



**BICKLEY PARK
SCHOOL**

Educational Visits Policy

Policy Details

Owner	Department	Managed by	Last update	Next review	ISBA Version (Y/N)
Jonathan Poole	Head	Head	November 2020	November 2024	N

Policy Approval/Distribution Process

Governors	Head/Bursar	SLT	All Staff
Approval	Noting	Noting	Noting

Policy Version Control

Version	Revision Date	Revised By	Section(s) Revised
1 st Version	September 2022	1 st Version	1 st Version

Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Responsibilities	5
Head	5
Group leader.....	6
Members of staff.....	6
Adult volunteers.....	7
3. Planning	7
Risk / benefit assessment.....	7
Exploratory visit.....	8
Other considerations.....	9
Financial planning.....	9
First aid	9
Ratios.....	10
Parents/Volunteers	10
Internal processes	11
Parental consent.....	11
Informing the Kitchen.....	11
Staff absence and lesson setting.....	11
The day of the visit	11
4. Supervision.....	12
Vetting suitability	12
Supervisors' responsibilities	12
Homesickness.....	12
Head counts.....	12
On transport	12
Behaviour	13
Refreshments/Lunch/Toilets.....	13
Lost pupils.....	13
Mobile phones.....	13
Report of accident, injury or dangerous occurrence.	13
Child Protection.....	13
5. Preparing pupils	14

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Participation	14
Inclusion	14
Information to pupils.....	14
Transport and pupils.....	15
Pupils with medical needs.....	15
Pupils with special educational needs.....	16
6. Communicating with parents.....	17
Information for parents.....	17
Parental consent.....	17
Photo consent	18
Medical consent	18
Other consent.....	18
Contact with parents during the visit.....	18
7. Transport.....	18
Minibuses	19
Seat belts	19
Supervision on transport.....	19
Hiring coaches and buses	20
8. Insurance.....	21
9. Adventurous activities	21
Employment of providers.....	21
10. Coastal visits.....	21
11. Swimming.....	22
Swimming Pools	22
Natural waters.....	22
Supervisors must:	23
12. Farm visits	23
13. Field studies	24
14. Residential visits.....	24
15. Visits abroad	24
Transport	25
Using a Tour Operator.....	25
Sources of further advice for school travel abroad.....	26
Planning and preparation.....	26

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Staffing the visit.....	26
Preparing pupils for visits abroad.....	26
Briefing meeting for parents	27
Vaccinations	27
Insurance	27
Foreign legislation	27
Visas/passports.....	27
Nationality	27
Emergency Medical Facilities	28
Paperwork	28
Information retained at the School.....	28
During the visit	28
Emergencies	29
Contacts at home	29
Travel by air	29
16. Emergency procedures	29
After a serious incident	30
17. Forest School.....	30
Appendix A: Volunteers supporting school trips agreement form.....	31
Role and responsibilities for volunteers who support on school trips and visits.....	31
The main duties of volunteers on school trips and visits are:.....	31
Further guidelines;	31
In the event of an emergency	31
Supporting with school trips	32

1. Introduction

We believe that pupils should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development. This document is designed to provide guidance and advice to those who wish to take pupils on a school trip, in order to ensure that the visit runs as safely as possible.

Most school visits take place without incident and it is clear that teachers demonstrate a high level of safety awareness. However it is important to do everything possible to ensure the safety of pupils on school visits. The potential hazards to which this policy refers should not discourage teachers. No amount of planning can guarantee that a visit will be incident free, but careful attention to safety measures can reduce the chance of accidents and lessen the seriousness of those that do happen. The management of health and safety on visits is part of the School's overall policy on health and safety. This guidance cannot cover every eventuality, but it sets out principles, which should be applied with good judgement and professionalism by visit leaders and their assistants.

This policy takes note of the Department for Education's advice document on health and safety for schools (updated April 2013).

2. Responsibilities

Head

The Head is responsible for ensuring that visits comply with any regulations and guidelines provided by the Governing Body and the School's Health and Safety Policy. In consultation with the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), the Head should ensure that the group leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

If the Head takes part in the visit as a group member/supervisor they should follow the instructions of the group leader, who will have sole charge of the visit.

With the help and advice of the EVC, the Head is responsible for ensuring that adequate child protection procedures are in place;

- An appropriate risk / benefit assessment has been completed;
- The group leader has experience in supervising the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
- The group leader or another member of staff is suitably competent to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place.
- Any non-teacher supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children: see **Vetting Suitability**;
- The ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate: see **Ratios**;
- Parents have signed consent forms, where necessary;
- Arrangements have been made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the pupils;
- A first aid kit is taken on each trip;
- There is adequate insurance cover: see **Insurance**;
- The group leader, supervisors and nominated school contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures;
- The group leader - supervisors and nominated school contact have the names of all the adults and pupils travelling in the group, and the contact details of parents and of the teachers' and other supervisors' next of kin;

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

- The school secretary has a copy of the lists of which pupils are travelling in which minibus / coach / travel group – if appropriate.
- There is a contingency plan for any delays, including a late return home.

Group leader

One member of staff, the group leader, should have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have regard to the health and safety of the group. The group leader should have been appointed or approved by the Head and the EVC. The group leader should:

- Obtain the Head's prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place;
- Follow school regulations, guidelines and policies;
- Appoint a deputy;
- Clearly define each group supervisor's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned;
- Ensure that all those attending or involved in the visit know who is in charge at any time and that all supervisors and external providers are clear about their responsibilities;
- Be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- Be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity (able to provide proof where necessary) and be familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place. If the trip is abroad or very far away and a pre-visit is not possible, trip leaders must find out as much information as possible about the venue / location as is possible in order to ensure its suitability and safety.
- Be aware of child protection issues and have contact details for the DSL;
- Ensure that adequate first aid provision will be available;
- Undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
- Undertake and complete an appropriate risk assessment: see **Risk / benefit assessment**;
- Review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise the Head and EVC where adjustments may be necessary;
- Ensure that teachers and other supervisors are fully aware of what the proposed visit involves;
- Have enough information on the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed;
- Ensure the ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group: see **Ratios**;
- Consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the pupils is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality;
- Ensure that group supervisors have details of the school contact;
- Ensure that group leaders brief other adults accompanying the trip on the emergency procedures.
- Ensure that the group's teachers and other supervisors have the details of pupils' special educational or medical needs which will be necessary for the to carry out their tasks effectively.
- Observe the guidance set out for members of staff and other adult supervisors below.
- Ensure the school secretary has a copy of the lists of which pupils are travelling in which minibus / coach / travel group – if appropriate, and return times for the trip.

