

## EDUCATIONAL VISITS

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Pupils can derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits. Educational visits play a major role in the education and development of all young people. They can contribute significantly to the development of cross curricular skills and personal and social education through the use of problem solving methods and approaches and through encouraging responsibility, self-confidence and self-reliance.

Fyling Hall is strongly committed to learning outside of the classroom walls. We believe that the value added of these activities far exceeds the inherent risks. Thus, safely managed educational visits with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of the broad and balanced curriculum we offer.

This policy covers all occasions when pupils leave the school premises on an organised out-of-school visit. All out-of-school visits should be checked with the Head of Department, the Headmaster **and** the Health and Safety Officer (HSO). This should be done in the planning stage **before** the visit takes place.

### Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Everyone concerned needs to ensure that every effort is made to include all children. The challenge is to make these activities available and accessible in some form to all who wish to participate or are required to take part. This would be irrespective of their special educational or medical need, disability, ethnic origin, sex or religion.

It needs to be remembered that this must be done whilst maintaining the safety of all those concerned, the integrity of the activity and the ability to manage the visit or venture. These are significant factors to be managed, which may over-ride other considerations. Communication with parents is key to decisions being made.

### Approval Procedure

Proposals for visits should be made to the Headmaster. When deciding if a visit merits approval, the school will consider the following:

- are there clear and justifiable objectives for the visit? What is the value of the event to individuals and groups?
- is the visit leader clearly identified and sufficiently responsible and capable of taking charge of the particular visit
- parental notification and consent has been undertaken?
- participants are aware of the visit objectives and have been prepared, briefed and involved in the planning as appropriate
- have all transport arrangements have been adequately assessed?
- is the venue known or has the group leader undertaken a pre-visit in order to assess the suitability of the site and to enable risk assessments to be produced? This may be replaced by information and advice received from other sources. Where this is the case, the risk assessment must take this into account and the leader must be sufficiently experienced.
- written risk assessments and control measures to control the risks must be produced. Control measures must be understood and complied with by all persons staffing the visit
- a check must be made to ensure any provider has public liability insurance of at least £5 million as well as suitable arrangements for participants' welfare
- consideration must be given to deciding if contractual insurance (personal accident and travel insurance) is necessary for the participants and staff and for informing parents about any cover applying to the visit.
- how will the visit be financed?
- is an emergency procedure (plan B) in place?
- what are the teaching implications for the staff and pupil absence?
- can the visit be taken at a more convenient time during the academic year?

### Individual Responsibilities For Visits

#### The Headmaster

This is the key role for ensuring that the management of visits meets the regulations and conforms to school policies. The Headmaster has undertaken training from the Royal Geographical Society. He delegates responsibility for the health and safety aspects of the visit to the Health & safety Officer (HSO), Paul Squirrel.

#### The Group Leader

This is the person with overall responsibility for the administration, programme, supervision and conduct of the venture. They are therefore an important part of the health and safety and good practice support system, and should both understand their own responsibilities and those of the other people in the process who contribute to their support, success and confidence. The Group Leader has full responsibility for the safe running of the activity including pre-planning and following guidance, and ensuring all participants are aware of their roles.

To achieve this, the group leader will:

- identify the clear purpose and objectives of the visit
- complete visit documentation, and obtain approval from the Headmaster for any visit off-site, no matter how short its duration
- have prior knowledge of the venue – the visit leader should normally have made an exploratory pre-visit

- carry out, and provide a written record of, a comprehensive risk assessment (which may be stored on the computer system)
- ensure that all proper means of transport have been catered for
- check that the nature of the activity falls within the scope of the school's insurance; if not, plan as necessary for an appropriate level of insurance cover
- inform parents and seek permission/consent, detailing the nature, purpose and related activities involved in the visit
- arrange briefing meetings with parents, as appropriate, for high risk, residential and foreign visits
- liaise with the school nurse to ensure that any specific medical or health issues of pupils or accompanying staff are taken into consideration within the planning and that their needs are catered for
- allocate supervisory responsibility to each adult for named pupils and ensure that each adult knows which pupils they are responsible for, and to ensure that each pupil knows which adult is responsible for them
- continuously monitor the appropriateness of the activity
- carry out a review of the visit on return, evaluating its success and recording any near-misses or proposed changes for repeat visits in the future – this should be shared with the headmaster.

The Headmaster is responsible for approving all visits or ventures that take place. Before approval is given, the group leader gains information from the Centres/Providers of the activities to ensure that health and safety, risk assessment and operating procedures are in place. Centres/Providers will be checked for their appropriateness, their leader's qualifications and basic operating procedures. These checks will be carried out annually where repeat visits are planned.

