

BABLAKE SCHOOL



SCHOOL VISITS POLICY

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1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- (a) The school recognises the importance of school visits for the educational, social and moral development of pupils.
- (b) The careful preparation and supervision of school visits is essential in order to ensure the safety and enjoyment of pupils as far as is reasonably possible.
- (c) All school visits must have the written approval of the Headmaster.
- (d) An administration file should be opened and kept containing all the relevant paperwork for each trip.
- (e) Each visit should have a designated leader, who is considered by the Trips Committee to be sufficiently competent and experienced to fulfil this role.
- (f) Where an activity centre or similar agency is engaged by the school, the distinction between the responsibility of the teacher and the staff of the agency needs to be clearly defined in writing.
- (g) The involvement of any non-contracted adult must have the written approval of the Headmaster; such persons must have undergone a CRB check.
- (h) The school recommends the following minimum staff/pupil ratios for visits:

For pupils in School Years 4-6, a minimum ratio of 1:15 is recommended.

For pupils aged 11 and above i.e. Shells upwards,

- abroad - 1:10 (minimum of two adults)
- domestic day within walking distance - 1:20 (minimum of two adults)
- domestic day visit - 1:15 (minimum of two adults)
- domestic residential - 1:15 (minimum of two adults)

Where a high risk activity is being undertaken a higher staff/pupil ratio may be required. Where a mixed visit is being undertaken, both male and female teachers must accompany the visit.

- (i) Written parental consent must be obtained prior to any pupil going on a school visit; communication with parents must be extensive and as frequent as is reasonably necessary.

- (j) Up to date medical information should be obtained on all pupils, especially when on a residential visit and taken on the visit.
- (k) The Headmaster reserves the right to exclude any pupil from participating in a trip or expedition.
- (l) The school notes the extra commitment required of staff to undertake residential visits in particular. Some part of, or whole visits may be undertaken in term time.

In all matters the school expects members of staff to carry out their responsibilities in a manner which is fair and reasonable.

Reference may be made to the booklet Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits, published by the DfEE in November 1998, and revised in 2002.

Pupils with a medical record which gives cause for concern should be taken on a visit only after consultation with the Trips Committee and with the written advice of the School Nurse or other medical professional.

Formal written Risk Assessments should be undertaken for all aspects of a visit, including travel arrangements. The EVC must be consulted.

2 POLICY GUIDELINES

Supervision

- i. Every trip must have a clearly designated leader who must be a teacher employed at the school or schools if a joint trip is arranged. The Leader is considered by the Headmaster to be sufficiently competent and experienced to fulfil this role. The Leader will be competent to undertake ongoing informal risk assessments to cover events such as illness of staff; inability of pupil to participate, change of weather or venue. Where there is a large party a deputy leader must be designated. A large party would be one where over 30 pupils are involved.
- ii. The level of adult supervision must realistically reflect the purpose and nature of the trip, the age and maturity of the pupils, the experience of the accompanying adults, and any special needs. In all matters the school expects members of staff or non-staff volunteers to carry out their responsibilities in a manner which is fair and reasonable.
- iii. Adults of the appropriate gender must accompany all school visits, i.e. male members of staff must accompany visits where boys and girls are involved and female members of staff must accompany visits where girls are involved.
- iv. Group leaders must explain clearly, and preferably in writing, the responsibilities of staff and adult supervisors on each visit; a briefing meeting is considered best practice.
- v. Pupils must know where they can contact an adult member of the party at all times.

- vi. All staff must carry a list of all pupils on the visit; checks and roll calls should be frequent and a roll must always be called when pupils re-join any transport before departure.
- vii. According to context, pupils should not wander around on their own unsupervised, but in groups of at least two or three; where appropriate, maps of the area should be distributed.
- viii. Non contracted adults can only accompany visits if the written permission of the Headmaster has been obtained and CRB disclosure obtained.
- ix. To identify members of a group on a residential visit, each pupil must be given written details showing the name, address and telephone number of the group's accommodation as well as the name of the school and group leader.
- x. Fire procedures at residential sites should be checked, as far as is possible, prior to the visit being undertaken. In any event, a fire evacuation procedure involving all pupils should be carried out as soon as practically possible after arrival.
- xi. All staff on a school visit owe a duty of care to act in the manner of a prudent parent in exercising supervisory responsibilities for the pupils; in certain circumstances a teacher on a visit can be expected to exercise a duty of care greater than that of a prudent parent. The golden rule is at all times: safety first.
- xii. Where outdoor activities such as field work are to be undertaken in which there is to be close supervision of groups, groups including girls must be accompanied by a female member of staff.
- xiii. On residential visits, staff do not share bedrooms with pupils; nor are pupils of different gender permitted to share bedrooms.

