



# Trips and Visits Policy

DRAFT

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This policy should be read in-conjunction with the following documents:

**St. Helens Council's:**

- ***Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits,***
- ***Guidelines for Schools (EVGfS)*** and
- ***Handbook for Group Leaders (HfGL)***

## **Preamble**

### *Introduction*

An educational trip or visit has enormous potential for enriching the school curriculum and, in some cases; it is an essential requirement of examination courses. Such enterprises, though demanding, can be enjoyable experiences for both students and staff. Thousands of school trips and visits take place every year, the vast majority safely and without incident. However, we are all aware that very occasionally things can and do go wrong. It is therefore very important that all trips and visits are properly planned and organised and that all staff involved with school trips and visits take all reasonable steps to ensure that risks are minimised.

### *Definition*

For the purpose of this policy, a school trip or visit is defined as any occasion when a student or group of students are away from the school site, undertaking a school activity and under the supervision of a member of staff. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, the word 'trip' will largely be used throughout this policy but where this occurs, please understand 'trip and/or visit', as appropriate.

This policy pays attention to the following guidance:

- Children should be able to experience a wide range of activities. Health and Safety measures should help them to do this safely, not stop them
- It is important that children learn to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life
- 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
- Staff should be given the training they need so they can keep themselves and the children safe and manage risks effectively
- The school policy does not seek to replace local or other professional guidance or regulations. All group leaders should follow LA guidance as a first recourse, but no guidance should be taken as an authoritative interpretation of law.

## Educational Trip / Visit Protocol for Trips / visits / holidays

### Procedure Overview Checklist:

1. Complete SCHOOL TRIP/EDUCATIONAL VISIT Initial Approval Form
2. SLT Approval.
3. Complete LA form if appropriate
4. Approval by Principal and Chair of Governors – (Residential and overseas visits).
5. Bookings and Preparation.
6. Notification to Governors
7. Collection of Monies (Parent Pay)
8. Complete Educational Visits documentation including risk assessment.

### Details

#### *Planning*

All trips require authorisation by the Vice Principal and should be planned in plenty of time. The school **must** be notified of all occasions when a student or group of students leave the school premises, either accompanied by members of staff or to meet members of staff at a pre-arranged location.

The completion of the Initial Approval form assists in planning and assessing the value of each trip.

The SCHOOL TRIP/EDUCATIONAL VISIT Initial Approval form must be completed and submit for approval **as far in advance as possible (at least 1 month for non-residential 2 months for residential visits)**. SLT will consider if the trip is suitable and for Calendar clashes.

Residential visits, or visits likely to have a significant impact on the day to day running of the school, will require both SLT approval and be notified to Governors.

**Staff must not make any formal commitment, incur or commit any expenditure or inform students or Parents until it has been formally approved.**

#### *The Timing of Trips and Visits*

**Students must miss lessons as rarely as possible.**

It is essential to the smooth running of the rest of the school that school trips are properly planned and arranged to ensure minimal disruption to all, both those on the trip and those left behind.

Departments are strongly encouraged to plan their pattern of trips and visits for the coming academic year as early as possible. This allows clashes to be kept to a minimum. Trips and visits will be included in the school calendar if planned in time and will take priority over non-calendared events. The earlier a trip is planned, the more likely it is to be approved.

While it is often easy to justify a trip from the benefit to one's own subject, lessons missed in other subjects need to be considered. Obviously, there will be times when it is impossible to avoid taking students out during lesson time, but full consideration must be made of alternative times before making such a decision.

Residential trips should take place during school holidays to avoid a loss of teaching time.

### ***The Cost of School Trips***

**This must comply with the School Policy on "Charging & remissions"**

For a trip that takes place **wholly or mostly in school time** or is an **essential** part of our curriculum then the school may only officially ask Parents to make a **voluntary** contribution towards the costs of the trip. Any student whose Parent does not contribute **must** still be included on the trip. The trip leader must, in their planning, identify where any short fall, between money collected and the total cost of the trip, will be recouped from. The trip leader may limit the amount of this short fall, in which case the trip would have to be cancelled if this limit was exceeded and all monies collected returned.