### **Members of the Group with Specific Responsibilities**

These people will assist the group leader in all their tasks and activities and will need to demonstrate person specific, pastoral, technical and management expertise. The list of responsibilities and competencies for the members of the group will need to be supplemented according to circumstances.

### **Responsibilities of Pupils**

As school visits are an extension of the curriculum, Fyling Hall expects its pupils to adhere to the principles stated in the Behaviour and Discipline Policy. Whilst we acknowledge that enjoyment is a fundamental ingredient of any visit, pupil safety is paramount. It is essential that all groups are made as aware and active in the process of managing the visit as they can be. It is essential that the pupils understand that they are still under school discipline and that school policies must be followed. Procedures, group and supervision strategies must be explained and understood. Individual and group responsibilities need to be clear, as well as the rewards and sanctions for ensuring they are kept to.

A Code of Conduct, negotiated and agreed in an acceptable way, is a key component of educational visits e.g. communication, behaviour, dress, group supervision and "down time". It may be necessary to have individual behaviour contracts with some young people, signed by themselves and their parents. Everyone should be as risk aware as is realistic. Any children whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways wherever possible. For foreign visits, parents should be told that in the unlikely event of a gross breach of the code of conduct, a pupil may be repatriated. This would be the decision of the group leader in consultation with the Headmaster. This would be at the expense of the parents.

### **Responsibilities of Parents**

Parents have important roles in school visit safety. They are responsible for ensuring that the school is aware of any medical and/or dental health problems, or any personal problem that could affect their child during the visit. All documentation from the school should be fully and accurately completed. Parents should also ensure that their child understands his/her responsibilities during the visit. The school will provide parents with key contact details and other important information about the visit. Parents should carefully keep details of the itinerary and timetable and who to contact if there is an urgent need to get in touch with their child during the visit.

### **Staffing Supervision**

We recognise that accompanying staff possess a key role in ensuring the high standards of learning, challenge and safety on a school visit. The levels of supervision will determine not only the health and safety of the children and their leaders, but also the quality of the overall experience, enabling learning to take place as well as allowing all those concerned to enjoy the experience and derive satisfaction from it. Supervision is a key element in the success of any venture.

To this end, an appropriate staff/pupil ratio will be observed, and this is determined by the risk assessment carried out by the group leader. In assessing supervision needs, relevant considerations will include:

- the age of the pupils and the gender mix of the group
- their previous experience away from home or school
- their general capabilities, maturity and discipline
- their previous experience and training in specific activities included in the visit
- the experience of accompanying staff
- the location and travel arrangements
- if any pupils have been identified with special educational/medical needs

As a general rule the staffing ratios are:

- one adult for every six pupils in school years EYFS to three
- one adult for every ten to fifteen pupils in school years four to six

- one adult for every fifteen to twenty pupils in school year seven onwards

Parents and volunteers who wish to accompany pupils on residential visits must be informed that they will be required to undergo an enhanced CRB check. It is also good practice to ensure that parents and volunteers accompanying pupils on day visits are not left to supervise pupils alone.

### Remote Supervision

'Unsupervised time' on a visit is no longer an acceptable concept. At all times, group leaders and staff are responsible for pupils. Any period of remote supervision must be covered by the drawing of clear boundaries for pupils, emergency procedures and how contact with staff can be made. It is often good practice to issue pupils with a card giving mobile phone details of staff and the address and contact numbers of the place of residence if an overnight stay is involved. The associated hazards should be considered in the overall risk assessment. On expeditions, pupils should normally be in groups of at least four and briefed on how to respond to an emergency. Parents must be fully briefed on the arrangements for any period of remote supervision.

### Children with Special Needs

When planning educational activities for pupils with special needs, we need to carry out a specific risk assessment as well as a generic assessment. The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify significant risks that are likely to cause harm to the pupil and identify and prioritise the measures that need to be taken to eliminate or contain the risk. Significant issues for SEN pupils are likely to include the following.

- **Supervision arrangements.** Extra supervision and support may be needed.
- **Transport issues.** The pupils may be transported in the school mini-bus, a coach or public transport. Safe seating and adequate supervision should be arranged and arrangements made to accommodate any needs the pupils may have during the journey.
- **Access to premises and movement around the premises.** Where this involves lifting and manual handling of pupils by staff or others there needs to be an individual moving and handling assessment.
- **Participation in activities.** There needs to be a risk assessment to identify what the safe arrangements are.
- **Emergency procedures.** These should take into account any pupils with SEN.
- **Administering medical treatment.** There should be written details of any medication required by the pupil, instructions on dosage and times and written parental consent.
- **Any special diet required or any allergies the pupil may have.**

### School Visits Insurance

Most visits are automatically covered under the school's insurance policy. However, group leaders should check with the Bursar that this is the case.

