



Emersons Green Primary School

POLICY ON SCHOOL TRIPS

This policy is supplemental to the Education Service Health & Safety Policy and does not supersede any part thereof.

PURPOSE

The guidance note has been produced to provide information on best practice relating to the organisation of school trips

The guidance is based on practical experience and the DfES good practice guide, "Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits". (Copies are available from DfES.)

STATEMENT

The school regards trips as a valuable part of a pupil's education and acknowledges the voluntary contribution that teachers and other adults make in enabling pupils to experience a rich variety of visits off the school site.

Such trips do, however, often involve a degree of risk, which is inherent when pupils are placed in unfamiliar places or are undertaking new activities. Some risk is accepted, but by following the procedures included within this policy, the degree of risk will be reduced to an acceptable level. This policy is of direct interest to any and all staff/volunteers who may propose or participate in any school trip.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Health & Safety (H&S) at Work etc. Act, as supplemented by The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, requires that the employer ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees and those affected by its undertaking. To achieve this the employer needs to produce safe systems of work, these being the outcome of risk assessment, and establish emergency procedures, to be implemented if hazards are realised.

Pupils are persons who will be affected by the work activities of the Education Service, and in addition to the H&S requirements, they are owed a general "Duty of Care".

SCHOOL TRIPS

There are a number of different types of school trips, visits and expeditions undertaken by schools. For the purposes of this guidance a school trip is to include **any organised activity where pupils leave the normal school site.**

Examples of school trips include:

- **Swimming** - This is a regular outing for pupils in key stages 2. It will usually involve one or more classes going from site to a public swimming pool. This involves travel in a vehicle.

- **Inter School Activities** - These visits will usually be sport based, e.g. Football or Netball matches, which requires one school to go to the site of another. Depending on the distance this could involve walking or travel in a vehicle.
- **Cultural Visits** - These will usually involve a visit to venues like Theatres, Art Galleries and Museums. Depending on the distance, this could involve walking or travel in a vehicle.
- **Adventure Activities** - These will usually involve attendance at an Activity centre, which offers specialist activities, e.g. canoeing, rock climbing etc. These are the activities either covered by the list of Outdoor Pursuits, contained in the Education Service H&S Manual, or by the Adventurous Activities Licensing requirements. They may, however, be organised by the school, e.g. orienteering. This usually involves travel in a vehicle.
- **Local area** - These will usually involve a visit to venues like local shops, schools, parks and walks around the local area. This usually involves walking.
- **Residential Visit** - This is any trip whereby pupils will be away from their homes for at least one night. This will include any stay in a hotel or similar and also includes camping.
- **Visits Abroad** - For the purposes of these arrangements this is any visit which involves the group leaving mainland Britain.

Charging Policy

Information on charges for school trips is contained in DES Circular 2/89, "Education Reform Act 1988: Charges for School Activities". In summary this indicates that if the trip is:

- **wholly or mainly during school hours** - No charge can be levied on parents. Schools can ask for voluntary contributions, provided it is made clear that they are voluntary.
- **a residential visit** - The cost of board and lodgings can be charged for. This is the case even if the trip is covered by a statutory requirement.
- **an optional extra** - The full costs of such trips can be charged for. These are trips which take place outside of normal school hours, do not form part of the national curriculum, are not part of an examination syllabus and are not covered by the scope of statutory requirements relating to education. Trips during school holiday periods are considered optional extras.

There is a separate Charging and Remissions Policy

TYPE OF SCHOOL TRIPS TO BE UNDERTAKEN & CHARGING POLICY

The School will undertake

- a range of school trips relating to the curriculum. These will be funded from the school budget.
- a range of school trips relating to the curriculum. These will be funded from the school budget but parents will be asked for voluntary contributions
- a range of school trips relating to the curriculum and extra curriculum activities. Those trips relating to the curriculum will be funded from the school budget but where they are held outside of normal school hours parents will need to pay towards the trip.
- a wide range of school trips including Outdoor Activities, Residential Trips & Trips abroad. Those trips relating to the curriculum will be funded by the school but for other trips parents will need to pay towards the trip

Procedure to be followed

STEP 1

When planning a school trip the responsible adult must complete an Initial School Trip Proposal Form in order to identify a basic risk rating – copies are kept in the Health and Safety file in the office.

The aim of this form is to provide schools' senior management with a brief outline of the trip, which indicates what its aims are and the hazards which need to be addressed. This form needs to be completed by the person who proposes the trip or the person identified by senior management to undertake the task. The information contained on the form will be the basis for the formal risk assessment stage. Ultimately approval of the trip will only occur where a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is completed.