Members of staff

Members of staff accompanying the visit must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances. They should:

- Follow the instructions of the visit leader and help with control and discipline;
- Consider stopping the visit or the activity, notifying the visit leader, if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

Adult volunteers

Group leaders must be aware of and apply statutory safeguarding measures for visits where there are non-teacher adult volunteers. In particular, visits which involve an overnight stay will require any non-teacher adult volunteers to:

- Be DBS checked;
- Provide references;
- Be trained in safeguarding, child protection and safe working before the visit;
- Subject to a risk assessment that details appropriate supervision of the volunteer.

Non-teacher adults on the visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit.

Non-teacher adults acting as supervisors must:

- Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- Not be left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk / benefit assessment;
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and teacher supervisors and help with control and discipline;
- Speak to the group leader or other members of staff if concerned about the health or safety of pupils at any time during the visit.

If volunteers do not have an enhanced DBS check, this should be noted on the risk assessment for the trip and appropriate safeguards and supervision put in place. **Risk / benefit assessments for visits involving non-teacher adult volunteers must be approved by the Head, who can advise on appropriate safeguards and supervision.**

3. Planning

Whether the visit is to a local park or museum, or includes a residential stay in the UK or abroad, it is essential that formal planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them.

Risk / benefit assessment

A risk / benefit assessment must be completed by the group leader well before the visit and should be approved by the EVC and the Head.

A risk / benefit assessment for a visit need not be complex. A common sense and proportionate approach should be used in assessing and managing risks and balancing them against benefits. For activities that take place annually (or more frequently) a review of an existing risk / benefit assessment may be all that is needed. If it is a new activity, assessment of significant risks must be carried out. Specialised information or knowledge may be necessary for certain activities, in which case the Head / EVC should ensure that the person assessing the risks is competent to do so. A risk / benefit assessment form can be found on the internal drive or obtained from the school secretary. The EVC is always available to help with the completion of these forms.

An assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them to the lowest practicable level. Pupils must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

contained and / or they outweigh the benefits then the visit / activity must not take place. An alternative activity or Plan B should be considered where appropriate.

The risk / benefit assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards / benefits?
- Do the benefits outweigh the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What are the existing safety measures in place?
- What further safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Examples of hazard are as follows:

- Crossing roads-how will it be managed
- Weather conditions
- Safe parking and alighting/boarding
- Safe lunch arrangements
- Is there open water nearby
- High Risk activities
- Members of the public

The person carrying out the risk / benefit assessment should record it and give copies to all members of staff/supervisors on the visit with details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the risks. The EVC should also be given a copy so that approval, as necessary, can be given with a clear understanding that effective planning has taken place.

Regardless of the type of the visit, the group leader must be prepared to re-evaluate and/or reassess the risks whilst the visit is taking place taking into account of any relevant changes in circumstances or factors such as fatigue or changes in the weather. If the risks become unacceptable the visit shall be terminated and/or a Plan B activity carried out instead.

Before booking a visit the trip leader should obtain assurances from the provider / tour operator / site manager that they have / will assess the risks and have appropriate safety measures in place and these will be provided in writing prior to travel.

Any outside agency must be ABTA bonded.

Exploratory visit

An exploratory visit should ideally be made by any teacher who is to lead a group abroad or on a residential visit, or who is to instruct or lead the group in an outdoor activity such as; trekking in a location that is not familiar to them.

In other cases, the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit, wherever that is possible, to:

- Ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- Obtain advice from the manager;
- Assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- Ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

- Become familiar with the area before taking a group of young people there.

If in the last resort, an exploratory visit is not feasible, then the group leader will need to consider how to complete an adequate assessment of the risks and benefits. A minimum measure would be to obtain specific information by letter from the venue, from other schools who have recently visited it, and from local organisations such as tourist boards.

Some visits will take new groups of pupils to the same location each year. As some factors will change from year to year, it is prudent to re-assess the risks each time, even when the group leader stays the same. It may be useful to evaluate each completed visit and keep a record.

Other considerations

Other factors which should form part of the planning stage include:

- The facilities/equipment the group will need to take on the visit;
- The facilities/equipment to be provided at the venue;
- Staff training needs;
- Transport arrangements; (free London zone off peak train travel is available for London schools: For best rates in other parts of UK it is best to book early for the best rates)
- Insurance arrangements;
- Information to the provider;
- Communication arrangements;
- Supervision ratios;
- Contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return;
- Information to parents;
- Preparing pupils;
- Emergency arrangements;
- Arrangements for sending pupils home early.

Financial planning

The group leader should ensure that parents have early written information about any costs associated with a visit. The costs of any exploratory visits should be added to the overall cost of the trip. Parents should be given enough time to prepare financially for the visit. It may be useful to break the costs down into subsections such as travel, hostel, meals etc. At an early stage, the visit leader should liaise with the Finance department for advice about the administration of finances for the visit. The group leader should set out how much spending money the pupils are advised to take and where necessary, ensure it is looked after.

First aid

First aid should form part of the risk / benefit assessment. Before undertaking any off-site activities the group leader should assess what level of first aid might be needed. On any kind of visit, the leader should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that an adequate first aid kit is taken (obtainable from the Matrons). For adventurous activities, visits abroad or residential visits it is sensible for at least one of the group's teachers to be a fully-trained first-aider. All adults in the group should know how to contact the emergency services. Regular (three-yearly) basic first aid training is provided for all Bickley Park staff.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

The minimum first aid provision for a visit is:

- A suitably stocked first aid kit;
- A person appointed to be in charge of first aid arrangements.
Other considerations when considering first aid needs should include:
- The numbers in the group and the nature of the activity;
- The likely injuries and how effective first aid would be;
- The distance to the nearest hospital – details of which should have been obtained for the risk / benefit assessment.

Ratios

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Age and ability of group;
- Pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- Nature of activities;
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- Duration and nature of the journey;
- Type of any accommodation;
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;
- Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
- Competence and behaviour of pupils;
- First aid cover.

Pupil to staff ratios for school trips are not prescribed in law. Those planning trips, on the basis of risk / benefit assessment, should discuss the ratios with the EVC and Head, taking into account the activity to be undertaken and the age and maturity of the pupils. Bickley Park School guidance is as follows:

- Nursery Classes, a ratio of 1:4
- Reception to Year 3, a ratio of 1:6-8 (adults to children)
- Year 4 to 6, a ratio of 1:10-15
- Year 7 and 8, a ratio of 1:15-20

Parents/Volunteers

Where a high adult: pupil ratio is required, it should be possible to staff it exclusively from staff at Bickley Park School. If this is not possible, parents/volunteers may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the School and the pupil group – the EVC should be contacted regarding non staff adults for trips as there is a contingency of parents that have been DBS checked and are briefed to stand in for school trips. Any volunteer without a recently completed Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check must never be left in sole charge of pupils.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Internal processes

Approval for an educational visit must be sought from the Head in all instances. The Head will then, if needs be, advise the EVC to ensure that the proposed visit complies with the school Educational Visits Policy. Visits should be applied for with as much in advance as possible – preferably at least one term.

