

THE STUDY EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

This policy applies to all children including those in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

At The Study Preparatory School all staff are committed to Every Child Matters. We recognise that the following five outcomes are key to well-being in childhood and later life:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well-Being

This policy has been compiled with reference to the Every Child Matters framework.

Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good primary practice.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits.

Group Leader

One teacher, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit. The Group Leader should:

- have an appointed deputy;
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and accompanying adults;
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;
- have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of pupils below);
- complete and distribute the relevant paperwork including 'Emergency Procedures.' This can be found on the ICT network in School Admin/School Trips. In addition, all teachers should have a 'hard copy' to which they can refer.

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit

Teachers and other adults on the visit must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would;

- follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline;
- consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

Responsibilities of pupils

Depending on the age of the group, the group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks;
- follow the instructions of the leader and other adults;
- behave sensibly and responsibly;
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it;
- not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous.

Parents

The group leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits. A briefing sheet for parents and other volunteers is available.

When a child joins the School, parents are asked to give generic permission for short local visits e.g. to Cannizaro Park. However, signed consent must be obtained for all other visits and any which incur a cost to parents.

Planning off-site visits

For any off-site visit, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them. Where practical a pre visit should be made, and a risk assessment from the offsite location should be obtained prior to completing the Study Risk Assessment.

The Headmistress is ultimately responsible for all off-site visits. In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the group leader, but the Headmistress must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience. Health and Safety issues are in the main delegated to the Bursar who will liaise with the Headmistress as and when necessary.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using The Study's Risk Assessment Form. The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- what are the risks?
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit? (This will vary depending on the nature of the visit)

The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- the location;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities or residential trips, it is sensible to have at least one trained first-aider in the group or to be sure that there is a trained first aider at the venue.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit. There are no statutory requirements but the factors to take into consideration include:

- age and ability of group;
- special needs pupils;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation;

There should always be sufficient supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. The following minimum supervision ratios are suggested for guidance:

For day trips

- Reception 1:5
- Pre-Prep 1:6
- Prep 1:10

Some venues have their own suggested ratios and these should be adhered to as a minimum requirement.

Where a high adult:pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents may be used to supplement the supervision ratio.

All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. 'Guidance for Parent/Volunteer Helpers on School Trips' (School Admin/School Trips) should be issued to all parent helpers before the trip takes place and signed confirmation that this has been read and understood should be received.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and pupils should know what to do if they become separated from the party.

Preparing Pupils

Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, special educational or medical needs

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, special educational or medical needs will not be excluded from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Communicating with Parents / Guardians

Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place – 'in loco parentis' – and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupils' health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in letter to parents / guardians prior to a visit:

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site (residential trips);
- names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- visit's objectives;
- details of the activities planned;
- clothing and equipment to be taken;
- money to be taken;
- a consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

Residential visits

The school will bear in mind the following:

- staff quarters should be next to the children's rooms or very easily accessible – we will obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance;
- access by staff to pupils' rooms must be available at all times;
- ensure that the whole party is aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, fire precautions/exits, regulations and that everyone can identify key personnel;
- security arrangements
- ensure that locks / shutters etc. work on all the rooms used by the group;
- storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc.
- provision for sick children (or staff) and those with special needs;
- safety in rooms (e.g. electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

Farm visits

Farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm will be very carefully planned, and the risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections.

The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas.

We will never let pupils:

- place their faces against the animals or their hands in their mouths after feeding them;
- eat until they have washed their hands;
- sample any animal foodstuffs;
- drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities);
- ride on tractors or other machines;
- play in the farm area.

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