

Educational Visits Policy

BETHANY SCHOOL
CURTISDEN GREEN
GOUDHURST
KENT

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1. Legal Framework

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and associated regulations, employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of their employees. **The Governing Body is the employer at Bethany School.** Employers are also under a duty, as far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure the health and safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities; this includes all off-site journeys, activities and visits. Alongside the specific statutory obligations of Health & Safety, the employer seeks generally to avoid breaching any legal duty of care which may result in or cause injury or damage of a type recognised in law.

This policy takes into account the most recent DfE departmental advice document of 26 November 2018: 'Health and Safety on educational visits', which replaces a number of guidance documents on health, safety and security in schools, including Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers (2001) and Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV 1998). In addition, specialist advice is available from the Outdoor Education Advisory Panel (OEAP).

Overseas visits should also refer to advice from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

This policy also takes account of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974, which applies to activities or on off school premises. Please also see Bethany School's Health and Safety Policy.

1.1 General responsibilities in Law – In loco parentis

When a Group Leader takes a group away from an educational establishment, they are "in loco parentis" (in the place of the parent). The standard of reasonable care expected is that of a person exhibiting the responsible, mental qualities of a prudent parent in the circumstances of a 'school' life, rather than in their home. This duty is continuous during the whole period of the visit and cannot be delegated to anyone else, even if other adults have been given specific tasks to undertake.

This means that the responsibility for duty of care cannot be passed to external group leaders, instructors, guides, wardens, coaches and others who are employed to provide a particular expertise associated with the activity or visit. Group Leaders and other adults with responsibility will pass leadership to the experienced and appropriately qualified 'experts', whilst engaged in particular activities, but always retain the overall duty of care for their young people.

Because of the additional training and experience of teachers, it is likely that a higher standard of care should be expected in carrying out their duties. The level of judgement expected of members of staff is also related to that member of staff's knowledge, experience and training. However, any action should be in line with well-developed and accepted guidelines.

Bethany School identifies and assesses risk when planning for and taking pupils on trips and visits. Staff devise, develop and consult risk assessments which grade risk on a scale of low, moderate and high and identify strategies to manage such risks. For trips and visits of low risk which occur regularly as part of School life and which take place in the local area, a generic risk assessment has

been used since February 2013. This risk assessment covers local shopping and cinema trips, for example, and annual school events such as the Remembrance Service as well as visits to local schools. A central register of which trips are risk assessed and authorised under the generic risk assessment is held by the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). For all other trips and visits, including all residential trips, a specific risk assessment is to be written. This then requires approval by the EVC and is also held by the EVC once approved.

Parental consent is also required, in writing, for off-site activities as the School acts 'in loco parentis'. Responsibilities in terms of Health and Safety to employees and in terms of a legal duty of care apply to all participants including those over the age of 18 for whom there is an element of supervision. The age of the young person, and the nature and location of the activity in which the pupil is taking part are factors in determining the degree of supervision required and are detailed in the risk assessment.

1.2 The Employer

Under education law, the Governors have the power to direct the School on health and safety matters. Non-compliance can lead to action by the Secretary of State.

Bethany School has in place:

- a written policy and procedures for planning and arranging off-site visits, including advice on risk assessment, that teachers and other organisers should follow.
- a system to assess, and give formal approval for, visits and journeys.
- collation of emergency telephone contacts for the duration of the visit, where necessary.
- monitoring of the training needs of staff regularly involved in visits through Professional Review.
- expertise accessible through named staff for advice in planning visits.
- appropriate insurance cover.
- procedures that set standards and monitor safety during off-site activities and visits.

1.3 Governing Body

Governors have the overall responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff and pupils and certain other individuals. Whilst they remain accountable for these responsibilities, the operational arrangement to achieve them may be discharged by the Head and/or senior teachers. The Head and/or senior teachers ensure that:

- the activity has a specific and stated objective; in the case of curricular activities or those linked to the taught curriculum, these should be appropriate to the learning needs of the pupils involved.
- they are informed about all off-site visits in advance; those that are deemed hazardous, residential and overseas should feature long term notice i.e. at least three months.

