

## EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

At Farnborough Hill we value the role of educational visits and regard them as an important part of school life.

They benefit young people in many ways, including:

- being able to apply a different range of skills other than those used in the classroom
- enabling, supporting and complementing the work of the curriculum
- developing personal social and academic abilities and interests, which can be motivational and have lifelong relevance

This document covers both Residential and Non-Residential visits.

These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the DfES guidance on educational visits <http://www.hse.gov.uk/education/visits.htm>

Staff, pupils and parents all have responsibilities during the course of any visit/activity. These include:

### **The Governing Body**

Within its ultimate responsibility to provide leadership for Health and Safety matters at Farnborough Hill, the governing body delegates its day to day responsibilities for safety of educational visits to the Head, she in turn delegates the procedures to the member of the SLT responsible for educational visits.

### **The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)**

The EVC is responsible for ensuring the procedures for school visits are carried out in accordance with school policies and procedures. This person is currently Mr Forrest-Biggs who has:

- experience in leading and managing a range of educational visits similar to those typically run by the school
- the knowledge and experience to support colleagues in the formulation of Risk Assessments and the development of Risk Management procedures
- experience in organising the induction and training of group leaders, teacher and other adults taking part in educational visits

### **The Head/EVC must ensure that:**

- visits comply with the school's regulations and guidelines including the school's own health and safety policy
- the group leader is competent to monitor risks throughout the visit
- adequate safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place
- all necessary action has been completed before the visit takes place
- risk assessments have been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place
- training needs have been assessed by the teacher in charge and EVC and the needs of the staff and pupils have been considered
- the group leader has experience in supervising the age groups on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- the group leader has nominated a deputy group leader
- the group leader and other teachers are suitably competent to instruct the activity and have a knowledge of the location/centre where the activity will take place
- group leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly
- ratios of staff to pupils are appropriate (as explained in the Staff Handbook: Procedure for School Trips)

- parents have signed consent forms
- arrangements have been made for the medical and special educational needs or disabilities of the pupils with parents, Matron and the Learning Support Co-ordinator
- adequate first aid provision will be in place
- the mode of transport is appropriate and safety regulations are adhered to
- travel times are known in school
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- contact details ie the address, contact name and phone number of the venue are known
- school contacts have been nominated and the group leader has the details
- the group leader, helpers and nominated contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures (Emergency Plan), including risk assessments
- all risk assessments for overseas residential trips are approved by the Governor responsible for Health & Safety
- the group leader, other teachers and nominated school contact have the names of all the staff and pupils travelling in the group, and the contact details of parents and staff's next of kin
- if using 2 coaches there should be: 1) a designated member of staff in charge of each coach (preferably the Group Leader and Deputy Group Leader) and 2) each of the teachers in charge should have a list of the girls travelling on their coach. It is important that copies of these are lodged with the School Office
- all staff should carry an abridged copy of the Emergency Plan with them at all times
- there is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home (eg ClarionCall)
- the EVC is involved in the planning and management of educational visits by:
  - establishing suitable record-keeping practices for use during educational visits eg Risk Assessments, medical matters, accidents and significant management decisions (as in the Staff Handbook)
  - ensuring that the school's Behaviour Policy, including the code of conduct is applied consistently to all educational visits
  - monitoring and reviewing the school's programme of educational visits, establishing a clear picture of current practice and reporting on successes and targets for improvement, particularly risk assessments
  - taking the lead for any review of the school's policy for educational visits

## Pre-Visits

In order to undertake a full and comprehensive assessment of risks, it may be necessary to undertake a pre-visit. The person organising it must make an appointment with the Head / EVC to discuss cost, dates, etc. Even when the visit is made regularly, risks should be reassessed each time. When undertaking risk assessments consideration must be given to:

- the number of pupils involved
- the age and ability of the pupils
- the previous experience of the group undertaking off-site visits
- the time of day and time of year
- the itinerary including travel arrangements
- the nature of the accommodation (pupils' rooms must not be on the ground floor)
- the hazards of the environment being visited
- the number and experience of accompanying staff
- the nature of the activities
- the qualifications of support staff eg lifeguard and staff in charge of other activities eg skiing
- the special education or medical needs of the pupils, including provision for the disabled
- the quality and suitability of available equipment
- seasonal weather conditions
- emergency procedures
- how to cope when a pupil becomes unable or unwilling to carry on
- the need to monitor the risks throughout the visit

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

Staff on school visits act as employees of the school whether the visit is during normal school hours or outside the school day.

All staff should be aware of the expectations placed upon them and must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would in the same circumstances.

