

## **St Edmund's School Canterbury**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY ON ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE SCHOOL STAFF POLICY**

Off-site trips are an extremely valuable aspect of the education we offer. In planning and running trips we should be aware that the law expects of teachers a high standard of care. Thorough planning is an essential ingredient of a safe and successful trip and is the responsibility of the group leader. These guidelines, the Trips Form and Risk Assessment which must be completed before a trip is approved, are all designed to help the planning process. Obviously, the extent of planning will depend upon the complexity of the visit in question. Not all the guidelines given below are relevant to every trip. If you have any doubt as to which of the procedures are appropriate to your trip, please discuss it with the Deputy Headmaster.

#### **APPROVAL BY DEPUTY HEADMASTER**

- A Trips Form and a Risk Assessment must be completed for all trips leaving the school site except those considered to be a routine and integral part of school life (e.g. away sports fixtures, music outreach). Forms are kept in the Common Room Annex.
- Completed forms should be passed to the Deputy Headmaster at the planning stage and in good time before the proposed trip. He will then normally approve the trip by signing and returning the form.
- By all means discuss the trip at an early stage with the Deputy Headmaster if you have concerns about its viability.

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

- You should regard a risk assessment as a routine procedure in your planning of a trip out of school. It is a legal requirement to make a risk assessment before undertaking a trip away from school (The Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1992).
- A risk assessment form should be submitted with the Trips Form to the Deputy Headmaster.
- A risk assessment has three objectives:
  - Potential safety problems are identified and understood.
  - Checking that existing control measures (i.e. the school's standard procedures) are adequate.
  - If they are not, to identify what additional measures would reduce the risks.
- The degree of detail and complexity in a risk assessment will depend on the nature of the group/trip/venue/activity.
- The following information and procedures should be regarded as the school's standard "control measures". For many trips, following these will be sufficient to ensure a well-planned and safe trip. For more complex trips, residential trips, and any involving potentially hazardous activities, a risk assessment must show that

the broader risks have been understood and measures have been implemented to reduce them.

A useful source of further information is the DfES document “Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits” (copy lodged with the Headmaster’s PA). This provides detailed information about preparing for:

- Adventurous activity trips (pp30-31)
- Coastal visits (p32)
- Trips involving swimming in the sea/other natural waters (p32)
- Swimming pools (p33)
- Farm visits (p33)
- Residential visits (p34)
- Visits abroad (pp35-40)

Risk assessment is an on-going business and should continue throughout the trip as the group leader and staff respond to situations and incidents during the course of the visit.

## INFORMING PARENTS

There are some kinds of activity for which you would not normally ask specific parental consent, when cost is negligible (less than £20) and/or when permission may be assumed simply by pupils being members of the school. Such activities include:

- Participation in school teams
- Participation in concerts
- Attendance at lectures, debates, industrial visits or conferences accompanied by a member of staff
- Activities off-campus organized for boarders at weekends.

For academic field trips which are not residential, it is generally sufficient simply to inform parents about the trip by letter, whilst inviting them to contact you if they have any concerns about the arrangements. The more major/ expensive/ lengthy/unique the trip, the fuller the letter will need to be.

A letter to parents will outline:

- Purpose of the visit
- Venue/itinerary
- Type of activity, including explanation of any “risk activity”
- Date(s)
- Time of departure and return, including arrangements for pick-up
- Transport
- Basic requirements: dress, kit, equipment, food/drink, pocket money, extra clothing and footwear, etc.
- Any documentation, passports, finances needed.
- Costs and method of payment
- Staffing and supervision
- Code of conduct expected
- Contact telephone numbers (if other than school)
- Contact address (if appropriate)

For residential trips it will also be necessary to add information on:

- Accommodation (including information about security and supervisory arrangements)
- Contact telephone numbers (if other than school)
- Contact address
- Pupil code of conduct
- Insurance cover provided or needing to be purchased by parents.
- A statement to the effect that in case of thoroughly unacceptable behaviour the group leader reserves the right to return a pupil home at parental expense.
  - In the case of a major trip (e.g. an exchange, a tour abroad, any extended residential trip, or an adventure trip) parents should be invited to a meeting at which arrangements can be outlined in detail and parents may ask questions.