### Risk Assessment and Risk Management Requirements

Risk assessment and risk management are legal requirements. It also needs to be acknowledged that the process represents and promotes good practice. "Working in the outdoors" encompasses many activities, from using the local environment as an 'outdoor classroom' through to taking part in recognised 'hazardous' activities. What they all have in common is to use an exciting and stimulating environment to promote learning and personal development. However, if personal development and increasing self-reliance are to be achieved, then we must properly assess, prepare for and manage any significant hazards in these environments and the risks they present.

A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should have the aim of eliminating or reducing them to an acceptable 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 reduced to an acceptable level then the visit must not take place. It is important that the pupils going on the visit are properly briefed before departure and are given clear instructions as the visit progresses.

A full risk assessment should be filled out for every visit that is not part of the routine school day. It is envisaged that there will be few exceptions to this rule. The risk assessment should be completed by the person in charge of the visit, with the help of the HSO if necessary.

The process of risk assessment involves the group leader and the team in:

- looking for and at the hazards involved.
- identifying and assessing the risks.
- deciding what control measures need to be put in place to eliminate or minimise the risk.
- recording the findings.

The risk assessments are carried out before the visit, during and after the visit as part of the evaluation to ensure that the assessment is still relevant. A copy of this documentation is compiled by the group leader to ensure that everyone learns and shares the information gained from visits.

### Outdoor/Adventurous Activities

The onus is laid on the organisers of the visit to assess the risks before and during the visit as an ongoing process. The "rule of thumb" for all outdoor and adventurous activities is "If an activity is being considered which involves real danger then a fully experienced and qualified leader must be in charge" The reciprocal is "If a fully experienced and qualified leader is not available then the proposed activity must be reduced to a non-dangerous level or should not take place"

Staff should be "suitably qualified". Since the Headmaster retains overall responsibility for all the arrangements on behalf of the governing body it is for the Headmaster to determine what qualifications are suitable for a

particular activity. Specific skill training might be important but a more likely requirement will be experience of managing groups in an outdoor or residential context.

Participant safety must never be compromised and if a suitably qualified leader cannot be found the activity should not take place. Other participating teachers will also need to be suitably qualified but the nature of this qualification will not necessarily be the same as that of the leader. One area of difficulty is when teachers are working with centre staff. The recommendation is that, in advance of the visit, schools should obtain in writing the occasions in which the centre's staff will hold responsibility. At all times the pupils must be aware of who is in charge. Information should both be given to and sought from parents. Parental consent forms are an integral part of the organisation of a visit. Parents are entitled to be informed of all the details and especially the emergency procedures. A parents briefing is strongly recommended.

### **Qualified Leaders**

Fyling Hall School advises that adventure activities should be categorised according to potential risk so that the school can identify activities for which special measures are required.

- 1 Category A: these are activities that present no special risks. Examples are walking in parks or non-remote country paths. The school follows its standard procedures for out-of-school visits.
- 2 Category B: these activities are particular risks. Examples include walking in open country and camping and for these activities, the leader should be designated as a competent person.
- 3 Category C: these include activities covered by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations (e.g. hill and moor land walking, climbing, and swimming in the sea or inland waters). For these activities the leader should have relevant experience, completed a recognised course of training and been assessed as competent to lead.

We highlight the importance of taking into account environmental factors such as weather conditions and terrain, in deciding in which category an activity should be placed.

### **Assessing Leaders**

Leaders of category A activities, no special skills required.

Leaders of category B activities should be assessed by a competent leader, usually a category C leader at least. Leaders of category C activities should have passed a course of assessment by the national governing body for the activity concerned.

In completing the risk assessment the following points should be taken into consideration (the list is **not** exhaustive):

- the activity/activities and how well these are matched to the group
- the venue
- the quality and suitability of any facilities and equipment
- travel arrangements
- the experience and qualifications of supervisory staff, including any centre staff
- staff/pupil ratio
- the group members age, competence, fitness and temperament as well as any special educational or medical needs
- seasonal and environmental conditions, including the weather
- communications
- that the activities to be undertaken are covered by the schools insurance or the school is indemnified by an outside supply of services.
- emergency procedures

This should not be seen as the end of the process, a continual dynamic assessment of risk should be carried out throughout the duration of the visit.

At Fyling Hall School routine visits are covered by generic risk assessments **but** it is still the responsibility of the visit organiser to familiarise themselves with the assessment concerned.