They should:

- follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline
- read all risk assessments and ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities
- inform the group leader if they are unsure of their ability to perform any supervisory function requested of them
- recognise their responsibilities and act within those at all times
- report any concerns to the group leader they may have regarding pupil behaviour and well-being during the visit

## **Responsibilities of Nominated Group Leader**

Group leaders have a common law duty of care towards the pupils in their charge. Group leaders must recognise their responsibilities to:

- obtain the Head's prior agreement before any off-site visit
- ensure the Bursar has approved pupils' participation before confirming their places on visit
- ensure the Accounts Office have confirmed the parents' payment schedule
- provide the Accounts Office with copies of the Provisional Residential Trip form and the introductory letter to parents
- provide the Accounts Office with all the necessary information for booking a coach eg itinerary including flight numbers, flight times etc
- follow the school's policy and procedures (as detailed in Staff Handbook)
- use a licenced travel company/provider (badges of quality include: Stf, AALA, ABTA, Council for Learning Outside the Classroom)
- appoint a deputy
- clearly define each member of staff's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age group
- be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity and have a knowledge of the location/centre where the activity takes place including remote supervision
- be aware of safeguarding and child protection issues
- ensure adequate first aid provision is in place
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents
- provide a Parents' Information Pack where necessary, including, for example, Medical Consent and Behaviour Code
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment
- ensure that accompanying staff are fully aware of what the proposed visit entails
- assess pupils' suitability to participate in the proposed visit
- ensure staff pupil ratio is appropriate for the group and the activity (see section on Supervision)
- consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of a pupil is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an emergency
- ensure all staff have details of the school contact
- ensure all staff have copies of the emergency procedure (abridged copy of Emergency Plan)
- ensure that all staff have details of the medical or special needs of the pupils, including requirements for the disabled. Always seek medical advice from the School Matron
- observe the guidance set out for teachers in the Staff Handbook

- ensure that the visit/activity provider has a current Health and Safety document/Safety Management System which satisfies the school's requirements
- regularly review visits/activities, including risk assessments, and report the findings to the EVC
- Appoint a member of staff to take photographs that document the trip and send these to the Director of Admissions (Clare Duffin) or the Data and Digital Communications Manager (Jo Wood) to be used for marketing purposes

## **Pupils**

The group leader must make it clear to pupils that they must:

- act in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy, including the code of conduct
- understand potential risks, act sensibly and not take unnecessary risks
- follow the instructions of the group leader and other staff/instructors including those at the venue
- dress (depends on activity, type of visit) and behave sensibly and responsibly
- look out for anything that might threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the group leader or staff about it
- remain in their group at all times

Any pupil whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit, or sent home (costs met by parents) once suitable arrangements have been made.

## **Supervision**

Staff/pupil ratios will normally be 1:20 plus 1. For a trip taking out a whole year group of 90-100 girls you will need 6 staff. For complex trips or residential trips, the ratio might need to be 1:15 or 1:10. The ratio should take into account:

- age and competence of pupils
- pupils with special educational or medical needs
- type of accommodation
- nature of activities
- experience of adults in off-site supervision
- duration and nature of the journey
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities
- requirements of the organisation/location to be visited
- first aid cover
- sex of accompanying adults

Where there is more than one teacher on the visit a group leader should be appointed who has the authority over the whole group. The Head/EVC must assess the suitability of accompanying staff at a very early stage of the planning. It should also be noted that for the protection of both adults and pupils all adults should ensure that they are not alone with a pupil whenever possible. All adults on a visit should clearly understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. It should always be clear that the teacher is responsible for the group at all times. Further details on staff/pupil ratios can be found in the Staff Handbook.

Whatever the length of the visit regular head counts should be taken of the pupils particularly before leaving any venue. All adults should carry a list of all the pupils and adults involved in the visit. The group leader should identify rendezvous points which will be manned constantly by members of staff and tell pupils what to do if they get separated from the group.

## **Preparing for remote supervision**

Parents should be told, before the visit whether any form of remote supervision will take place. During any time that remote supervision takes place the group leader must ensure that pupils are aware of the ground rules and are adequately equipped to be on their own in a group. The size of each group should also be considered. As a minimum, pupils should have the following:

- local telephone numbers and emergency contacts if lost
- teacher in charge's emergency mobile telephone number
- money
- use of credit card (if considered appropriate)
- maps and plans and any other information for them to act effectively (if necessary)
- a knowledge of how to summon help
- a knowledge of out of bounds areas or activities
- a knowledge of a rendezvous point and meeting times

It is important that pupils are told to stay in their groups (of at least four) and not to go off on their own. They are to be given clear instructions about permitted remote supervised activities and understand and accept the ground rules.

## **Parents**

Parents should be able to make an informed decision on whether their daughter should go on a visit.

The group leader should ensure that parents are given sufficient information in writing and invited, when appropriate, to any briefing sessions.

The group leader should inform parents about how they could help prepare their child for the visit.

