



ST PHILIP'S SCHOOL

## EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

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### PART 1: INTRODUCTION

#### **Introduction**

Educational trips bring the curriculum to life and broaden the experience of pupils. Teachers regularly take boys on day trips to historic sites, museums, galleries, natural features, etc. to support the curriculum. There are also regular opportunities to travel overseas, particularly during the school holidays.

#### **Information**

Details of school trips and sports fixtures are advertised to parents through the termly diary and/or the Head Master's newsletter. Team and games lists are published on a weekly basis so that parents know exactly where their son will be and what collection arrangements are. For overseas or residential trips either a detailed letter or a meeting in school will be held.

#### **Consent for school trips**

Although permission for school trips is included in the standard terms and conditions, for certain trips parental permission will always be sought. For example, when a trip or visit extends beyond the normal school day, involves an overnight stay, collection from a different venue, an overseas visit or extra cost to the parent. The School will not take a boy on such a trip without signed parental consent, contact details and any relevant medical and dietary requirements. A general permissions form is sent out at the start of each academic year and includes a consent section which must be returned to the School prior to a boy partaking in any related activities. For non-standard trips (such as overseas, high-risk or residential trips) a separate consent form will be sent to parents.

#### **Safety**

While on a trip, boys must follow the safety instructions given by a member of staff or qualified instructor. The School reserves the right to exclude any boy (either by sitting out or going home) who does not follow reasonable instructions. Parents are asked to reinforce this message with their son prior to the trip.

## **PART 2: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF**

### **Involvement**

As part of their teaching role at the School, staff are required to support, contribute and lead educational visits. Some trips will be the initiative of a particular member of staff, while other trips will be organised by other staff, sometimes from different subject specialisms. Whatever trip a member of staff is assigned to, the School requires the highest level of professionalism and enthusiasm. Staff are encouraged to provide fresh ideas for school trips.

### **Role of the education visits coordinator**

The Deputy Head is responsible for coordinating educational visits. With the SMT and other colleagues, the Deputy Head approves visits, ensuring their suitability, their even spread across year groups and their planning. The Deputy Head oversees the organisation of larger scale trips, which require extra paperwork. The Deputy Head provides appropriate training to all staff.

### **Role of the group leader**

Every trip or visit, no matter how short, has a group leader who is in charge of organising and running the practicalities of the trip. The group leader will have received training and experience of accompanying similar trips before taking on the role of leader. The group leader is responsible for ensuring that a first aid kit is carried at all times on the trip.

Group leaders will have received training from the Deputy Head on the following:

- risk assessments;
- emergency procedures;
- budgeting;
- circumstances under which a visit might be terminated or curtailed (e.g. severe weather).

The group leader is responsible for planning the trip. Group leaders should agree with the Deputy Head a suitable timeframe for each stage of planning the trip.

Trips will also be assigned a deputy leader who should be capable of taking over the role of group leader if required.

### **Personal liability and insurance**

Any member of staff responsible for children in his/her care is acting 'in loco parentis', which means he/she has the responsibility to act as a prudent parent would in similar circumstances.

The Health and Safety Executive has published guidance to show that teachers should not be afraid of running trips. It is never possible to completely remove risk from an activity, and teachers should simply act sensibly and responsibly. The guidance can be read [here](#).

The School has Employers' Liability Insurance and public liability insurance, as well as a group travel policy that covers most visits inside the UK and overseas. This cover includes that vast majority of activities that could possibly occur on school trips, but in the case of adventurous or hazardous activities the group leader should liaise with the Bursar to check that the activity is covered by the School's policy (if not, an extension can usually be arranged). The Group Leader should take a copy of the school's travel insurance with him/her on all but the shortest of visits.

The School does not permit staff to transport boys in private vehicles on school activities.

### **Preparatory arrangements**

For local or regular trips that are within the remit of normal school life (e.g. a visit to the Oratory Church) it is likely that no additional paperwork will be required beyond notifying (often at relatively short notice, e.g. 24 hours) the SMT and School Secretary that a class will be off-site. For larger-scale trips, the period and amount of planning will be significantly longer and the notice period to parents will be significantly longer when the trip takes place during school holidays.

### **Overseas and residential trips**

The following list is designed to help plan larger-scale (i.e. longer and overseas) trips. Some points will only be relevant to overseas trips.

At least one term in advance:

#### *Logistics*

- Present a preliminary plan to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) including: purpose, location, transport, hotels, activities, itinerary, number and age of participants.
- A draft itinerary, fully costed, to be sent to parents with consent form.
- Transport details for all stages of trip.
- Check that the proposed activities are covered by the School's insurance policies (see above), particularly if the trip involves particular hazards.
- Ascertain the medical and visa requirements.
- Depending upon the destination: check with the Travel Advice Unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

#### *Health and safety (including safeguarding and child protection)*

- The required staff to pupil ratio (see below).
- Confirmation that any agency providing the trip is licensed and that any instructors are appropriately qualified (i.e. Adventure Activities Licensing Authority).

