



## **St. David's School**

### **Off-site Educational Visits (including recommended pupil ratios)**

Offsite visits are part of St. David's School curriculum where social skills are developed through problem solving, decision making, teamwork and residential experiences.

Environmental awareness contributes to particular objectives in the sciences and geography curriculum and project work based on off-site activities enhances the aesthetic and creative programmes of study.

Cultural visits contribute to knowledge and appreciation of world history, events and heritage.

**The School has a duty to ensure, so far as it reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare of staff and the health and safety of pupils and visitors on and off site whilst on school activities.**

Staff are not required to undertake activities out of their normal working time unless as part of their contract where they are involved in sporting fixtures and activities, but should they volunteer their services for out of school hours activities the School provides full insurance indemnity.

**The School is required to assess risks, introduce measures to control risks and to tell employees about the measures taken. The staff must take reasonable care of their own and other's health and safety, co-operate with the School, carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions and inform the School of any serious risks.**

**Staff have a common law duty to act with care as befits a trained and experienced professional. They are not in loco parentis as the care that they are expected to give is professional and not family context.**

As per the terms and conditions of their contract, staff are required to show a duty of care to be demonstrated to the pupils. Discipline, health and safety, maintaining good order and discipline among the pupils and safeguarding their health and safety both when they are authorized to be on the School premises and when they are engaged in authorized school activities elsewhere.

**For the purposes of this policy "the School" is the Headteacher and the Governing Body. The Headteacher will necessitate full compliance with any regulations and guidelines and will ensure that the activity/group leader is competent to undertake the activity.**

**The activity/group leader will have full responsibility for the safe running of the activity.**

Teachers, volunteers, pupils and parents all have responsibilities during the course of any off-site activity in which they are participating.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

**Five steps to risk assessment for off-site visits:**

- 1. Look for the hazards**
- 2. Decide who might be harmed and how**
- 3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done.**
- 4. Record your findings**
- 5. Review your assessment and revise it if necessary.**

**Risk Assessment for educational visits can be usefully considered as having three levels.**

- Generic activity risk assessments which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place.**
- Visit/site specific risk assessments which will differ from place to place and group to group.**
- Ongoing risk assessments that take account of, for example, illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activity.**

The latter category is crucial if new dangers emerge during the visit, changing circumstances can radically alter the safety of an activity and staff should always err on the side of caution.

## **PRE-VISITS**

In order to undertake a full and comprehensive assessment of risks it will be essential in most cases to undertake a pre-visit. Even where visits are made regularly, risks should be reassessed from time to time. When undertaking risk assessments staff should take a number of variables into account:

- 1. The number of pupils involved**
- 2. The age of the pupils, their sex, ability and general behaviour**
- 3. The previous experience of the group in undertaking off-site visits**
- 4. The time of the day and the time of the year**
- 5. The travel arrangements**
- 6. The hazards of the environment being visited**
- 7. The numbers, experience and quality of accompanying adults**
- 8. The nature of the activity**
- 9. Ratio of adults to pupils**

## **VOLUNTARY HELP**

**The use of voluntary help must be carefully considered and their legal responsibilities clearly understood.**

CRB checks would be carried out on volunteers who have regular contact with pupils whether on or off-site. For the purpose of off-site visits parent helpers would be used and no parent would be left in sole charge of a pupil or group without staff supervision.

- Staff make the decision as to which voluntary helpers accompany a visit and ensure their suitability.**
- Every volunteer accompanying the visit must know precisely what their role is and understand the responsibility that they have to ensure that they carry out their role.**
- Each helper must be acquainted with their charges in advance of the visit.**

- Volunteers must understand that they have a responsibility to follow the instructions of the group leader who will be a member of staff.

## **RECORDS AND COMMUNICATION**

### **Records:**

**When risk assessment is undertaken before a visit a record must be kept of outcomes. A similar report should be kept after the visit for future reference.**

### **Communication:**

Parents must always be made aware when their children are leaving the School premises. If a parent refuses to allow their child to take part in a visit the group leader must ensure that the curriculum work that was being developed during the visit is made available to that pupil in another format.