Visits should be discussed with the EVC and / or Head of Pre-Prep or Head of Prep/ Head before pencilling in the school diary. Staff are rarely allocated at this stage unless definitely known.

As soon as the Head has approved the visit, the date of the visit should be confirmed in the school diary and the venue booked.

The Group Leader should arrange the transport required. Parental permission must be sought if staff are to use their own vehicles for purpose of transport.

Parental consent

At least three weeks prior to the visit, The Group Leader must arrange for a parental consent form to be sent to parents, to include the nature of the trip, the costs if any, the dress code, a kit list (if required), whether remote supervision will take place at any time during the visit, and which staff members are accompanying the trip. If extensive kit is required for the trip, parents must be given at least 1 month's notice so that they have time to acquire and budget for anything that needs to be purchased / borrowed.

Parental consent forms must be reviewed when returned to ensure any relevant information provided by the parent has been noted. Where possible, medical information should be retrieved from the school records to avoid parents repeatedly filling out the same information for each trip. However, it is essential that this information has been confirmed as up to date.

Informing the Kitchen

At least two weeks prior to the visit the group leader must inform the Catering Manager of the visit. Details of packed lunch requirements for pupils and staff must be provided via Matron. The risk / benefit assessment form has a page for this information.

Staff absence and lesson setting

The Head of Pre-Prep or Head of Prep must be informed of all trips and staff accompanying them to ensure that all missed classes are covered.

The day of the visit

The school secretary must be notified of pupils, staff and other adults who actually set off on the trip prior to them leaving the school premises and should be provided with lists of travel groups.

Coaches must not park in the school grounds under any circumstances. All coaches must wait outside the school.

The Group leader must ensure all pupils on the trip have the opportunity to use the toilet before leaving the school site.

All pupils must wear school issued wrist bands / carry a credit card containing the school name and contact number. All adults on the trip must wear Hi-Viz jackets.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Any pupil medication should be collected from Matron with an accompanying list and details. The Group leader should ensure that pupils requiring medication are either carrying it themselves or have handed it to their group supervisor.

4. Supervision

Vetting suitability

The group leader must ensure that the Volunteer Checks have been carried out.

Supervisors' responsibilities

All adult supervisors, including teachers and parent/volunteer helpers, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. It may be helpful to put this in writing. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or known behavioural issues. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

Homesickness

It is not uncommon for pupils to become slightly distressed or upset at times when on residential trips, especially if this is their first trip away from home. Parents need to be made aware that this will not be considered as a medical emergency and that pupils will not be returned home before the end of the trip due to homesickness. Part of what we are trying to achieve with residential trips, is resilience and independence – in this regard, full cooperation and support from parents is expected and they should be made aware of this during any briefings prior to the trip. If, however, a child becomes uncontrollably distressed for a prolonged period of time or is manifesting physical symptoms as a result of emotional distress, and this is causing other pupils to become distressed, or the child is threatening to attempt to make their own way home, further advice should be sought from the Head directly, or a member of SLT, if the Head is unavailable. Parents should be contacted, at the discretion of the group leader, after discussion with the Head and a decision should be made on the best course of action. It may be that, after a conversation with their parents, then the child settles down. In any event, returning the child home should be considered the last resort, as this may trigger further situations with other pupils and / or parents.

Head counts

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. All supervisors should carry a list of all pupils and adults involved in the visit at all times. Pupils should not wear name badges. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the group. In situations where pupils are given opportunity to explore without direct supervision, they should be given very clear instructions and parameters to adhere to. Pupils should never be allowed to roam alone, but always in groups of at least two. They should be given clear timings and locations to meet back and it should be checked that they have a reliable method of telling the time within their group.

On transport

Staff should be spread amongst the pupils on the coach or train, and this must be organised by the group leader, who should ensure that pupils are not isolated or sitting by themselves. On coaches/minibuses all must wear seat belts and this needs to be checked.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Behaviour

Excellent behaviour is expected from all pupils at all times during the visit. To avoid/prevent injuries, pupils must be advised to walk up and down stairs and stay on one side allowing members of the public to pass and not be allowed to run on stairs or public walk ways at any time during the visit.

Refreshments/Lunch/Toilets

No pupil is allowed to eat or drink on a coach/train etc., unless at the discretion of the Group Leader. Boys may take some refreshment as soon as the coach, train etc. reaches its destination. Empty cartons should be collected and disposed of correctly. All pupils should be given the opportunity to use the toilet regularly. If the visit includes lunch the Group Leader should have ascertained where the pupils are going to eat and that there are toilet facilities available nearby. Adults must supervise the pupils in public toilets.

Lost pupils

Collect all of the pupils into the care of one or two members of staff and then organise a search with the rest of the adults. If a pupil is missing the Head must be informed immediately. If the pupil cannot be found in 5 minutes the centre and the police must be informed. After 10 minutes, parents must be informed. Once the pupil is located he must be seen immediately upon his return to school by the Head and any problems sorted out. The pupils' parents must also be contacted and seen by the Head.

Mobile phones

Staff should take these on all visits and ensure they are fully charged and switched on. This should be checked by the Group leader. All staff should have each others' number stored in their phone. Pupils must not be allowed to take mobile phones with them, unless this has been agreed between the trip leader and Head. If this is the case, strict guidelines will be put in place, in line with the Cameras and Mobile Phones Policy.

Report of accident, injury or dangerous occurrence.

These should be reported to the Matron, Head and Bursar upon return from the visit. They will complete the appropriate school forms.

Child Protection

The School's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures will apply at all times during off-site visits.

In an emergency, dial 999 and request ambulance, police or fire service, as necessary.

If you suspect a child is at risk of harm (including if the concern relates to the behaviour of a member of staff):

- Immediately alert the Head and EVC.
- OR, if you cannot contact the Head or EVC and you suspect the child is at immediate risk:
- Alert the London Borough of Bromley LADO/Social Services on 0208 461 7669.
- If you have a concern about the behaviour of a member of staff you must report the concern to the EVC, who will report it to the SLT or Head if necessary.

5. Preparing pupils

Pupils who are involved in a visit's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should understand clearly what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. Lack of control and discipline can be a major cause of accidents. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others. This should be reinforced by the group leader before each visit.

Participation

The group leader should ensure that the pupils are capable of undertaking the proposed activity. Pupils should be encouraged to take on challenges during adventurous activities but should not be coerced into activities of which they have a genuine fear.

Pupils whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such pupils should be sent home early. Parents and pupils should be told in advance about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a pupil would be returned home safely and who would meet the cost.

Inclusion

The School will make every effort and make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that all pupils are able to take a full and active part in off site visits and that they are accessible to all, irrespective of disability, special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation etc.

The School will only consider preventing a pupil from attending an off-site visit as a last resort and will only do so following consultation between the School, the pupil and the parent(s) and only then if the refusal is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, for example because of an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of the pupil concerned or others on the visit.