## PARENTAL CONSENT

- Written parental consent is required for all trips involving:
  - An overnight or longer residential stay.
  - Any adventurous activities.
  - Periods of time when pupils are under “remote supervision” (i.e. not direct supervision).
  - Any exchange.
  - Any trip abroad.
  - A cost of more than £20.
- For adventurous activities and remote supervision parents must be briefed carefully and thoroughly and asked to sign in advance that they accept such activities.
- On residential trip parents should be asked to give their consent for emergency medical treatment.
- The consent form is also a good opportunity to gather:
  - Medical information about the pupil.
  - Parents’ emergency contact details.
  - Details of family doctor.
- Use the standard form for seeking consent – or a variation of it after removing irrelevant elements (example provided at the end of this document).

## STAFF : PUPIL RATIOS

- The recommended ratio for one-day academic field trips is at least one adult for every 15 pupils.
- Ratios may need to be more favourable under certain circumstances. Factors to take into consideration are:
  - Age, gender and ability of the group.
  - Pupils with special educational or medical needs.
  - Behaviour of pupils.
  - Experience and competence of staff.
  - Nature of activities.
  - Duration and nature of journey.
  - Type of accommodation.
  - First Aid cover.

- There must be enough teachers to cope effectively with an emergency.
- Trips to remote areas, abroad, overnight, or involving hazardous activities should be more generously staffed.
- On all trips away overnight there must always be at least two members of staff and on mixed trips away overnight at least one member of staff of each sex (this may be relaxed if a residential centre provides female staff). A rule of thumb on residential trips is one teacher to 10 pupils.

## STAFFING AND SUPERVISION

- There must be a designated group leader. A deputy should also be nominated. The group leader is responsible for:
  - Planning and preparation (as specified in this document), including risk assessment.
  - Briefing of parents, pupils and staff.
  - Risk assessment.
  - Supervision and conduct of the visit/trip.
  - Welfare and safety of pupils and staff.
  - Operating emergency procedures where necessary.
- There must be a clearly established line of responsibility, ensuring that all adults and pupils on the trip know and accept who is the leader, deputy and so on.
- Staff must be suitably experienced, competent (e.g. with the age of the group) and, where relevant to the activity, qualified. Group leaders should be aware of their own levels of competence, take advice from experts if necessary, and identify the skills and experience of other members of staff and plan to accommodate these.
- Supervising adults should be well briefed by the group leader and have a good understanding of their responsibilities on the trip, the emergency procedures, the information in the risk assessment and information about individual pupils.
- Expert staff (at outdoor centres, for example), may be of great assistance, and may, indeed, be essential, but remember that the ultimate responsibility for the welfare of your pupils is yours.
- Whatever is planned must be within the capability of the pupils and, where physical activity is involved, training may need to be part of the preparation. Forethought, care, and a prudent concern for the safety and welfare of all involved will ensure both success and peace of mind.

## PREPARING PUPILS

- Pupils should be carefully briefed before a visit, especially in matters of conduct and safety.
- Pupils should understand:
  - Aims and objectives of the visit/activity.
  - Background information about the place to be visited.
  - Relevant foreign culture/customs.
  - How to avoid specific dangers.

- Safety precautions.
- Standards of behaviour expected.
- Rules about ringing home (how to avoid causing concern or confusion at home).
- Emergency procedures.
- Rendezvous procedures.
- What to do if separated from the group.
- Items banned from bringing on the trip and from purchasing during the trip.
- Staff roles.

