

## **C10. Procedure and Guidelines for Educational Visits**

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### **PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### INTRODUCTION

At Eaton Square School, we believe that learning outside the classroom is an essential component of our curriculum. It gives our pupils unique opportunities to develop their resourcefulness and initiative and to spend time together in an informal environment. We expect that every member of our staff endorses the educational value of activities outside the classroom. We encourage everyone possible to participate in them, and to help with the arrangements. We always welcome suggestions from staff for new trips.

Each trip is different. Some are directly related to the curriculum, some are designed to promote social awareness, or to enhance physical skills, self-reliance and team-working. Others will extend their knowledge of the world. The common factor is that they all make an essential contribution to the pupils' development and education in the broadest sense of the word.

#### OUR TRIPS AND VISITS

We regularly take pupils on day trips to: historic sites, museums, galleries, natural features, farms and Roman remains to support the curriculum in History, Art, Geography, English, Science, Latin and Languages. There are regular theatre trips for pupils. We also run annual residential Trips for Children from Year Two upwards, which are detailed in Staff Handbook Section E7: Annual School Trips.

#### INFORMATION ON PLANNED TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

The School calendar lists the trips and visits that are due to take place over the coming term, together with a list of planned home and away sports fixtures. Parents are notified in advance:

- If their child has been selected for a sports team
- If their child is going to be out of school for a day trip
- Of planned residential trips. Parents who opt for these trips are always invited into the School for a full briefing before their son or daughter departs on a trip or visit that involves an overnight stay, either in the UK or overseas.

## CONSENT

Parents give consent for School trips that occur during School hours through signing the registration form. Specific, individual written consent is requested for pupils taken on a trip or visit that extends beyond the normal school day, involves an overnight stay, collection from a different venue, an overseas visit or extra cost to the parents.

## **PART 2: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF INVOLVED WITH SCHOOL VISITS**

### ROLE OF THE EDUCATION VISITS COORDINATOR

The Bursar is our Education Visits Coordinator (EVC). The EVC supports the Headmistress in the process of approving visits, ensuring that they are spread through the different age groups, and the school year. The EVC organises transportation and ensures staff follow the guidelines for supervision and risk assessment. All new Heads of Years meet with the Deputy Head Academic to discuss planning trips and carrying out risk assessments.

### ROLE OF THE GROUP LEADER

Every trip or visit, no matter how short, must be planned in advance by the member of staff who is in charge of organising and running it. He or she will always have had experience of accompanying school visits before taking on the role of Group Leader. With the exception of library visits, all Group Leaders either hold a valid First Aid certificate themselves, or ensure that one of the other teachers accompanying the visit holds one. Heads of Year are responsible for booking day visits, liaising with the EVC for approval and for any necessary lunch or timetable changes. All visits and trips must be arranged a term in advance so that transport can be arranged. Heads of Year must complete a booking form (See Appendix C10a School Trip Details Form) and a copy to the EVC and a copy to each of their year group teachers. The EVC will arrange the transport. Please check Staff Handbook Section H9: Safety on School Outings for Health and Safety issues and risk assessment procedures. A pre-visit must take place and adequate risk assessment checks must be carried out, including obtaining a copy of the venue's own risk assessment.

### PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

The law places the Group Leader "in loco parentis". Eaton Square School has Employers' Liability Insurance and public liability insurance, as well as a group travel policy that covers most visits inside the UK and overseas. Cover includes cancellation or delay, medical expenses, replacement of passports, personal possessions and money. The policy covers most school visits, including skiing holidays. Any member of staff organising an adventurous or hazardous activity should check, via the Bursar, whether or not the activity is covered by the School's policy. An extension usually can be arranged. The Group Leader should ensure that s/he takes a copy of the School's travel insurance with him/her on all residential visits.

Eaton Square School's policy does not allow staff to transport pupils in their private cars, and does not allow them to be transported in cars belonging to parent helpers (unless the parents make a private arrangement that does not involve the School).

### **PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS**

The amount of advance preparatory work needed will obviously vary considerably with the type of activity. Repeat visits and shorter visits will need less planning, and can be arranged at shorter notice, though it is always desirable to give parents as much notice as possible when planning visits. (Group Leaders may draw upon the EVC's stock of existing background material when planning regular repeat visits to familiar destinations).

#### **Day Trips**

For day trips the following planning needs to be undertaken:

- The Head of Year is responsible for sending a letter to parents (detailing the location, date and time, the cost, the arrangements for lunch and the dress code), and providing post-trip write-up and photos for the Share. Full School Uniform or Sports kit is usually to be worn. All local day trip costs are included in the school fees.
- One parent helper per class is invited to attend a school trip. The Head of Year and class teachers are to clearly outline the roles and responsibilities that parents have on the school trip. Parents must not be left unsupervised with groups of children, unless they have been CRB checked by the School.
- The Head of Year will arrange coat labels with the school address that each child is to wear on their blazer pocket, with the School Secretary. Registers are to be kept in school and a list of children going on the trip is to be taken on the trip and a copy given to the Office upon leaving for the trip.
- Children must listen to the teacher and behave in an orderly fashion at all times. The children must be reminded that they are representing the School and act accordingly.

