

TRIPS AND EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Learning outside the classroom is an essential component of the Tonbridge School curriculum. It gives boys unique opportunities to develop their awareness, resourcefulness and initiative, and to spend time together in an informal environment. Each trip is different: some are directly related to the curriculum, some are designed to promote social awareness or to enhance physical skills, self-reliance and team-working, some take boys beyond their “comfort zone” and enable them to take and understand risks in a managed way, and others will extend boys’ knowledge of the world. The common factor is that they all make an essential contribution a boy’s development and education in the broadest sense of the word.

Boys are regularly given the opportunity to visit theatres, galleries and museums in London and elsewhere; many of the visits are chosen to link with particular areas of study at GCSE, AS, or A-level. Visits are organised directly by individual departments; for example, the Art Department usually take a number of boys of all ages to various galleries and exhibitions during the year. Boys also regularly visit other schools for sports competitions and matches, visit universities, engage in social activities, and undertake other activities in the vicinity of the School (e.g. community action). Separate consent forms are not sent to parents for each individual trip: the Activity Consent Form contained in the Information Pack for New Parents covers all such trips. Details of departure and return times are circulated to all relevant Housemasters. Day boys are expected to inform their parents of their time of return to Tonbridge, and parents are advised to check with Housemasters if they are unsure about the arrangements for the trip. The cost of these short trips incurred during a term will be added to the School bill for the following term. The School strives to keep the costs of all School trips to a minimum.

In addition, the School runs a large number of extended trips and visits including exchanges, field trips, adventure activities, concert tours, sporting tours, ski trips, activities linked with the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme, and CCF activities. Information about trips, visits and activities is available on the Firefly and on the Parents’ Portal, on noticeboards, on the School web site, and by direct written and e-mail communication from the School or teachers to boys and parents. The School requires parents’ specific, individual written consent for some trips: e.g. most that extend beyond the normal school day, involve an overnight stay, an overseas visit or a significant extra cost to parents. Safety is top priority for the School, and each Trip Leader understands that they have a duty to act as a responsible parent would in looking after the boys in his or her care under the particular circumstances of the visit; there is also a responsibility within the conditions of employment to maintain order and discipline and for safeguarding the health and safety of the pupils, whether on School premises or on authorised activities elsewhere. We expect parents to support the School in ensuring that their sons follow the instructions given either by a member of staff, or by a qualified instructor, and use the proper equipment. We reserve the right to send any boy home early at their parents’ expense if they decline to follow reasonable instructions given for their own safety, or do not follow the School’s published behaviour code. It is also important that staff organising trips take into account the specific needs of students and plan accordingly.

Detailed guidelines are provided for all teachers leading trips in the school’s “Trips Handbook: Guidelines on Educational Trips and Visits organised by the School”, along with the DFE published guidance “Health and Safety on Educational Visits (2018)” and HSE advice contained in “School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities; Tackling the Health and Safety Myths”. The guidelines include administrative procedures, responsibilities, approval processes, staffing, parental information and consent, medical arrangements and first aid, insurance, communications, passports and visas, clothing and equipment, emergency procedures, behaviour, and specific guidelines for hazardous activities and particular activities (e.g. mountain walking and sailing). Copies of these guidelines are available on request from the School.