STEP 2 - INITIAL APPROVAL the Headteacher will assess the information provided and decide whether the trip:

- a) conforms to the type of school trip the school will undertake
- b) is able to be organised effectively in order to minimise/control the risks associated with it. If the assessment indicates that the requirements have not been met or there is insufficient information on which to make a decision, then either additional information will be requested or the suggested trip will be indicated to have been disapproved. If additional information is requested, then the PROPOSER will need to resubmit the INITIAL SCHOOL TRIP PROPOSAL FORM with the additional information.
- c) If Approval is given then an individual will be appointed as the SCHOOL TRIP ORGANISER for the trip and the trip given a risk assessment classification.
- d) A responsible adult needs to visit the venue prior to the planned trip.
- e) The responsible adult must liaise with office staff to cost the trip taking the Charging and Remissions Policy into consideration.
- f) The risk assessment classification will be High, Medium or Low.
- g) If the trip is to involve a residential stay then the RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL TRIPS NOTIFICATION FORM must be sent in to the Health and Safety Unit of the Personnel Section in advance of the trip.
- h) Debrief and evaluation - Staff and pupils involved will be asked to comment on the trip and identify any concerns and also to highlight where things worked out positively.

General Identification of Hazards/Risks

A Hazard is defined as the potential outcome of an event whilst Risk is defined as the likelihood of the event being realised. There are many hazards associated with a trip off site and the following are examples of those that have resulted from incidents occurring on school trips **Death, major injuries, assaults, robberies, lost luggage, road traffic accidents, missed transport connections.**

The hazards are many and varied but generally trips can be grouped as below to identify a priority for risk assessment.

- **High risk - Trips abroad and/or involving adventurous activities,**
- **Medium Risk - Other residential trips**
- **Low Risk - Short duration trips in the local vicinity or regular trips. This would include visits to local shops, park.**

This is a useful way of identifying the extent of the planning required and should inform judgements made relating to timescales. For example a High Risk trip, involving outdoor activities in a foreign country, may require a year' preparation, whilst a trip to a local shopping centre may only require a few weeks.

Risk Assessment - The aim of the risk assessment is to identify the arrangements that will need to be in place to ensure the trip takes place safely. Many of the arrangements will be standard

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ones and there should be a basic framework to be followed for all trips. This will then be supplemented for those trips involving greater risk. A single assessment can cover regular trips, e.g. for swimming or inter school activities, whilst an individual risk assessment will be required for any residential trip.

To achieve this the visit leader should complete a School Trip Risk Assessment Form. This form will identify the hazards associated with the trip and the control measures.

School Approval - The school will need to identify who on site is responsible for approving each part of the trip. It is advised that a small group, incorporating a senior teacher, teacher and governor/s, be appointed.

Approval should be a three-stage process.

- Stage 1 will be the initial approval to proceed to formal risk assessment,
- Stage 2 will be the approval of the arrangements made following the formal risk assessment
- Stage 3 will be the final approval once these arrangements have been implemented.

Communication with Parents - Communication with parents/guardians should start with an initial indication of the trip's aims and its relation to the national curriculum or how it intends to benefit pupils. It will also need to indicate clearly what the charging policy will be for the trip, although this may have been done by inclusion in the school's prospectus. The initial notification should also have a return slip attached, so that parents can indicate how much interest there is, especially where funding will be required from parents, as this will affect the viability of the trip.

Briefing of pupils - This is essential so that pupils know what to expect and what is expected of them. In particular they will need to be advised what is to happen on each day, which must include where they are to meet, clothing etc. required, what papers they need to bring with them

RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS AND STANDARDS

The following advice, either based on experience or standards, has been compiled to help inform decision making on what needs to be looked at as part of the risk assessment and/or met when considering the approval of a school trip

Accommodation - Where a trip involves an overnight stay it is important to ensure that the sleeping arrangements are suitable and that accommodation is secure. This is to cover both the risk of unauthorised access into the building and where pupils might be tempted to leave the building, e.g. to sample the night-life. Staff should ideally be accommodated close to the pupils, and pupil dorms/rooms are to be single sex.

It is advisable to obtain, in advance, a layout of the accommodation and the arrangements in place, e.g.

- are external doors secured after a certain time?
- will pupils be expected to share facilities with others?

It is also advisable to have a walk around the facility on arrival, internally and externally, to check for potential points of entry or egress.

Activities - Any activities or potential activities which may form part of the school trip are to be identified. This must include both the formal activities e.g. abseiling, mountaineering, etc. plus informal ones, e.g. pupils may be allowed to go shopping in a town or swimming. This is essential both to ensure that hazards are identified and risk assessed, and in order to provide parents with a complete picture of what the trip involves.