## **MODES OF COMMUNICATION**

1. Letters with reference to using transport  
Staff must state in a letter the means of proposed transport for the visit and if using private transport the insurance for transportation must be checked.
2. Information about visits during school time  
Staff must in a letter inform the parents of detailed times of the visit, the address, and full details of the itinerary.
3. Parents will be asked to contribute towards the cost of an off-site educational visit and where there is a shortfall the School will subsidise it.  
In the case of a non-educational visit the costs will be calculated against:
  - Transport
  - Board and lodging
  - Admission costs
  - Costs of appropriate non-teaching staff
  - Incidental costs of staff
  - Materials and equipment required for the visit
  - Insurance costs for the visit
4. Where a trip is outside school hours parents will be given full details of this, the school insurance company will be informed and a contact telephone number provided.
5. When organising a trip the team leader must have details of any medical requirements of any pupil. Parents must ensure that the team leader had all necessary details, medicines and emergency contact number of the parent.
6. The group leader must take a list of all the parent contact numbers if on a trip out of school hours.
7. Where the trip is within the school day the group leader must contact the School should there be any problem, delay or emergency. The School Office staff will liaise between group leader and parents.
8. The group leader should have a meeting with any other staff/helpers before the trip and provide any necessary written information and details.
9. Parents will be required to sign a consent form for any organised trip which grants permission for the child to participate and also for the group leader to act professionally in ensuring the wellbeing of the child in any emergency.

## **FIRST AID**

A first aid box will always accompany any group off-site and level one of first aid provision would be applied. A qualified first aider must accompany any trip which involves outdoor activities. The school minibus is also equipped with a first aid kit.

Should a child's requirements be more than level one, then emergency services must be called. Should a child require such a service an adult must accompany them and the parent must be contacted by either the group leader (out of school hours trip) or the School Office.

## **SUPERVISION**

**The following factors must be considered by the group leader and the Headteacher when organizing and authorizing a visit.**

- **The age and ability of the group**
- **The special educational and medical needs of the pupils**
- **The type of activity being undertaken**
- **The experience and competence of all the adults accompanying the activity**
- **The duration of the visit**
- **The type of accommodation if it is a residential activity**
- **The competence and behaviour of the group**
- **The first aid cover available**

The level of supervision will always depend on the type of visit, the age of the pupils, the profile of the group and other variables such as the weather, the time of day and the activity/Adult/pupil ratios as a minimum will be set according to national guidance.

These will be dependent on the activities and the level of supervision required.

The group leader is responsible for organizing any coach, any extra insurances and passports etc. Practical consideration must be given by all staff on such an organized trip to headcounts, buddy systems, arranging of groups, night time (if applicable) leisure time, and travel issues.

## **INSURANCE**

**Staff must be aware that within school hours the insurance arrangements for the school will prevail. However, if conducted out of school hours there may be a requirement for additional insurance. Where this is a factor and when children are involved in overnight stays and outdoor pursuits, the Headteacher must advise the School insurance company and on their recommendation take appropriate cover.**

The acquisition of the following types of insurance might be required:

- Public liability
- Employers liability
- Personal accident cover for all adults including teachers
- Medical treatment costs
- Specialised activity risks
- Evacuation for medical reasons when abroad
- Loss or damage of hired equipment
- Emergency costs including accommodation and transport
- Compensation against cancellation, delay, loss of luggage, money
- Legal assistance in recovery of claims
- Failure or bankruptcy of an agent or travel company
- Travel abroad

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

These are included in the **School Disaster Policy**

## **DISCIPLINE**

**The responsibility of staff towards the pupils (duty of care) is no way diminished because of the activity or visit being off school premises.** Increased risks are likely to be encountered because the children are on unfamiliar ground and the opportunity for inappropriate behaviour is also increased.

The challenge aspect of an off-site visit is a valuable part of the pupils' development. In an adventurous visit such as abseiling, sailing and climbing, the challenge will be focused and planned. **Instruction will be provided by a trained instructor with school staff present in an overall supervisory role. The element of risk is assessed, pre-planned, and managed by school staff.**

There is no need for the children to experience any other risks in their travels, leisure time or waiting time on a trip. **Therefore the standards of discipline and authority exerted by the school staff must be effective, absolute and continuous.**

**It is the team leader's responsibility to ensure that this happens.**

## **PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL/SPECIAL MEDICAL NEEDS**

If a pupil requiring specific medical needs is to participate in an off-site activity the school must ensure that any protocol established between the School and the parents extends to the differing circumstances of the activity.

Should the School be undertaking a residential visit parents must be asked to give their authorization to the group leader to act for their child should the need arise for emergency treatment during the visit (as previously stated in this policy).

## **CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR AND DISABILITIES**

A full risk assessment should be carried out case by case in order to ascertain the appropriate strategies. Adjustments must be made and seen to be effective. The off-site trip should be seen as no different in principle from the on-site context where challenging behaviour would be managed.

## **LICENSED ACTIVITIES**

The activities that require a licence that the School participates in are the following:

- Watersports
- Abseiling and rope climbing

Any activity centre that is used must always be asked to provide evidence of their licence. The group leader retains the overall responsibility for the pupils throughout the visit even though they are being instructed by the licensee.

