will receive and perhaps work with the school party.
- pupils will need to be made aware of its relation to and implications for their recent, current or impending learning, and will need to know what will be expected of them at the venue in terms of their work and behaviour.
- any accompanying teachers and any non-teacher supervisors will need to be carefully advised about their roles and responsibilities.

The organising teacher must also ensure that everyone involved is aware of any contingency plans for inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, aware of the first-aid facilities, aware of any emergency telephone numbers and of pupils with special medical needs. If transport by coach or minibus is to be involved, the organiser must be satisfied that the vehicle(s) and the operators comply with the statutory requirements, and with any other requirements laid down by the LEA or the School.

## **DURING THE VISIT**

### **Behaviour and safety**

- Staff should make frequent references to the rules and procedures applicable to the visit or particular activity. Each pupil is given a copy of the 'Code of Conduct' on residential trips.
- Staff should insist that pupils are inducted into a real sense of safety awareness and good practice. On residential visits, it is vital to check out any possible risk elements on arrival at the accommodation. Both staff and pupils should be made familiar with escape routes and emergency procedures.
- Pupils should be encouraged to develop a strong sense of 'Health & Safety' for themselves and others, and to become familiar with the general and visit specific rules and procedures. Pupils must heed the staff's advice on how to avoid any potential risks, especially when using particular equipment/hardware and they must never enter or work in laboratories unless actively supervised. They are required to behave sensibly at all times, and should be reminded regularly of the dangers of running.
- Drills such as evacuation of a coach must be practised.
- Regular head counts should be carried out, especially before leaving any venue.
- Pupils should be reminded of agreed rendezvous points and what to do if they become lost.
- Pupils must be supervised effectively when resting between activities. On residential visits, unstructured free time should be kept to a minimum.

### **Dealing with accidents and emergencies:**

#### **Accidents:**

- In the event of a pupil injuring himself, dealing with that incident must take priority. **All participation in such activities must stop** and pupils must be instructed to rest quietly and not to make any further use of equipment/hardware associated with the accident, until the incident has been dealt with and the welfare of the injured party has been organised. Pupils must be made aware of the circumstances leading up to the accident and an appropriate short discussion about the incident should serve as an example to others.
- Small cuts and abrasions can be dealt with using the first aid bag but more serious incidents should receive the attention and evaluation of a qualified 'first aider'.
- All accidents however minor should be reported in the **SCHOOL ACCIDENT BOOK** by the end of the day on which they occur - if the visit is abroad then the incident should be written up as soon as possible on return to the School.
- Pupils should be encouraged to report all injuries however minor and should be reassured that no punishment or sanctions will be taken against them. Pupils should also be reminded at regular intervals about the course of action that they should take immediately following a personal injury. Any cuts and abrasions should be dealt with wearing disposable gloves.

### ***Illness and sickness during the visit:***

- a) Pupils must be encouraged to report that they are feeling unwell during a visit - otherwise it is possible that their condition could cause them to lose concentration or become faint. Opportunities must be afforded in such circumstances for the pupil to leave the activity to visit the cloakroom, get some fresh air, have a drink of water, rest, etc. and the advice of a first aider should be sought if there is cause for concern, or if it is thought that the incident is not genuine. However, pupils must not leave the activity without first informing a member of staff of the situation.
- b) In the case of serious illness abroad the Tour Operators Emergency Procedures should be followed; the headmaster or school contact and parent contacts informed as soon as possible.
- c) On all trips parents sign a form giving permission for the member of staff in charge of the trip to sanction any emergency treatment.

### ***If a child goes missing:***

- a) All the children are collected together and supervised. The centre authorities are immediately notified and all available staff should search the venue. If the child is not found the parents and police are immediately notified.
- b) All contact details for parents are taken on all outings.

### ***Supervision/Alcohol***

- a) One named person is responsible for ensuring the guidelines with regards to alcohol are followed. Should they be contravened, this person will also be held responsible. It is expected that the Trip Leader will assume this responsibility.
- b) Two people must not drink at all each night. The remaining staff members must drink in moderation so that they are fully capable to assist in any emergency. The guide is the legal limit for driving. If they drink in excess of this they are contravening the policy and liable to serious disciplinary action.
- c) Particular care must be taken at the evening dinner with parents. Extreme caution must be exercised with regards to alcohol in this situation in order that parents maintain full confidence that all members of staff are able to look after their children in an emergency.

