

## SCHOOL TRIPS POLICY

### Aims

The School recognises the importance of school trips for the educational, social and moral development of students. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that school trips are undertaken as safely as reasonably possible while retaining the enjoyment and educational or social value of the activity. To this end the careful preparation and supervision of school trips is essential. Many of the roles detailed below overlap to some extent to ensure that all aspects are fully considered before the start of the trip.

While the complete eradication of risk is impossible the aim of this policy is to ensure that trips are well planned in advance, that all foreseeable risks have been considered and safety measures put in place. All staff on a school visit owe a duty of care to act in the manner of a prudent parent in exercising their responsibilities towards the students. The first consideration at all times is to be the safety of participants.

Reference may be made to the booklet *Health and Safety on Educational Visits (2018)*.

### Role of the Governing Body

The Whitgift Foundation, as Proprietor and Governing Body, is responsible in law for the safety of all those who participate in school trips. In order to fulfil this obligation the Governing Body will appoint one of its members or School Committee members, subject to overall Court permission, to oversee the School's trips policy (as part of the Health and Safety Committee) and will require the Headmaster to:

- ensure that each trip has a specific and stated objective and that such objectives are appropriate to the age and abilities of the participants
- ensure that plans are in place to ensure the trip will proceed safely
- ensure that the Educational Visits Co-Ordinator ("EVC") is appointed and has the appropriate time and expertise to fulfil the responsibilities expected of him/her
- ensure that guidance is available to inform the School's policy, practices and procedures relating to the health and safety of students on trips
- ascertain what governor training is available
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that any visits are well-planned in advance
- satisfy himself that the necessary assurances have been obtained from any external contractors about competence and insurance cover
- ensure that any children with special needs or a disability are included as far as is reasonably possible in any trip

## **Roles of the Headmaster, the Senior Deputy and the Educational Visits Co-Ordinator**

While the Headmaster is the final authority in the day-to-day running of the school, many of his responsibilities are delegated to the Senior Deputy, and to the School's Educational Visits Coordinator. The Senior Deputy's main responsibilities for school trips are as the overall supervisor of arrangements for trips and to be the immediate point of reference for parents and the Governing Body.

The Senior Deputy, on behalf of the Headmaster, will:

- ensure that the EVC is suitably trained and competent to discharge his/her responsibilities
- ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the Governing Body to monitor the proper management of school trips
- monitor the activities of the EVC to ensure that the EVC's duties under this Policy are properly discharged
- make time available for the EVC to train any staff and non-staff supervisors before the trip commences
- ensure the School has emergency procedures in place in case of a major incident

### **Role of the Educational Visits Co-Ordinator**

This is a pivotal role in that the EVC shall be responsible for ensuring the safety of the school visit before, during and after the trip has ended. The EVC will also be responsible for assisting in the planning of school procedures to help the School fulfil its health and safety obligations for visits. The EVC will work closely with the Senior Deputy for both the strategic and operational aspects of school trips and procedure.

The EVC will:

- ensure that the School's Trips Procedure is followed
- ensure that every academic year all members of staff receive, sign and return to the EVC the Generic Risk Assessment for School Trips. The EVC will keep these signed risk assessments on file
- ensure that visits have a stated and appropriate objective
- satisfy himself/herself that appropriate risk assessments, including pre-visit assessments, have been satisfactorily undertaken – this also includes the competence and insurance cover of any external agencies involved in the trip
- check that an appropriate Group Leader is nominated. The EVC will satisfy himself/herself as to the Group Leader's competence and ability to maintain discipline
- ensure that all staff and non-staff are both competent and appropriate to be on the trip
- if necessary, train or arrange for staff or non-staff supervisors to be trained
- confirm in writing that non-staff volunteers can attend the visit and make sure that DBS disclosures are in place where necessary
- ensure that parents are fully informed about the trip, have provided their full and unequivocal consent to their child going on the trip and can be contacted for its duration
- ensure that supervision ratios are appropriate

- where an external agency assists with the visit, ensure the agency is competent and has appropriate insurance cover
- ensure that emergency arrangements for a trip are in place
- consider how students with special needs or a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 can be involved in school visits
- without prejudice to the Director of Estates and Facilities' role in making reports under RIDDOR, keep records of visits including reports of accidents or near incidents (near misses)
- review practice and systems in the light of any lessons learned during the visit
- attend such training sessions as are required to ensure that he has the necessary competence and skills to act as an EVC
- prepare forms and checklists for Group Leaders to complete in preparation before the trip and reporting following the trip
- discuss the proposed visit with the proposer as a first step
- ensure that the financial aspect of the proposal is sound
- advise the Headmaster or Senior Deputy on the feasibility or otherwise of the proposed trip
- ensure that all correspondence with parents and/or students is accurate, realistic, and informative and is not issued until the Headmaster or Senior Deputy has given provisional approval

