

Educational Visits Policy

Introduction

Pupils can derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits. Educational visits play a major role in the education and development of all young people. They can contribute significantly to the development of cross curricular skills and to personal and social education through the use of problem solving methods and approaches and through encouraging responsibility, self confidence and self reliance. This policy is designed to help teachers, governors and other interested parties to ensure that pupils stay safe and healthy whilst on Highgate School visits.

This policy draws on information contained in:

Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits DfEE 1998 (HASPEV)
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/visits/>

Aims and Objectives of Highgate School Educational Visits:

- To give all children a wide range of high quality experiences outside the classroom, including
- at least one residential experience.
- To provide school staff with easily accessible advice guidance and resources as well as good professional development opportunities.
- To “make the case”, so that there is general understanding of the unique contribution that school trips can make to children's lives.
- To encourage parents and carers to back school trips.
- To encourage partnerships between schools, local providers and other organisations over visits and out of school activities.

In deciding if a visit application merits approval the school will consider the following:

- There are clear and justifiable objectives for the visit. For example where does it fit into the structure of the year? What is the value of the event to individuals and groups?
- The visit leader is sufficiently responsible and capable of taking charge of the particular visit.
- Parental notification and consent has been undertaken.
- Participants are aware of the visit objectives and have been prepared, briefed or involved in the planning, as appropriate.
- All transport arrangements have been adequately assessed.
- The venue is either known or the visit leader has undertaken a pre-visit in order to assess the suitability of the site and to enable risk assessment(s) to be produced. Occasionally, for a distant destination, this process may be replaced by information and advice received from other sources (e.g. school or independent person with local knowledge). Where this is the case the risk assessments must take this into account and the leader must be sufficiently experienced.

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- Written risk assessments and control measures to control the risks must be produced. Control measures must be understood and complied with by all persons staffing the visit.
- A check must be made to ensure any provider has public liability insurance of at least £5 million as well as suitable arrangements for participant welfare.
- Consideration must be given to deciding if contractual insurance (personal accident and travel insurance) is necessary for the participants and staff and for informing parents about any cover applying to the visit.
- The financing of the trip must comply with Highgate School regulations.
- An emergency procedure is in place, which includes means by which Highgate School and the group are able to contact each other.
- What are the teaching implications due to staff and pupil absence?
- Can the trip be undertaken at a more convenient time during the academic year?

A final decision with regard to commissioning and enabling an event is taken by the Assistant Head (Co-Curricular), currently Paul Aston, who will base the decision on the above objectives and criteria whilst also giving consideration to the balance of teaching implications and the value of the trip.

The vetoing of a trip does not prevent it being reviewed and implemented at a future time. As a result this could then facilitate a smooth progression to the academic year minimising any detrimental effects to teaching across the school.

The academic year will have a regulated range of stimulating trips organised uniformly across all year groups in such a way to enhance the academic progression of all pupils in the school.

After the visit:

- Evaluation after the event is an important aid to planning future visits, especially for additional and high risk activities.
- The standard RIDDOR accident report form must be submitted to the Health and Safety Officer for any accident that resulted, or could have resulted, in serious injury.
- An incident report must be submitted to the school giving details of any incident that could have had severe consequences to the welfare of any participant or staff member, and any failure of the services offered by a provider.

PLANNING VISITS AND EXPEDITIONS IN HIGHGATE SCHOOL

The following is aimed at tackling common questions when planning visits and is designed to encourage 'good practice'. Some of these guidelines only apply to expeditions, longer and overseas visits but you are advised to read through all these guidelines before planning any visit. They should be read in conjunction with the guidelines setting out the procedure for planning visits and Form I (Approval in Principle), the financial form(s), Form 2A (Short Visits) and 2B (Longer and Overseas visits) and the Risk Assessment instructions.

Planning ahead

The aim, when possible, should be to obtain approval in principle and financial approval a term in

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advance for short visits and for some longer visits. Some longer visits and all overseas visits should normally obtain approval in principle and financial approval a year in advance of the planned visit. Only when approval in principle has been given should details of a visit be entered into the Arrangements diary.

The event must be placed into the forward planner on the intranet, by passing the details to Kate Engineer, once authorised by the Assistant Head (Co-Curricular). Therefore the full academic year of events will be organised and entered by the end of the preceding summer term.

