

## **School Visits Policy and Procedures (including EYFS)**

### **1. General**

A school visit is defined as any visit, holiday, day trip, or other activity, which involves students being supervised by staff or other adults whilst away from Gad's Hill School for the purposes of education, sport or recreation. School visits are an important part of the education process and the purpose of these procedures is to make certain that each visit is sufficiently planned, supervised and organised to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Employers, school staff and others have a duty of care under common law to take care of pupils in the same way as a prudent parent would do.

In drawing up this policy and the accompanying procedures, the school follows recent DfE advice on “legal duties and powers for Local Authorities, Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies”. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilities-and-duties-for-schools> and <https://oeapng.info/guidance-documents/>

These procedures are not designed to place further administrative burden on teaching staff. They do, however, seek to minimise any risks to staff and students whilst they are away from school premises.

### **2. Types of visit**

At Gad’s Hill School, visits fall into one of two possible categories:

- A. Routine visits
- B. Higher risk visits

#### **A. Routine visits**

A routine visit is one which is undertaken during the course of the normal school day to a familiar or externally supervised location and one which does NOT involve high risk or adventurous activities. In general these are considered as routine school trips, e.g.: theatre, museums, Gad’s Hill Farm, the Dockyard, Rochester, sports activities, and fieldwork.

- B. Higher risk visits involve an activity or place of visit with a greater risk of potential harm to students or staff.

A higher risk visit will include:

- overnight / residential visits
- overseas visits
- that involve high risk / adventurous activities (such as skiing, sailing etc.)

### **3. Procedures**

Staff are directed to the *Educational Visits Handbook*, which contains advice and guidance for the safe organisation and management of school visits. This can be found on the SIS, on the staff page, under the tab headed Staff Docs, entitled Educational Visits Handbook. Staff must familiarise themselves with the procedures in the event of an emergency.

In the case of residential trips, visits or events involving KS4 pupils, approval must be sought from the Head of Senior School prior to a booking being confirmed. In the case of residential trips, visits or events involving EYFS, KS1 or 2 pupils, approval must be sought from the Head of Kindergarten and Junior School prior to a booking being confirmed. Approval must be acknowledged by completing a

visits form and submitting via the EVC (CG in the Senior School and AP in the Junior School or Kindergarten) for checking. The EVC will forward final documents to the appropriate SMT for checking at least 7 days prior to the trip commencing.

#### **Procedures for Routine Visits:**

- Complete a visit form and submit to the EVC for approval. It is good practice to raise dates of forthcoming events at the staff conference, well in advance, to avoid a clash of events.
- A letter should be sent to parents as detailed in Information to Parents.
- The visit should be entered onto the SIS and the visit form attached.
- Any necessary risk assessments (school or venue) should be completed, and attached to the function form. The level of detail on the risk assessment form must reflect the perceived level of risk of the activity.
- An up-to-date nominal role must be lodged with the school office at the time of departure, with the visit pack.
- Templates for the visits forms are to be found on the e-forms section of the SIS.
- Staff must obtain an emergency contact number and current medical conditions for all participants on the visit, including accompanying adults. These details are available via Isams, must be taken on the trip and a copy lodged in the office prior to departure. Pupils with medical care plans should be highlighted and a copy of the plan taken on the trip.
- Prior to leaving school, the EVC will leave a complete “visit pack” with the school office. This should contain an itinerary, risk assessment, visit form, staff/pupil list, contact telephone details and medical conditions and a copy of the parent letter.

#### **Procedures for Higher Risk Visits:**

Special consideration needs to be applied when organising residential, adventurous activities, coastal visits, field work in a potentially hazardous location and overseas visits.

When planning an activity involving caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports (other than rowing), the organiser must check that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 (for England, Scotland and Wales).

Follow the procedure for a standard visit and also:

- Parent’s evenings may be required to fully inform parents, prior to their financial commitment and to provide detailed pre-departure information. The Headmaster/EVC can advise.
- A detailed itinerary must be given to parents by letter, this will include details of accommodation, modes of transport, emergency contact numbers for the school and company/venue.
- Detailed risk assessments must be undertaken for all those aspects of the visit which are considered to be of high risk. If using a tour operator, risk assessments provided by the company are acceptable.
- A separate parental consent form must be obtained, including 2/3 current emergency contacts, medical information and dietary requirements.

#### **4. Risk Assessments**

Regular trips such as fixtures, swimming, Gad’s Hill Farm visits do not require written risk assessments.

The purpose of risk assessment and management is to help children to undertake activities safely, not to prevent activities from taking place. Children should be made risk aware, not risk averse. Common sense should be used in assessing and managing the risks of any activity. Health and safety procedures should always be proportionate to the risks of an activity.