## **Procedure for a School Visit**

- The teacher wishing to undertake a school trip will complete a planning trip form on Evolve, the online trips platform. This plan will be provided to the Headmaster or Senior Deputy who, if satisfied the trip is appropriate, will approve the trip online. No further action should be taken until approval at this stage is given.
- Parents will be informed of the proposed trip and, if deemed necessary, will be invited to attend a meeting(s) at the School to discuss the trip including insurance cover.
- The parents' written consent will be obtained – this will usually be covered by the annual consent form. Any child whose parents fail to give their full unequivocal written consent to the trip will not be allowed to participate. This includes parents being asked to give permission for emergency treatment for their children in the event that they cannot be contacted. This may take the form of the annual consent form.
- The EVC will undertake formal written risk assessments for all aspects of the visit, including travel arrangements. These risk assessments will be:
  - Generic activity risk assessments, that is assessments of risk likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place
  - Visit / site specific risk assessments which are likely to differ from place to place and group to group.
- If necessary the EVC will arrange for a pre-visit especially when neither the School nor the Group Leader has visited that location before.
- Where an activity centre or external agency is engaged by the School, the distinction between the responsibilities of the School and the staff of the agency needs to be clearly defined in writing.
- The involvement of any non-contracted adult must have the written approval of the Senior Deputy; in any residential trip such persons must have undergone a DBS check.

- Up to date medical information should be obtained on all students, especially when on a residential visit. Students with a medical record which gives cause for concern should be taken on a visit only after consultation with the EVC and Senior Deputy and with the written advice of the Senior School Nurse or other medical professional.
- The EVC will ensure that all reasonably practicable efforts have been made to include special needs or disabled students as fully as possible in the visit.
- Each visit will have a designated Group Leader who is employed by the School and is considered by the EVC and Senior Deputy to be sufficiently competent and experienced to fulfil this role. The Group Leader will be competent to undertake ongoing informal risk assessments as the trip progresses. Such assessments will consider unforeseen aspects of the trip such as illness of staff; inability of student to participate; change of weather or venue.
- If on a trip any student is taken to a doctor or to hospital it will be the normal procedure for the parents to be informed.
- The EVC will also satisfy himself/herself as to the suitability and competence of other supervisory adults to discharge the responsibilities assigned to them. In all matters the School expects members of staff or non-staff volunteers to carry out their responsibilities in a manner which is fair and reasonable.
- At the conclusion of the trip the EVC will ensure that a full report of the trip, including a record of any accidents or near incidents, together with any recommendations for amendments to procedures or arrangements for the management of similar trips, is completed online by the Group Leader. He/she will also ensure that, where appropriate, a full account of the finances is provided and a copy lodged with the Foundation.

At all times the Headmaster reserves the right to exclude any student from participating in a trip or expedition or any part of the trip. This authority is delegated to the Group Leader who is authorised to forbid the student from participating at any time during the trip if it becomes clear that the student is either incapable, or insufficiently responsible to, undertake all or any part of the trip or activities.

## **Supervision**

- Every trip must have a clearly designated Group Leader. Where there is a large party a Deputy Leader must also be designated. We define a large party as one where over 30 students are involved.
- The level of adult supervision must realistically reflect the purpose and nature of the trip, the age and maturity of the students, the experience of the accompanying adults, and any special needs or disabled students.
- The EVC and the Senior Deputy will ensure that the allocation of staff to a trip is equitable and made with due regard to experience, expertise and the ability to control the group in a manner which ensures the participants' safety and protects the good name of the School;
- While every trip must be judged on its merits, the School recommends a staff/student ratio of 1:10. Where the School is visiting abroad and/or a remote area or is undertaking a higher risk activity a higher staff to student ratio may be required. This must be discussed with the EVC or the Senior Deputy.