The School will work with parent(s) and pupil(s) in order to agree a way forward in respect of the proposed off-site visit and retain a written record of the steps taken and the final decision.

Information to pupils

The group leader should decide how information is provided, but must ensure that the pupils understand key safety information. For some pupils on overnight visits it will be their first experience away from home on their own and in the close company of other pupils. Pupils should understand:

- The aims and objectives of the visit/activity;
- The background information about the place to be visited;
- Basic foreign words where appropriate;
- Relevant culture and customs
- How to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- Why safety precautions are in place;
- Why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- What standard of behaviour is expected;
- Appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct;
- Who is responsible for the group;

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

- What not to bring back either within the UK or from abroad;
- What to do if approached by anyone from outside the group;
- Rendezvous procedures;
- What to do if separated from the group;
- Emergency procedures.

For residential visits all group members should carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation in case an individual becomes separated.

Where visits involve multiple activities with differing requirements each activity will need to be assessed and separate information provided. Pupils should be aware of who is responsible in any instances where the group leader has delegated responsibility to another member of staff or an instructor.

If at any time there is a change in the planned schedule, new activities should be assessed and pupils provided with the appropriate information.

Transport and pupils

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules, including:

- Arrive on time and wait for the transport in a safe place;
- Do not rush towards the vehicle when it arrives;
- Wear your seatbelt and stay seated whilst travelling;
- Never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or driving controls;
- Bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions;
- Never attempt to get on or off the moving vehicle;
- Never lean out of or throw things from the window of the vehicle;
- Never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- Never run about or pass someone on steps or stairs while the vehicle is moving;
- Never kneel or stand on seats;
- Never distract or disturb the driver or impede the driver's vision;
- Stay clear of doors after boarding or leaving the vehicle;
- After leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road;
- If you have to cross roads to get to the transport in the UK always use the Green Cross Code;
- If you feel unwell, tell a teacher or supervisor.

Pupils with medical needs

Additional safety measures to those already in place in the School may be necessary to support pupils with medical needs during visits. Consideration should be given to arrangements for the safe storage and administration of medication and ensuring sufficient supplies are available for residential visits.

All members of staff supervising visits should be aware of a pupil's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures. Summary sheets held by all teachers, containing details of each pupil's needs and any other relevant information provided by parents, is one way of achieving this. If appropriate, a volunteer teacher should be trained in administering medication, if they have not already been so trained, and should take responsibility in a medical emergency. If the pupil's safety cannot be guaranteed, it will be appropriate to ask the parent to accompany a particular pupil.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

The group leader should discuss the pupil's individual needs with the parents. Parents should be asked to supply:

- Details of medical conditions;
- Emergency contact numbers;
- The child's GP's name, address and phone number;
- Written details of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times) and parental permission to administer;
- Parental permission if the pupil needs to administer their own medication or agreement for a volunteer teacher to administer;
- Information on any allergies/phobias;
- Information on any special dietary requirements;
- Information on any toileting difficulties, special equipment or aids to daily living;
- Special transport needs for pupils who require help with mobility.
- All medications should be given to the group leader, or another nominated member of staff on the trip, unless it is an emergency treatment medication, such as an epipen, asthma pump, insulin, etc: in which case staff should ensure the pupil is carrying it at all times.

Enquiries should be made at an early stage about access and facilities for securing wheelchairs on transport and at residential centres etc, if appropriate.

If ramps are not going to be available in certain places, the organiser may wish to arrange to take portable ramps with them. The group leader should, at an early stage, assess whether manual handling skills will be needed and, if so, whether training should be sought.

All teachers supervising the visit should be given the opportunity to talk through any concerns they may have about their ability to support the child. Extra help should be requested if necessary, e.g. a parent.

If teachers are concerned about whether they can provide for a pupil's safety or the safety of other pupils on a trip because of a medical condition, they should seek general medical advice from the School's Matron or further information from the pupil's parents.

The visit leader should check that the insurance policy covers staff and pupils with pre-existing medical needs.

Pupils with special educational needs

Schools will already be familiar with the nature of a pupil's special educational needs. Any limitations or problems the pupil may have should be taken into account at the planning stage and when carrying out the risk assessment. Off-site visits may pose additional difficulties for a pupil with SEND and the behaviour of some pupils may prove challenging. The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- Is the pupil capable of taking part in and benefiting from the activity?
- Can the activity be adapted to enable the pupil to participate at a suitable level?
- Will additional/different resources / costs be necessary?

6. Communicating with parents

Parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or visit unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum of which parents have already been informed via the School Calendar / letter. Parents will be asked to confirm that contact and medical details held by the school are up to date at the start of each school year. This will then reduce the need for parents to provide this information for every trip as it can be retrieved from the system directly.

Information for parents

Before residential visits, or when the pupils are to travel abroad or engage in adventurous activities, parents should be encouraged to attend a briefing meeting where written details of the proposed visit should also be provided. There should be alternative arrangements for parents who cannot attend or who have difficulty with communication in English. Parents need to be reassured that the teachers and other adult supervisors on the visit will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupil health and safety should be given to parents:

- Dates of the visit;
- Visit's objectives;
- Times and locations for departure and return: parents must agree to meet their child on return;
- Parents should be informed, via School post text, that pupils have arrived safely
- Any changes to return times, due to delay or other unforeseen circumstances, will be communicated to parents via School Post text service and / or via class reps. Staff on the trip must inform the office or agreed school contact as soon as possible of any changes to return times.
- Mode(s) of travel, including the name of any travel company;
- The size of the group and the level of supervision, including any times when remote supervision may take place;
- Details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- Details of provision for special educational or medical needs;
- Procedures for pupils who become ill;
- Details of any vaccinations or medication required for the visit;
- Names of the visit leader, other staff and other accompanying adults;
- Details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- Standards of behaviour expected and general group discipline including prohibited items.
- Details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation, medical cover, any exceptions in the policy and whether parents need to arrange additional cover;
- Clothing and equipment to be taken- (this will be given at least a month in advance);
- Money to be taken;

Parental consent

Before pupils join the School, parents are required to sign and return a general consent form (Appendix A), which covers sports fixtures, chess and debating matches, and all educational visits that do not involve extra cost to parents. Pupils will be permitted up to £25 for personal expenditure, depending on the nature of the trip. The leader of the trip will determine the amount to be taken.

Specific, written parental consent is required for any trip that involves:

- Any extra cost to parents

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

- Overnight stays
- Activities with a higher than normal element of risk (e.g. skiing, canoeing, climbing)

If in doubt as to whether specific parental consent is required, the trip leader should consult with the Educational Visits Coordinator.

If parents withhold consent, the pupil should not be taken on the visit but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent, the Head and EVC will need to consider whether the pupil may be taken on the visit or not.

Where a consent form is required it must be completed for every pupil in the group.

Photo consent

All staff on the trip must be aware of the status of the parental consent of each child before taking pictures of them as an individual or as a group. All photos taken by staff must be with school approved cameras or iPads.