Staffing

As with all visits, staffing ratios and requirements must be visit-specific according to the number, composition, age range of pupils, and appropriate to the venue and the activities planned for the visit.

As a general rule, the following applies:

Groups on visits must have at least two members of staff. (In certain circumstances one staff member may be sufficient e.g. sixth formers attending a lecture in London)

If there is a mixed group of girls and boys, at least one female and one male member of staff must accompany the group on the visit. (In certain circumstances one member of staff, male or female may be sufficient e.g. sixth formers attending a lecture in London.)

Normally a staff ratio to pupils of 1 member of staff to 10 pupils should be followed. (A higher ratio of staff to pupils is required for younger children)

All groups on visits must have a nominated group leader and nominated deputy leader (except on visits led by one member of staff)

Where pupils below Y8 are on a residential visit, at least one of the staff members must be female and one male even if the party is made up of boys alone or girls and boys.

Parents on off-site visits

Short Visits (non-residential). Parents may be invited to accompany a group on a day visit but at no time must a parent be left in charge of a pupil(s). Parents may be asked to assist in managing a group but only under the overall supervision of a teacher. In planning a visit group leaders must ensure that there is adequate Highgate staffing from the outset. Parents do not count as part of the ratio.

Longer visits (residential home and overseas). Parents and any other adults (including spouses) accompanying the group must be CRB checked. This must be budgeted for when the financial proposals are forwarded to the Bursary. If a group leader plans to invite parents or other adults or non-Highgate pupils on a trip they must declare this on Form I. Generally inviting parents etc will be the exception rather than the rule.

Tour Companies and External Providers

Only licensed providers (e.g. Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority AALA) may be used. It is also advisable to obtain recommendations from other schools that have used the provider if the company is otherwise unknown to you.

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Insurance

The School's insurance policy provides group cover for all members of parties involved in non-hazardous trips. Details can be obtained from the Bursar.

Hazardous activities require separate insurance and you must discuss this with the Bursar. If you are using a licensed provider you must obtain details of their insurance arrangements and parents should be given a copy of the policy schedule.

Pre-visit inspection

Where possible it is good practice to inspect a location prior to planning a visit, in order to check its suitability.

Travel Arrangements

If you are hiring a coach the vehicle should not be more than ten years old. You must complete a coach booking form and forward it to Tracey Geach at the MSC. It is important that coach bookings are made well in advance of your proposed visit. Currently the School's preferred coach operators are Corbel of London, Minibus Executive Travel (MET) and MCH Coaches. If you are using a coach supplied by a tour operator you must check to ensure that coaches meet our minimum requirements by asking the tour operator to supply relevant details and the coach company's risk assessments. If you are hiring a minibus the vehicle should not be more than five years old.

If you are using the school minibus you must be on the list of approved drivers. This is maintained by the Bursar. For visits involving travel over some distance, the driving should be shared and therefore the party should include at least two approved drivers per vehicle. The school now has a driver, Phil Starkey, who should be the default option for driving a minibus.

If you are using your own private vehicle on necessary school business to transport pupils you must have a valid driving licence, with no penalty points. While the School's comprehensive insurance policy gives cover for such use of your vehicle, you must check your own insurance policy and how this is viewed by your insurers.

Pupils must be required to wear safety belts in all vehicles. It is Group leaders and staff who are responsible for ensuring that this requirement is enforced on all journeys.

For travel by train and underground, particular care needs to be given to the risk of some pupils being separated from the rest of the group and this must be set out in the Risk Assessment.

When travelling abroad pupils need to be briefed on matters such as securing passports and visas, baggage security and airport security checks.

Parents must be clear about the travel arrangements when they sign the consent form.

First Aid

One member of staff must be nominated as being i/c First Aid. (Many staff will shortly be given the opportunity to complete a first aid course)

This member of staff is:

- a) responsible for the first aid bag. This should be taken on visits, as appropriate
- b) to administer basic first aid, though the person responsible must be careful to avoid administering medical treatment beyond their training, skill and knowledge

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c) to remain with a casualty while emergency help is summoned and, if needed, accompany the casualty to hospital. You should contact the School nurse to order a first aid kit.

Accommodation

Where overnight accommodation is involved, fire exits and emergency evacuation procedures should be checked by the Group Leader on arrival. The group should then be given a briefing/fire drill.

