

# The Old School Henstead

## **EDUCATIONAL VISITS**

### Incorporating Minibus Policy

This policy applies to any activity organised by the school involving one or more pupil off-site. We believe that off-site visits offer a hugely rewarding experience to young people, extending and enriching their learning in many ways. However our priority has to be the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. All visits must take into account pupil's disabilities and special educational needs. No pupil should be discriminated against when planning the visit and provision must be made to include all pupils whenever possible.

This policy document outlines the requirements for the planning, approval and recording of all off-site visits, including legal requirements and responsibilities and Health and Safety issues.

### **Before the Visit**

Any proposed visit must be discussed in advance with the Headmaster, or his deputy, who will assure himself, in consultation with the EVC, of the competence of the visit leader to lead that particular visit. Costings, including any additional insurance which may be required must be worked out.

All residential visits and other less routine off-site visits must be approved by the Governors well in advance.

In the event that additional adult helpers are involved, (e.g. parents) it is essential that the Safeguarding Policy is followed and that any necessary CRB checks etc. are obtained.

A risk assessment, which will usually involve a preliminary visit to the site must be undertaken and lodged with the school secretary.

Adequate supervision must be planned for. As a guide for straightforward trips, e.g. museum visits or country walks, 1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3 (Reception and Nursery classes may have a higher ratio) and 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in years 4 to 6. Higher levels of supervision may be required for some activities/groups of children. There should be a minimum of one teacher in charge (the visit leader).

Adequate information about the visit must be provided to parents to allow them to decide whether to send their child on the visit. Details of clothing and any other requirements (packed lunches etc.) must be provided. For residential visits a parents' meeting is usually required.

Children should be briefed about the full itinerary of the trip and their concerns taken in to account.

**Pupils with special educational and medical needs**

The Head Teacher will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

All visits must be recorded in the school diary/calendar so that cover and school duties can be arranged. The school cook must be informed if pupils will be out of school at lunchtimes.

Visit-specific parental consent must be gained for all off-site visits. Parental Permission slips must be signed and dated and lodged with the school secretary. For residential trips, these should include "In Loco Parentis" permission which should be taken on the trip.

### **During the Visit**

One adult, '**the visit leader**', usually a teacher from the school, should have overall responsibility for the visit which includes the health and safety of the participants. The visit leader must:

1. Ensure adequate first aid provision

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2. Keep an accurate list of participants' names and regularly check their presence
3. Ensure that all adult helpers are aware of risk assessments and emergency procedures and have appropriate details of all participants' special educational and medical needs
4. Brief assistants and pupils on their responsibilities, especially with regard to any identified potential risks.
5. Be prepared and able to stop any activity or visit if deemed unsafe.
6. Carry a charged and switched on mobile phone (number known to the school office)

The Visit Leader must make it clear to pupils that they must:

1. Not take unnecessary risks (and point out possibly unseen potential hazards)
2. Follow the instructions of the leader and other assistants at all times during the visit.
3. Dress appropriately for the activity and behave according to School Rules and in a way which brings credit to themselves and the school
4. Be sensitive to local codes and customs especially when abroad
5. Be aware of Health and Safety and tell the leader or assistant of any concerns

The Visit Leader may be assisted by other adults who should be clear about their roles and responsibilities in assisting the Visit Leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all young people on the visit. For residential visits or in other situations where assistants are likely to have sole charge of children, they should have a relevant and up to date CRB check.

All visits should have first aid cover. The degree of cover depends on the nature of the visit. All Old School staff are trained to 'First Aid at School' level. A first aid kit appropriate to the specific needs of the visit is to be readily available.

Relevant procedures from school's Emergency File must be available in case of a major incident.

In all cases, the leader will have contact details of all parents and a charged mobile phone to be able to contact them. Should the situation mean that this is difficult, the leader should phone the school administrator who will then contact parents.

### **Transport**

#### ***Supervision during journeys***

The Visit Leader is responsible for the group at all times, including maintaining good discipline. Minibus and coach drivers should not normally be responsible for supervision except for a small number of older children making a short journey in the minibus.