- Where a mixed visit is being undertaken, both male and female teachers must accompany the visit. For an all-student trip there, ideally, should be at least one male member of staff.
- The EVC and the Group Leader must explain clearly, and preferably in writing, the responsibilities of staff and adult supervisors on each visit; a briefing meeting is considered best practice.
- Students must know where they can contact an adult member of the party at all times. The Group Leader is to consider providing them with a “contact card” showing the name, address and telephone number of the group’s accommodation as well as the name of the school and Group Leader and any other contact telephone numbers (and in the appropriate foreign language if abroad).
- All staff must carry a list of all students on the visit and, for residential or non-UK trips, a copy of the Parents’ consent form for each student. Checks and roll calls should be frequent and a roll must always be called when students re-join any transport before departure.
- According to context, students should not wander around on their own unsupervised, but in groups of at least two or three; where appropriate, maps of the area should be distributed.
- Non-contracted adults can only accompany residential visits if the written permission of the Headmaster has been obtained and proper checks have been carried out including DBS checks.
- Fire procedures at residential sites are to be checked, as far as is possible, prior to the visit being undertaken. On arrival, all students and staff should be made aware of the fire procedures for the building.

### **Expertise in Activities**

- Accompanying adults must have reasonable knowledge, experience and skills (and in hazardous activities, qualifications) in the activities undertaken as well as the ability to control the group and ensure the maintenance of the high standards expected of Whitgiftians.
- The Senior Deputy, EVC and Group Leader must be satisfied that students are medically fit to undertake the planned activities. If there is any doubt, reference should be made to the School Nurse.
- Where staff have specific qualifications it is their responsibility to make sure that these are up to date and valid; the EVC will keep a record of such training and, if necessary, arrange for refresher sessions.
- If a member of staff has any reason to doubt the competence or conduct of any adult on a visit, this should be made known to the Group Leader at once with fully documented evidence (e.g. witnesses). It is the Group Leader’s responsibility to deal with the matter at once, if necessary contacting the EVC or Senior Leadership at school. All discussions should be accurately minuted.
- Where an external agency is being used, such as a travel company, the EVC will establish the competence of the agency’s staff in advance. Doing so may include an inspection of the agency/centre’s documentation on staff and risk assessment, equipment and its accident log. Where the activity is an adventure activity as defined in the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 the EVC will check that the agency holds a current licence.

- The EVC will ensure that all supervisors on the trip are competent to undertake informal risk assessments for any stage of the activity.

## **Knowledge of Area and Activities**

- Group Leaders should be familiar with the nature of the conditions likely to be encountered.
- Prior information must be obtained by the Group Leader or EVC about local hazards and safety requirements that are likely to be encountered. Where appropriate, contact should be made in advance with local agencies, wardens, the Foreign Office etc in order to ascertain local conditions.
- Informed and responsible local advice must always be heeded and acted on accordingly.
- Students and adults must be suitably clothed and equipped for particular activities and the conditions likely to be encountered.
- A pre-visit by the Group Leader and/or EVC may be necessary to evaluate the site(s) from an educational and safety viewpoint; where this is impractical, the EVC and Group Leader must be able to demonstrate to the Senior Deputy that sufficient preparation has been undertaken (e.g. use of a reputable travel agent's package) to ensure the safety of the group as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Where the trip is abroad an appropriate foreign language phrase-book should be taken. Every effort is to be made to ensure that at least one member of staff is fluent in the local language and, ideally, all members of staff should have some knowledge of it.
- Where foreign language exchange visits are undertaken, the School will raise the issue of safeguarding and child protection with the host school in writing; it is the responsibility of the host school to undertake the necessary precautions to the satisfaction of Whitgift School when acting as the agent for foreign students on exchange. Any concerns regarding the safeguarding of our students may result in the cancellation of the proposed foreign language exchange. When parents host students at Whitgift, DBS checks will need to be taken for the hosting families.
- Students on an exchange visit must have a telephone number and address of the Group Leader(s) whilst in the foreign country; regular contact is to be maintained with the student by the Group Leader(s) throughout the visit.
- On a foreign visit a member of staff must be nominated to act as a link between parents and the group.

## **Insurance Arrangements**

- For each school trip the Group Leader should ensure adequate insurance is in place as provided by the School's insurers or by separate insurance for specific trips. Details can be obtained from the Director of Estates and Facilities.
- Parents must be made aware of any insurance cover that has been arranged. Copies of travel insurance arranged must be sent to parents.
- Where the School is engaging an external agency the EVC shall satisfy himself/herself about the adequacy of the agency's insurance cover.