1.4 The Head of Bethany School

The Head has the responsibility to ensure that:

- A record of the purpose of the visit is kept
- A nominated Group Leader has been appointed, with the appropriate experience and qualifications, who has delegated responsibilities for the control and operational aspects of the visit.
- The nominated Group Leader has sufficient time to carry out the planning tasks associated with the activity or visit.
- The Group Leader and any other adult members, including volunteers, understand their role and have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to undertake the task required of them.
- The Group Leader and any other adult members, including volunteers, hold appropriate planning meetings in advance of the visit.
- The Group Leader has carried out all the necessary procedures and practices associated with planning, carrying out and monitoring the activity or visit.
- A risk assessment associated with the particular activity or visit has been carried out and approved and retained by the Bursar who will advise on any deficiencies found.
- Training needs of all staff and volunteers have been assessed and that plans have been drawn up to ensure their needs are met.
- Safe-guarding procedures are in place.
- Have due regard for the extent of “on duty” time involved in the visit and take all reasonable steps to ensure any fatigue factor is kept to a minimum and does not adversely affect the well being of any party member. This includes attention to periods of prolonged driving activity by staff – maximum two hours followed by a change of driver.
- Make Group Leaders and adult helpers aware of any particular relevant characteristics about the young people in their care e.g. those who lack self confidence, those with special needs, medical problems etc.
- The Senior Management have approved the visit in writing.
- Adequate insurance cover is provided.
- Contact arrangements, both for the Group Leader and at the establishment, are known to all necessary personnel.
- When overnight stays are involved, there is a known, ‘home’ contact based ‘at school’ to act as a conduit of information between parents and the excursion in case of emergencies or the need for consultation. Typically this is the SMT member of staff on duty, reachable via the SMT phone which they share.

2. Educational Visits Co-ordinator

DfE recommendations require that establishments should create the post of an Educational Visits Co-ordinator (Bursar and Deputy Head)

Functions of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (supported by the Head) are to support individual leaders of off-site visits, helping to:

- Establish the educational purpose of each visit (a member of teaching SMT)
- Establish the procedures to manage the risks identified for the programme

- Support the Head with decision-making and approval
- Organise the induction of Group Leaders, accompanying staff and adult/volunteer helpers. This is more than just appointing, and involves selection, observation and requires problem awareness and associated responses as well as how the activity(s) are normally conducted

Organise the training of Group Leaders, accompanying staff and volunteer helpers (rests with the teaching SMT to assess and ensure as competent individuals) This will commonly involve training such as first aid, hazard awareness, and appropriate leadership awards/qualifications.

- Assess the competence of Group Leaders, accompanying staff and volunteer helpers. This will commonly be done with reference to an 'awarding body' such as first aid, but could also include practical observation or verification of prior experience.
- Organise the emergency planning.
- Arrange Record keeping in electronic form for individual visits including accident and 'near miss' reporting in written form and retained should the need arise to refer to them.
- Review systems and from time to time, monitoring practice.

No visit may take place until the EVC has approved the risk assessment either electronically or in writing. This approval is required for colleagues using the generic as well as specific risk assessments.

2.1 EVC Competence

The EVC should be specifically competent. Evidence of competence may be through qualification, but more usually will be through the experience of practical leadership over years of off-site education e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme; such competence will be identified in a person on the School's Senior Management Team.

3. The Group Leader

The Group Leader has the responsibility to inform the Head and the EVC of the proposed visit and its objectives, obtaining agreement, in writing, for the activity or visit to take place, indicating the precise nature of the activities to be included, and the likely date, duration and venue for the activity or visit.

The Group Leader is expected to lead and control the operational aspects of the visit, with the support of the EVC, and clearly define each group leaders', volunteers' and adult helpers' roles and to supervise all staff in addition to maintaining the overall responsibility for the pupils.

Group Leaders must ensure that they:

- Read, understand and are aware of the School's regulations, guidelines and policies, and where applicable the appropriate National Governing Bodies of Sport policies and procedures.
- Appoint a deputy (all parties **MUST** include at least two adults)

- Contact parents by letter or email informing them about the trip and requesting consent, where required, relevant medical information, and the reply slip should also contain parental permission for medical treatment to be carried out should the need arise.
- Have due regard for the individual abilities, including special needs, of each young person and to ensure that the young person is not stretched beyond his/her capabilities and if appropriate that pupils are prepared accordingly for the activities to be undertaken.
- Give guidance on the expectations of behaviour from pupils. The leader is both entitled and expected to enforce order, good discipline and procedures that are reasonably safe”.
- Issue all adult helpers/volunteers with a list of all group members acquired from the School’s Information Management System (ISAMs), particularly those for whom they have direct responsibilities.
- Carry out all the required planning and preparation prior to the activity and the monitoring and evaluation of the activity or visit.
- Be responsible for the control and discipline of all young people on the activity or visit.
- Pay due heed to the requirement that caving, climbing, trekking, skiing and watersports, where delivered by external providers must have their licenses, qualifications and licences checked and verified (which is usually evident in the schedule of risk and insurance that is issued before the trip or activity commences).
- For ‘significant’ visits (either more than one day or a major one day event), Group Leaders should conduct a review meeting with staff involved and note points for improvement for future and similar activities.
- In addition, Group Leaders should have recently visited the site (recommended that this be within three months prior to the activity). Where the Headmaster agrees that it is impossible to take part in an exploratory visit, the Group Leader must be familiar with the type of environment and have good local knowledge of the area; or achieve this through reputable local guides or other qualified staff. This knowledge becomes even more important when certain hazardous activities are involved which not only require specialist knowledge and skill but also a thorough knowledge of the local environment and climatic conditions e.g. pot holing, skiing etc.