Medical consent

Doctors can be expected to carry out necessary emergency treatment without parental consent but it is possible that a surgeon in another country might be reluctant to operate on a pupil unless assured that the group leader had parental authorisation to agree to such treatment. It is sensible to include a translation of the medical consent, as signed by the parent, in the relevant foreign language.

Other consent

Parental consent should be obtained before pupils are carried in a teacher's or other adult's private vehicle. Pupils carried in private vehicles must be in groups of two or more. Under no circumstances must a pupil be alone in a car with an adult.

Contact with parents during the visit

The group leader should ensure that parents can contact their child via the school contact and the group leader (two school mobile numbers) in the event of a home emergency and that they have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the visit or a late arrival home. Parents should therefore:

- Know the destination details;
- Be aware of the emergency contact arrangements at home (particularly important during holiday periods when the School may be closed) and at all the venues the group will visit;
- Be aware that they will be texted in the event of a change to travel arrangements or return times

7. Transport

With the help and advice of the EVC, the Head should satisfy themselves that all travel arrangements, including the hire of private coaches or buses, are suitable for the nature of the visit.

The group leader must give careful thought to planning transport. The most important factor to consider is always the safety and welfare of the party.

If any of the group uses a wheelchair, the visit leader should ensure that transport used has appropriate access and securing facilities. It may be appropriate to use portable ramps.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Minibuses

Any person who holds a driving licence dated before 1st January 1997 is eligible to drive a school minibus.

Any person who holds a driving licence from after this date is permitted to drive one of the two minibus lite vehicles that the school operates.

Details of minibus courses are available from the bursar. The minibus driver must:

- Not drive when taking medication or undergoing treatment that might affect their ability or judgement;
- Carry a mobile phone (the number should be left with the School Office); this should not be used whilst driving.
- Ensure the pupils are aware of behavioural expectations in the minibus and that they must be wearing seatbelts for the entire duration of the journey;
- Know what to do in an emergency (refer to the Emergency Action Plan);
- Be aware of the location of first aid and firefighting equipment;
- Avoid driving for long periods and ensure that adequate rests are taken when Needed (a 15-minute break is recommended every 2 hours); Staff who are not driving should be responsible for supervising pupils during break stops so that the driver is able to have a break
- Take into consideration the effects of teaching and the working day. Whenever possible, two members of staff should go in the minibus. If two or more minibuses are heading to the same destination, they should aim to travel safely in convoy.

The Bursar has overall responsibility for the minibuses.

A passenger list for each vehicle, which includes the destinations and timings of the trip will also need to be completed and handed to the school secretary before departure. The driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit.

Seat belts

All minibuses and coaches that carry groups of three or more children aged between 3 and 13 years inclusive, must be fitted with a seat belt for every child. The seats must face forward and seat restraints must comply with legal requirements. Children aged under 3 years must travel in a child car seat.

Forward or rear-facing baby seats-children under 3 from 9-18kg

Forward-facing child car seats (booster seats) – children under 3 from 15-25kg.

Only EU-approved child car seats can be used in the UK. These have a label showing a capital “E” in a circle.

For trips abroad, if the provision of seatbelts in coaches or minibuses cannot be guaranteed, parents should be informed and indicate their consent via the visit consent form

Supervision on transport

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk/ benefit assessment for the journey. The group leader is responsible for the party at all times, including maintaining good discipline.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

The driver should not normally be responsible for supervision. Driver supervision may be sufficient if a small number of older children are being taken on a short journey. The visit leader should also be aware of alternative routes or means of travel in the event of delay or cancellation.

Factors that the group leader should consider when planning supervision on transport include:

- The level of supervision that will be necessary on double-decker buses/coaches: one supervisor on each deck should be appropriate in normal circumstances;
- Safety when crossing roads as part of the journey: the visit leader should ensure that pupils know how to observe the safety rules set out in the Highway Code and the Green Cross Code. Pedestrian crossings and traffic lights or footbridges should be used to cross roads, whenever possible;
- Safety on buses, trains, ferries and boats: the visit leader should make clear to pupils how much or how little freedom they have to 'roam'. Misbehaviour is a major cause of accidents to children on such means of transport. Appropriate supervision and discipline should be maintained at all times. Pupils should also be made aware of what to do in an emergency and where emergency procedures are displayed;
- Booking transport: the group leader should arrange for seats to be reserved well in advance to ensure that the party can travel together;
- Safety of pupils whilst waiting at pick-up and drop-off points and when getting on or off transport, particularly when using UK vehicles abroad: pupils should be made aware of safety rules and expected standards of behaviour;
- Safety while on stops or rests during the journey: visit leaders should plan with the driver sufficient stops at suitable areas to ensure the safety of all group members, including the driver. Drivers of buses and coaches must comply with legislation covering maximum periods of driving and minimum rest periods;
- The safety of the group in the event of an accident or breakdown: the group should remain under the direct supervision of the group leader and/or other teachers;
- Head counts, which should always be carried out by the group leader or another delegated teacher or supervisor when the group is getting off or onto transport. Note that on return to school a sweep of the coach or minibus should be made for possessions and litter and that this will normally take the place of a head count;
- Making sure members of staff know who has responsibility for checking that seat belts are fastened and that passage ways remain unblocked;
- Making sure that all group members are aware that travel sickness tablets should only be administered to a pupil with authorisation from the parents.

Hiring coaches and buses

The group leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed. Schools using operators to transport pupils should ensure that the operators have the appropriate public service vehicle (PSV) operators' licence. When booking transport, the visit leader should ensure that seat belts are available for pupils. Whilst seat belts must be fitted on coaches that carry groups of children, they are not legally required on buses. Buses where seat belts are not fitted are not normally appropriate for visits involving long journeys.

If any of the group uses a wheelchair, the group leader should ensure that transport used has appropriate access and securing facilities. It may be appropriate to use portable ramps.

8. Insurance

The group leader is responsible for checking that each activity to be undertaken on the trip is fully covered by the School's insurance policy. This is not always the case with foreign adventure activities. The visit leader should check that if a tour operator is used it is ABTA bonded. A cancellation policy should be in place in case a parent decides to withdraw their child from a residential activity/trip.

9. Adventurous activities

When planning an adventurous activity (skiing, trekking, canoeing, water sports etc) the group leader must check that the people running the activity have the relevant qualifications, including a suitable log book and obtain and validate a copy, prior to the trip, of their Adventure Activities License.

The visit leader should check and agree the provider's arrangements for supervision and recreation during the evenings and between adventurous activities. The group leader should also provide any relevant information to the provider such as the group's age range, competence etc.

The group leader and other members of staff retain ultimate responsibility for pupils at all times during adventurous activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff. The provider is responsible for the safe running of an activity. Clear handover and hand back procedures should be in place. Everyone, including the pupils, must have an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the School's staff and the provider's staff.