**Copies of written risk assessments should be given to all the teachers/volunteers concerned and copies should be made available to the HSO.**

The Headmaster along with the HSO take responsibility for:

- supporting individual leaders
- supporting the Headmaster (unless the Headmaster is the co-ordinator) and governors in their decision making roles
- organising induction and training for leaders, staff and adult helpers
- assessing the competence of leaders, staff and adult helpers
- organising emergency planning
- record keeping, monitoring and review
- liaising with the governing body

### **Communicating with Parents/Persons with Parental Responsibility**

Communication with parents will be clear, as full as required and interactive, so that questions can be asked and queries answered. Parents' consent to a visit should be based on a good understanding of the purposes, nature and programme for a visit. Parents should be kept informed of any off-site activity.

### **First Aid**

The provision of a first-aider does not prevent accidents, but it is an important part of the control measures that follow risk assessment. The School provides adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel at its locations to enable employees, pupils and visitors to be given first aid.

Decisions about the deployment of first aiders on visits are based on risk assessments, which consider:

- the hazards in any environment and the risks they present.
- any generic policies in place.
- the group and its specific needs (including special educational and medical)
- the leaders and activities to be undertaken
- the transport arrangements.
- the remoteness of any location and the ability to summon support.
- what first aid qualifications and experience are available at the visits providers locations/centres.
- the history of any incidents or accidents in similar contexts.

All parents, as part of the Admission process, have consented to the school acting in loco parentis in medical emergencies. However, it is good practice to seek this permission again for any residential visits.

### **Recording and Reporting Incidents and Accidents**

Accidents to children, leaders and volunteers will be recorded or reported in accordance with the established procedures. All accidents and emergencies will be recorded, no matter how minor. In the case of a serious injury, the parents and the Headmaster will be informed as soon as possible.

### **Tour Companies and External Providers**

Only licensed providers (e.g. Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority AALA) may be used. It is also advisable to obtain recommendations from other schools that have used the provider if the company is otherwise unknown to you.

### **Passports, Visas and EHIC**

Group leaders should make copies of all passports, visas and EHIC and retain a copy throughout the visit. A second copy should be lodged at school. For visits in Europe all pupils should have an EHIC (the successor to the E111).

### **Transport**

Transport arrangements are an essential part of school visits. The school's own minibuses and list of approved coach companies provide most of the local off-site road transport services. Where off-site visits and ventures involve long distance travel by road, it may be necessary for the group leader to contact other coach companies or other travel providers. Pupils are required to wear safety belts in all vehicles. It is the group leader and the staff's responsibility for ensuring that this requirement is enforced on all journeys. For travel by train and underground, particular care needs to be given to the risks of some pupils being separated from the rest of the group and this must be set out in the risk assessment. When travelling abroad, pupils need to be briefed on matters such as securing passports and visas, baggage security and airport security checks.

### **The Use of Private Cars**

Private cars may only be used to carry pupils if staff have sufficient cover on their insurance policies.

### **Accommodation**

Where overnight accommodation is involved, fire exits and emergency evacuation procedures should be checked by the group leader on arrival. The group should then be given a fire briefing/drill. Pupils should know where staff rooms are allocated and these should be in the vicinity of pupil accommodation. Group accommodation should be located in one area rather than scattered in different parts of a residential complex if at all possible. As far as is reasonably possible, ground floor accommodation should be avoided for female pupils. The group leader should also have a room list.

### **Safety and Emergency Procedures**

Visit organisers have an implicit 'duty of care' and must take prudent and reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of all those involved. Whilst a visit is in progress, the headmaster acts as the emergency school contact. Any major incident will immediately be related to him especially if injury is involved. The group leader will take full details of all pupils in addition to the contact number of the headmaster and the School Office on all residential visits. Each group leader will ensure that at the very least a mobile is taken and that the Headmaster has this number.

First Aid kits are mandatory on any visit and it is the responsibility of the group leader to organise this (there are first aid kits in the school minibuses). In the case of emergency medical treatment being required, the group leader will make direct contact with the parents. If this situation occurs abroad, then the group leader acts *in loco parentis* (as stated on the Medical Form), but parents are contacted as soon as is feasible. For EYFS visits, at least one member of staff has a Paediatric First Aid Certificate.

### **Overseas Visits**

Taking a group of pupils abroad can present further difficulties to those for visits solely in the United Kingdom. Extra consideration needs to be given to issues of supervision, how the pupils will communicate in the event of difficulties and the level of insurance cover required. Overseas visits should be fully discussed with the Headmaster before a commitment is given to run a visit.

### **Exchange Visits**

It is good practice to draw up a protocol with the host school in order to ensure that an agreed health and safety policy is adhered to by host families and that all families involved are aware of the content of the protocol.

**Visit Checklist**

24 hours before departure, the group leader should complete the pre-departure checklist and hand it to the HSO.

**Evaluation**

The group leader evaluates all visits and a short evaluation report is given to the Headmaster. Where additional costs have been incurred unexpectedly, a full financial report should be given to the Bursar upon return. You are also invited to share details of your visit and photographs via the website.

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