## DISCIPLINE AND GROUP CONTROL

- Make sure that your requirements are clearly explained, and thoroughly understood by all (supervising adults and pupils) before the trip.
- Make it clear where you devolve responsibility (e.g. to an instructor), ensure that the pupils know that the instructor is to be obeyed whilst they are in his care.
- On some major trips it may be sensible to produce a written code to be given to each member of the party covering, for example, some of the following:
  - Daily timetable or itinerary.
  - Sleeping arrangements (keep a list to hand).
  - Rules on segregation of sexes.
  - Lights out/morning routine.
  - Room tidying and checks.
  - Items not to be carried or taken on the trip.
  - Standards and type of dress.
  - Personal hygiene.
  - Arrangements for free time.
  - Catering.
  - Emergency procedures, such as fire drill (precautions should be checked on arrival).
  - No locking of rooms at night (fire!).
  - General standard of behaviour/punctuality/meeting points (e.g. on ferries).
  - Respect for hotel staff, drivers, instructors, other guests, etc.
  - Safety precautions (sun cream/clothing on ski trips, for example).
  - Pocket money kept centrally.
  - Security of all personal belongings, valuables and passport.
  - Respect for cultural norms of the host nation.
- Be at pains to stress the danger inherent in visiting a country where the traffic drives on the right.
- Ensure that your group is conversant with any code particularly relevant to their activity, e.g. mountain code, country code, the codes of National Bodies under whose auspices an activity is being pursued.

## SECURITY

- Regular head counts are essential, particularly before leaving any venue, on boarding transport, at mealtimes and bedtimes, etc.
- On any walk there must be adults at the front to lead and adults at the back to

prevent stragglers. Road crossings must be supervised wherever possible.

- It is helpful for pupils to be easily identifiable (e.g. by wearing uniform) especially in crowded urban areas and for younger children. Consider using badges with the name of the school and an emergency contact number.
- Rendezvous points should be established and children should be briefed on what to do if they become separated from the main group.
- On residential visits all group members should carry the address/phone number of the accommodation.
- Pupils should be well prepared for remote supervision:
  - Telephone numbers and emergency contacts if lost.
  - Money.
  - Maps and plans.
  - Knowledge of how to summon help.
  - Knowledge of out of bounds areas/activities.
  - Rendezvous point.
- In advance of residential visits group leaders should do their best to follow these guidelines:
  - To secure a floor plan of rooms.
  - Room should be grouped together with staff rooms adjacent, the immediate area being exclusively for the group's use if possible.
  - If possible pupils should not be on ground floor rooms, especially girls.
  - Male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities should be separate.
  - Pupils' doors should have locks but teachers must have access.
  - Balconies, windows and electrical connections should be safe.
  - To secure assurances from the accommodation manager that all his staff (including temporaries) have been checked as suitable to work with young people.
  - To ascertain whether security arrangements are in place if there is no 24-hour reception.
- On arrival there should be a briefing to explain the layout of the accommodation, its fire precautions and exits, its routines and regulations. There should be a fire drill.

## MEDICAL

- The group leader must consult the Special Medical List for details of pupils' medical conditions and follow up by discussing the child's needs with the parents.  
Check with the Medical Centre if in doubt.
- In the first instance, check with the Medical Centre regarding any special requirements for your destination, e.g. inoculations that might be necessary. Check also arrangements for emergency treatment abroad (e.g. E111), and secure consent to emergency treatment (see Consent Form).
- Members of staff responsible for leading expeditions in this country, and abroad, which involve an overnight stay of one or more nights, MUST obtain from the Medical Centre a medical record form for each participating pupil to facilitate emergency hospital treatment should it be necessary. The form will offer parental

consent for such treatment, plus a list of allergies, etc.

Record the administration of any medicines – date, time, name of medicine, dose.

In an emergency the school Medical Centre can be contacted for extra information

24 hours a day (during term-time) – telephone: 01227 475607.

## FIRST AID

Group leaders should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that an adequate first aid box is taken. (The Medical Centre will advise and provide.)

For adventurous activities, visits abroad or residential visits it is sensible if at least one of the adults is a fully-trained first aider.

