

# **BEECH HOUSE SCHOOL**

## **SCHOOL VISITS POLICY**

It is widely accepted by most people that educational visits are an important part of the school curriculum and that children benefit greatly from them. The aims of educational visits are:-

- They raise achievement by boosting self-esteem and confidence.
- They develop key skills.
- They develop social education and citizenship.
- They promote education for sustainable development.
- They promote health & fitness.

In order for these visits to take place within a safe environment, Beech House School, through the Headmaster and the Senior Management Team, has developed the following policy.

### **1. Responsibility**

The Principal has overall responsibility for health & safety and welfare. In practice, this means:

- Having health and safety policy and procedures, informed by risk assessment.
- Recording the significant finding of risk assessment.
- Organising and implementing appropriate preventative and protective measures.
- Providing appropriate training and information.
- Appointing competent people to carry out specific tasks.
- Recording and reporting accidents.
- Preparing emergency procedures.
- Monitoring and reviewing arrangements to ensure required standards are achieved.
- Discharging Health & Safety responsibilities for educational visits through:
  - a. Policy & guidance, based on risk assessment and defined standards of competence.
  - b. Monitoring arrangements to ensure compliance.
  - c. Training opportunities.
  - d. Provision of information and advice.
- Being informed by knowledge of educational objectives, legal requirements and relevant practical experience.

Employees also have responsibilities. These are:-

To take reasonable care of their own and others' health & safety.

To co-operate with their employers.

To carry out activities in accordance with training and instruction.

To inform the employer of any serious risks.

The Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC) should:-

- Ensure educational visits meet the school's requirements.
- Approach the Principal for approval and other decisions.
- Assess the competence of prospective leaders and staff.
- Ensure risk assessments meet requirements.
- Organise training and induction.
- Ensure parents are informed and give consent.
- Organise emergency arrangements.
- Keep records of visits, accident or incident reports.
- Review systems and monitor practice.
- All staff concerned have an up to date First Aid qualification.

The Group Leader should:-

- Have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit, including direct responsibility for the pupils' health, safety and welfare.
- Be approved to carry out the visit, be suitably competent and knowledgeable about the school policies and procedures.
- Plan and prepare for the visit and assess the risks.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of other staff, adults, parents, helpers and pupils and ensure effective supervision of what they do.

## **2. Child Protection Procedures.**

Any adult who may find him/herself in the position of having to supervise a child, must have an enhanced DBS check.

## **3. Supervision**

The following are deemed responsible enough to supervise children on visits:-

- Teaching staff
- Non-teaching staff
- Classroom assistants
- Lunchtime supervisors
- Coaching staff
- Students on teaching practice
- Spouses or partners of teaching staff

However, only teaching staff, coaching staff and classroom assistants may be appointed as Group Leaders and the remaining should not be left supervising children on their own. The ratio of adult : pupils should be activity and age appropriate. The school operates an adult : pupil ratio of 1 : 4 (Nursery) and 1 : 13 (Reception) for all off-site visits involving children in our EYFS classes. In the rest of the school, the adult : pupil ratio will be between 1 : 15 and 1 : 20. There will always be at least one teacher, one of whom will have been designated in charge of the visit. One or more of the accompanying staff will be qualified in paediatric first aid. Refer to HASPEV paragraphs 69 to 84 for guidelines to follow.

#### **4. First Aid**

On any kind of visit, the Group Leader or any adult supervisor must have a working knowledge of First Aid and ensure that an adequate First Aid box is taken.

Refer to HASPEV paragraphs 64 to 68 for further guidelines.

#### **5. Medical Needs**

Group Leaders must carry with them details of pupils with medical needs and make all the other adults supervising the visit aware of these needs. Parents should be asked to complete a form detailing all medical needs when the pupil enters the school and bring to the attention any changes in their child's medical needs. For visits involving at least one overnight stay, a separate form should be completed and held by the Group Leader. A copy should be held by the emergency school contact. Adults should also declare any medical problems.

If teachers are concerned about whether they can provide for pupil's safety to the safety of other pupils on a trip because of a medical condition, they should seek general medical advice from the School Health Service or further information from the pupil's parents.