If the Group Leader thinks the risk to health and safety of the young people is unacceptable, they must stop the activity.

After approvals the Group Leaders are responsible for:

- Briefing all group leaders, adult helpers and volunteers of the details of the activity or visit, ensuring staff are experienced in leading groups and the ratios of pupils : staff are adhered to (refer to Section K of the staff handbook and highlighted section below)
- Giving all helpers prepared guidelines and checklists
- Collating details of young people’s particular needs, potential hazards and the appropriate steps to take in the event of an emergency. This may include establishing and providing training for staff. Include medical, dietary, behavioural and special needs for all who attend the trip/visit.

- Notifying parents and guardians throughout the planning and preparation stages by appropriate methods, which for an extended, residential or hazardous visit or a visit abroad, should include a meeting at school.
- The pupils. This may include establishing and providing training. It is also important that pupils are appropriately briefed of the necessary details in a manner that reflects their ages. For example, the briefing for an 11 year will contain less sophisticated language than a briefing for an 18 year old.
- Keeping the Headmaster informed immediately prior to the activity where necessary and reporting upon the activity or visit on return.
- Providing the School's marketing team with data, photographs etc to be used as a record of the event and for school publications. Photographs to be taken and used in line with the School's privacy policy and parental permissions to use images.
- Ensuring appropriate first aid provision exists
- Planning appropriate transport
- Ensuring that emergency procedures include parental permission for emergency medical treatment if the need arises
- Collecting individual payments for the trip and liaising with the Bursary on all aspects of funding for the trip

4. Teachers/Supporting Staff

Teachers involved in activities or visits under the auspices of their employer must act as employees whether the visit takes place inside or outside the normal hours of the establishment.

Teachers who may be leading a group on an activity or visit should:

- Ensure the health and safety of all in their group, and act as a reasonable parent.
- Follow the instruction of the Group Leader (regardless of their 'rank' in school) in helping with organisation, control and discipline.
- Consider stopping the activity or visit, by notifying the Group Leader, if they think the risk to health and safety of the young people is unacceptable.

5. Adult Helpers and Volunteers

Adult helpers and volunteers need to understand the objectives of the activity and what is expected of them as helpers. They need to develop a rapport with Group Leaders to generate a continuity of supervision, and to follow the instructions of the Group Leader in order to help with the management and control of the young people. They will not be expected to take direct responsibility for the young people but will operate under the supervision and guidance of the Group Leader. They should speak to the Group Leader if they become concerned about the health and safety of any young people during the activity or visit.

Normally numbers of adult helpers/volunteers should not exceed the professional members of staff. However, there are exceptions. These exceptions should be based on an assessment of risk and therefore will vary with circumstances. Examples might be a specialist climbing trip where the volunteers may be highly qualified and experienced in carrying out the specialist activity on the visit.

All helpers and volunteers will be vetted in accordance with the School's safer recruiting procedures.

6. School Trips

Detailed procedures for all types of school trip are laid out in Section K of the Staff Handbook and these should be read and adhered to.

School rules must be followed, especially those regarding appearance, behaviour, smoking and drinking. It is incumbent upon all staff and pupils involved in the visit to uphold high standards and to set a good example to others. Depending on the nature of the visit, the normal school rules on pupils' mobile phones can be relaxed. It is advised that all staff carry a mobile phone while on any school trip. The school provides mobile phones to be used on trips and can be booked via IT/reception.

The School's trips and visits are insured by Chubb under Policy No UKCHD35372. This insurance covers personal injury, public liability, medical and related expenses, personal effects, hired equipment, special activities and cancellations. Specific insurance is also taken out by departments who run residential trips to cover the above.

The ratio for staff to pupils must stay within 1 to 15 for day visits and 1 to 10 for overnight and overseas visits. The ratio can be greater if some of the pupils are over 18. All adults on overnight or residential visits must have an enhanced DBS check.