Generic risk assessments are available on the SIS for routine school visits but there is space on the form to add risks specific to individual visits. A written risk assessment for a routine visit is not always necessary.

Higher risk visits must include individual and thorough written risk assessments including consideration of any current home office government advise regarding travel or possible threat.

Where site risk assessments are available from locations to be visited, these should be requested in advance. The risk assessment must be taken on the visit and amended in situ if there are any changes to planned activities or the itinerary. The filed risk assessment can be updated upon return to school.

NB: Any injury or death of a member of staff or child outside Great Britain may be subject to the law of the land in which the injury/death occurred. A school could still be held liable if the injury is the result of negligence on the part of the school or its staff.

### **5. Parental consent**

The school holds “life-time” consent forms for all its pupils which cover parental permission for their child to participate in standard school visits and for accompanying staff to grant permission for emergency medical treatment. However, in the EYFS all visits require individual consent. All overnight trips require an updated consent form. Higher risk visits will also require parental permission with details proportionate to the activities to be undertaken. It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the school of any changes to a child’s medication and personal contact details.

### **6. Supervision & Management**

All visits must be adequately supervised by adults with appropriate DBS clearance. One member of staff must be the designated “*Party Leader*”. That person will have overall responsibility for the organisation of the trip though they may delegate aspects of this to other staff members. Other staff who accompany the trip will provide support for and be responsible to the party leader regardless of their normal management designation within the staffing structure of the school. The party leader will hold ultimate management responsibility and accountability for the trip and for those staff, adults and children who are accompanying it.

Non-staff adults are often welcome as an additional “pair-of-hands” in support of the trip and such adults (parents, spouses, family members, Governors etc.) who are not members of school staff may be invited to accompany a trip as a volunteer *or* guest. Any associated charges will be communicated in advance and processed by the bursary. In relation to Non-staff adults accompanying the trip the following must apply:

- a. The party leader must make a risk assessment in relation to individual non-staff adults who wish to accompany the trip. If their presence would pose a high risk of disruption to the trip or risk to the children then they should not accompany the trip. For example; non-staff adults may have a record in their contact with the school of being non-compliant, difficult to manage, argumentative with staff, or already a party to a safeguarding event etc.

- b. The party leader must consider and manage the potential for conflicts of interest (for example; parents whose children are on the trip, family members of staff, Governors etc.) as a part of the risk assessment.
- c. Non-staff adults who are not DSB cleared must not have unsupervised access to children.
- d. The party leader must brief staff and non-staff adults in respect of their relationship and responsibilities within the party. Especially the chain-of-command and responsibilities
- e. Non-staff adults must complete and sign a "Code-of-Conduct" (see Appendix 1) prior to the trip, which will be returned to the trip leader, who will retain a copy for the duration of the trip.
- f. Non-staff adults (including Governors) do not have operational authority over members of staff and must not interfere with staff decisions or duties in relation to the conduct of the trip or the education or management of the children.
- g. The party leader, supported by school staff, has ultimate authority in all matters relating to the operation of the trip, the education, safety and welfare of the pupils and staff.

The Bursary is responsible for applying for DBS checks. However a volunteer/parent can take the role of a responsible adult without a DBS check provided they do not have unsupervised access to children. An adequate number of adults must accompany each group to fulfil the staff: pupil ratio that is suitable for the age group and activity.

The school guidance, based on level of assessed risk, on supervision is as follows:

- a) Foundation stage - One supervisor to every 4 pupils unless the risk assessment deems a higher ratio is necessary.
- b) Years 1 to 2 - One supervisor to every 5 pupils
- c) Year 3 - One supervisor to every 6 pupils
- d) Years 4 to 6 - One supervisor to every 10 pupils
- e) Years 7 to 11- One supervisor to every 10 - 15 pupils, depending on the nature of the activity.

### **7. Host Families**

Host families may be used to accommodate pupils on sports or language exchanges. When arrangements are made direct between two families which accept responsibility, this is regarded as a personal arrangement and outside the scope of regulated activity. However, where the family is paid, the arrangement to accommodate a child is not made by the pupil's family, or the school has the power to terminate the arrangement and could constitute regulated activity. In this case a DBS check including a barred list check should be obtained and suitable records kept.

In the case of pupils being accommodated with host families overseas, the school will work with partner agencies, such as a school or travel operator to ensure that appropriate assurances are obtained before a visit.

Staff will take reasonable steps to safeguard young people for example ensuring that pupils are seen by a member of staff every day while away from home, have access to a mobile phone with signal or know who to contact and how if they have any concerns about their own safety.

