



Thomas's
LONDON DAY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL TRIPS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. THE VALUE AND PURPOSE OF SCHOOL VISITS AND VENTURES

A great deal of attention is now paid to the quality and effectiveness of the learning opportunities offered to children and young people and the strategies used to promote best practice.

Attempts to enhance learning or provide realistic situations to use and apply knowledge, skills and understanding are at the forefront of good practice. Learning in its broadest sense, frequently turns to the exciting and stimulating environments that are provided outdoors. This may be just outside and beyond the classroom or group based, through journeying far and wide.

Where these opportunities are well planned and structured, the values have been shown to be clear.

The children have the opportunity to:-

- Use and apply their knowledge and understanding outdoors, in a different and often more stimulating environment.
- Focus on specific environments, from geography trails to problem solving and team challenges, to develop their organisational, team working and leadership skills.
- Develop an awareness and understanding of environmental and sustainability issues, through fieldwork studies.
- Raise their awareness and understanding of the wider safety issues through opportunities to become involved in risk assessment and risk management.
- Learn new skills.
- Reinforce existing skills and knowledge by putting theory into practice and through interaction with others.
- Enjoy the experience and learn from it.

2. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF LEARNING ACROSS AND BEYOND THE CURRICULUM

2.1 DEVELOPING KEY SKILLS

- Using and applying knowledge, skills and understanding in different, realistic and exciting contexts.
- Developing the ability to work co-operatively.
- Developing the ability to communicate successfully.
- Showing initiative and a positive attitude.
- Showing greater independence, moving towards self-reliance.
- Becoming increasingly risk aware and increasing understanding and independent action.

2.2 RAISING ACHIEVEMENT BY BOOSTING SELF-ESTEEM AND MOTIVATION

- Raising self-esteem through successful participation and enjoyment.
- Developing a positive attitude to learning.
- Helping demonstrate strengths and understanding of limitations.
- Encouraging responsibility.
- Improving behaviour.
- Addressing disaffection.

2.3 DEVELOPING SOCIAL EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

- The ability to work with others, accept and support them, building relationships.
- Learning to tolerate others and respect their views – understanding equal opportunities.
- Learning to accept the consequences of their own actions.
- Learning to defend their own point of view.
- Encouraging a commitment to voluntary service.
- Exploring attitudes and values they will carry into adult life.

2.4 PROMOTING EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- An appreciation of the natural world as a source of interest and challenge.
- A concern for living things.
- An understanding of the need for interdependence between people and the environment.
- Recognition of the effect of present actions on the future.
- An increasing ability to access evidence and make personal decisions.

2.5 PROMOTING HEALTH AND FITNESS AND A POSITIVE USE OF LEISURE

- Developing a positive attitude to physical activities and a health lifestyle.
- Developing and experiencing physical fitness and well-being.
- Achieving success in physical activities.
- Developing self-respect and self-discipline and the ability to cope with adversity.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS

Serious accidents during educational visits and adventurous activities are rare as they take place in controlled and safe environments. However, when school visits or ventures do go wrong, they hit the media headlines, going straight to the top of national and local coverage, whilst similar and far more frequent incidents in other contexts do not. It is necessary, therefore, to have a realistic and balanced view.

The key roles and responsibilities of the Schools, the Principals, The Senior Management Team, the Heads of Departments, Group Leaders and support staff/helpers, when taking children on out of school activities are set out in this policy. We have a duty to ensure that:

- We make our children more risk aware and able to manage themselves.
- Parents and others with that responsibility are:-
 - made fully aware of the risks involved in educational visits and adventurous activities.
 - shown how these risks are managed.
 - informed of what strategies are to be put in place to make them manageable.
- Once this information is in place, parents are able to make an informed decision about giving their consent.

Explanation and parental consent does not remove the responsibilities of the School and Principals under health and safety law, as the corporate parent.

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSION

Everyone concerned needs to ensure that every effort is made to include all children. The challenge is to make these activities available and accessible in some form to all who wish to participate or are required to take part. This would be irrespective of their special educational or medical need, disability, ethnic origin, sex or religion.

It needs to be remembered that this must be done whilst maintaining the safety of all those concerned, the integrity of the activity and the ability to manage the visit or venture. These are significant factors to be managed, which may over-ride other considerations.