Costs to include in any calculations for the total cost of the trip that must be recovered

- Transport
- Access/Entry fees
- Instructor's fees
- Equipment hire
- Insurance
- Student food & drinks that would be billed to school
- *Anything else that would be billed to the school*
- NOT VAT – which can be reclaimed

For a trip that takes place **wholly or mostly outside of school time** and **is not an essential** part of our curriculum, then the school may charge Parents for students who take part in that activity. It is important that a breakdown of the cost is included in the initial letter to Parents so that they may see what is being covered/NOT covered and how much money may be returned at the end that was collected as a "contingency fund". The trip leader should also outline on what items the contingency fund may be spent. For transparency, after the completion of any residential trip then the Parents must be sent a simple set of accounts along with any returned money.

School Trips must be self-funding. There is no central contingency fund for overspending trips.

Parent Pay is the school's preferred method of making payment to the school.

Refunds will not generally be given if a child is removed from a trip for whatever reason. In exceptional circumstances, (e.g. if another child is found to take that place), then some refund may be considered. However, all deposits are strictly non-refundable and any expenditure incurred or committed any the school at the time of withdrawal will remain the responsibility of the pupil or parent.

If a child is removed from a trip for behavioural reasons, then no refund would normally be considered.

### *Parental Consent*

The school will seek annual consent from parents for students to take part in all curriculum based trips and after school sporting activities. For all residential trips parental consent must be sort on an individual basis for each trip. It is best practice that for overseas trips that the consent form includes a translation (where appropriate) into the local language to aide local Doctors/Medical staff to understand that you have permission to act on the Parents behalf.

### *Communicating with Parents*

Parents must be informed in writing about all trips and include all details of the purpose and supervision arrangements. Trip leaders must have an alternative option planned for any student whose parents choose to withdraw them from a trip.

If a trip involves overnight accommodation, Parents must be given full details of the type of accommodation provided and the security arrangements which are in place to ensure the safety of their child. They must be fully informed as to the nature of the trip, with a clear indication of the organisation for supervision and any activities that will use remote supervision. Parents must acknowledge that their child is fit enough to go on the trip, outline any health problems and authorise the leader of the party to act on their behalf in an emergency. They must also provide a contact number for the duration of the trip.

For longer trips, particularly those overseas, the trip leader must hold a Parents' Information Evening a few weeks before departure. This allows information to be shared, questions to be asked and answered, and reassurance to be given where appropriate. The publication of an information booklet for Parents and students is also strongly advised.

The trip leader **must** ensure that he/she is in possession, throughout the trip, of all medical and contact information of the students taking part on the trip. The MIS manager can help with the production of contact numbers and medical information held on our database if consulted in due time.

The school will nominate a school contact for the trip. This will be a senior colleague.

## **Supervision**

Any adult involved on the trip needs to realise that they are responsible for the students in their care for the full duration of the trip and for residential trips this will be 24 hours per day. Staff may not delegate responsibility to anyone else and must be capable at any point in the day (or night) to make informed decisions in the event of an emergency.

Best practice is to divide the total number of students into smaller groups that each supervising adult can take responsibility for. It is important that this supervising adult has all appropriate information on those students and each student knows which adult is responsible for their care. If for any reason this has to change during the trip then students must be clearly informed of which adult has taken over the care for them.

For periods of remote supervision students should be organised in “buddy” groups of not less than 4 students so that if an emergency occurs none of the students could be left on their own.

There are no exact ratios for school trips. The trip leader must ensure that the staffing for a trip is ‘reasonable’. This will depend on the age, gender mix, ability and behaviour of the students involved. It will depend on the type of activity undertaken, the nature of the journey and the type of accommodation if the trip is overnight. The competence of the adults supervising a trip must also be considered, together with the need for first aid cover.