- Prior to making any commitment, obtain health and safety details from the provider about their provision and responsibilities for the safety of the boys (e.g. obtain risk assessments).
- Ascertain that all coaches used will have seat belts and liaise with the Deputy Head where assurance is not given.
- Prepare the School's risk assessment (see below).
- Ascertain which other staff would accompany the trip, having regard to particular skills (e.g. first aid, native speakers); part-time games and peripatetic music staff may be considered if appropriate; check that any accompanying adults have the required disclosure and barring checks.
- It is not the School's policy to take parents on trips, but any volunteers who will be in regulated activity must have the relevant child protection checks.
- Consider whether it is feasible/ necessary to carry out a reconnaissance visit or acquire a reference from a school that has run the trip.
- Receive any necessary training (e.g. first aid training).

#### *Costs*

- Fully inclusive costs, including an appropriate contingency for delays and emergencies, factoring in the costs of the accompanying staff.
- Establish the minimum and maximum pupil numbers for financial viability (bearing in mind that the costs of the accompanying staff will be divided amongst the participants).
- Check that the tour company/airline is ATOL/ABTA bonded to provide cover in the event of the bankruptcy of the provider.
- Establish the size and deadline for any deposit required by tour operators/airlines/activity centre etc., and ensure that the size of the deposit requested from parents is sufficient to cover these costs (including the costs of deposits for accompanying staff).

#### **Staff/pupil ratios**

Staff/ pupil ratios are not prescribed by law and the School/group leader must judge the appropriate staffing for the planned activity.<sup>1</sup> Generally the School uses the following as guidance:

<b>Ratio</b>	<b>Year Group</b>
1:6	Year 3 inclusive
1:10	Years 4 – 6
1:15/20	Years 7 upwards
1:10	All visits abroad

#### **Risk assessment**

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<sup>1</sup> See [HSE website](#): 'Pupil to staff ratios for school trips are not prescribed in law. Those planning trips, on the basis of risk assessment, should decide the ratios, taking into account the activity to be undertaken and the age and maturity of the pupils.'

All group leaders receive training in making a risk assessment for a visit, trip or activity they are planning, unless it forms a normal part of the education provided by the School. A standard proforma is provided. Group leaders use the following steps and are provided with a number of sample risk assessments (saved in the staff common area in the risk assessment folder). The steps that they should follow are explained at Staff meetings and a number of previous examples are available on the Staff drive. Group leaders should read the HSE advice [School trips and outdoor learning activities](#), which advocates a common sense and proportionate approach to risk assessment, recognising that excessive paperwork and unrealistic and fanciful assessments of risk do little to safeguard children.

For activities that are repeats of the same or similar trips and activities, staff may not need to make a fresh risk assessment, as the risk assessment has already been made. Staff should liaise with the Deputy Head if they think this is the case. If a new risk assessment is required, the Deputy Head maintains a dossier of generic risk assessments that cover sports fixtures, theatre and museum visits and most of our regular visits. Similarly, many activity centres will be able to provide group leaders with risk assessment for their product, which should be acquired and checked as early in the planning stage as possible: this can then be incorporated into the activity part of the risk assessment. Risk assessments carried out by the school for previous visits can generally be updated and re-used.

### **Finalising details**

At the final planning stage, group leaders should:

- liaise with the Deputy Head and Bursar on the best way to manage the finance (paying the trip provider/ receiving payments from parents; whether it will be added to their bill or via cheque);
- calculate a final cost;
- ascertain any medical or VISA requirements (including for non-British passport holders);
- overseas/overnight trip: send a preliminary letter, approved by the Deputy Head to the target parents/guardians outlining the purpose, programme and cost of the trip. The letter will also:
  - request a reply to express interest/acceptance, with a deposit/full payment by a stated date;
  - advertise the parents' briefing within six weeks of departure;
  - explain any restrictions on numbers;
  - give details of any special equipment needed;
  - include a consent form to be signed and returned (see appendix);
- encourage interest among the target Year Group(s) of boys with a briefing that covers the visit, its dates and purpose;
- check with the Deputy Head regarding boys who may need special provision due to medical, SEN or behavioural issues;

- collect funds from parents and arrange for the Bursar to pay the balance to the airline, hotel, travel company, etc.;
- ensure that the staff going on the trip have phones that will work in that location
- brief and prepare the boys in advance.