When assessing the level of supervision the Visit Leader needs to consider:

1. Nature of transport, e.g. double-decker bus, train etc.
2. Safety on road crossings
3. Safety on transport when pupils are able to roam, e.g. ferries
4. Booking transport so group can travel together
5. Safety at pick-up, drop-off, and rest points
6. Safety of group in the event of an accident
7. Travel sickness and other travel related problems

During the journey, the Visit Leader needs to ensure that:

1. Head counts are carried out when the pupils are getting on and off the transport
2. A supervisor has responsibility for checking safety equipment e.g. wearing of seat belts
3. Pupils understand that they do not have access to the driving area at any time

#### ***Minibus***

The School Minibus, driven by a member of the school staff or other approved and appropriately qualified adult, can be used for taking small groups of up to 16 people plus

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driver to sporting fixtures and field trips. For larger groups a coach will be hired, complete with driver.

The School will ensure that the vehicle meets legal requirements with respect to licensing, insurance, maintenance and the procurement of appropriate permits including drivers' CRB checks, where required.

All minibus drivers must:

- Be fit and able to drive, having had an adequate rest period and not being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Carry out pre-drive safety checks on brakes, tyres, steering etc and to ensure that the vehicle is appropriate for the passengers to be carried.
- Plan journeys so that they can be completed safely and comfortably in accordance with passengers' needs.
- Have a clear plan of action in the event of a breakdown or accident

### **Record-keeping**

The School will ensure that appropriate records are kept with respect to operation, accident and damage, maintenance, staff training and permitted drivers.

### **Private Cars**

Drivers must ensure their passengers' safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy, and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for using their car on School business.

Drivers should not be left alone in the vehicle with a pupil except in an emergency.

### **Coaches**

All coaches will be booked from a reputable hire company who will be required to provide transport appropriate for the journey being planned. Full details of the intended journey must be provided to the hire company, including details of any stop or breaks required. The company will suggest suitable embarkation times to meet the required time of arrival. Coach and bus companies they should have the appropriate public service vehicle licence.

The Visit Leader and assistants will ensure that all children are properly seated with seatbelts (if provided) fastened throughout the journey.

### **Public Transport**

Where public transport (buses, trains, underground, ferries etc) are used, full consideration must be given to all transfers between each stage of the journey. Children should, wherever possible, be kept together and should walk in pairs between one stage and the next, e.g. between train and underground station.

Higher levels of adult supervision than usual should be considered.

### **Finance (including Insurance)**

The visit leader must ensure that the visit is financially viable and that the budgeting includes all foreseeable costs. Parents must be made fully aware of any costs they will incur, and given accurate indications of those they may additionally incur, such as those necessitated by early return.

The visit leader must confirm with the School Secretary that the School's Insurance policy covers the visit and its activities. If in the unlikely event it doesn't then alternative arrangements must be made.

WITHOUT APPROPRIATE INSURANCE NO ACTIVITY OR VISIT CAN TAKE PLACE

### **External Providers**

Only reputable companies who follow best practice and, in the case of adventurous activities, have appropriate licences will be used.

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Copies of external providers' risk assessments and licences must be obtained.

The use of an external provider does not absolve the visit leader and assistants from responsibility; they have the final decision over any aspect of the visit. They must be prepared to step in at any time to stop an activity.

## **Activities on or around Water**

Extra vigilance and supervision is required for all activities based on or near to water. Any visit must include a specific parental consent for any water-based activities which may take place.

Swimming in a pool, sea or any other body of water must not take place unless the appropriate risk assessment has been completed prior to the visit, appropriately qualified lifeguard(s) is/are present and that at least one lifeguard has the appropriate local knowledge. There must be NO sudden change of plan on the visit, no matter how tempting.

Watersports are adventurous activities and must be appropriately assessed and insured.

Water margin activities can be equally dangerous and organisers should read Group Safety at Water Margins produced by Department for Education and Skills and CCPR 2002.

## **Residential Visits**

The visit leader should organise a duty rota for the visit ensuring that there is always at least one member of staff on duty at any time, and, if it is a mixed visit, ideally one of each sex. No member of staff may consume alcohol while on duty, nor prior to duty in such quantity as to impair judgement or exceed allowable levels for driving while on duty.

The visit leader must brief the duty staff on their responsibilities.

Visit Leaders are advised to formulate a visit-specific policy for the use of mobile phones by pupils on the visit. This should include their use in the event of an emergency. (see *Emergency File*)

## **The School's pupil code of conduct applies for the duration of the visit.**

Pupils and parents must be made aware of any additional rules specific to the visit prior to departure including any sanctions such as an early return for disciplinary reasons.

Parents must agree the arrangements for sending a pupil home early and covering the associated costs.