On every trip an adult should be appointed to be in charge of first aid arrangements.

Supervising adults should know how to contact the emergency services and they should know the location of the nearest hospital.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If anything goes seriously wrong contact the Headmaster at once.

If an accident or emergency happens on a visit the main factors to consider are:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.

- Ensure that all the group are safe and looked after.

- Establish the names of casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.

- Ensure a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and the rest of the group are kept together and adequately supervised. An embargo should be placed on members of the group contacting parents/the outside world.

- Establish reliable link with outside world (conventional telephone is best).

- Notify police if necessary.

- Notify British Embassy/Consulate if abroad.

- Inform the school contact person.

- Notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required.

- Notify the provider/tour operator.

- Record accurately and as soon as possible all facts, evidence, witness details.

- Keep a written record of events, times, contacts, decisions after the incident.

Details to be passed to the school:

- Nature, date and time of incident.

- Location of incident.

- Names of casualties.

- Details of injuries.

- Names of others involved.

- Action taken so far.

- Action yet to be taken.

- Details of staff deployment.

- Legal liability should not be discussed with other parties.
- No-one should talk to the media under any circumstances – all media enquiries should be referred to the Headmaster.
- Do not deal directly with parents. The Headmaster (or, if he is not available, the school contact person) will contact parents and act as link between the group and parents. He will also liaise with the Chairman of Governors.

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

If there are pupils with SEN ask yourself:

- Can the activity/visit be adapted to enable them participate at a suitable level?
- Is the pupil able to understand and follow instructions?
- Will additional supervision be necessary?
- Is there a supervisor available who knows them well?

## USING COMMERCIAL OPERATORS AND CENTRES

- If using a commercial operator, make sure all arrangements are confirmed in writing.
- Make sure commercial operators are reputable: they must be members of ABTA or AITA. School tour operators are required to carry out regular safety checks at their destinations. You should ask for written details of such checks and ask for names/addresses of customers who have recently used the operator and destination. References should be taken up. If necessary, check with the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, 10 Spring Gardens, London, SW1A 2BN (telephone: 020 7389 4004).
- If using a centre you should obtain written or documentary assurance that providers have assessed the risks (a copy of their risk assessment) and have an appropriate health and safety policy in place. Adventurous training providers should have a licence from the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority. You should ask for their licence reference number and check with the Authority that the license is valid (telephone: 01222 755715 / fax: 01222 755757 / [www.aala.org](http://www.aala.org)).
- The group leader should obtain written assurances from the centre as to management and staffing levels, equipment, emergency plans, and adequate public and third party insurance. Expert staff (e.g. instructors at outdoor or water sports centres) must have current qualifications and experience in the field in which they are supervising. Details must be checked when planning a trip and you must have evidence on paper that staff are properly qualified.
- The standard of accommodation should be checked. Make a preliminary visit if at all possible/appropriate. Alternatively, you should seek references from another school that has recently used the tour operator or visited the venue.
- The demarcation of responsibility between school and centre is a fundamental issue. Clear transfers of responsibility are vital. The group leader and school staff must know when he/she will be responsible for the safety of pupils and when the centre assumes responsibility. This must be established in writing with the centre.

## TRANSPORT

- Book transport. Seek advice, if necessary, on coach firms. Only reputable firms may be used: drivers must be qualified and vehicles properly maintained.
  - If travelling in a school minibus, read the guidelines on use of minibuses. If using a private car, check that your own insurance covers you.
  - During a school journey sufficient stops should be agreed with the driver so group members have regular breaks.
  - Group leaders are responsible for organizing head counts at every point of embarkation and for supervising safety at stops (e.g. traffic at motorway services).
  - Group leaders are also responsible for ensuring that seat belts are worn.
  - Supervising adults should sit amongst pupils on trains, buses, etc. On ferries pupils must be clearly briefed on the extent of their freedom to roam, rendezvous times and points, discipline and emergency procedures.
- On return:
- No pupil may be set down en route without a written request from parents, and then you must wait until the parent arrives.
  - On arrival back at school you should wait until all children have been collected by their parents unless you know that other arrangements have been made.