Disability - Equal opportunities and the Disability Discrimination Act, as applied to school trips, would indicate that pupils with disabilities should be offered the same opportunities as other pupils within schools. In particular where outdoor activities are concerned not all venues as yet cater for persons with disabilities. This is something which will need to be considered if a pupil with a disability wishes to attend. Staff must take all reasonable steps to accommodate such a request.

Emergency Arrangements - Even in a well organised and run school trip incidents can occur, e.g. ill health or injury. The school needs to establish emergency arrangements to be implemented. In particular how to contact local emergency services, possible use of interpretation service and how to send pupils home. Equally a system needs to be available whereby parents/guardians can contact someone at the school, should they need to contact their child/ward.

(The Residential School Trip Notification Form usually contains the relevant information.)

Insurance - Where school trips are undertaken as part of school activity the same insurance arrangements will apply as for a normal school day. Teachers and volunteers, where no other insurance will operate, will be indemnified under the terms of the Council's Public Liability Policy whilst undertaking their duties. The Council does not provide Personal Accident benefits for pupils either in school or on school trips.

The Council has available, upon request, a "School Journey Insurance", which provides cover for Cancellation, Medical Expenses, Personal Accident, Personal effects and Legal Liability to indemnify each member of the party.

Cover is at the discretion of the Governors/Headteacher, but it is strongly recommended that this cover, or equivalent, be arranged for all trips abroad or where the trip includes an overnight stay.

Details on "School Journey Insurance" are obtainable from the Risk & Insurance Unit (extension 5164).

NB: Please ensure that there is a list of all members in the party and contact numbers for each. This is essential both for Insurance & Emergency arrangements.

Personal Needs - This covers the type of clothing/equipment the group and staff will need to take with them, these requirements needing to be established as early as possible. Most outdoor activity providers will have equipment available but this will need to be checked. Pupils may require a packed lunch, decent walking shoes, pocketmoney, passports, etc.

Security - Security is a key consideration for any trip both in terms of personal safety, e.g. arrangements to minimise potential assaults, and in terms of loss of personal property, arrangements to prevent stealing or vandalism.

To address these concerns arrangements need to be implemented to ensure adequate supervision of the group, provision of contact numbers and identification of areas viewed as high risk. See **Accommodation** above for additional considerations.

Supervision - The school must meet the basic requirements for supervision as listed below. These are viewed as an absolute minimum and will need to be supplemented where pupils have special medical or educational needs, if the trip involves adventurous activities, if the trip is abroad or if any aspect of the trip may require it.

The minimum levels of supervision are to be worked out by the following:

- **If the group is of mixed sex it is recommended that at least one competent adult of each sex must accompany the group. In our case this is sometimes not possible so the school must ensure that both sexes are represented and police checked at the place of visit**
- **A teacher must be in charge of the group**

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- **For years 1 to 3 there must be a minimum of 1 competent adult for every 6 pupils**
- **For years 4 to 6 there must be a minimum of 1 competent adult for every 15 pupils**

A competent adult is either a teacher or someone who the school/party leader feels to be competent to take on the supervisory role. The competent person is to have authority with the pupils and preferably be known by them.

NB Any parent/volunteer acting as a competent adult must have undergone a police check whether or not they would be considered to have unobserved access to pupils.

Tour Operators - Where the trip is booked using a tour operator or outside body the school must ensure that the tour operator is reputable and is bonded with an authorised institution.

Transport - This can involve walking, use of school minibus, hiring of vehicles and drivers etc. or a combination of these. The greater the distance to be travelled the more complicated the arrangements are likely to be. Transport is to be booked well in advance to ensure that it is available. See Transport Section of H&S Manual for specific information relating to travel by school minibus and parental involvement with transport.

Vetting - Depending on the trip this may simply involve checking the provider is registered, e.g. under the Adventurous Activity Licensing Activities for certain specific activities, to taking up references or arranging police checks, e.g. trips where pupils will stay with families as part of an exchange.

SUMMARY

Some school trips, e.g. involving outdoor pursuits, have a degree of risk associated with them and risk can never be completely removed. This is acknowledged, but most accidents have occurred where risks have not been considered or where inadequate arrangements have been made. This guidance should ensure that trips are organised in a methodical way and thus ensure that school trips continue to be undertaken safely.

REVIEW - This policy is a working policy and will be subject to regular review in practice. The school will periodically review the process to ensure that it continues to work effectively.

Signed **Signed.....**

Health and Safety Governor

Date.....

Headteacher

Date.....