#### **Staff/Pupil Ratios**

The DCSF recommended staff to pupil ratios for visits (not inclusive of regular offsite activities) is:

| Class   | Ratio |
|---|-------|
| Greenhouse Nursery (2-3s)   | 1:2   |
| Beehive and Treehouse Nurseries (3-4)                               | 1:4   |
| Reception   | 1:4   |
| Years 1-3   | 1:6   |
| Years 4 – 6   | 1:6   |
| All visits abroad (only undertaken with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6) | 1:10  |

## **Residential Trips**

The list that follows is designed to cover all the planning that a Group leader needs to undertake for a residential visit. It is designed to be as comprehensive as possible.

### Preparation in Advance

- Obtain advice from the Deputy Head Academic and the EVC, on suitable dates, precedents etc
- Discuss preliminary plan, including purpose, location, transport, hotels, activities, itinerary, number & age of participants with EVC
- Calculate the staff/parent to pupil ratio (see above)
- Prepare a draft itinerary
- Decide mode of transport for all legs of the journey.
- Prepare fully inclusive costs for the visit, including an appropriate contingency for delays and emergencies. (The costs of the accompanying staff and parent helpers must be included).
- Check that the provider of adventurous activities is licensed and the individual instructors possess a recognised qualification from a national body, such as the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority.
- Obtain a clear statement from the Centre about their responsibilities for the safety of the pupils before making any commitment. Ask for copies of their risk assessments
- Prepare the risk assessment(s), (see below),
- Check the school's insurance cover, if the visit involves hazardous activities.
- Ensure the SLT find other members of staff who are willing to participate in the trip, bearing in mind the need to have both male and female teaching staff when both sexes participate in a visit, if appropriate.
- Carry out a reconnaissance visit if the location is not one that the school has visited before.
- Ascertain the medical and visa requirements
- Establish when the deposits are required by tour operators/airlines/activity centre etc, and ensure that the size of the deposit requested from parents is sufficient to cover these costs (including the costs of deposits for accompanying staff)

### After Permission is Granted

- Write a preliminary letter to send to parents and guardians of the target age group, outlining the purpose of the trip, the programme and the expected maximum cost. Ask for written consent where required together with a deposit by a specific date for overseas trips.

- Discuss with EVC concerns about special arrangements that may be required for handling any specific medical or SEN issues.
  - Finalise the costs with travel company etc.
  - Work out the cost for parents and request final payments.
  - Arrange for the Finance Department to pay the balance to the airline, hotel, travel company etc.
  - Brief and prepare the pupils and parents in advance.
  - Ensure that they are given plenty of advance notice if they need special equipment (e.g. for skiing).
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- Give the Finance Department details of requirements for foreign currency/travellers' cheques/pre-paid foreign currency card. Agree collection arrangements.
  - Write letter to parents to brief them on all aspects of the trip, including:
    - The itinerary, including the meeting and collection points.
    - The money, kit and equipment that the pupils need.
    - The medical and visa requirements.
    - Arrangements for handling illness and accidents, and arrangements for informing parents in such circumstances.
    - Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event that the return is delayed.
    - The need for a copy of each pupil's passport.
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- Check all tickets for accuracy. Store them in the school safe until collection
  - Meet with the other members of staff to discuss the itinerary, the risk assessment, the respective roles of the Group Leader and other accompanying staff, and emergency procedures.
  - Collect in passports
  - Prepare the master pack that contains the following information:
    - The itinerary (including address, phone numbers etc of all locations where the party is staying),
    - Mobile numbers of all participating staff,
    - A list of pupils, together with copies of their parental contact forms (which includes details of each pupils' medical conditions),
    - Copies of all passports and travel documents,
    - Emergency contact numbers for the Headmistress/Deputy Head/ Member of the SLT designated to be on-call,
    - A copy of the tickets, travel insurance document (including emergency contact details),
    - A copy of the risk assessment.