## **Foreign Visits**

The visit leader must be aware of:

1. Visa and passport regulations (ARE ALL PARTICIPANTS UK CITIZENS?)
2. Emergency medical facilities and required documentation
3. Vaccinations required
4. Insurance cover for abroad
5. Driving regulations
6. Foreign customs and regulations regarding children
7. Travel update guidelines issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

For any overseas visit the visit leader is advised to hold copies of visas and passports.

Visit leader should be aware of care orders and wards of court.

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## **Risk Assessments and other Paperwork**

The School will carry out a full and comprehensive risk assessment before undertaking any off-site journey. The emphasis of the risk assessment will be on:

- Identifying risk.
- Deciding who or what is at risk.
- Considering ways in which the risk can be reduced or mitigated.
- Deciding how the risk can be controlled.

The assessment will consider areas such as:

- Size of the group.
- Ages of members of the group.
- Destination, route and stops on the journey.
- Appropriate means of transport.

In addition to the **generic risk assessments** (e.g. for travel by minibus) and any **visit-specific risk assessments**, Visit Leaders and assistants should also carry out an **ongoing risk assessment** i.e the continuous assessment of risk through a visit. This is of fundamental importance to the health and safety of the visit.

Leaders and assistants must always be prepared to stop an activity.

A written record of the visit and any ongoing risk assessment must be completed by the visit leader and signed by all the assistants.

Other paperwork which may be required:

- Information letters etc to parents
- Parental Consent forms
- Trip-specific Pupil Medical forms, which include contact details and permission for emergency medical treatment if the parents cannot be contacted
- Emergency procedures
- Incident and Accident forms / Documentation
- Agreement forms for external providers
- External providers' licences and risk assessments etc
- Insurance documents

**Educational Visits Coordinator** (this role is currently undertaken by the Headmaster, pending the attendance of the appointed member of staff in Autumn 2011)

The role of the EVC is to:

1. Support and advise the visit leader
2. Support and advise the Headmaster and Governors in their responsibilities re off-site visits.
3. Check and confirm the off-site visit forms with the visit leader and in conjunction with the Headmaster.
4. Check and confirm off-site visit risk assessments with the visit leader.
5. Assess the competence of the leader and other assistants in conjunction with the Headmaster.
6. Confirm the emergency contact procedures with the visit leader.
7. Assist in induction and training for off-site visit leaders and assistants.
8. Keep records, monitor and review the School's Educational Visit policy and off-site visits.

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## Emergency Procedures

All visit leaders and visit assistants must be aware of the emergency procedures which must be arranged with the EVC at the time of the visit's final approval.

IN THE CASE OF AN ACCIDENT (**See also school's *Emergency File***)

### The priorities are to:

1. Assess the situation
2. Safeguard the uninjured members of the group including yourself
3. Attend the casualty or casualties
4. Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident

### Factors to consider:

1. Establish the names of any casualties
2. Inform those in the group who need to know
3. Ensure that an assistant accompanies any casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group is supervised
4. Notify the police
5. Notify the British embassy (if abroad)
6. Inform the School contact with details of:
  - names of casualties
  - details of injuries
  - action taken so far
  - action to be taken
7. Notify insurers (this may done by School contact)
8. Notify external provider
9. Establish a landline communication (suitable local number) mobiles may be unreliable
10. Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence
11. Keep a written account of all subsequent events

## Media

In the event of media contact then liaison must be made with the Headmaster. Please also see procedures in the *Emergency File*.

In the event of an emergency all media enquiries must be made through the Headmaster at School. NO comment should be made to the media by the Visit Leader, assistants, or pupils. The name of any casualty should not be given to the media.

The best response is politely to direct all enquiries to the Headmaster passing on the number.

No one in the group should speak to the media – direct all enquiries to School

No one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties

## Useful references

- Health and Safety of pupils on educational visits (2001) DfES (HASPEV)
- BS 8848:2007 – Ensuring safety in outdoor activities overseas (2007) RGS ISBN 978 0 580 50503 4
- Out-of-classroom Learning produced by the RSPB
- High Quality Outdoor Education produced by Ordnance Survey
- Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings (2005) DfES
- Group Safety at Water Margins (2002) DfES
- Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers (2001) DfES
- Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits Parts 1,2 &3 ( 2002 ) DfES
- Guidance on First Aid for Schools (1998) DfES

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