#### **6. Transport**

The following will be used at some time:-

1. Staff cars
2. Parent's cars
3. School minibus
4. Public transport (buses and trains)
5. Coach provided by your operator or other external provider
6. Aeroplanes and ferries

For 1:

The school insurance covers all staff on school business.

For 2:

This method must only be used for occasional/emergency usage.

The school is responsible for telling the driver the number of pupils allowed in the car. A Male driver must not escort a group of all females. Permission must be given by parents allowing other parents to drive their child.

For 3:

Whenever practically possible, two members of staff should accompany a party and they should carry a mobile telephone. Medical information and emergency telephone numbers of all the party should be carried, as should a First Aid kit. The log should be completed. In order to drive the minibus, the member of staff should have passed the appropriate practical driving test. If he or she passes this assessment, they should present their driving licence to the school office and a copy will be made. The level of insurance is determined by the number of points on the licence. The Headmaster will decide if the number of points is excessive, in which case the member of staff will not be allowed to drive the minibus.

For 4 and 6:

Staff must ensure that they are each responsible for a group of pupils, with frequent head courts and a 'buddy system'. They must make pupils aware of emergency procedures given by the transport provider.

For 5:

Tour operators who operate a Safety Management System should be used whenever possible. Coaches provided by local operators (e.g. to carry pupils to the baths or other local venue) must have seat belts fitted and children must be told to fasten them. It should be recognised that coaches overseas may not have seat belts fitted and this fact made aware to parents. Staff should sit at points around the coach.

## **7. Consent**

Permission for every visit must be sought from the Principal. Details must be given on Form 1 and the Principal must sign Form 2.

For visits in school time not incurring a cost (e.g. sporting fixtures) parental permission must be sought at the beginning of the academic year and this must be renewed annually. Parents should be made aware that the onus is on them to inform the office of an up-to-date contact number in case of an emergency. A letter informing parents of venue, pick-up times, etc. should be sent for each fixture for Upper Prep and Lower Prep pupils. For senior fixtures, this information will be given via the school sports notice board or via letter.

For visits incurring a cost, separate parental permission must be sought, usually on a slip at the end of the letter, informing parents of the destination, cost and return time. A space for an up-to-date contact number should be included on the slip, in case parents have not informed the office.

For visits involving at least one overnight stay, Form 3 must be completed.

## **8. Finance**

When budgeting for a visit, the following costs should be taken into consideration:-

- Travel
- Admission or entrance fees
- Extra staffing
- Administration (telephone calls, photocopying etc.)
- Contingency fund
- Pupils not taking up the offer

All monies accepted by the staff must be taken to the office as soon as possible and signed for. A form is available for this. Staff are advised to count out cash in front of another adult.

During the visit, receipts must be obtained and given to the Bursar/ School Administrator on return, together with a statement of the accounts.

Surplus money will be dealt with in one of the following ways, depending on the amount:-

1. A cash refund to pupils.
2. A cheque refund to parents.
3. A reduction in the following term's fees.
4. Kept back by the school to fund future visits.

## **9. Insurance**

All pupils are covered on the school's insurance.

The new European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) must be carried if the countries to be visited are covered by the scheme.

## **10. Accommodation**

Staff are advised to use accommodation provided by reputable tour operators (e.g. NST, Equity, Rayburn) as these will have been checked and/or audited. Overseas, the standards are different and this should be brought to the attention of parents. Wherever possible, a pre-visit should be carried out.

Upon arrival, staff must check the fire drill procedures and make the pupils aware of them. Rooming arrangements must take into consideration the ages and sex of the pupils, with girls being accommodated on upper floors whenever possible. Balconies must be checked and pupils advised not to use them. Staff should make frequent checks of rooms (a tidy room competition is a good way) to ensure that pupils are not creating any hazards.

Staff and adult helpers should not be alone in a pupil's bedroom with only the pupil present. If a pupil needs to be spoken to on his/her own, another person should be present or the pupil seen in a public area.

## **11. Records**

A record must be made of the following and a report given to the EVC:-

- a) Any accidents or 'near misses'.
- b) Any illnesses or occasions when a pupil was unwell and required the administration of proprietary medication (e.g. painkillers or something to ease diarrhoea).
- c) Any pupil misbehaving and requiring them to be closely supervised. They may be banned from future visits.
- d) Any incidents requiring the reporting of the same to the police.
- e) Any loss of property belonging to the party.
- f) Any damage (accidental or otherwise) done by members of the party.
- g) Any incidents requiring emergency treatment at a hospital.