#### The Day Prior to Departure/The Day of Departure

- *Collect tickets and foreign currency from the safe.*

- *Give trip information packs to designated school recipients and to other staff participants*
- *Collect travelling first aid kit(s). Check contents.*

### **DURING DAY TRIPS OR RESIDENTIAL TRIPS**

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with Group Leader. He or she has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. He/she may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out a head count on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving a museum, restaurant, activity centre, hotel etc.
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts.
- Checking the fire exits and escape routes at each hotel. Ensuring that every pupil walks through the emergency escape route at each hotel.
- Ensuring that sleeping accommodation is suitable and located together (preferably not on the ground floor).
- Setting times for pupils to be in their rooms at night. Conducting checks (using the other staff).
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour.
- Storing cash, travellers' cheques and tickets in the hotel safe.
- Keeping an account of all expenditure.
- Recording all accidents and near misses.

### **The Risk Assessment**

All Group Leaders must complete a risk assessment, found in Section H9a of the Staff Handbook in advance of the trip and have it countersigned by a senior member of staff. The Group Leader must consider:

- Identifying the potential hazards of the place being visited.
- Listing the groups of people that are especially at risk from the significant hazards.
- Listing existing controls or notifying where the information may be found.
- Considering how he/she would cope with the hazards which are not currently identified or fully controlled.
- Carrying out continual monitoring of hazards throughout the visit and evaluating the risk assessment on return to School after the trip.

Professionally operated licensed activity centres and tour operators specialising in school visits will conduct their own risk assessments. The Group Leader should ask for copies at the planning stage. An additional risk assessment must be completed to ensure complete coverage of all aspects of the visit. Risk assessments carried out by the school for previous visits can generally be updated and re-used, unless there has

been a change of circumstances. At Eaton Square School, the EVC maintains a file of generic risk assessments that cover sports fixtures, theatre and museum visits and most of our regular visits.

### **HEAD COUNTS**

The Teacher in charge conducts, or arranges for another Teacher or Teaching Assistant to conduct a head count of the children:

- Before leaving school
- (If applicable) On sitting down in the coach
- On arrival at the destination
- At regular intervals while at the destination
- On leaving the destination
- On arrival back at the school, as the children exit the coach

Where we walk, the children walk in pairs, with one adult at the front, one in the middle and one at the back. Children are reminded about basic road safety and of the expected standards of behaviour. When we travel by coach, a member of staff will check that all the pupils are sitting properly and wearing their seat belts.

### **MISSING CHILD**

Our procedures are structured to ensure that this does not happen; but in the event that a child is missing – either from school, or on a visit, we follow the procedures set out in our Missing Child policy (Staff Handbook, Section F10).

### **ILLNESS OR MINOR ACCIDENTS**

If a Pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill, the Group leader, or another member of staff will take him/her to the local hospital or clinic. If the trip is outside the UK, s/he will notify the insurers on their helpline to arrange (where possible) for the medical bill to be sent directly to the insurance company for settlement. If the accident is more serious (such as a broken leg when skiing), the school's medical insurers may arrange for the pupil, accompanied by a member of staff to be repatriated to the UK. We expect the Group Leader to phone the pupil's parents if their child has suffered an accident or injury that is serious enough to require medical treatment – as opposed to minor cuts and bruises.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

In the event of a serious accident resulting in the death or injury of one or more of the pupils and staff, the Group Leader's first priority would be to summon the emergency services, and to arrange for medical attention for the injured. One of the accompanying members of staff should accompany the injured pupil(s) to hospital. Ensuring that the rest of the group were safe and looked after, and informing the Headmistress or on-call member of the SLT of what had happened would be the next tasks for the Group Leader, who would need to give as full, calm and factual account as the circumstances permitted. Where the full facts had not yet emerged, he or she should say so, and ensure

that follow-up communications with the Headmistress are maintained. He/she would also need to arrange (perhaps using another member of staff) for the school's insurers to be contacted as quickly as possible, together with the British Consulate, if the accident happened overseas. A full record should be kept of the incident, the injuries and of the actions taken.

At Eaton Square School, depending on the nature of the incident, we may implement our own model communications plan for informing as swiftly as possible both the families of the injured, and the families of those who are unhurt. We recognise that in an era of instant communications, it may not be possible for us to be the first to break the news. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that we have an important duty to speak personally to the parents of any pupil who has suffered some injury or mishap. We will use mass communication methods (email from ISAMS) for communicating with those whose children are not affected.

Where possible, communication with the media should be left to the Headmistress. The Group Leader should refer the media to the school. If comment is unavoidable, it should be factual, calm and no attempt made to cover gaps in knowledge. Pupils should be discouraged from talking to the media.

### **DELAYED RETURN**

If a visit is delayed, the Group Leader should send an email to parents to alert them to the delay and the revised time of arrival.

### **ON RETURN**

Each Group Leader is asked to provide the Deputy Head / Headmistress with a report on the visit, reports of accidents and near misses on his/her return. Personal observations and lessons learned are always valuable. The risk assessment evaluation should be completed.

### **EXPENDITURE**

The Group Leader is responsible for returning any unused cash to the Finance Department, together with receipts.