### **8. Special consideration**

Special Consideration must be made for pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD) or Language and Learning Difficulties (LLD). These considerations should include:

- a) Increased ratio of supervision – specific allocation of staff

- b) Severity of the Learning or Language Difficulty
- c) Suitability of the activity and any possible adaptations
- d) The impact on the group dynamics
- e) Suitability of the visit location and the availability of suitable and adequate facilities. e.g.: Toilets
- f) Specialist medication and medical facilities readily available

Every effort should be made to make all school trips and visits available to all pupils, however, where a pupil may be endangered by the visit then consideration of the pupil's welfare must be a priority.

### **9. First Aid**

The school requires the appointment a designated First Aid qualified supervisor on both routine and higher risk visits. With Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, the designated First Aider must hold a Paediatric First Aid qualification. A fully stocked and checked first aid kit should be taken on all trips and visits. See (S9) Medical Treatments and First Aid procedures para 30-34 for the action to be taken if an ambulance is required.

### **10. Pupil Behaviour**

Trips and visits put Gad's Hill pupils in the public eye and as such their behaviour and appearance are of paramount appearance. The group leader must set out clear boundaries for behaviour and appearance. A Pupil 'code of conduct' is available on the SIS which Group Leaders should encourage children to sign.

### **11. Transport**

Transport of pupils must be appropriate for the age and size of the group. The school minibuses are available depending on their availability. All drivers must satisfy the school's regulations for driving, as indicated in the school staff handbook. When private cars are used, they must be roadworthy and comply with Road Traffic Legislation. The school insurance covers the vehicle, driver and passengers when being used on school business.

When using outside coach companies, the group leader must use a reputable company and raise any concerns they may have with the coach driver before allowing pupils to travel.

All passengers on any mode of transport must adhere to the safety regulations regarding seat belts and the use of booster seats as set out by relevant legislation.

Prior to each departure pupils must be briefed on expected standards of behaviour and emergency procedures as detailed on the briefing cards supplied in the school minibuses.

### **12. Insurance**

All school trips must have adequate insurance. In most cases the school insurance will cover the trip. The school insurers are: **Accident and Health**. There may be activities that will require additional premiums, the Bursary has details of these. The trip organiser must check with the bursary that the insurance cover is adequate for the activities undertaken on the trip.

### **13. Information for parents**

Details of the visit must be sent to parents in letter form in advance of any visit. As a minimum this must include:

- a. the name/educational purpose and venue of the visit
- b. details of activities to be undertaken

- c. the member of staff organising and responsible for the visit
- d. the cost and method of payment (cheque in advance or recharge)
- e. financial penalties incurred if a child is unwilling to travel or 'pulls out' of the trip (if relevant)
- f. time of departure/return and/or detailed itinerary + travel arrangements
- g. specific clothing and equipment needed
- i. the school emergency contact number
- j. a request for any amendments to contact and medical details on the 'lifetime' parental consent.

#### **14. Nominal roll**

A full list of participants for each visit must be available in the school office at the time of the visit. The group leader must ensure that a register is taken before departure and an updated copy of the nominal roll **is** lodged in the school office or telephoned in if the trip departs before school opens. The school emergency contact **must** ensure this information is taken with them if the trip is out of school hours.

Staff leading school visits, particularly residential ones, should provide a list of those children taking part to the **designated teacher** to ensure that they are made aware of all essential information relating to the pupils in their care.

#### **15. In the event of accident or emergency**

Any major incidents, or illness or injury of a serious nature must be reported to the duty manager or school office on 01474 822366 as soon as is practicable. Staff must keep a detailed log of all actions, including dates, times and people involved. Any media contact must be managed and coordinated with the duty manager. Outside school hours, the school emergency contact/duty manager must be informed. The member of staff in charge of the visit should follow the emergency procedures as set down in the *Gad's Hill School Visits Handbook*, (also documented in the crisis management policy) which must be taken on the visit.

On return from the visit the organiser must report to the school office/EVC/Headmaster/Bursar with details of any injuries or illnesses sustained by staff or pupils during the visit where necessary. The school accident book must be completed at the earliest opportunity and the incident logged on Isams.

#### **16. Data Protection**

When distributing information to accompanying staff regarding pupils and staff, care and consideration must be taken with data of a personal nature such as addresses, medical details to ensure that the data is secure but without compromising the safety and welfare of trip participants.

Material containing personal information about staff or pupils which has been distributed to accompanying staff for the duration of the trip, must be collected by the trip organiser and shredded at the end of the trip. Trip documentation, including planning and risk assessments, compiled by the trip organiser and must be forwarded to the Trips and Visits co-ordinator to be stored for a period of 14 years (KG & Juniors) or 10 years (seniors).

If an incident of a medical, safeguarding or disciplinary nature takes place during the trip then a report should be compiled (either on Isams, or if lengthy, then as a file note) and this record must be retained with the trip documentation for the same time period.

**Staff responsible: CG and AP**

**Reviewed: May 2019**

**Review date: May 2020**

**Governor responsible: Kirsty Hillocks**