## **Five Steps to Risk Assessment – A Guide**

New Government Guidance was given in September 2011 whereby written risk assessment is not required every time a school takes pupils to a local venue, e.g. local park or museum. Formal risk assessment is only required for residential trips or trips taking place outside school hours. The Health and Safety Executive leaflet, *Five Steps to Risk Assessment (2002)*, suggest the following approach, which has come to be widely accepted.

### **STEP 1: Look for the hazards**

- activities to be undertaken
- unlicensed or inexperienced organisation running an activity
- mode of transport
- size of groups
- nature of venue, accommodation and food
- on trips abroad, inability to speak or understand a foreign language

Specific legislation regulates the operation of outward-bound and adventure activity centres: Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 and Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996. These acts were introduced in the wake of the Lyme Bay disaster. Check that centres are familiar with the legislation.

### **STEP 2: Decide who might be harmed and how**

- pupils or staff getting lost or injured
- money or valuables being stolen.

### **STEP 3: Evaluate the risks**

Work out how likely it is that someone will be harmed by the hazard identified, and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done. In taking action, ask yourself:

1. Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
2. If not, how can I control the risks so that is unlikely?

It is not the function of a risk assessment to reduce risks to zero, otherwise no school trip would ever be undertaken. The point of a risk assessment is to ensure that risks are reduced to an acceptable level.

### **STEP 4: Record your findings:**

Remember that the law requires a risk assessment to be *suitable* and *sufficient* – not perfect! You must be able to show that:

- A proper check was made. Have you, for example, checked that every organisation to which you are entrusting the pupils has carried out its own risk assessment – and is that risk assessment appropriate?
- you asked who might be affected
- you dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, considering the number of people who could be involved
- the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low

It is imperative that those in charge of each school trip be supplied with a copy of the risk assessment. The document is not designed merely to provide an audit trail if something goes wrong. It is meant to be the basis on which the health and safety aspects of the trip are organised. For this reason, the HSE cautions: ‘Don’t be overcomplicated.’ This is wise advice: an overcomplicated risk assessment may be difficult to understand and implement.

### **STEP 5: Review your assessment and revise it if necessary.**

If some aspects of the risk assessment turn out in practice to have been faulty (e.g. because it was impossible to implement certain steps, or because other measures would have been preferable), it is essential that you modify the risk assessment for future use. The fact that the original risk assessment was not perfect does not mean that it was negligent; it just proves how difficult it is to foresee every eventuality.

Failure to amend an inadequate risk assessment would mean the risk assessment would no longer be ‘sufficient’, and would be clear evidence of negligence.

### Checklist of residential trips

Consult the headmaster on the nature of the trip and complete a proposal form to seek approval of the trip.	
Book the hotel/centre and agree on the aims of the trip. Check whether the centre is licensed and check the list of qualified instructors.	
Keep a journey file, which contains a copy of all letters, lists and information given to parents.	
The leader should identify staff willing to accompany the trip, and ensure appropriate ratios.	
The leader should make a preliminary visit to the centre to become familiar with the facilities.	
Work out a budget for the trip and ensure that there are sufficient funds, making allowances for unforeseen developments.	
Send a letter to parents outlining the cost and nature of the trip. Ensure that you have consent forms, signed by parents/guardians. (NB No pupil can participate in an activity without consent.) Ask for details of pupils' medical and dietary needs. Emergency contact numbers and Doctor's name and address will also be needed on residential trips.	
Book transport; if the school minibus is to be used, ensure that you have sufficient appropriately qualified drivers.	
Produce a programme planner, which describes a programme for each day, supervision details and emergency arrangements.	
Carry out and produce a risk assessment for all activities on the trip.	
Ensure the Application for Collective Passport is sent to the Passport Agency well in advance of foreign travel.	
Arrange a meeting with parents to discuss arrangements, the expected standards of behaviour, itinerary and so on. It helps if they have an 'Information for Parents' booklet.	
Arrange for a senior member of staff and a parent to act as contacts while you are away. Give them a full list of pupil contact details.	
Hold a meeting of all staff involved to arrange supervision duties and other matters. Establish a code of conduct.	
Make sure you are familiar with the emergency procedures to be adopted if an accident happens.	
After the trip, evaluate the programme.	
Report any accidents/problems to the headmaster.	
Balance the accounts and submit a final account for audit	

Signed: _____	Position: _____
Name (print) _____	Date: _____

This is a planning tool, to be used prior to visits or residential trips.  
It is based on a checklist in the DfEE publication 'Health and Safety of pupils on educational trips'