

# ST. EDWARD'S JUNIOR SCHOOL



## OFFSITE VISITS POLICY

St. Edward's Junior School has formally adopted, through its Board of Trustees, the Gloucestershire 'Guidance for Offsite Visit'. Further procedures have been agreed with the Board of Trustees to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

### **Aims and purposes of Offsite Visits**

St. Edward's Junior School has a strong commitment to the added value of learning beyond the statutory school day and beyond the school premises.

Each year the school will arrange a number of activities that take place off the school site and out of school hours, which support the aims of the school. The range of activities are outlined in the school prospectus and with other School policies.

The Board of Trustees has given its approval to the following types of activities being arranged in support of the educational aims of the school:

Out of hours Clubs (music, drama, art, science, sport, homework etc)

School teams (including tours)

Regular local visits ( libraries, shops, woodlands, place of worship, farms)

Day visits for particular year groups

Residential visits

Overseas visits

Adventure Activities, which might be classed as higher risk.

### **Approval Procedure and Consent**

The Headmaster has nominated the Assistant Head as the Offsite Visits Co-ordinator (OVC) and the Board of Trustees has approved this appointment. The Board of Trustees has delegated the consideration and approval of Offsite visits and other offsite activities and has nominated a Trustee (Mrs G Prosser) as a signatory, as necessary, on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Before a visit is advertised to parents/carers the Headmaster and the OVC must approve the initial plan. They will also approve the completed plan and risk assessments for the visit at a later date.

Where external contractors are involved in organising all or part of the visit the contract will be made with the school on behalf of the pupils. All payments for the visit will be made through the school's accounts.

For out of hours clubs, school teams and local visits parents/carers will be asked to sign a general letter of consent for participation in these activities when the child joins the school. Parents/carers will be given information for the activities that pupils are involved in and will be informed by letter or telephone call if an activity has to be cancelled.

For any visit lasting a day or more parents/carers will be asked to sign a letter, which consents to the child taking part.

As part of the parent/carers' consent they will be fully informed of the activities and arrangements for the visit. For all residential visits parents/carers will be invited to a briefing meeting where they can ask for clarification of any aspect of the itinerary and organisation of the visit.

## **Staffing**

The school recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety on a school visit.

Teachers and other staff are encouraged and supported to develop their abilities in organising and managing learning in a variety of environments. The selection of staff for Offsite visits will be a key priority in the initial approval of any proposed visit.

Where it is appropriate the school will ensure that CRB screening is available for volunteer adults assisting with offsite activities and visits.

The school does not support additional people accompanying offsite visits who are not at the school or part of the agreed staff complement. This may include family members accompanying visits if the Board of Trustees is not satisfied that there is an educational benefit for the pupils.

The appointed Group Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange the visit. This will include, as necessary, making time or finances available to conduct an exploratory visit, briefing teachers and/or other staff, accessing training courses, reviewing and evaluating the visit or identifying time when the leader and OVC might work in partnership to undertake planning and risk assessments.

### **Responsibilities of OVC and Trip Leader**

At least one person qualified to administer first aid will accompany each offsite visit.

### **The functions of the OVC are to:**

- support the Head and Trustees with approval decisions;
- ensure the competence of the staff and volunteers to lead or otherwise supervise a visit;
- organise the training / induction of Leaders and others going on a visit;
- ensure that Criminal Records Bureau checks are in place as necessary;
- ensure that parental consent or refusal is obtained;
- ensure that emergency arrangements and emergency contact for each visit are in place;
- keep records of individual visits including accident/incident/near miss reports;
- review systems and monitor practice.

Important note: Functions listed above which are administrative in nature may be delegated to an appropriate member of school. The responsibility to ensure that these functions have been carried out remains with the OVC.

## **Visit Leader**

The visit leader has overall responsibility for the management of the visit and must:

- follow regulations, guidelines and procedures set out in the Offsite Visits Policy.
- recognise that whilst leading the visit he / she is representing the Head and the School.

- ensure that all accompanying members of staff, are fully briefed on their roles and responsibilities and understand the requirement to be vetted in accordance with the School procedures.
- ensure the overall maintenance of supervision, order and discipline at all times;
- make adequate arrangements for the safety and well-being of all pupils at all times;
- introduce appropriate child protection measures;
- make appropriate and adequate preparations for emergencies in conjunction with the OVC and ensure that all accompanying Leaders are familiar with these procedures;
- arrange for clearly understood delegation in his/her absence;
- ensure that persons instructing adventure activities are competent and properly qualified;
- ensure that the visit and activities are suitable for the group;
- ensure that accompanying staff are aware of any pupils' special educational or medical needs;
- consider the planning checklist (Planning Checklist for Offsite Activities) to ensure all procedures have been followed;
- prepare a specific risk assessment for the visit;
- obtain the Head's written approval for the visit;
- brief pupils on expected standards of behaviour
- **carry out continuous risk management while the visit takes place.**

## Supervision

**Activity Category A** (These comprise activities that present no significant risks)

1 adult for every 6 pupils in Years 1-3 (Reception classes, ie: Under 5s should have a higher ratio to be determined by risk assessment).