## **VISITS ORGANISED BY A THIRD PARTY**

The Headteacher and the group leader must ensure that the accreditation or verification of providers has been checked.

The Headteacher and the group leader must check that contractors have adequate emergency support procedures and that these will link to the School emergency procedures.

## **TRANSPORT**

Hired transport.

Only reputable companies must be used. Staff wishing to use hired transport must book this through the School's Service Manager.

The group leader is responsible for supervising the pupils on any hired transport and ensuring that seatbelts are worn.

### **School Minibus**

The driver of the school minibus must ensure that the vehicle has been checked by the Service Manager before use and by the driver before taking pupils in the vehicle. Seatbelts must be worn and a second adult accompanying the driver.

### **Public Transport**

Supervision of the pupils must be ensured. The adult/pupil ratio must be increased dependent on age of the children involved. This must be discussed with the Headteacher and authorised accordingly.

### **Private use of cars**

The group leader must be confident that vehicles and drivers are legal. The following details must be current:

- Valid driving Licence
- Vehicle road fund licence and MOT certificate
- Vehicle insurance valid for carrying passengers on a school off-site visit

Volunteer drivers should be asked to sign a declaration indicating that these requirements are in place. Where staff volunteer their vehicle they must ensure that they have additional cover for transporting pupils in the line of their work.

The School will not reimburse parents or staff for the use of their vehicle as this will invalidate the insurance unless they are a registered taxi.

Parents must always be informed when it is intended to use private transport to convey their children.

## **OFF-SITE PRE-VISIT RISK ASSESSMENT**

### **TRANSPORT**

IDENTIFY ANY RISKS REGARDING THE USE OF TRANSPORT FROM SCHOOL TO LOCATION

ORGANISATION OF HELPERS:

TYPE OF TRANSPORT: CAR, MINIBUS, COACH, PUBLIC TRANSPORT

IDENTIFY ANY HAZARD RISKS EN-ROUTE

DECIDE WHO MIGHT BE HARMED AND HOW

AT THE SITE

EVALUATE THE RISKS AND DECIDE WHETHER PRECAUTIONS ARE ADEQUATE OR WHETHER MORE SHOULD BE DONE.

LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS (WHERE APPLICABLE)

TOILETS:

RETURN TRIP

ANY DIFFERENT FROM OUTWARD JOURNEY

REVIEW YOUR ASSESSMENT AND REVISE IF NECESSARY

NOTES AND COMMENTS AFTER THE VISIT

## **SCHOOL TRIPS RISK ASSESSMENT AND POLICY**

### **ALL STAFF WISHING TO RUN A TRIP SHOULD FOLLOW THE FOLLOWING STAGES:**

1. Fill in a proposed trip form available from the office and detailing:
2. The individual or group of pupils who are to go on the trip
3. The staff who are to accompany the trip
4. The purpose of the trip
5. The date of the trip
6. The timings
7. The transport details
8. The cost to pupils and the overall costs
9. The emergency contact for the trip who must be a member of staff
10. Whether there are any activities which may put the children at risk
11. First aid cover details
12. Return the form to the office for approval by the Headteacher at least two weeks before the proposed trip.
13. Ensure that a copy of the form goes to the Services Manager and the Deputy Headteacher for booking of transport and cover of staff timetabling.

Send a copy of the letter which you propose to send to parents to the Headteacher once approval for the trip has been given and before it goes out to parents.

Inform the Head at least one week prior to the date of the trip the details proposed list of both pupils and adults going on the trip and give permission slips from parents into the office.

It is important that accompanying adults know which children have medical problems and that their medication is taken with them.

Ensure that lesson notes are left for staff covering lessons of all those staff on the trip.

Inform any other staff affected by children's absence e.g. tennis coaching, music tuition

- Ensure that an appropriate first aid kit is taken on the trip
- Ensure that a travel sickness kit is taken
- Ensure that any staff or parents' cars carry yellow child carrying signs
- Ensure that the kitchen are aware of any changes to lunch numbers or if any catering arrangements are necessary. Take black rubbish bins for rubbish.

If any external staff are taking activities make sure that they have British recognised qualifications to run them.

Details of any medication must be given in writing by parents. If required issue loco parentis forms regarding waspeze, Piriton and Paracetamol. The medications should be labeled with child's name and given to the Trip Organiser.

Complete the checklist on the reverse of the booking trip form in order to ensure all contingencies are covered.

Inform the Headteacher should there have been any problems on the trip.