The group leader and other members of staff should have sufficient information on what the activity involves before it takes place. They should approach the instructor at an appropriate safe interval if they are concerned that the pupils may be at unnecessary risk.

Employment of providers

Schools choosing to employ, rather than contract with, an unlicensed freelance provider of adventurous activities, who would otherwise need a licence to trade, take full legal responsibility for all aspects of the activity. If the provider, in the employment of the School, provides licensable facilities to the pupils of another school, the employing school will need a licence.

10. Coastal visits

Group leaders and other members of staff should be aware that many of the incidents affecting pupils have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming (for which see separate section below). The visit leader should bear the following points in mind when assessing the risks of a coastal activity:

- Tides, rip tides and sandbanks are potential hazards; timings and exit routes should be checked;
- Ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags;
- Establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- Look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc;
- Some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds;
- Cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to the path at all times. Visit leaders should consider whether it is safe or legal for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

The local coastguard, harbour master, lifeguard or tourist information office can provide information and advice on the nature and location of hazards.

11. Swimming

Swimming must be listed as an activity to which parents give their consent.

Swimming Pools

Within the UK: The Trip leader must be satisfied that the pool's operating procedures are sound and that the level of qualified staffing at the pool is sufficient.

Outside the UK: It is recognised that it is not always possible to obtain the necessary information regarding operating procedures and staffing. Swimming may take place provided that the following criteria are met:

- One staff member of the party must be a qualified lifesaver and must be present at all times;
- An additional poolside staff member of the party must be present at all times;
- Poolside rescue equipment must be present and supervisors must have access to an emergency telephone;
- No more than twelve pupils may use the pool at any one time;
- The clarity of the water must be acceptable;
- Appropriate signs indicating depth must be visible;
- Changing facilities must be in keeping with basic personal safety and pupils must know not to leave their peers alone at any time;
- Pupils must be fully briefed about pool behaviour.

Natural waters

Swimming and paddling or otherwise entering natural waters should never be allowed as an impromptu activity. The pleas of children to be allowed to paddle or bathe because it is hot weather, for example, should be ignored.

Entering natural water is only permitted in areas that have official surveillance, by which the School means fully qualified lifeguard cover. The activities undertaken must be formal and supervised.

The group leader must:

- Be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers;
- Ascertain for themselves the level of the pupils' swimming ability;
- Check the weather ;
- Be aware of the local conditions, such as currents, weeds, rip tides, shelving, uneven or unstable bottom;
- Use local information from the lifeguard, coastguard, harbourmaster, police or tourist information office;
- Beware of rocks, breakwaters and other potential hazards;
- Look out for warning signs and flags: a red flag means it is unsafe to swim; yellow flags mean that lifeguards are on patrol in the area between the flags; a black and white flag means it is an area used by surfers and not suitable for swimming;
- Designate a safe area of water for use by the group within the lifeguard patrolled area;
- Brief the group about the limits of the swimming area;
- Avoid crowded beaches where it is harder to see pupils;

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

- Be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water;
- Be aware of the dangers of paddling, especially for young pupils;
- Ensure that pupils have not eaten for at least half an hour before swimming;
- Ensure the activity is suitable for the pupils, especially any with special needs or disabilities;
- Adopt and explain the signals of distress and recall;
- Ensure that buoyancy aids, life jackets etc are used where appropriate;
- Carry out regular head counts;
- Be aware that it is not always possible to tell when someone is in difficulties in the water.

Supervisors must:

- Have clear roles: at least one supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance;
- Take up a best position from which to exercise a constant vigilance;
- Divide their careful watching between staff who stand in the sea and look landward towards the group and staff who stay on land and watch the group from that vantage point;
- Give the children their full, undivided attention; ensure sun protection is adequate for each child;
- Always follow the advice or directions of the lifeguard;
- Never swim themselves unless it is to help a child in distress;
- Not join in any of the children's games;
- Ensure that children leave the water immediately if they get cold, especially if toes and fingers look blue or feel numb, which could suggest the onset of hypothermia;
- Recognise that a child in difficulty is unlikely to wave or shout; all of their energies will be used in trying to keep afloat.

12. Farm visits

The group leader should check that the farm has a licence to accept school parties. Farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm should be carefully planned. The risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with *E Coli* 0157 food poisoning and other infections.

Check that the farm is well managed, that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas. Consider the merits of an exploratory visit.

There are some basic safety rules. Never let pupils:

- Place their faces against the animals or put their hands in their own mouths after feeding the animals;
- Eat until they have washed their hands;
- Sample any animal foodstuffs;
- Drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities);
- Ride on tractors or other machines;
- Play in the farm area.

13. Field studies

Field studies associated with a range of subjects including Geography, Biology and History might take pupils to industrial sites and other urban areas as well as into the countryside and to the coast (see above: **Coastal visits**). The scope of field studies means that the visit leaders, who will usually be subject specialists, should also be competent to lead and instruct their pupils within urban and non-urban environments at minimal risk.

14. Residential visits

- The group should ideally have adjoining rooms with teachers' quarters next to the pupils': the leader should obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance;
- The immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the group's use;
- Ensure there is appropriate and safe heating and ventilation;
- Ensure that the whole group are aware of the layout of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routine, and that everyone can identify key personnel;
- Security arrangements: where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors;
- The manager of the accommodation should be asked for assurances that the staff, including temporary workers, are suitable for work with young people and have an enhanced DBS check.
- Locks on doors should work in the group's rooms but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times;
- There should be drying facilities;
- There should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage, equipment etc, and for the safe keeping of valuables;
- Adequate lighting: it is advisable to bring a torch;
- There should be provision for pupils with special needs and those who fall sick;
- Balconies should be stable, windows secure and fitted with safety devices to prevent them from being opened fully, and electrical connections safe;
- Where possible pupils should not be lodged in ground floor rooms;
- The fire alarm must be audible throughout the accommodation;
- There should be recreational accommodation/facilities for the group;
- The hotel/hostel should be able to meet any particular cultural or religious needs of the group;
- There should be an appropriate number of group supervisors on standby duty during the night.

15. Visits abroad

Travelling abroad can be hugely rewarding for pupils and adults alike, but it is important that careful preparation takes place. Much of the earlier advice in this policy applies to visits abroad, but there are some additional factors that need to be considered, not least because the legislation may be different from that of the UK. Package organizers have responsibilities under Directive 90/314/EEC. This is implemented in the UK by the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 (The Package Travel Regulations). The regulations apply to packages sold or offered for sale in the UK. A package is defined as a combination of any two of: accommodation, transport, or other tourist services not ancillary to transport. The legal position of packages arranged as part of an educational course is subject to the effects of a future judgement in the European Court of Justice. The Head and EVC should be aware of these regulations in case they are in scope.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

As a general rule school staff should not organise parts of overseas trips themselves; by putting together various components of a trip that are sourced separately, which are then presented as a package to parents, could be regarded as acting as a tour operator and, if this is the case, would be subject to the Package Travel Regulations. The Package Travel Regulations (PTR) came into force in 1992 and is an EU directive which makes a Tour Operator liable for the negligence of their suppliers when a holiday is "packaged". In practice, the regulations apply when the package includes two or more elements of the trip, e.g. travel and accommodation, but the cost is invoiced as one amount. All overseas trips should be booked through a tour operator, as when this is done, the onerous nature of the Package Travel Regulations remains with the tour operator.