## **12. Travel abroad**

Whenever possible, the party should travel on a group passport. If this is not possible, checks should be made by the Group Leader well in advance of the trip that the pupils' passports are valid.

An adult member of the party should have a working knowledge of the language of the country to be visited wherever possible. If this is not the case, at least one adult member of the party should have

visited the places on the itinerary on at least one occasion and have some knowledge of local customs, traditions etc. Pupils should be given a simple vocabulary for use in an emergency.

As with any visit involving overnight stays, parents should be invited to attend a meeting in order to be fully briefed about the visit.

Reputable, bonded tour operators should be used.

### **13. External providers**

Checks must be made by the Group Leader that all providers (e.g. water sports centres, outdoor centres) are staffed by qualified personnel.

### **14. Special Needs (educational and medical)**

Visits should be available to all pupils. However, where there might be a potential problem, a decision on inclusion must be made after discussions with the pupil, the parents and group leader have taken place. If the pupil has to have one-to-one support, the funding for this has to be provided from elsewhere and not shared amongst the rest of the party.

### **15. Exclusion**

A pupil can be excluded from a visit (e.g. because of medical or behavioural reasons) by the Headteacher or Group Leader right up to the point of departure.

### **16. Mobile telephones**

The school has a mobile telephone ('Pay as you go') and this is available from the Deputy Head. It is useful for all adults in the party to carry a mobile telephone and for numbers to be exchanged. It is also useful for these numbers to be logged with the school office.

Children should not take mobile telephones with them. They can cause a nuisance during 'down time' and are easy to steal or lose. Parents should be given the number of the school mobile. Staff can take their own mobiles, but a separate SIM card should be used for school trips.

### **17. Equipment**

The safety and suitability of equipment is primarily the responsibility of the employer. However, the employer will expect staff to be vigilant, to address and report defects and to maintain a system of scheduled inspection.

### **18. Preparing pupils**

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. A 'Code of Conduct' document is a useful method of informing pupils and parents the standards expected. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others. See HASPEV p.53.

### **19. School minibuses**

A mini bus log must be completed on every use of the vehicle, by the driver.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### A. Group Leader

They would usually take charge and follow the procedure given below:-

1. Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.
2. Ensure that all the group are safe and looked after.
3. Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.
4. Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedure.
5. Ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together.
6. Notify the police if necessary.
7. Notify the British Embassy/Consulate if an emergency occurs abroad.
8. Inform the school contact. The school contact number should be accessible at all times during the visit.
9. Details of the incident to pass on to the school should include: Nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, names of casualties and details of their injuries, names of others involved so that parents can be reassured, action taken so far, action yet to be taken (and by whom).
10. Notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required ( this may be done by the school contact).
11. Notify the provider/your operator (this may be done by the school contact).
12. Ascertain telephone numbers for future call. Mobile telephones, although useful, are subject to technical difficulties and should not replace usual communication procedures.
13. Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence.
14. Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident.
15. Complete an accident report form as soon as possible. Contact HSE if appropriate.
- 16. No-one in the group should speak to the media nor discuss legal liability with other parties. Media enquiries should be referred to the Headmaster.**

### B. School Contact

Prior to the visit, the name and school and home telephone numbers of a school contact should be identified. It is advisable to arrange a second contact as a reserve. Bear in mind that the school number may become busy and that alternative numbers may be useful. See HASPEV p.37.

The school contact should:-

1. Ensure that the group leader is in control of the emergency and establish if any assistance is required from the school base.
2. Contact parents. Details of parents' contact numbers need to be available at all times while the group is on the visit. The school contact should act as a link between the group and parents. Parents should be kept as well-informed as possible at all stages of the emergency.
3. Liaise with the media. The names of any casualties should not be passed on to the media.

4. Report the incident using appropriate forms if necessary. Some incidents are reportable under RIDDOR.

If the incident was a serious one, it may be necessary to use professional counsellors to help those affected to cope with the incident.