1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in Years 4-6

**Activity Category B** (These comprise residential and or some higher-risk or higher profile activities)

	<b>UK only</b>	<b>Abroad</b>
One teacher/ responsible person	Maximum 10 participants (same gender as staff)	Two adults must accompany all visits abroad (also see:
Two teachers/ responsible people	Maximum 20 participants	Two teachers: Maximum 20 participants
Two teachers/ responsible people	Maximum 30 participants	Two teachers/responsible people and one other adult: Maximum 30 participants
Each additional teacher/other adult	Maximum 10 additional participants	Each additional teacher/other adult: Maximum 10 participants

Mixed parties must be accompanied by at least one staff member or other adult of each gender.

Staff must conduct a risk assessment on transport arrangements including boarding, travelling and alighting from a bus to determine the supervision ratios accordingly. If pupils walk to the activity then a similar risk assessment must be undertaken.

If there are changes to the itinerary then a risk assessment must be conducted before any activity is undertaken.

### **Procedure For Planning an Offsite Visit ( Day Trips)**

- 1 Obtain SMT approval via the preliminary off-site visit proposal form at least one month before the visit.
- 2 Two weeks before the visit complete the risk assessments of venue and travel. Send out details and parent consent forms, if required. (See Point 4).
- 3 Check medical records and make a note in the Risk Assessments of any known medical conditions.
- 4 **Formal parental consent** is required if:-
  - a) The trip will be out of school hours
  - b) A cost is involved
  - c) It is proposed to use private cars
- 5 Prepare and send formal parental consent form for school visit, emergency contact information and letter of information. Ensure all activities are listed and obtain approval from the Head before issuing.
- 6 On day of trip, take a list of pupils and leave a copy in school.
- 7 **Continually risk assess during visit.**
- 8 Evaluate trip on return.

### **Procedure for Offsite Visits (Residential in the UK or abroad)**

- 1 Obtain SMT approval via the preliminary offsite visit proposal form at least 6 months before the visit.
- 2 Inform parents of the trip, the approximate cost, details of the proposed activities and the insurance cover. Request a cheque deposit to be received before half-term of the Autumn Term, in order that the final cost can be worked out, sent over to Bursary and added to the Spring Term fees.
- 3 Send letter out to parents informing them of the final cost of the trip and tell them how much is going to be added to the Spring Term bill.
- 4 About two months before the trip, obtain Parental Consent form which includes any special, medical and dietary details, family doctor details, emergency contact details during the trip and agreement to their child receiving medication as instructed and any emergency dental, medical or surgical treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities present. Parents acknowledge the need for their child to behave responsibly and to meet any costs incurred by their child as a result of his/her actions that are not covered by the insurance policy.
- 5 Obtain consent for swimming activities and information about swimming ability, if required.
- 6 About one month before the trip, arrange a parents'/pupils' information evening.
- 7 Complete risk assessment for activities to be undertaken.
- 8 Collate a medical/dietary list and emergency contact list (leave one at school and take one for each member of staff on trip).
- 9 **Continually risk assess during visit.**
- 10 Complete evaluation forms on return.

## Planning Checklist for Offsite Activities

This checklist is to help the OVC and the party leader to ensure:

- The health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff
- The maximum educational benefit to pupils
- Effective management, planning, organisation and leadership.

The checklist is an aide-memoir and note pad to be used by the party leader or could provide a formal record for the Headmaster or Trustees. It may therefore be used by the Headmaster to decide whether final approval for a visit is given.

### **PARTY LEADER**

Is there a clearly identified party leader, sufficiently experienced and competent to assess the risks and manage the proposed visit or activity?

### **PURPOSE**

Is there a clearly identified purpose for the whole programme and any of its constituent parts, appropriate to the age and ability of the group?

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

Has the party leader assessed the risks involved in all aspects of the visit or activity and recorded the significant findings (or made reference to a previous record, with amendments as necessary?)

### **LOCATION**

Is the proposed location of the visit suitable for the activity to be undertaken and manageable for the group?

### **ADVICE**

Have you sought advice from someone with expertise or technical competence where there is uncertainty about safe practice? This may be a member of staff who has a coordinating role for off-site activities within the school.