Expertise in Activities

- i. Accompanying adults must have a reasonable knowledge, experience and skills (and in hazardous activities, qualifications) in the activities undertaken.
- ii. Leaders must be satisfied that pupils are medically fit to undertake the planned activities. If there is any doubt, reference should be made to the School Nurse.
- iii. Detailed guidance on particular activities is given in:
 - ◆ Safety in Outdoor Pursuits (DFEE Safety Series No 1)
 - ◆ Safety in Physical Education (DFEE Safety Series No 4)
 - ◆ Safe Practice in Physical Education (BAALPE Publication)
- iv. Where staff have specific qualifications it is their responsibility to make sure that these are up to date and valid; CRS (Deputy Head) will enable staff to attend such courses as INSET.
- v. If a member of staff has any reason to doubt the competence or conduct of any adult on a visit, this should be made known to the leader at once with fully

documented evidence (e.g. witnesses). It is the leader's responsibility to deal with the matter at once, if necessary contacting Senior Management at school. All discussions should be accurately minuted.

- vi Where an external agency is being used, such as a travel company, staff must establish in advance the competence of the agency's staff. Doing so may include an inspection of the agency/centre's documentation on staff and risk assessment, equipment and its accident log. Where an activity centre or external agency is engaged by the school, the distinction between the responsibilities of the school and the staff of the agency needs to be clearly defined in writing.
- vii Before undertaking such a trip, those leading it must ensure that its aims and objectives are clear and that the pupils will derive benefit from it.
- viii All supervisors must undertake risk assessment(s) for the activities planned. Training for all staff in risk assessment is available on application to the EVC Mr John Robson.
- ix Staff are advised to refer to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents website at www.rosipa.co.uk for up to date information.

Knowledge of Area and Activities

- i Group leaders should be familiar with the nature of the conditions likely to be encountered.
- ii Prior information must be obtained about local hazards and safety requirements that are likely to be encountered. Where appropriate, contact should be made in advance with local agencies, wardens, et al, in order to ascertain local conditions.
- iii Informed and responsible local advice must always be heeded and acted on accordingly.
- iv Pupils and adults must be suitably clothed and equipped for particular activities and the conditions likely to be encountered.
- v A preliminary reconnaissance visit by the leader is essential in order to evaluate the site(s) from an educational and safety viewpoint; where this is impractical, staff must be able to demonstrate that sufficient preparation has been undertaken (e.g. use of a reputable travel agent's package).
- vi Appropriate risk assessments need to be made, if necessary, the travel agent should provide these.
- vii An appropriate foreign language phrase book should be taken where necessary. RoSPA recommends that at least one member of staff should be fluent in the local language and that all members of staff should have some knowledge of it.
- viii Where foreign language exchange visits are undertaken, the school should raise the issue of child protection with the host school in writing; it is the

responsibility of the host school to undertake the necessary precautions when acting as the agent for foreign pupils on exchange. When Bablake acts as a host school a check of hosts by the School will be required.

- ix Pupils on an exchange visit must have a telephone number and address of the leader(s) whilst in the foreign country; regular contact should be maintained with the pupil by the leaders throughout the visit.

Insurance Arrangements

- i. A statement on insurance cover should be prepared in consultation with the Treasurer's office where appropriate, i.e. on residential visits.
- ii. Parents must be made aware of any insurance cover that has been arranged. Copies of travel insurance arranged through the Treasurer's office must be sent to parents.
- iii. On non-residential visits no special insurance should be necessary: if in any doubt, check with the Treasurer.
- iv. The school has insurance which covers staff and pupils for visits; in addition, non-contracted adults are also covered on a separate policy. Copies of the policies are available from the Treasurer's office.
- v. The insurance of staff and non-contracted adults in addition to the above is the responsibility of the individuals themselves.