### **For general activities 1 adult for every 15-20 students is reasonable.**

However, it is stressed that this is only an example. Trip leaders must assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular trip.

Trips to remote areas or those which involve more hazardous activities will clearly require a higher level of supervision. It is also the case that many institutions which are open for visits by school parties have their own staffing guidelines which need to be adhered to. Staff taking trips must always check with the locations they are visiting about such matters.

When trip leaders are considering the staffing for their trips they must always bear in mind the consequences of staff absences on those left behind. If several people are required to staff a trip then consideration should be given to using support staff. However, in these cases suitable cover must be available for anyone on a trip. Staff must not assume that support staff can simply leave school for a day without any consequences for cover arrangements.

If a school trip is taking place which involves several members of staff, each person going on the trip must ensure that the relevant paperwork has been completed. The composition of the staff involved with a trip often changes from the time the initial permission form is submitted. It is very important that the school and Cover coordinator know exactly who will be out on trips and that cover arrangements for lessons and duties have been put in place. The trip leader must co-ordinate this

process, but **all staff who go on trips must** take responsibility for ensuring their lessons and duties are covered appropriately.

If a trip cannot be fully covered by members of staff, there are circumstances where other adults can be used to supervise trips. All adults who supervise school trips should have been agreed in consultation with SLT and have completed appropriate DRB checks.

### **Communication regarding Behaviour**

The Governors have agreed that excellent behaviour is a requirement of all pupils and students included in trips. If, in the opinion of the trip organiser, a pupil's behaviour or attitude may cause concern then the pupil concerned can be removed from the trip. A record of this decision should be made.

The letter to parents should include the following paragraph:

*All school trips and events are considered a reward for excellent behaviour and the school reserves the right to refuse any pupil whose behaviour or attitude may be of concern. All money paid into the trip is non-refundable. This applies even if the school decides that, because of misconduct or poor attitude on the part of your son / daughter, it would not be appropriate for him / her to take part. Signing the reply slip indicates that you understand, accept and support this policy and will make no claim against the school if it is applied. Please do not sign the form otherwise. Your child will only be accepted onto the trip if the reply slip is signed.*

The reply slip should include the following:

*I / We have read the details of this trip and have impressed upon my/ our child the need for appropriate behaviour at all times. I understand that no refund will be claimable. I / We accept the conditions outlined in the letter.*

### **Risk Assessments**

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what, could cause harm to students and staff on the trip, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

The EV pack contains a risk assessment form. For most 'routine' trips the thorough completion of this form is a sufficient process of risk assessment. Any trips involving high risk activities and all trips involving overnight stays require a full, separate risk assessment.

The risk assessment must be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?

- Can the trip leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

For trips that will involve outdoor or adventurous activities or indeed residential trips, staff are reminded to request copies of risk assessments from the service provider well in advance of the trip and to make reference to these in their own risk assessments.

### ***Factors to Consider in Planning a Trip***

The following list is not exhaustive, but it tries to summarise what needs to be done during the planning and organisation of a trip. The list also gives further ideas about areas for risk assessment.

- Facilities/equipment the group will need to take
- Facilities/equipment provided at the venue
- Staff training needs
- Designating someone to record the visit and carry accident forms, etc.
- Transport arrangements, including meeting arrangements for trips which leave before the start of morning school and collection arrangements for trips which return after the end of normal school
- Insurance arrangements
- Communication arrangements
- Supervision ratio
- Contingency plans for enforced changes of plans or late return
- Information to parents
- Information to school
- Preparing students
- Arrangements for sending students home early
- Emergency arrangements

### ***Running the Trip***

The group leader should have a copy of the ***Handbook for Group Leaders*** with them for the duration of the trip.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Teachers in charge of students have a duty of care to make sure that the students are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take lifesaving action in an extreme situation.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school visit. If an emergency happens the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- Attend the casualty



- Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident

### *Guidance on Emergency Procedures*

A copy of the following guidelines must be taken by all party leaders and their deputies.