Parents should also be asked to agree the arrangements for:

- sending a pupil home early and agree to meet the cost of any damage to hotel furniture or equipment caused by their daughter

Parents will need to:

- sign a consent form which includes agreeing to the payment schedule
- provide the group leader with emergency contact numbers
- attend the meeting arranged by the Group Leader prior to departure. If unable to attend details of the information covered at the meeting must be sent to the parents
- sign the confidential medical consent form
- agree to notifying the insurance company of their daughter's pre-existing medical conditions.
- agree to the group leader notifying the tour company of their daughter's pre-existing medical conditions

## **First Aid**

Where possible there should be a qualified first aider on every visit. Where this is not possible a person must be appointed to be in charge of the first aid arrangements. This person must meet with Matron to discuss the group's medical needs and, if necessary, meet with parents before departure. The appointed person takes charge when someone is injured or becomes ill, looks after the first aid equipment and ensures that an ambulance or other professional medical help is summoned. When the appointed person is not first aid trained they should not give first aid treatment for which they have not been trained. A suitably stocked first aid kit should be taken on every visit.

## **Insurance**

The school takes out an annual travel insurance policy to cover all educational visits. The policy does contain certain exclusions dependent on the activity involved and the EVC and Group Leader should be aware of all general exclusions. Relevant details of the insurance policy should be obtained from the Bursar and provided to all participants at an appropriate stage prior to the event taking place. If a pupil has a pre-existing medical condition that may affect her ability to fly, parents must obtain a "Fit to Fly" letter from her Doctor or Consultant. Policies provided by travel companies must be read carefully by the Group Leader and a copy must be sent to parents as soon as is practically possible. For residential trips, parents have the right to take out their own policy for their daughters, as long as it is made clear to them that they must provide the Group Leader with a copy of the Policy.

## **Emergency Procedures**

In an emergency the group leader or the deputy group leader will take control of the situation and follow the school's emergency plan procedure.

## **Transport**

It is the responsibility of the Bursar's office to book local, reputable coaches. For some residential trips travel companies arrange coaches for journeys at home and abroad. It is the responsibility of the Group Leader to check the tour company's safety management system with regard to coaches and check with the EVC/Bursar that all safety regulations have been met.

Consideration must be given to the following:

- passenger safety
- type of journey
- traffic conditions
- insurance cover
- weather
- luggage capacity
- journey time and distance
- stopping points on longer journeys
- supervision
- safeguarding and child protection requirements

## **Use of cars**

Staff must make an appointment to see the Deputy Head (Pastoral) prior to considering transporting pupils in this way as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. If permission is given staff must first of all meet with the Bursar so that he can check their licence, insurance policy and MOT certificate (if required) and then, if agreed, obtain a letter from parents giving their permission for their daughter to travel by car and then.

The following should be adhered to:

- the car must be roadworthy and have a current MOT certificate if applicable (checked by the Bursar)
- the driver has the appropriate licence and insurance to cover 'use for work' (checked by the Bursar)
- drivers ensure pupils wear seat belts

## **Use of Minibuses**

Procedures detailed in the Staff Handbook are to be followed. A copy of these procedures must be held in all minibuses.

## **Additional Requirements for Residential visits**

- Where pupils are accommodated on more than one floor there must, if at all possible, be staff accommodation on each floor.
- Where possible the group leader should obtain a floor plan of rooms reserved for the group's use in advance.
- When possible the immediate accommodation should be exclusively for the group's use.
- There should be appropriate and safe heating and ventilation.
- The whole group should be aware of the layout of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routines, and can identify key personnel.
- Where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors.
- Locks on doors should work in the group's rooms but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times.
- The group leader must know where to locate the master key in case of an emergency.
- There should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage, equipment.
- There should be provision for children with special needs (including disabled) and for those who fall sick.
- Balconies (balustrades) should be 1.1m high and stable (this is the minimum Building Regulations requirement), windows secure, electrical connections safe.
- Pupils should not be lodged in ground floor rooms that have an exit onto the street. If they are roomed on the ground floor, with no exit onto the street, a risk assessment must be carried out prior to the girls entering the room.
- Where possible there should be appropriate recreational activities for the group.
- There must be a nominated staff member on duty during the night, who is easily contactable.
- Pupils must know where staff rooms are located, in particular the member of staff responsible for first aid.
- Explanation of Fire Procedures must take place as soon as possible after arrival and a Fire Drill should take place.
- The group leader must ensure that the tour company has a current Health and Safety document which satisfies the school's requirements.

## **Records and Communications**

Records of a visit can provide a very useful and informative way of demonstrating the accountability of the school towards its pupils. Pre-visit risk assessments should be kept. After visit reports, including an evaluation of the risk assessment, should also be kept on file. Records of any accidents or incidents should also be kept on file.

Parents may exercise their right not to allow their children to take part in a visit. Under these circumstances the school must make alternative arrangements to ensure that any curriculum work being developed during the visit is made available to the pupil in school. If a parent does not allow her daughter to go on the visit she is expected to attend school for the day. It is the responsibility of the Head of Year to arrange for the pupils to join another year group. Communication with parents regarding school visits is included in the Staff Handbook. Parents can ask for funding for their daughters who are unable to participate in non-residential trips because of financial reasons. The Head will discuss such matters with the Group Leader.

Further guidance for day and residential trip leaders can be found in the Policy Procedure for Education Visits – Day Residential.

This policy is reviewed annually by the EVC.  
The next review is due in November 2018.