



## POLICY ON VISITS AND ACTIVITIES OUT OF SCHOOL

### **Introduction**

Members of staff in charge of and assisting with school visits should be conversant with this part of the policy and other more detailed departmental rules. The School will prepare written risk assessments and arrangements for individual visits and activities and where necessary staff will be trained. The risk assessments and arrangements will include consideration of matters such as hazardous activities, fire precautions and fire procedures, pupil supervision, transport, pupil free time etc. Final authorisation for each visit will be made by the Head and in her absence the Deputy Head.

It is important that sufficient time is allocated to the preparation and planning of a visit to ensure its success and safety. A reconnaissance is usually advisable to enable the party leader to identify any potential hazards.

There are relevant guidance documents on the HSE website and the Department of Education website.

### **Staff Pupil Ratio**

**There should be a minimum of two members of staff accompanying any visit, in the ratio of not less than one to twenty pupils in the senior school and one to ten pupils in the junior school.**

**The Head may make exceptions.**

Wherever possible, all members of staff accompanying the visit should be qualified teachers employed by the School but the Head may allow an ancillary helper in the junior school or a senior member of the administrative or domestic staff to accompany the visit, provided a qualified teacher employed by the School is always in charge and the majority of the supervision is by qualified teachers.

The ratios described are minimum recommendations. The Head will be responsible for ensuring that a group is adequately staffed and in considering whether a higher ratio of staff to pupils will be necessary for any particular visit the following points will be taken into account:

- the ages, experience and temperaments of the pupils involved
- any special needs of any pupils taking part, including medical ones or any disability
- the length and purpose of the visit
- the nature of the locality and the activities to be undertaken
- whether any hazardous activities are involved

If a joint visit is arranged with another school so that staff share supervision, members of staff of the other school may be included in calculating the appropriate staff pupil ratio.

If female pupils are going on the visit, a male member of staff should be accompanied by a female member of staff. However, the Head has discretion in this matter in the light of the nature and duration of the proposed visit and the ages of the pupils concerned if compliance would result in difficulties in staffing small groups of pupils. The requirement is primarily for the protection of male members of staff who should be advised that a female member of staff will always accompany them on a school visit if they so wish.

### **Parent and Other Adult Helpers**

Whilst it is accepted that other suitable adults may play a useful role in connection with accompanying school visits, they should not be taken into account in the calculation of the minimum number of staff required to supervise the group as set out above. The Head may, however, make exceptions to this general rule for:

- groups of 20 or more pupils where there are at least two members of staff accompanying the group.

Parents may be asked to accompany the party should their child be ill or disabled, provided that a qualified teacher is always in charge of the party, and at least half the supervisors are staff.

Parents or other suitable adults should only be allowed to accompany the visit if:

- their inclusion is expressly approved by the Head who should reserve the right to refuse any offer of help. Staff being accompanied by their husband and/or children should be discouraged except in special cases.
- They have been informed of the nature of the visit and made aware of their duties and responsibilities.
- DBS enhanced checks will be made for volunteers on overnight stays. They will not be included in staffing ratios as they will act as the responsible carer for their child.

### **Information Concerning Visits**

Parents must be fully informed in writing about the visit well in advance. Where appropriate (and this is recommended in the case of any visits which will last longer than one day) parents and pupils should be invited to the School to discuss details with the organisers. Where possible the Head or a senior member of the teaching staff who is not involved in the visit will also attend to give an objective view and independent advice.

Written information should include safety items such as the following:

- accommodation type and meal arrangements
- travel arrangements
- activities and visits in which pupils will be allowed to participate
- insurance cover and name and address of insurers
- health formalities (e.g. inoculations)
- names of party leaders and members of staff accompanying party and address and telephone number of party leader at destination (where there is none, for example in case of exchange visits, details of a contact number in UK must be given)
- in case of pupils under 16 on day of commencement of visit, contact number of pupil must be given (if pupil staying in family it may not be possible to give this information immediately in which case further information will need to be given)
- advice on clothing and equipment (if school uniform is not worn, means of identification in an emergency are recommended) and pocket money
- code of conduct and details relating to standard of behaviour expected from pupils during visit, including rules of smoking and alcohol.