**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE TRAVEL INSURANCE POLICY HAS AN EXCESS OF £50 PER PERSON. IN THE TRIP CORRESPONDENCE, PARENTS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT IF AN INSURANCE CLAIM IS SUCCESSFUL, THE PAY-OUT WILL BE LESS THE £50 EXCESS. IF PARENTS ARE NOT HAPPY WITH THIS THEN THEY EITHER NEED TO PUT IN PLACE THEIR OWN EXCESS INSURANCE POLICY OR ARRANGE THEIR OWN TRAVEL INSURANCE POLICY (BUT ALL POLICIES HAVE AN EXCESS).**

**STAFF SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE WHEN MAKING REFUNDS THAT THEY DEDUCT THE EXCESS BEFORE DOING SO, SO THAT THE SCHOOL DOES NOT END UP BEARING THE COST OF THE EXCESSES.**

## **Transport**

The EVC will consider the transport needs of the party. He/she will:

- ensure that the tour operator or hirer of transport such as coach companies are reputable;
- check that there are sufficient adults on the trip to supervise the students and maintain good discipline – in this regard the School acknowledges that a staff or non-staff driver of a minibus cannot also be expected to supervise the students whilst travelling;
- ensure that any staff or non-staff drivers have the appropriate qualifications and, if necessary, insurances for driving that vehicle;
- consider whether there are any safety concerns arising from the mode of transport and plan in advance how to deal, for example students travelling on a ferry or a train;
- ensure that first aid is available is at all times which will include sickness tablets.

## **Charging**

- Where the visit is deemed by the Department concerned to be essential to fulfil the requirements of the School's prescribed syllabus, at least part of the cost should be borne by the Department. Heads of Department will need to include an appropriate provision when submitting their annual budget and will ensure that parents are aware of the dates and costs of the trip before the student starts the course. HoDs will ensure that parents are advised that in the event of financial hardship it might be possible to provide financial assistance.
- Where the visit is not deemed essential to teaching of the curriculum, it is an optional extra. As such, the full cost can be passed onto parents provided that they have given their consent.
- Where a trip is expected to cost more than £250 and is deemed to be 'useful' rather than 'essential', this must be made clear in the letter to parents advertising the trip.
- In the case of a very expensive trip (over £1000) that is 'helpful' to the participants, e.g. a sports tour, the organiser must commit to some fund-raising effort to reduce the anticipated cost to parents.
- With the exception of any trip deemed 'essential' and, therefore, part of the syllabus, **under no circumstances should a member of staff indicate that a student who does not participate in a trip will be disadvantaged in the future.**

- The cost of staff places on residential visits should be included in the overall total and apportioned to students or borne by the department, unless the Headmaster has approved additional assistance from other budgets.
- Reference should also be made to the School Trips Finance Policy.

## **Emergency Procedures**

- Group Leaders should ensure that a First Aid kit is taken on every school outing and must ensure that at least one member of staff has a minimum of a 'working knowledge' of first aid. First aid kits are available from the School Nurse.
- Group Leaders and supervisors must make sure that students are fully briefed about the local conditions which they are likely to face; students must also be told what to do if they encounter any difficulty or emergency or to know where to find either the Group Leader or an adult.
- All adults on a visit should have a list of students and their parents' emergency contact numbers or the School's contact details for emergencies during term time hours.
- Parents must be informed at the earliest opportunity if an emergency occurs. Parents will be asked to give permission for emergency treatment for their children in the event that they cannot be contacted.
- In the event of an accident or illness, parents must be informed as quickly as possible. If any student sustains an injury an Accident Report must be made and eyewitness accounts recorded in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy.
- Staff should remind themselves of the general rules regarding contact with parents or the press in the event of an emergency.
- A point of contact must be established at the School in order to transmit information to parents in certain circumstances (e.g. late returns); on residential visits a contact must be designated and his/her telephone number given to parents in advance of the visit.
- Adults on the trip are encouraged to take a mobile telephone and there are school mobiles available.
- The EVC, or nominated school contact for the trip, will prepare or authorise contingency plans for eventualities which may happen on a visit (e.g. care and/or return of ill/injured students, early return for disciplinary reasons); as far as is possible, parents should be informed of these plans in advance of the visit.
- The EVC or a senior member of staff must be available to the Group Leader for emergency contact.

## **Incident where group is separated e.g. Terrorism incident**

Trip leaders should make sure all staff are aware of what to do in a terrorist incident or some other incident which causes the group to become separated or in danger.

- Follow all instructions from emergency services.
- Staff should make sure groups and other staff know where to meet in case of an incident eg a high profile point, in case the group disperses. This should be done at the start of the trip and also during the trip
- Groups should stay together as well in particularly more vulnerable/likely places eg a major city – it is best not to split into too many smaller groups. Also, do consider carefully whether it is safe to allow groups to split up into different locations. If there is



an incident fewer groups and staying together will make it easier to look after everyone and deal with any injuries.