5. ESTABLISHING THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF ALL VISITS, VENTURES AND ACTIVITIES

All activities organised through the Schools are expected to have a clear educational value. It is important that this is identified and understood by everyone concerned, in order that:

- High expectations are to be set and codes of behaviour agreed.
- Roles and responsibilities are to be clearly identified and determined.
- Appropriate strategies are used to realise the aims.
- Parents and others are fully informed of the nature of the venture.

The Head, The Senior Management Team and Group Leaders must each, in their own way, satisfy themselves that the appropriate strategies are in place to make them happen. At an appropriate stage, aims, objectives and expectations should be shared with the group. Without such a focus, the key elements of the venture and its full potential are unlikely to be realised. The more positively they are thought through and planned for, the more successful the outcomes.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

Everyone involved in working with children is aware of the importance of health and safety. Quite simply, nobody would want any harm to come to anyone involved in an educational visit, off-site venture or adventurous activity.

The position is not complicated. Whilst the School, the Principals and the Heads' have particular responsibilities, it is a responsibility shared by everyone within the school.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999 set out responsibilities. Legislation is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive.

7. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VISITS

7.1 THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

This is the key role for ensuring that the management of visits and ventures meets the regulations and conforms to the schools health and safety policy.

This management process needs to be in conjunction with a clear picture of expectations and standards that can be achieved by making the most of the positive learning opportunities presented.

Any delegation of responsibilities must be done with a clear rationale, derived from a good knowledge of the people concerned; the visits and activities; the aims and objectives; and the risk assessments you require.

7.2 THE EDUCATIONAL VISITS CO-ORDINATOR (EVC)

The Head of School may delegate some of their duties to a designated, senior member of staff.

7.3 THE GROUP LEADER

This is the person with overall responsibility for the administration, programme, supervision and conduct of the venture. They are therefore an important part of the health and safety and good practice support system, and should both understand their own responsibilities and those of the other people in the process who contribute to their support, success and confidence.

7.4 MEMBERS OF THE GROUP WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

These people will assist the Group Leader in all their tasks and activities and will need to demonstrate person specific, pastoral, technical and management expertise.

The list of responsibilities and competencies for the members of the group will need to be supplemented according to circumstances.

7.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILDREN

- It is essential that all groups are made as aware and active in the process of managing the visit or venture as they can be.
- Procedures, group and supervision strategies must be explained and understood.
- Individual and group responsibilities need to be clear, as well as the rewards and sanctions for ensuring they are kept to.
- A Code of Conduct, negotiated and agreed in an acceptable way, is a key component of educational visits e.g. communication, behaviour, dress, group supervision and “down time”.
- It may be necessary to have individual behaviour contracts with some young people, signed by themselves and their parents.
- Everyone should be as risk aware as is realistic.

Any children whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways wherever possible.

8. APPROVAL SYSTEMS

The Head of School is responsible for approving all visits or ventures that take place. Before approval is given, information is gained from the Centres/Providers of the activities to ensure that health and safety, risk assessment and operating procedures are in place.

Centres/Providers will be checked for their appropriateness, their leader’s qualifications and basic operating procedures. These checks will be carried out annually where repeat visits are planned.

9. SCHOOL TRIPS INSURANCE

The School Trips Insurance Policy automatically covers children taking part in school trips aged **8 to 13** years. Children under the age of 8 years who are taking part in school trips abroad, must be notified to our insurers and an additional premium be paid. Travel insurance is normally only required for trips abroad.

The Schools insurance must be checked to ensure cover is in place if the trip involves any potentially hazardous activities.

The School carries public liability insurance, which covers trips to all UK venues. In the event of a trip being action-related, additional medical cover may be needed.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Risk assessment and risk management are legal requirements. It also needs to be acknowledged that the process represents and promotes good practice.

“Working in the outdoors” encompasses many activities, from using the local environment as an ‘outdoor classroom’ through to taking part in recognised ‘hazardous’ activities. What they all have in common is to use an exciting and stimulating environment to promote learning and personal development. However, if personal development and increasing self-reliance are to be achieved, then we must properly assess, prepare for and manage any significant hazards in these environments and the risks they present.