Transport

Group leaders should ensure that drivers taking groups abroad are familiar with driving the coach or minibus in the countries being visited and those en route. EC regulations require the fitting and use of a tachograph and prescribe maximum limits on driving time and minimum requirements for breaks and rest periods. These regulations apply for most drivers of school passenger vehicles when undertaking an international journey. Different licence requirements would normally apply for driving abroad. The DETR can provide advice on the relevant transport legislation.

Factors to consider when travelling abroad include:

- The need to be aware that different legislation and regulations may apply for drivers' hours and recordkeeping purposes, particularly in non-EU countries;
- EU drivers' hours and tachograph regulations normally apply to any vehicle with nine or more passenger seats on journeys through EU countries and some countries outside the EU. In other countries, drivers must observe the domestic rules of the countries being visited. Advice on domestic rules may be obtained from the relevant embassies of the countries concerned.
- Special documentation is required for minibuses taken abroad;
- All group members should be aware of unfamiliar right-hand drive traffic. The passenger doors on UK minibuses and coaches may not open on the kerb side in countries where travel is on the right hand side of the road. Extra care will be necessary when the group is climbing in and out of the vehicle. Detours may be necessary to ensure safety.
- Carrying capacity and loading requirements.

Using a Tour Operator

Before using a tour operator group leaders should ensure it is reputable. Ascertaining this should form part of the risk assessment. The Civil Aviation Authority licenses travel organisers and tour operators selling air seats or packages with an air transport element (Air Travel Organisers Licence or ATOL). The licence is a legal requirement and provides security against a licence holder going out of business.

A travel agent does not need to be an ATOL holder if acting only as an agent of an ATOL holder. But if so, the group leader must check whether or not the whole package being supplied is covered by the ATOL. If it is not, the organiser must show evidence of other forms of security to provide for the refund of advance payments and the costs of repatriation in the event of insolvency.

There are seven bonding bodies approved by the Department of Trade and Industry:

- Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA)
- Federation of Tour Operators Trust (FTOT)

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

- Association of Independent Tour Operators Trust (AITOT)
- Passenger Shipping Association (PSA)
- The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)
- Yacht Charter Association (YCA)
- The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust (ABTOT)

Sources of further advice for school travel abroad

- The Department of Trade and Industry - for the regulations governing tour operators.
- The Schools and Group Travel Association (SAGTA) is an independent association with a members' code of good conduct and safety rules. All its members are in ABTA.
- Alternatively, there are voluntary bodies established to promote school journeys, such as the School Journey Association.
- Group leaders who wish to arrange travel independently may also seek the advice and help of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Travel Advice Unit. The Unit's purpose is to help intending travellers to avoid trouble abroad. It can provide information on threats to personal safety arising from political unrest, lawlessness, violence etc.

Planning and preparation

It is good practice to make an exploratory visit to the location. If this is not possible, the group leader should gather as much information as possible on the area to be visited/facilities from:

- The provider;
- The Foreign & Commonwealth Office's Travel Advice Unit;
- Other schools who have used the facilities/been to the area;
- The local authority/schools in the area to be visited;
- National travel offices in the UK;
- Embassies/consulates;
- Travel agents/tour operators;
- The internet, books and magazines.

Staffing the visit

Staffing ratios for visits abroad are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity and the pupils' age. See the EVC for advice.

Preparing pupils for visits abroad

Factors to consider for visits abroad include:

- Language, particularly common phrases;
- Culture, including body language, rules and regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender etc;
- Dangers of drugs and alcohol;
- Food and drink: group members should be warned of the dangers of drinking tap water in certain countries. In some countries it is safer to drink bottled water, and care needs to be taken with raw vegetables, salads and unpeeled fruit, raw shellfish, underdone meat or fish;
- Money: how to carry money and valuables discreetly eg money belts, zip armllets. If larger amounts of money will be needed, it is advisable to take travellers cheques;
- How to use phones abroad, money required (a BT contact card allows calls to be charged to the home number) and the code for phoning home.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Briefing meeting for parents

It is particularly important that parents are given the opportunity to meet the teachers and others who will be taking the pupils overseas.

Vaccinations

The group leader should find out whether vaccination is necessary and ensure that all members of the group have received it in good time. Check whether the country to be visited requires proof of vaccination. The Department of Health gives advice on vaccination requirements in their publication, *Health Advice to Travellers Anywhere in the World*.

Insurance

The group leader must ensure that the group has comprehensive travel insurance.

Foreign legislation

The group leader needs to check relevant legislation, particularly on health and safety - e.g. fire regulations.

Visas/passports

The group leader should ensure that all members of the group have valid passports and visas (if appropriate) in the early stages of planning the trip. A group passport may suffice in certain circumstances. Some countries require a passport to be valid for at least six months prior to entry and this should be researched prior to the trip and advised to parents.

Photocopies of the group's passports should be taken for emergency use. Otherwise there can be problems if someone other than the designated leader has to accompany an injured pupil back to the UK.

Nationality

If the group includes pupils whose national or immigration status or entitlement to a British passport is in doubt, it is advisable to make early enquiries of the Home Office's Immigration and Nationality Directorate concerning the requirements of the immigration rules and the right of re-entry.

Pupils who are not nationals of any EU member state may need a visa to travel from the UK to another member state. However, they may receive visa exemption if they are members of a school group. Details and forms are available from the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges.

Pupils other than EU nationals may require a separate passport and may need to use separate passport control channels from the rest of the group.

Care orders and wards of court

If a child is subject to a care order, foster parents will need to ensure that the Social Services Department consents to any proposed trip. If a pupil is a ward of court, the Head should seek advice from the court in relation to school journeys and activities abroad well in advance.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Emergency Medical Facilities

Some of these are available through reciprocal health care arrangements in European Community (EC) countries to EU Nationals. An EHIC card is required for all trips to an EU country. It is advisable to take a contingency fund as sometimes treatment must be paid for in advance and money has to be claimed back later.

Paperwork

The group leader should ensure that he/she obtains and take:

- Travel tickets, passports and visas. It is also advisable to carry a separate list of the numbers of any travel documents/passports, and photocopies of all the group's documents in a sealed waterproof bag;
- A copy of the contract with the centre/hotel etc, if appropriate;
- Medical papers, EHIC cards and significant medical histories;
- Parental consent forms and permission for group leader to authorise emergency treatment on parental behalf;
- The phone numbers and addresses, at home and in school, of the Head and of the school contact;
- The names of parents and the addresses and telephone numbers at which they can be contacted (home and workplace);
- Copies of a list of group members and their details;
- Details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number;
- The name, address and telephone number of the group's accommodation;
- The location of local hospital/medical services.