Parents should also be advised that the Head reserves the right to exclude a pupil from a visit on behavioural grounds.

### **Consent Forms**

A pupil will not be allowed to participate in a school visit unless an appropriate consent form has been signed by her parents/guardians and returned to the School.

### **Employees conveying pupils in private cars or minibuses**

Pupils should be transported in a coach, minibus or by public transport. The use of private cars is to be discouraged. Before allowing a member of staff to use his/her own car to transport pupils, the Head will check that the member of staff:

- has a satisfactory clean driving licence
- has suitable safety belts for the pupils age and weight

- has fully comprehensive insurance which covers use for the purposes of his/her employer's business.

Those members of staff who drive the minibus must have attended a recognised training course and their training must be updated every five years.

Whenever employees are driving, the risk assessment relevant to the trip must address the problem of driver fatigue.

### **Hazardous Activities**

Where hazardous activities are involved it is important to ensure that appropriate members of staff accompanying the visit are qualified\* and competent and that all equipment used is to the appropriate safety standards and properly maintained. Where possible, these activities should be undertaken at a specialist centre where appropriate and properly maintained equipment and qualified and competent staff are available. It is important that parents are informed in writing of any hazardous activities involved and that these are specifically mentioned when applying for travel insurance e.g. mountain walking, rock climbing, water-sports, pony trekking etc.

The Head will always obtain written evidence that any activity centre used has a licence\*\* and that all instructors and supervisors are formally qualified and experienced. If an activity centre or similar is used, the Head will obtain a copy of the centre's Health and Safety Policy, risk assessments and assess its suitability.

\* Qualifications must be those approved by the Sport's/activity's national governing body. Qualifications must be checked in advance by the party leader.

\*\* Activity centres providing caving, climbing, trekking (foot, pony, bicycle or ski) or water sports (other than rowing) and associated activities must hold a licence as required by Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004.

### **Shared Responsibilities**

#### **Residential Centres**

The centre's safety procedures should be checked at the initial planning stage. There will be times where it is more appropriate for centre staff to be responsible for the pupils. In accordance with guidance (circular 22/94) it should be agreed in writing prior to the start of the course when (and in what circumstances) the centre staff will be responsible for the pupils and the pupils must know who is in charge at any given time. If, as in the case of some field trips, the visit is unaccompanied, then this must be made clear to the parents and the staff must be satisfied of safety precautions.

### **First Aid and Mobile Phone**

A first aid kit and mobile phone must be carried and the required qualification for the leader should include first aid knowledge. Ideally, there should be a trained first aider in every group involving travel but if this is not possible an appropriate first aid kit should always be readily available for use.

### **Regular routine curricular activities off the school premises under the supervision of school staff**

These include recreational activities that do not take place on the school premises. It is not necessary for parents to sign a consent form for these activities and the Head may take parent and other adult helpers into account when deciding on the number of supervisors required for the journey provided a teacher is in charge. It must, however, be borne in mind that the ratio of pupils to teachers for the actual teaching of activities should be appropriate to the activity being taught.

With the consent of parents, pupils considered to be sufficiently responsible, may be allowed to walk unaccompanied to where the activities are carried out provided that they walk in groups of no less than three.

### **Team Matches**

Team match dates can be viewed on the school website calendar. Pupils will be informed of match details by the PE staff. Consent from parents is obtained at the beginning of the school year when they fill in the Blanket Consent form. Transport will be by school minibus.