- Establish nature and extent of the emergency.
- Make sure that all other members of the party are accounted for and safe.
- If there are injuries, establish their extent and administer first aid (if you have been trained or feel capable – but be aware of consequences that might follow were you to give incorrect treatment).
- Establish names of the injured and call relevant emergency services.
- Advise other party staff of the incident and that emergency procedures are in operation.
- Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies casualties to hospital.
- Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout and arrange for their early return to base.
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all children are accounted for.
- Control access to telephones until contact is made with the Principal/EVC and until they have had time to contact those directly involved. Pass full details of:
  - the incident (name, nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, details of injuries, names and telephone numbers of those involved, action taken so far).
  - Telephone numbers for future communication; identify alternate telephone numbers in case telephone lines become jammed.
- The school will arrange to contact the parents of those involved. In serious incidents the parents of all party members should be informed. The school will also inform parents of any delays that will be necessitated.
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- Media:
  - No one in the group should speak to the media.
  - All media enquiries should be referred to the Principal.
  - Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty or others involved be divulged to the media.
- The Party Leader should write down as soon as practicable all relevant details. A record should be made of any witnesses. Preserve any vital evidence.
- Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.
- All accident forms should be completed and insurers and HSE or Local Authority inspectors should be contacted.

### *Additional Procedures for Visits Overseas*

Prior to the visit the tour leader should obtain and take with them:

- European Health Insurance Card (where appropriate) and significant medical histories.

- Details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number.
- Location of local hospital/medical services.

In the case of an emergency the framework outlined above should operate. In addition the group leader should notify the British Embassy/Consulate.

### *After the Trip*

The trip leader must inform the school contact (phone call/text) (or whoever has been delegated as the school contact) that the party has returned safely and ensure that all the students are safely collected from school by a responsible adult, such as a parent or guardian.

If any difficulties or incidents occur on a school trip, the appropriate SLT member must be informed as soon as possible after the trip returns to school so that appropriate follow up action can be taken quickly.

## Transport

Most school trips will involve transportation by some type of bus: a school minibus; hired minibus or hired coach. It is extremely important that staff and students use such transportation safely. **Everyone must wear seat belts at all times.** It is good practice for staff to remind all students of the need for good behaviour before all minibus and bus journeys. On coach journeys Staff must remember that the journey is an integral part of a school trip and appropriate risk assessments must be carried out.

### *Using the School Minibus*

The school owns one minibus:

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### *Booking a Minibus*

You need to see the Finance Assistant who will book the minibus for you. You will need to indicate if you need a minibus driver for the journey. You also need to enquire the cost of using the minibus for that journey and indicate how you will be covering these costs.

### *Driving the Minibus*

**It is strongly recommended that staff do not drive the minibus if they feel excessively tired.** The consumption of alcohol when in charge of a minibus either as a driver or a passenger is forbidden and due notice must be paid to 'night before' consumption of alcohol.

On longer journeys, regular stops should occur and **staff must not drive for more than two hours at a time without a break.** As far as possible, two drivers should be

available for longer journeys. Judgements about potential problems with a journey must form part of the risk assessment process which takes place before departure.

If there are any concerns about the vehicle's roadworthiness (before/during/after journey) **it must not be used** and these concerns **must** be reported to the Finance Assistant immediately. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that the bus is clean both before and after a journey. The details of the minibus log/ pre-travel checks that must be completed by the driver before each journey and returned to the Finance Assistant. Please leave the vehicle in a state that you would like to collect it on a future occasion. Receipts for purchases of fuel or oil must be kept and handed in to the school office for reimbursement.

### *Sixth-Form Trips – Making their own way to and from venue*

Staff organising trips for Sixth-Formers who make their own way to and/or from a venue must state this fact to parents in writing stating that students will not be supervised when they are travelling. Parents need to accept responsibility for the students at this time by signing correspondence to that effect.