Pupils should know where staff rooms are located and these should be in the vicinity of pupil accommodation. Group accommodation should be located in one area rather than scattered in different parts of a residential complex. As far as is reasonably possible, ground floor accommodation should be avoided for female students. It is important to have proper details of the accommodation that is being provided before the visit, even if a pre-visit is not possible. The group leader should have a room list. No boys in girls rooms and vice-versa.

Risk Assessment

A full written Risk Assessment is required for all visits (use the forms provided). The Risk Assessment must a) identify specific hazards/risks b) state who is at risk c) set out measures to control/minimize the risk d) calculate the estimated Risk Rating e) set out the emergency procedure to be followed.

All Risk Assessments must be visit specific and must cover the full itinerary. Risk Assessments should be reviewed and, if necessary, updated, even for visits/expeditions that occur regularly.

If a licensed provider is responsible for a visit/activity, you are advised to ask for a copy of their own Risk Assessment and to refer to and include this as part of your own.

There must be on-going risk assessment by group leaders and staff as the visit progresses and as circumstances require. On expeditions and visits involving any hazardous activity, Group Leaders and staff should always have and be prepared to revert to a 'Plan B'. Pupils must not be made to undertake or to continue with an activity if they are expressing serious concerns about their health, well-being and overall safety.

Any pupil who is deemed to be a risk to the safety of other pupils should not be allowed on a visit. (In such circumstances you must discuss the matter with the EVC in the first instance.)

Attached are some generic risk assessments which might be helpful (though they must be adapted to the specific visit).

It is important that pupils going on a visit are properly briefed before departure and given clear instructions as the visit progresses.

Code of Conduct

On all visits pupils should be reminded of the basic requirements of safeguarding the safety of each other, courtesy and consideration towards members of the public and conduct that enhances the reputation of the School. School rules apply.

For visits involving overnight stays and overseas visits pupils and parents should agree to the following as a minimum:

- Pupils carrying out the instructions of the Group Leader and Staff at all times.
- Alcohol. The instructions here will be group and visit specific. The following guidelines are suggested.

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- No alcohol to be bought or consumed by pupils if the party includes pupils below the Sixth Form
- Local/National laws apply at all times
- Sixth formers may consume two glasses of wine with a meal or the equivalent in alcoholic content on a separate occasion at the discretion of the Group Leader.
- No spirits are to be consumed
- Alcohol may not be brought into or consumed in private rooms. (If staying in a hotel abroad it is sensible to ask the hotel in advance to remove the contents of any mini-bar that private rooms may have.)
- n.b. at least one member of staff must be alcohol free at all times
- In mixed groups, girls and boys may not enter each others' rooms.
- Pupils must be reminded not to carry, have in their possession or purchase (e.g. as a souvenir) any object that might be deemed an offensive weapon.
- No smoking.
- Pupils must adhere to all deadlines and be in their rooms at the time stated by the Group leader. (Group leaders must make proper arrangements to check this with frequent roll calls)

Repatriation

For foreign visits parents should be told that in the unlikely event of a gross breach of the code of conduct, a pupil might be repatriated. This would be the decision of the Group Leader and in consultation with the School 24/7 contact and the SMT. It would be at the parent's expense

Remote Supervision

'Unsupervised time' on a visit is no longer an acceptable concept. At all times group leaders and staff are responsible for pupils. Any period of 'remote supervision' must be covered by the drawing of clear boundaries for pupils, emergency procedures and how contact with staff can be made. It is often good practice to issue pupils with a card giving mobile phone contact numbers of staff and the address and contact numbers of the place of residence if an overnight stay is involved. The associated hazards should be considered in the overall risk assessment. On expeditions pupils should normally be in groups of at least four and briefed on how to respond to an emergency. Parents must be fully briefed on the arrangements for any periods of 'remote supervision'.

Passports, Visas and EHIC

Group Leaders should make a copy of all passports, visas and EHIC, and retain a copy throughout the visit. A second copy should be given to the EVC (and 24/7 School Contact for Junior School visits) before departure. For trips in Europe all students should have an EHIC (the successor to the E111).

Exchange Visits

It is good practice to draw up a protocol with the host school in order to ensure that an agreed health and safety policy is adhered to by host families and that all the families involved are aware of

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the content of the protocol.