- Any time, eg a shopping centre, where you allow students to move around on their own, they must know where to meet in case of an emergency and carry with them their information card so they can get help if needed and you can be located. Consider carefully whether it is safe to allow students to move around on their own – consider their age and make sure they stay in groups of 3 or more. You should also have looked carefully at the place you are allowing this and if you are unsure do not allow them to move around unsupervised.
- In general, please remind staff and students to be vigilant and stay safe.
- If there is an incident, once it is safe to do so, contact the School or SMT duty member to update them as to what is happening and the support you need.
- In the event of a terrorist attack the Government has issued that the best practice is to RUN – HIDE – TELL. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-safe-film>

## **RULES APPLYING TO SCHOOL TRIPS**

Published School Rules are to be strictly adhered to throughout a School trip. Every student should have a current copy of the School Rules and they are available on the School website. Further copies are obtainable from the School Office. In particular, students' attention should be drawn to the following rules;

### **Alcohol (Lower School and Fourth and Fifth Forms)**

The purchase and/or consumption of alcohol on a School trip is expressly forbidden for students in the Lower School and Fourth and Fifth Forms.

Whilst the law regarding the purchase and consumption of alcohol may be more relaxed in other countries, the School rule with regard to alcohol will be consistently applied by staff.

Students are forbidden to take alcohol out as a gift for host families and may not purchase alcohol on their return as a gift for parents.

Students on exchange visits should be reminded that the ban on the consumption of alcohol applies to students below the Sixth Form at all times during the trip including when they are with families or otherwise not under the supervision of members of staff.

Staff are not permitted to purchase and store alcohol for students.

### **Alcohol (Sixth Form)**

The consumption of a very moderate amount of alcohol by Sixth Formers on a school trip is permitted but only under tightly controlled circumstances and when agreed by the Senior Deputy.

- Parental consent to drink alcohol should have been obtained prior to the trip on a special form obtainable from the Senior Deputy.
- Permission to drink alcohol is granted by the accompanying member of staff and is entirely at their discretion.
- Alcohol can only be consumed in the presence of a member of staff and only as an accompaniment to a meal.

- Sixth Form students are limited to 3 units of alcohol as an accompaniment to their meal. (1 unit being a glass of wine or half a pint of regular strength beer).
- Spirits may not be consumed during a school trip.
- Sixth Formers on exchange visits may, subject to prior written consent having been received by the trip organiser from parents, and subject to the wishes of the host family, consume in a family social context alcoholic drink, provided that the total amount consumed within a 24 hour period including any alcohol consumed with staff consent, does not exceed the amounts specified above.
- Consumption of alcohol at any other time on a school trip is forbidden and students who are discovered doing so can expect severe disciplinary action to be taken.

## **Smoking and Vaping**

Smoking and vaping are forbidden at all times on school trips.

## **Forbidden Items**

The following items may not be brought, or purchased, on a school trip:

- Fireworks, matches, cigarette lighters;
- Knives, guns, catapults and similar offensive weapons;
- Cigarettes and other smoking materials (including shisha and e-cigarettes)
- Any illegal substances;
- Pornographic material;
- e-cigarettes, vapes and shisha pens;
- Solvents.

## **Illegal Substances**

Any drug-related offence, including the possession, use or distribution of illegal Substances or any drug paraphernalia, is regarded extremely seriously. Any student who disregards English law with regard to illegal substances cannot expect to continue his education at Whitgift.

## **Behaviour**

Students should remember that the provision of trips at Whitgift depends entirely on the willingness of staff to give up their time and energy. It is, therefore, unacceptable for staff to have to experience the stress and inconvenience of dealing with thoughtless or willfully poor behaviour.

- The highest standards of behaviour are expected from all students on a School trip.
- Whilst on a School trip students are representing the School and, as such, are expected to display good manners, commonsense, honesty and consideration for others.
- Hotel/Hostel rooms should be kept tidy and noise should be kept to a minimum so that other guests are not disturbed.

- No guest can be taken into a hotel/hostel room without the permission of the group leader.
- Use of Social Media must be entirely appropriate and not bring the School into disrepute.
- Students should not take unnecessary risks and, if abroad, should be sensitive to local customs and cultures.
- The instructions of staff should be followed at all times. This is particularly important during the journey and with regard to reporting times, evening curfews and bedtimes.
- Poor behaviour brings the School into disrepute and is unacceptable.

Reviewed by the Educational Visits Coordinator and the Senior Deputy: September 2023

Next review: September 2024