SEE PROPOSED TRIP FORM and LOCO PARENTIS FORM

## WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF MAJOR ACCIDENT

**If at any time you question the competence of any staff who are involved in a trip such as drivers, instructors for activities or the safety of equipment used, do not partake of the activities or use the transport, insist that alternatives be provided**

### **1. If the accident has happened on school premises**

- a) Call the emergency services straight away. One member of staff should remain with child and accompany to hospital.
- b) The School Office must contact the parents.
- c) The children should be kept calm and information given on the "official" version of the accident.
- d) The person accompanying the child should remain with the child until parents arrive.
- e) The accident should be reported to the Department of Health and the relevant form completed.
- g) Notify Chair of Governors.
- h) Notify solicitors.
- i) Handle media as necessary.
- j) Letter or information given to other parents

[See PROPOSED TRIP FORM AND LOCO PARENTIS FORM]

### **2. If the accident has happened off school premises**

If an accident has happened to a pupil

- a) Inform the emergency services straight away and one member of staff should accompany the child to hospital.
- b) If the school is in session contact the School and explain what has happened. The School will then be responsible for contacting parents.
- c) Discourage the children on the trip from contacting parents until the school has contacted them first with the "official" version of what has happened.
- d) If the school is not in session contact the Headteacher, Deputy, Services Manager or Secretary who will then take over the School's role. If you are unable to contact them then you will have to contact the parents yourself.
- e) If it proves necessary, the person with the child in hospital should remain with the child until the parents are able to get there and the remainder of the pupils and staff return to school or continue with the trip as scheduled if it is longer than a day trip.

If an accident has happened to a member of staff

- a) Contact the School of the Headteacher, Deputy, Services Manager or Secretary and explain what has happened.
- b) The School or emergency contact will contact the member of staff's next of kin and inform them what has happened. If you are unable to contact either the School or the emergency contacts then contact the next of kin yourself.
- c) Continue with the trip if appropriate.

**3. Trips abroad**

There is one trip abroad for Year 6 each year

## **PUPIL RATIOS GUIDANCE**

The following are all recommended minimum ratios, which reflect best practice. Ultimately, ratios should be determined by a sound risk assessment; in practice this means that occasionally there will be special circumstances where it is necessary to adopt different ratios from those outlined below. As stated elsewhere in the guidelines, the quality and nature of supervision, which must be planned and active, is more important than merely having the correct supervisory ratio.

### **Pre-school children**

Children under the age of five participating in a visit or journey require very close supervision. There should be at least 1 adult for every 2 children, so that every child can have their hand held. Where there are no significant dangers a ratio of 1:4 **might** be acceptable.

### **Years 1 to 3**

There should be 1 adult for every 6 young people, with a minimum of 2 adults. A female member of staff must always be present.

### **Year 4 to 6**

There should be 1 adult for every 6 people, with a minimum of 2 adults. A female member of staff should always be present. On residential and foreign visits, this ratio is reduced to 1 adult for every 6/8 young people.

## **SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR VISITS**

### **Good supervisory practice**

Good supervision is a pro-active task with a philosophy of 'prevention rather than cure'. Good supervisors are constantly assessing and reacting to the circumstances at hand, as they are never the same for long. It is also important to recognise that 'safe supervision' depends on good supervisors and is not simply a product of correct ratios and procedures. Generally, supervision is most effective when:

- The aims and objectives of the visit are clearly understood by all supervisors and young people
- The visit and activities have been carefully risk-assessed and control measures put in place
- Supervisors and young people have contributed to the overall plan
- Supervisors have a reasonable knowledge of the young people, including any special educational needs, medical needs or disabilities.

### **The party leader**

It is good practice for the party leader to:

- Delegate supervisory roles to other adults in the group
- Allocate supervisory responsibility to each adult for named young people
- Ensure that each young person knows which adult is responsible for him or her
- Ensure that each adult is responsible for the party leader for the young people under their supervision
- Ensure that all adults and young people are aware of the expected standards of behavior

## **Supervisors**

It is good practice for each supervisor to:

- Know the young people and to have prior knowledge of any special or medical needs or disabilities
- Carry a complete group register
- Make regular headcounts
- Have a means of contact with other supervisors
- Have prior knowledge of the venue
- Continually monitor the appropriateness of the activity
- Ensure the young people maintain the agreed standards of behavior
- Clearly understand the emergency procedures and be able to carry them out
- Have appropriate access to first aid
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision
- Competence and qualifications of staff, both general and on specific activities
- Type of accommodation
- Duration and nature of journey
- First Aid cover

Policy written by C Mardell July 2011  
Policy to be reviewed: July 2012