### **For overseas trips: six weeks in advance**

Group leaders will arrange a parents' briefing to cover the following:

- need for EHIC cards and how to order one, if required;
- the itinerary, including the meeting and collection points;
- contact details for the hotels/hostels/names and addresses of the host families (if applicable);
- the number of the school mobile phone;
- the money, kit and equipment that the boys need; appropriate dress code of the country;
- the medical and visa requirements;
- the expected standards of behaviour, and the potential risks of irresponsible behaviour; that boys who behave unacceptably may be sent home at their parents' cost; school rules apply on trip;
- arrangements for handling illness and accidents, including contacting parents;
- arrangements for communicating with parents in the event that the return is delayed;
- the need to notify the school in the event of contact with an infectious disease within four weeks of travelling;
- the reasons why a completed consent form is essential;
- the need for a copy of each boy's passport;
- brief boys on expectations of standards of behaviour and cultural differences;
- organise first aid equipment;
- ensure that the travel tickets/ booking are correct.

### **The week of the trip**

- If travelling abroad within Europe, collect all of the boys' passports of EHIC (healthcare abroad) card.
- Ensure that all consent forms have been submitted (no boy can go on the trip without this form).
- Ensure the tickets are correct and safely stored; tell a second member of staff where the tickets are.
- Hold a meeting with the other travelling staff to discuss: the itinerary, the risk assessment, the respective roles of accompanying staff, and emergency procedures.
- Prepare packs for the School Office, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and for each member of staff, that contain the following information:
  - itinerary (including address, phone numbers, etc., for all locations where the party is staying);
  - the group leader contact details and those of accompanying staff;

- a pupil list, with copies of parental contact forms (which includes details of each boys' medical conditions);
- copies of all passports and travel documents;
- emergency contact numbers for the Head Master/Deputy Head, and any other emergency contacts;
- the address and contact details of the nearest British Consul;
- a copy of the tickets, travel insurance document (including emergency contact details);
- a copy of the risk assessment, including the location of the nearest hospital.

### **The day prior to departure/the day of departure**

The Group Leader will do the following:

- collect tickets;
- give each boy a simple pack with contact details, accommodation details a basic itinerary and instructions on what to do if lost;
- remind boys about the rendez-vous, dress code, standards of behaviour, etc.;
- remind boys of the potential risks of irresponsible behaviour;
- remind boys to bring passports (if not already collected by the group leader in the week preceding);
- collect travelling first aid kit(s) and check contents.

### **During the visit or activity**

The group leader has primary responsibility for the running and safety of the trip. The group leader may make amendments to the itinerary in the case of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions; any significant changes to the schedule will be relayed to the Deputy Head or other named contact back home.

The group leader may delegate some responsibilities to other accompanying staff. For example:

- head counts;
- seat belt checks;
- checking and informing group about fire exits, escape routes and meeting points at the accommodation;
- ensuring that the rooms are suitably located;
- setting times for boys to be in their rooms, lights out; and for checking that this is followed (a shared duty with all accompanying staff);
- ensuring that the boys are carrying the trip contact details;
- setting times for checking boys when they are working in disparate activities;
- behaviour management (shared);
- checking the safety of documentation (e.g. passports) and valuables (e.g. money, cameras);
- storing cash, travellers' cheques and tickets in the hotel safe;
- keeping an account of all expenditure;

- recording all accidents and near misses.

### **Illness or minor accidents**

At the earliest possible opportunity, the boy's parents should be informed. In case of accident or illness, the group leader or designated first aider will take him to the nearest hospital/clinic, taking the EHIC card (if within EU). If outside the EU, the staff member will ring the School's insurance company (where possible) for the medical bill to be sent directly to the insurance company for settlement. If the accident is more serious (such as a broken leg when skiing), the school's medical insurers may arrange for the boy, accompanied by a member of staff, to be repatriated to the UK.

### **Emergency procedures**

In the event of a serious accident, the group leader's first responsibility is to ensure the boy receives the treatment he needs from the emergency services, remaining with the boy at all times. It is also important that: the rest of the group remains adequately supervised; the Head Master (or SMT contact) is provided with as full and factual details of the accident as are available; the group leader, or deputy group leader, contact the School's insurance company and the British Consul, if abroad; a full written record of the incident, its timings, the injuries and of the actions taken is written.

The staff at School – the most senior member of the SMT available – may need to implement the School's plan for informing the family of the boy(s) involved, as well as those not affected, whether or not this has already been reported through news services. The School may use the text message service, email, telephone or the School website to convey information. This should be managed by the Head Master/SMT, not the group leader, and excessive or inappropriate comment to the media should be avoided.

### **Delayed return**

Any significant changes to the schedule or delays in return should be relayed by the group leader to the school office/SMT contact so that parents can be informed of the delay and given a revised timetable.

### **On return**

On return, the group leader should provide the Deputy Head with details of any accidents or near misses. If anything could have been planned or managed better, it is important to convey this. All school property should be returned, with a note of anything lost or damaged. The group leader should ensure that boys delete any staff mobile phone numbers and that staff delete any boys' numbers they had for the purpose of the trip.

### **Expenditure**

The Group Leader is responsible for returning any unused monies to the Bursar. The School credit card should be returned (if it was taken), together with all

receipts, and records of any other expenditure. Unused balances will be returned to the parents by way of credits shown on the next school bill.