Transport

- i. The school will ensure that the tour operator or hirer or transport providers such as coach companies are reputable.
- ii. The School will check that there are sufficient adults on the trip to supervise the pupils and maintain good discipline – in this regard the school acknowledges that a staff or non-staff driver of a minibus cannot also be expected to supervise the pupils;
- iii. The School will ensure that any staff or non-staff drivers have the appropriate qualifications and, if necessary, insurances for driving that vehicle.
- iv. The School will consider whether there are any safety concerns arising from the mode of transport and plan in advance how to deal, for example pupils travelling on a ferry or a train.
- v. The School will ensure that a first aid kit is available is at all times which will include sickness tablets.

Procedure for a school visit

- i. The teacher wishing to undertake a school trip will complete an application form (available from the EVC) outlining the educational or social benefits likely to be gained from the trip together with provisional practical details. This plan will be provided to the Headmaster and the EVC who, if satisfied the trip is appropriate, will approve the trip in writing.
- ii. An administration file should be opened and kept containing all the relevant paperwork.
- iii. Parents will be informed of the proposed trip and, if it is deemed necessary, will be invited to attend a meeting(s) at the school to discuss the trip including insurance cover.
- iv. The parents' written consent will be obtained. Any child whose parents refuse to give their full unequivocal consent to the trip will not be allowed to participate.
 - a) draft copies of letters to parents must be sent to the Headmaster or Deputy Heads for their approval and/or amendment;
 - b) consent slips should be included at the bottom of the letter (no signed consent form, no visit for that pupil);
 - c) Group Leaders, Form Tutors or set teachers must ensure that all the forms are collected;
 - d) parents must be informed of any special requirements in terms of equipment, clothing, time of return, addresses and telephone numbers of hotels/youth hostels, passports etc. in advance of the visit (this is very important, especially on residential visits);
 - e) full itineraries must be given to parents in advance of residential visits;
 - f) a medical form (available from the EVC) must be sent to parents and returned to the leader when residential visits are undertaken in order to ensure that up to date information is available on the visit;
 - g) visits to countries within the European Union will require each pupil and member of staff to have to have a valid EHIC; these are only available to E.U. citizens.
 - h) pupils and members of staff travelling abroad must be in possession of individual passports, either UK passports or other passports plus appropriate visa(s); group passports should not be used.
 - i) it is advisable that a meeting for the parents of those pupils going on residential visits should be held in order to explain the itinerary, ground rules of the visit and to answer questions from parents (field trips at the discretion of the Head of Department).
 - j) staff should be readily available to speak to parents.
- v. The Headmaster will ask that formal written risk assessments for all aspects of the visit, including travel arrangements are undertaken. These risk assessments will be:

- ◆ Generic activity risk assessments that is assessments of risk likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place;
 - ◆ Visit/site specific risk assessments which are likely to differ from place to place and group to group;
 - ◆ If necessary a pre-visit will need to be arranged especially when neither the school nor the Leader has visited that location before.
- vi. Charges for the visit should be clear and adhered to fully; any surplus must be reimbursed to the parents concerned.
 - vii. Liaison with the Treasurer's office is essential; pupils involved, date(s), destination and cheques for the payment of fees should be clearly set out on paper; amendments to the list must be notified in writing.
 - viii. The School Nurse should be contacted and asked to provide a list of known special medical requirements concerning pupils on the visit. Up to date medical information should be obtained on all pupils, especially when on a residential visit. Pupils with a medical record which gives cause for concern should be taken on a visit only after consultation with the Headmaster and with the written advice of the School Nurse or other medical professional. Information should be given to supervising staff on the trip.
 - ix. Emergency telephone numbers should be listed and kept in the file; these must be taken on the trip.
 - x. Coaches/minibuses should be booked using only reputable firms via the Treasurer; all vehicles must be fitted with seat belts, fire extinguishers and other appropriate safety equipment. Those driving minibuses are bound by the school's codes of practice.
 - xi. A list of pupils going on a visit along with the destination and estimated time of return must be given to the School Office at least one week in advance of the visit; any last minute alterations should be notified on the day (when picking up the mobile telephone).
 - xii. A list of pupils going on the visit should be pinned to the notice board in the Common Room at least seven days in advance of the visit.
 - xiii. The Group Leader will ensure that the following actions are completed on or before the date of departure of the trip :
 - ◆ Lists carried by all staff on the visit must be checked on the day of departure and amended for absentees if appropriate.
 - ◆ Senior management must be notified of any pupils who are not intending to go on a visit which is compulsory as far in advance as possible.
 - ◆ Leaders must have a sufficient 'float' of money to cover unforeseen expenditure on visits (foreign currency can be ordered from the Treasurer's Office).
 - ◆ A point of contact must be established at the school in order to transmit information to parents in certain circumstances (e.g. late returns); on residential visits a contact must be designated and his/her telephone number given to parents in advance of the visit.