The process of risk assessment involves the Group Leader and his team in :-

- Looking for and at the hazards involved.
- Identifying and assessing the risks.
- Deciding what control measures need to be put in place to eliminate or minimise the risk.
- Recording the findings.

The risk assessments are carried out before the visit, during and after the visit to ensure that the assessment is still relevant.

A database of this documentation is compiled by the Group Leader to ensure that everyone learns and shares the information gained from visits and ventures.

11. SUPERVISION

Supervision is a key element in the success of any venture. It will determine not only the health and safety of the children and their leaders, but also the quality of the overall experience, enabling learning to take place as well as allowing all those concerned to enjoy the experience and derive satisfaction from it.

Good supervision requires everyone involved knowing what strategies are to be used and what their roles and responsibilities are, as well as having a clear picture of the expectations placed upon them. It is a team effort and shared responsibility, based on small manageable tasks and relationships building into a larger successful system and partnership.

The ratio of competent adults to children for trips is determined by the risk assessment carried out by the Group Leader.

12. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSION

The Schools ensure that every effort is made to include all children in all activities. We strive to make these activities available and accessible in some form to all who wish to participate or are required to take part irrespective of their special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, sex or religion. The needs of the child will, however, be balanced again maintaining the safety of the group as a whole.

13. COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS OR PERSONS WITH PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Communication with parents will be clear, as full as required and interactive, so that questions can be asked and queries answered. Parents' consent to a visit or venture should be based on a good understanding of the purposes, nature and programme for a visit or venture.

Parents should be kept informed of any off-site activity (simply defined as outside the school or school gates).

14. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

All children have the right to be protected from harm. An educational visit, off-site and residential activities, provide a stimulating learning, environmental and, in many cases a different and more relaxed or interactive environment.

The Schools are committed to ensuring that:-

- Safeguarding Children procedures are initiated
- Ensuring clear lines of communication and effective liaison between staff managing and supervising this work.
- Ensuring clear lines of communication and effective liaison between all agencies responsible for the safety and welfare of children.
- Enabling children to understand their rights and recognise and deal with unsafe situations.
- Implementing the policy and procedures the Schools Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

15. FIRST AID

The Schools Health and Safety Policy ensures that, as far as possible, the schools are an accident-free environment. The same standards apply to off-site, including all forms of visit and ventures. The provision of a first-aider does not prevent accidents, but it is an important part of the control measures that follow risk assessment.

- The Schools provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel at its locations to enable employees, pupils and visitors to be given first aid.
- Decisions about the deployment of first aiders on visits and ventures are based on risk assessments, which consider:
 - The hazards in any environment and the risks they present.
 - Any generic policies in place.
 - The group and its needs (including medical)
 - The leaders and activities to be undertaken
 - The transport arrangements.
 - The remoteness of any location and the ability to summon support.
 - What first aid qualifications and experience are available at the trips providers locations/centres.
 - The history of any incidents or accidents in similar contexts.
- Cover is proportional to the risk, rather than to group numbers or similar criteria.

16. RECORDING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS

Accidents to children, leaders and volunteers will be recorded or reported in accordance with the established procedures.

All accidents and emergencies will be recorded, no matter how minor. Any serious injuries must not only be recorded but also reported to the person nominated as RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995). This person will normally be the Head of Department. The types of injuries that must follow these procedures are:

- Fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs or toes
- Dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine
- Loss of sight (temporary or permanent)
- Chemical or hot metal burn to the eye or any penetrating injury to the eye
- Injury or illness resulting from an electric shock or electrical burn leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours

- Any other injury leading to hypothermia, heat-induced illness or unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

In the case of a serious injury, the parents and the Head of School will be informed as soon as possible.

17. TRANSPORT

Transport arrangements are an essential part of school visits or ventures. The Schools own school minibuses and list of approved coach companies provide most of the local off-site road transport services. Where off-site visits and ventures involve long distance travel by road, it may be necessary for the Group Leader to contact other coach companies or other travel providers.

The Use of Private Cars:- If private cars are used to transport children, as they will not be covered under the schools insurance.

Some insurance companies regard this type of use as for business purposes, which may be outside the use permitted by the car owner's policy. The vehicle must not be used if adequate cover cannot be confirmed.

This policy will be reviewed annually.			
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