### **APPROVAL**

Does the proposed activity fall within Category C? If so, it will also need to be assessed by the OVC at the planning stage.

### **VENUE**

Does the visit involve hazardous activities booked through commercial, charitable or private providers? Is there a contact name, address and telephone number known for the visit venue?

### **STAFF**

Are members of staff or instructors leading hazardous activities suitably qualified and experienced, i.e. competent to do so?

Have members of staff been vetted regarding child protection where necessary?

Does staffing include male and female supervision where necessary?

### **STAFF/PUPIL RATIO**

Will the group have an acceptable staff/pupil ratio necessary for the activities proposed?

Do plans and staffing ratios reflect the needs of people with disabilities?

**PRELIMINARY VISIT**

Has the party leader made a preliminary visit to the site or centre to be visited, to check arrangements? (e.g. travel time, access and permission, facilities and equipment, leisure or recreational facilities for residential stays, staff support, guides or programmes of work, potential health and safety issues, security, shelter, toilets, cost, accommodation, contingency arrangements, references from previous users.)

If not, has action been taken to ensure the party leader is aware of potential hazards and opportunities?

**PARENTAL CONSENT**

Has parental consent been obtained for the visit as a whole and for any hazardous activities, which are planned?

**THE PROGRAMME**

Do pupils and staff have the appropriate clothing and equipment necessary for the activities proposed and allowing for a range of weather conditions?

If not, will another provider be offering additional appropriate equipment?

Are the pupils prepared for and physically capable of taking part in the proposed activity?

Is the programme suitable for all the participants?

Is there an alternative programme in the event of poor weather for example?

**ORGANISATION**

Are sufficient staff aware of dietary and medical needs of young people and staff? Have suitable and sufficient first aid arrangements been made?

**TRANSPORT**

Is appropriate and legal transport available?

Are there suitable and sufficient qualified drivers for any planned minibus journey?

Will departure and return times be made known to staff, pupils and parents?

Is there a contingency plan, in the event of a delay or early return?

**FINANCE AND INSURANCE**

Have adequate arrangements been made to finance the visit and manage the finances?

Are you aware of VAT regulations e.g. regarding criteria for VAT recovery?

Is there adequate and relevant insurance cover?

**BRIEFING FOR PUPILS**

Will the pupils be properly briefed on the activities they will undertake during the visit?

The briefing may need to include:

- appropriate clothing and equipment
- rendezvous procedures
- safety risks of jewellery
- groupings for study or supervisory purposes
- a system of recall and action in emergencies
- agreed codes of conduct and behaviour
- significant hazards
- relevance to prior and future learning.

**BRIEFING FOR STAFF**

Will the party leader also brief accompanying members of staff?

The briefing may need to include:

- anticipation of hazards and the nature of the programme
- defining roles and responsibilities of staff
- careful supervision, to cover the whole time away
- standards of behaviour expected from pupils
- regular counting of participants
- how much help to give to pupils in their tasks
- a list of names of people in sub groups
- emergency procedures.

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT**

Has a named point of contact been identified at home or at “base” in the event of an emergency, who has a contact list of the group members, including staff, and a programme of the group’s activities?

Are sufficient staff aware of procedures and relevant phone numbers in the event of an emergency?

### **PREPARATION AND COMMUNICATION**

Is there adequate time and opportunity to prepare for the visit or activity?

Have other staff and colleagues whose work may be affected been notified of planned arrangements?

### **FOLLOW UP**

Have arrangements been considered for appropriate follow up work and evaluation after the visit?

Has a report been provided for the Headmaster or other colleagues, where appropriate, to share positive aspects of the visit and learn from problems or incidents?

Have other records been completed relating to vehicles or equipment for example?

Have financial records been completed?

## **The expectations of Pupils and Parents/Carers**

The school has a clear code of conduct for school visits based on the school’s ‘Behaviour Policy’. This code of conduct will be part of the condition of booking by the parents/carers, and include the potential of withdrawal of a child, prior to and during the visit, if such conduct was inappropriate.

### **Emergency Procedures**

The school will appoint a member of the Senior Management Team as the emergency school contact for each visit. All major incidents should immediately be related to this person, especially those involving injury.

The Group Leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency school contact, including the home contact details of parents/guardians and next-of-kin, as appropriate.

All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back through the school systems.

The school will have emergency funding available to support the Group Leader in an emergency.

### **Evaluation**

All visits will be evaluated by the Group Leader with the OVC. A short evaluation report will be made available for the Headmaster and nominated Trustee.

The OVC will ensure that any risk assessments on the trip are dated as having been evaluated and/or modified as a result.

The Group Leader is responsible for presenting a financial account for the visit, which will be audited as part of the school's procedures.

November '09

Review Date: November '10