- ◆ A record of passport numbers and the telephone number of the Liverpool Passport Office should be taken on all foreign visits. Passports should be held by the group leader.
 - ◆ Leaders should ensure that a First Aid kit is taken on every school outing. These are available from the School Nurse.
 - ◆ The school mobile phone number is given to all pupils on the trip. Taking a mobile telephone on school visits is considered good practice and these can be booked from the EVC.
- xiv. At the conclusion of the trip the Group Leader will ensure that a full report of the trip including a record of any accidents or near incidents is completed and provided to the Headmaster and the EVC together with any recommendations for amendments to procedure.

Charging

- i. This section should be read in conjunction with the School's *Charging Policy*.
- ii. Where the visit is deemed by the Department concerned to be essential to fulfil the requirements of the School's prescribed syllabus, the cost should be borne by the Department. Heads of Department will need to include an appropriate provision when submitting their annual budget.
- iii. Where the visit is not deemed essential to the teaching of the curriculum, it is as Optional Extra as defined in the School's *Charging Policy*. As such, the full cost can be passed onto parents provided that they have given their consent.
- iv. Transport, tuition and/or accommodation costs incurred due to unexpected achievement or necessarily late notification should be brought by the relevant Head of Department to the attention of the Headmaster.
- v. The cost of staff places on residential visits should be included in the overall total and apportioned to pupils or borne by the department.
- vi. Field Trips: residential field study courses are deemed to optional extras as defined by the School's *Charging Policy*.
- vii. Where an expedition is deemed to be an optional extra, the Headmaster reserves the right to exclude any pupil from participation. It is the School's policy not to allow parents in arrears with the payment of tuition fees to incur additional expense. Checks should be made with the Treasurer's Office at the earliest convenience in order to avoid embarrassment.

Emergency Procedures during the Visit

- i. Group Leaders and adults must make sure that pupils are fully briefed about the local conditions which they are likely to face; pupils must also be told what to do if they encounter any difficulty or emergency; pupils must know where to find either the leader or an adult.

- ii. All adults on a visit should have a list of pupils and their parents' emergency contact numbers.
- iii. Parents must be informed at the earliest opportunity if an emergency occurs.
- iv. In the event of an accident or illness, parents must be informed as quickly as possible. If any pupil sustains an injury, an Accident Report must be made and eyewitness accounts recorded; these must be submitted to the Health and Safety Officer.
- v. Leaders must have contingency plans for eventualities which may happen on a visit (e.g. care and/or return of ill/injured pupils, early return for disciplinary reasons); as far as is possible, parents should be informed of these plans in advance of the visit.

Discipline and Sanctions

- i. At all times the Headmaster reserves the right to exclude any pupil from participating in a trip or expedition or any part of the trip. This authority is delegated to the Group Leader who is authorised to forbid the pupil from participating at any time during the trip if it becomes clear that the pupils i.e. either incapable of or insufficiently responsible to undertake all or any part of the trip or activities.
- ii. Normal School Rules will apply on all school visits; they are to be vigorously enforced and breaches dealt with appropriately at the time.
- iii. On residential visits it is essential that pupils are given clear instructions as to their conduct; this applies to matters such as free time, lights out and bounds.
- iv. As a general rule, no pupil can be allowed to consume alcohol on a school visit. Where the consumption of alcohol is deemed to be appropriate, then the Party Leader must set this out in writing prior to the visit and obtain written permission from parents/guardians. Pupils over the legal age pertaining to the country of visit can only be allowed to consume alcohol in specific situations with the written permission of the Headmaster and the relevant parents/guardians.
- v. Smoking is strictly forbidden.
- vi. The use and/or possession of illegal drugs are strictly forbidden.
- vii. Breaches of discipline on visits should be reported to the relevant Head of Year in writing on return to school; serious breaches should be reported to the Headmaster.
- viii. On residential visits, should a pupil's conduct be deemed to be so bad (e.g. drunkenness, abusive language, refusals to accept the instructions of adults, *et al*) as to be intolerable, he or she is to be sent home; procedures need to be in place for dealing with this eventuality.