Meeting with parents and pupils before departure

It is good practice to invite parents of pupils going on a visit, accompanied by the pupils themselves, to a briefing meeting at the School, in order for arrangements to be explained and questions answered. This applies to many longer visits and especially to overseas visits.

Parental Consent

No pupil may go on a visit without parents having given their written consent by signing the consent form.

Parents must give this consent on the basis of having been fully informed of the arrangements for the visit. They should not be informed on a 'need to know' basis only. When parents give their consent they should be aware of the following as applicable to the specific visit:

- The full itinerary, including travel arrangements.
- Any hazardous activities, the supervision provided and the risk assessment.
- Details of any period of 'remote supervision' and the control measures in place.
- Insurance arrangements including insurance for hazardous activities. (Longer and overseas visits) Policy schedules must be provided as appropriate.
- Medical arrangements e.g. policy on the dispensing of medication (Normally if a pupil needs to purchase and take any medication, he or she should obtain either in advance or at the time permission from a parent. Paracetamol should not be given to a pupil who is receiving other medication from a doctor. Aspirin, or preparations containing aspirin, may not be given.)
- Full contact details of the hotel/place of residence (Longer and overseas visits) and group leader.
- The Code of Conduct for the visit (longer and overseas visits).
- A copy of the risk assessment (for overseas visits or major expeditions)

The signed consent forms should be retained by the Group Leader throughout the visit. A copy of the set of consent forms must be given to the EVC (and the 24/7 School contact for Junior School visits) before departure.

All staff should be given and retain through the visit a list of staff and pupils on the visit, along with their mobile contact numbers, their emergency home contact numbers and the contact numbers for the hotel or equivalent if a longer or overseas visit.

Reporting incidents/near misses

It is a requirement that any accident or 'near miss' on a visit should be reported immediately on return to the EVC and also through the procedure set out in the School Policy for reporting accidents.

If you have any area of Health and Safety concern you must report it to the EVC immediately on return.

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Report on visit

You are asked to give some feedback on your visit (particularly expeditions, longer and overseas visits) to the EVC, to enable good practice to be maintained.

You are also invited to share details of your visit and photographs on the Intranet.

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Appendix to EV Policy

Parent Volunteers for School Trips and Activities

(This appendix should be read in conjunction with the Foundation's Policy on Safeguarding and Welfare of Children)

Parent Volunteers who are engaged in formal, regular contact with pupils (eg through library duty, sports coaching or supporting a club or society) will be subject to the normal school procedure for checking staff, including a requirement for a CRB disclosure.

Parent Volunteers who may be considered by the School to accompany a school trip or visit that involves a residential stay will be subject to the normal school procedure for checking staff, including a requirement for a CRB disclosure.

Parents who intend to host and provide residential accommodation to pupils from Highgate's exchange school partners in other countries are also subject to statutory checks. The DCSF recommends that any adult hosting a pupil on an exchange visit has a CRB disclosure, and the School has made this a condition for any child taking part in our exchange programmes and is likely to make it a requirement. Any disclosures which the CRB check brings with it will be shared with the partner school, so that the school with the parents involved can make a decision whether they wish to go ahead with a particular exchange.

It will not be possible for Parent Volunteers to participate in the activities detailed above unless acceptable and up to date CRB certificates are in place on the School's records.

Parent Volunteers who assist the School in one-off activities or shorter trips (not involving a residential stay) will agree to be subject to the School's guidance for their involvement. This guidance states that:

- Parent Volunteers will receive a copy of the School's Safeguarding and Welfare Policy in advance of their involvement and will provide formal evidence to the School that they have received, read and understood this policy.
- Parent Volunteers cannot be included in the staff : pupil ratio for any trip or activity.
- Parent Volunteers must never be allocated sole responsibility for an individual child or group of children on any trip or activity.
- Parent Volunteers must always work under the direct supervision and guidance of a nominated member of staff on any trip or activity.
- The member of staff in charge of the trip or activity where Parent Volunteers are involved must make reference to their involvement and the guidance given to parent Volunteers in the Risk Assessment prepared in advance of the trip or activity.

If a member of staff in charge of a trip or activity has any questions about the guidance given above they should contact the EVC or the appropriate Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

TJL, Sep 2009