## LATE RETURN

If your return is delayed, telephone the School Office or school contact person to give a revised estimated time of arrival. Ask pupils to telephone home on their mobiles if they have them.

## CATERING

Inform the caterers if meals are to be missed. Submit a written request (using the catering requisition forms) well in advance (minimum 48 hours' notice) if you require packed meals, late meals, etc. These forms are available in the Common Room Annexe and in the School Office.

## LIAISON WITH COLLEAGUES

You should inform colleagues in plenty of time in advance if any disruption to lessons is planned. This may be done through the weekly calendar meeting. Also put a list in the Common Room of all pupils involved, and ensure that pupils make a polite request to staff if they need to miss any lessons or other activities. Pupils should be reminded to check for clashes with music lessons and warn their music teachers in plenty of time.

## FINANCIAL MATTERS

- Parents should be billed in advance – usually you will need to send appropriate information to Accounts before the end of the term prior to the trip.
- Do not deal with school trip money through your own account. Seek advice from the Head of Finance and Estates regarding sensible procedures to ensure that there can be no doubts about financial propriety.

- Observe strict accounting practices, keeping accurate records of all payments received, and made, with receipts as appropriate.

## INSURANCE

- Check with the Head of Finance and Estates whether or not the school insurance cover is sufficient for the trip/activity. Is additional cover needed? If using a commercial operator what is available through the operator or centre?
- Any trip abroad, residential trip or involving adventurous training activities is likely to require specialist insurance.

## LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

- The standard of care which has be exercised by teachers towards their pupils is that which would be exercised by “reasonably careful parents” towards their own children. In this context the test of the “reasonably careful parent” must be applied not in relation to the parent at home, but in relation to parents applying their minds to this particular aspect of school life, or this activity within the school context.
- Where a teacher has done all that a reasonably careful parent would have done in the particular circumstances, there is unlikely to be any question of legal liability, even though a pupil may have been injured.
- Make sure, therefore, that you know all the applicable regulations and requirements for the trip/activity you are undertaking, and are able to comply with them.
- If a legal claim against a teacher does arise under common law, the school as the teacher’s employer will be liable, though individual teachers can be liable for negligence under Criminal Law.

## FOREIGN TRAVEL

Early enquiries about the validity of passports, visa requirements, etc., will avoid panic when departure is imminent. For foreign nationals you may have to make particular arrangements, e.g. for visas.

## CHECKLIST FOR MAJOR TRIPS (Residential)

### A. Take with you:

- Travel tickets, visas, plus copies.
- A copy of letters confirming essential arrangements/booking forms/confirmation invoices, etc., and contact details for the accommodation.
- Details of location of local hospital/medical services.
- Full insurance details, with claim forms and the company’s contact details.
- A copy of the detailed itinerary.
- A full list of party members and accompanying adults, with addresses, telephone numbers of parents/contacts.
- A recent photograph of all members of the party.

- A note of the contact telephone numbers for the school contact person and a contact number for the Headmaster.
- Parental consent forms (medical consent may be needed to be produced at a hospital).
- A first aid kit appropriate for the type of journey (including travel pills, etc.).
- E111s if appropriate.
- Passports (if appropriate).
- List of passport numbers/place of issue.
- An outline of the emergency procedures.
- Cash/credit cards/cheque book/travellers cheques/emergency funds.

**B. During the trip:**

On arrival at a hostel/hotel check all rooms for damage and report at once to hotel management.

**C. Leave with the Headmaster and with the Headmaster's PA:**

- A copy of the itinerary, including contact telephone numbers and full details of expected time of return.
- Group leader's mobile phone number.
- A copy of each party member's parental consent form.
- The name, address, telephone and fax numbers of tour operators/ferry companies/coach companies/accommodation, etc.
- A copy of insurance documents.
- A copy of travel documents.