- ix. Parents and pupils need to be fully informed of the range of sanctions which can be used on a residential visit; should either a pupil or parent indicate that they are reluctant to accept these sanctions, then the pupil will not be allowed to go on the visit.
- x. Such sanctions may include:
 - a) loss of free time;
 - b) staying with adults on the visit to the various sites;
 - c) cleaning up the coach/hostel;
 - d) confiscation of money;
 - e) 'grounding';
 - f) sending to bed early;
 - g) sending home (any additional costs to be met by parents including those of an accompanying adult where the pupil is under sixteen years of age).
- xi. Pupils with a poor disciplinary record should not be automatically excluded from visits but their disciplinary record should be taken into account and, where necessary, a formal assessment of risk undertaken.

3 ROLES

Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible in law for the safety of pupils who participate in school trips.

In addition the Governing Body will wish to:

- i. ensure that the EVC has the appropriate time and expertise to fulfil the responsibilities expected of him;
- ii. ensure that guidance is available to inform the school's policy, practices and procedures relating to the health and safety of pupils on visits;
- iii. ascertain what training is available;
- iv. try to ensure that any visits are well-planned in advance;
- v. satisfy themselves that the necessary assurances have been obtained from any external contractors about competence and insurance cover;
- vi. ensure that any children with special needs or a disability are included as far as is reasonably possible in the visit;
- vii. ensure that vicarious liability insurance cover is clear and sufficient.

Headmaster

While the Headmaster has an important role in being the focal point for the school, many of his responsibilities have been delegated to the EVC. The Headmaster's main functions for the school trips are as the overall supervisor of the trip and arrangements and to be the immediate point of reference for parents and the Governing Body.

The Headmaster will:

- i. ensure that the EVC is suitably trained and competent to discharge his responsibilities;

- ii. satisfy himself that appropriate risk assessments including pre-visit assessments have been satisfactorily undertaken – this also includes the competence and insurance cover of any external agencies involved in the trip;
- iii. satisfy himself of the Leader's competence and ability to maintain discipline;
- iv. ensure that all staff and non-staff are both competent and appropriate to be on the trip;
- v. confirm in writing that non-staff volunteers can attend the visit and make sure that CRB disclosures are in place where necessary;
- vi. ensure that parents are fully informed about the trip, have provided their consent and can be contacted for its duration;
- vii. make time available for the EVC to train any staff and non-staff supervisors before the trip commences;
- viii. ensure the school has emergency procedures in place in case of a major incident.

Educational visits Coordinator: EVC

This is a pivotal role in that the EVC shall work closely with members of staff for ensuring the safety of the school visit before, during and after the trip has ended. The EVC will also assist the School Health and Safety Committee in planning school procedures to help the school fulfil its health and safety obligations for visits. The EVC will work closely with the Headmaster and School Health and Safety Committee for both the strategic and operational aspects of school trips and procedure.

In addition to any other responsibilities set out in this policy the EVC will:

- i. ensure that such risk assessments including pre-visits as are necessary are undertaken;
- ii. assess the competence and, if necessary, train or arrange for staff or non-staff supervisors to be trained;
- iii. ensure that parents give their full and unequivocal consent to their child going on the trip; the EVC will ensure that such consent is given on a fully informed basis;
- iv. ensure that supervision ratios are appropriate;
- v. where an external agency assists with the visit, ensure the agency is competent and has appropriate insurance cover;
- vi. organise the emergency arrangements for a trip;
- vii. consider how pupils with special needs or a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 can be involved in school visits;
- viii. keep records of visits including reports of accidents or near incidents (near misses);
- ix. review practice and systems in the light of any lessons learned during the visit;
- x. maintain a record of training for members of staff;
- xi. attend such training sessions as are required to ensure that he has the necessary competence and skills to act as EVC;
- xii. prepare forms and checklists for Leaders to complete in preparation before the trip and reporting following the trip.