The group leader may wish to ask parents for passport-size photographs of the pupils. It may be useful to have photographs of the adults in the group as well.

Information retained at the School

Full details of the visit should be retained at school while the visit is in progress. This should include:

- The itinerary and contact telephone number/address of the group;
- A list of group members and their details;
- Travel groups and staffing / vehicles;
- Contact names, addresses, telephone numbers of the parents and next of kin of all staff/volunteers on the trip;
- Copies of travel documents, insurance documents, medical papers;
- A copy of the contract with the centre/hotel etc, if appropriate; and emergency contact numbers – in the case of trips abroad.

It is the Head's responsibility to ensure this information is available at all times. Files should be placed with the School Office, Bursar and Head. This is particularly important if the visit takes place when the School is closed.

During the visit

It is advisable for pupils to carry a note in the relevant foreign language for use if they get lost with relevant contact details on it.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Group members should carry an appropriate amount of foreign currency at all times e.g. money for a telephone call (or a phone card).

Emergencies

The group leader must ensure that all members of the group know what action to take if there is a problem.

The group leader and supervisors should know where the nearest British Embassy or Consulate is located and the telephone number. This information should have been included on the risk / benefit assessment. Depending on the age of the pupils, it may be appropriate to ensure that they have this information to hand.

Group leaders need to be aware that some diseases are more prevalent in some countries than in others and should know what action to take should a member of the group become infected.

Many of the health problems of pupils on longer visits are caused by lack of food, of liquid or of sleep. The group leader should take this into account at the planning stage and take measures to prevent these risks. If appropriate, parents should be asked to provide suitably factored sun protection creams and sun hats/glasses. Group members should be advised about the dangers of over-exertion in the heat and of dehydration, which can cause headache, dizziness and nausea. In warm climates it is important to keep fluid levels high, take extra salt and wear loose, lightweight clothing, preferably made of cotton or other natural fibres.

Contacts at home

It is advisable to have a teacher/contact at home with a valid passport who could go to the area being visited to provide support to the group in the event of an emergency.

Travel by air

Taking a school group on an aircraft requires careful planning and preparation. The airline/travel agent will be able to advise on particular requirements. If the group includes any members with disabilities, it is advisable to check that the airline has a wheelchair service and lifting facility etc, if appropriate. The group leader should resist any attempt by the airline to split the group between different aircraft.

16. Emergency procedures

If an emergency occurs, the priorities for the group leader and accompanying staff are to:

- Assess the situation;
- Make sure that all members of the party are safe, accounted for and adequately supervised;
- Attend to any casualties/injuries;
- Contact the emergency services and follow their advice;
- Contact the School/School Contact and decide how parents are to be contacted and informed.
- Inform the representative of the tour operator, if one is being used;
- Notify the British Embassy/Consulate, if abroad.

The group leader should write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

The group leader should refer the media to the Head wherever possible. Any statement should be drafted in advance, be factual and avoid subjective statements. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media.

- No one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.
- The School's Bursar will notify insurers, if necessary.

The main factors for the School Contact to consider include:

- Ensuring that the group leader is in control of the emergency and establishing if any assistance is required from the school base;
- Contacting parents. Details of parents' contact numbers need to be available at all times while the group is on the visit. The School Contact should act as a link between the group and parents. Parents should be kept as well informed as possible at all stages of the emergency.

After a serious incident

It is not always possible to assess whether group members not injured or directly involved in the incident have been traumatised or whether other pupils or members of staff in the School have been affected. In some cases reactions do not surface immediately. It may be helpful to contact local community support services and to seek professional advice on how to help individuals and the School as a whole cope with the effects of a tragedy. See Disaster Policy

17. Forest School

Bickley Park School operates a forest school, and a comprehensive handbook is in place, taking into account its location outside of the school boundaries and covering all aspects of its safe operations, not limited to the following:

1. Introduction
2. Mission Statements
3. Forest School Rules & the Countryside Code
4. Location Map
5. Site guide
6. Ecological Impact of the Forest School
7. Woodland Management Plan
8. Flora and Fauna on site - including harmful
9. Public Liability Insurance Certificate
10. First Aid Certificate
11. Health and Safety : including Risk / benefit Assessments

An inspection of the site prior to each visit must be completed, documented and returned to the school Bursar. The trees on site should be checked each year by a qualified tree surgeon.

This policy also broadly applies to the Early Years Department.

Appendix A: Volunteers supporting school trips agreement form

Role and responsibilities for volunteers who support on school trips and visits.

We are very grateful to volunteers who support Bickley Park School when attending trips and events outside school.

There are certain procedures that must be adhered to on educational visits for the safety and protection of children, parents and staff. The following must be maintained in the interest of all:

The main duties of volunteers on school trips and visits are:

- To ensure the safety and security of the children at all times
- To engage with the children in order to enhance their learning experience
- To help ensure that all children, including their own, participate fully and independently in all activities

Further guidelines;

- Volunteers are asked to read any briefing information which relates to the trip, prior to leaving school premises in the morning.
- Any materials and contact details given to volunteers for a trip should be returned to school staff upon return.
- Volunteers cannot bring any siblings or additional children on a school trip.
- Volunteers should not leave their group/class at any time without notifying the teacher.
- If the trip does not involve children taking money to purchase items in shops, volunteers are asked to refrain from purchasing items, or food and drink for their own child/group.
- Volunteers should not interfere with their own child's social interaction with their group and friends or their child's independence.
- Volunteers who experience any difficulties with a child/children in their group should inform the class teacher as soon as possible.
- Volunteers must be accompanied by a member of school staff when taking children to the toilets.
- Volunteers who have not been invited as designated helpers on a trip cannot join the group without the prior agreement of the group leader and Head. This would contravene the risk assessment which has been agreed for the visit.
- When walking in public places volunteers should encourage children to walk in twos rather than a group.
- Volunteers must ensure Mobile phones are switched off and not used at any period during the time with the children, nor should they take any photographs of any children during the visit.
- Volunteers, will not be expected to administer any medicines or first aid (unless with prior agreement). This will be the responsibility of the school team. All helpers will know who the first aiders are in an event of an accident.

In the event of an emergency

- The team leader will have sole responsibility for contacting the appropriate emergency services, the school and/ or parents. No other phone calls will be made by any other member of the trip team unless asked to do so by the team leader.
- They will follow the instructions given by the team leader and will act to promote the safety of all children and adults.

Supporting with school trips

Name of volunteer

Trip supporting

Date

I have received information regarding my role and responsibility on a school trip and understand the procedures I need to follow if there is an accident.

Signed