### **Residential Visits**

#### **All visits involving a period of residence need to be planned well ahead**

Whether at home or abroad, residential visits will include periods of time which are not taken up with organised activity. Pupils may want to leave the group accommodation in order to shop for souvenirs, to take a walk, or to have a cup of coffee at a café. After careful risk assessments guidelines must be laid down by the Party Leader and clearly understood by all members of the party. The following points may be helpful:

- Pupils should not be allowed to wander unsupervised in groups of less than 4. Larger groups may be required.
- Risk assessments for remote supervision must be carried out.
- The geographical area in which pupils are allowed to wander should be clearly defined.
- A time limit should be set in proportion to the age of the pupils. Anyone who returns late should understand that he/she will subsequently be penalised. Before dispersal, everyone should know where a member of staff can be found during the whole of the period and exactly where the group is reassembled.

- If pupils are leaving from and returning to the group accommodation, a signing in and out book should be used.
- If no circumstances should pupils of any age be allowed out of the group accommodation after the evening meal except in escorted parties accompanied by members of staff.
- If the party is likely to be in a hotel or staying in a town, pupils should be reminded that it is an offence for persons under 18 to buy alcohol in public houses, off licence or shops. In the UK persons over 16 may drink beer, wine or cider with a meal in a hotel or restaurant, and where pupils over 16 are involved in a visit, parents, and pupils should be clearly informed of the school's policy in connection with consumption of alcohol.
- Pupils away from home may well strike up acquaintance with pupils from other school parties or persons from the locality. This can be a problem if it leads to proposed meetings at times when the group is supposed to be engaged in organised activities or safely in their accommodation. Request to go for a walk at unusual times should be regarded with some suspicion and unexpected absence carefully noted and investigated.
- The group register should be checked at mealtimes and whenever the party is about to move from one venue to another. It is often convenient to give a small group of pupils' responsibility for one another, reporting to the leader if anyone is missing.
- The Party Leader should check the fire exits in any group accommodation and ensure that pupils are aware of them. If possible (for example if staying at a hostel) a fire drill should be held one evening.
- If pupils are staying in private homes, appropriate guidelines in connection with their safety and conduct (based on those set out above as appropriate) should be given to host families. DBS checks will need to be done in advance of the visit.

### **Trips abroad**

Some special additional precautions as necessary for foreign visits.

- **Insurance Cover**

This matter should be discussed with the Bursar.

## **Health**

A check should be made to see whether inoculations are required. Parents and pupils should be carefully briefed on any health and hygiene precautions which are necessary in the regions where the pupils will be travelling. A staff emergency first aider must be on the accompanying staff.

Items to keep in mind:

- Tap water is not safe to drink.
- Salads should be avoided in remote areas and fruit always carefully washed in purified water or peeled.
- The strength of the sun should never be underestimated especially at high altitudes and pupils should bring sun protection cream and a hat.
- Rabies can be transmitted by bites or scratches from infected cats, dogs, foxes and farm beasts.

- **Funds**

Careful estimates should be made of the need for cash in the currency of the country to be visited and sufficient additional funds in cash should be available to provide for all anticipated needs. If further funds are required, the group leader should telephone the contact number of staff and/or the school office for assistance.

- **Foreign Customs**

Pupils should be advised beforehand of any local customs they may meet which might surprise them and warned of the possibility of giving offence.

## **Travel Guidelines**

In advance of the trip, pupils should be given clear safety instructions based upon the risks associated with the particular type of travel to be used.

## **Emergency Procedure**

These procedures are based on those contained in DFEE circular 22/94 and should be used in the event of serious or fatal injury. In any shared responsibility situation, they should be agreed in advance with the centre involved. 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 staff member in charge of small sub-group if out of contact with party leader until party leader can be contacted) 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 are 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 until the incident is over and members of the party are accounted for
- control access to telephones until contact is made with the Head, emergency contact point or designated senior members of staff and until he/she has had time to contact those directly involved. Give full details of the incident, i.e.:

name

nature, date and time of incident

location of incident

details of injuries

names and telephone numbers of those involved

action taken so far

telephone numbers for future communication

The policy and trip paperwork written from Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV) has been updated to comply with “Legal Duties for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies” posted on the DfE website.

Reviewed and updated October 2021

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