



WALTHAMSTOW HALL
SEVENOAKS

Junior School

POLICY ON EDUCATIONAL VISITS FOR JUNIOR SCHOOL CHILDREN, YEAR 1 – YEAR 6

INTRODUCTION

Walthamstow Hall places great value on educational visits for all of its pupils, including the very youngest, recognising that they provide a unique opportunity to enhance the curriculum and to extend and support class based work. They provide opportunities which cannot be provided on site and can extend the knowledge and understanding of all children. This policy has been produced in response to our concern for keeping all members of our school safe whilst benefitting from such experiences. We acknowledge the need for the considerable preparation needed to take a group of children safely out of school in compliance with the regulations. Some of our visits are local, although many are further afield within the region or in London. We do not take Year 1 to Year 3 children on overnight or foreign visits – Year 5 stay three days in the Isle of Wight and Year 6 stay three days in Paris.

The Monitoring Reference for Inspectors reminds us that:

Children must be kept safe whilst on outings. **For each type of outing, providers must carry out a full risk assessment (please refer to the Appendix B of the Health and Safety Policy New June 2017)**, which includes an assessment of required adult: child ratios. This assessment must take account of the nature of the outing, and consider whether it is appropriate to exceed the recommended requirements in accordance with the provider's provision for supervision of children on outings.

This assessment must be reviewed before embarking on each specific outing. Providers should obtain written parental permission for children to take part in outings. Providers should take essential records and equipment on outings, for example, contact telephone numbers for the parents of children on the outing, First Aid kit, a mobile phone and a copy of the school's Major Incident Procedure. Records should be kept about vehicles in which children are transported, including insurance details and a list of named drivers. Drivers using their own transport should have adequate insurance cover.

This policy has been drawn up with regard to the following documents:

- The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide, DCSF guidance
- A Guide to the Law for School Governors, April 2009
- General Inspection Queries, Independent School Association (ISA) guidance: an ISBA Briefing Document, Feb 2009
- Minibus and Coach Seats: DFT guidance
- Independent Schools Inspectorate Handbook for the Inspection of Schools, 2017

PART ONE: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

OUR VISITS

Supervision

Generous staffing levels, close supervision at all times and proper protective clothing are essential for even the shortest of excursions. All school outings/visits, including away matches, must be accompanied by at least two members of school staff.

If ever out of the school grounds the members of staff always take a mobile phone with them, the number of which is always recorded in the School Office. A copy of the school's Major Incident Procedure is also carried by the Teacher in Charge of the outing/visit. The pupils are always briefed in advance about the visit and of the standards of behaviour which we expect.

Staff Ratios and Responsibility

We recommend a ratio of 1:6 for Year 1 and Year 2 children; 1:8 for Year 3 to Year 5 children and 1:10 for Year 6 children. This may be higher or lower depending on the nature of the outing and must be decided by the Teacher in Charge of the outing and approved by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator. There is always at least one qualified Teacher on an outing. One of the qualified Teachers will have been designated in charge of the visit and carry out the necessary paperwork and risk assessments. In Year 1 and Year 2 at least one qualified Classroom Assistant should also accompany the party, depending on the number of pupils on the outing. We frequently invite parents from other year groups to volunteer to help with off-site visits – the maintenance of staff: pupil ratios must be maintained at all times and therefore parents of the pupils on the outing will not be asked to accompany the party unless there is exceptional need e.g. for pupils with particular medical conditions and in such cases these parents must not be counted as part of the overall adult: pupil ratio. Parent volunteers are never allowed to supervise children alone and are thoroughly briefed about their roles beforehand by the qualified Teacher in Charge of the visit.

VISITS

During the course of the year, each year group will be offered the opportunity to go on school visits relating to their studies.

All members of the party travel together on a coach and are taken directly to the venue. We hire coaches, fitted with front-facing seats and seat belts, from our regular coach company, who complies with our conditions for using hired transport. The school provides a packed lunch for all children and other refreshments as necessary. The coach brings them back to school, usually in time for the end of the school day (depending on the distance travelled).

KEEPING PARENTS INFORMED

Through curriculum booklets, the school website, information evenings and notices in the weekly newsletters, parents are kept informed about the aims of the curriculum, the topics that will be studied and methods of delivering the curriculum. The school calendar lists the visits that are due to take place over the coming term. A letter is sent to parents by the Teacher in Charge of the outing well in advance, giving information about every visit and, if appropriate, its cost. All visits are optional.

CONSENT

We require written consent from parents in order to take children off-site. We are unable to take children without a completed and signed consent form, at Annex A which includes details of where parents may be contacted in an emergency. A consent form will be sent to parents well in advance and must reach the school at least 3 working days before the outing or visit. A blanket consent form for walks within a one-mile vicinity of the school will be issued annually in the Pre-Prep Department to enable the children to be taken off site within a one mile of the school to enhance their educational experiences, for example the Year 2 Visit to the War Memorial.

PART TWO: INFORMATION FOR STAFF

SAFETY: ADVANCE PLANNING

Risk Assessments

Safety is our top priority. Even the shortest of visits needs to be thoroughly planned, and requires its own risk assessment, which must be undertaken by a qualified Teacher and reviewed thoroughly before a repeat visit is made.

Head Counts

The Teacher in Charge conducts, or arranges for another Teacher or Classroom Assistant to conduct a head count of the children (recording the fact that we have done so):

- Before leaving school
- On sitting down in the coach
- On arrival at the destination
- On leaving the destination
- On arrival back at the school

Where we walk, the children walk in pairs, with one adult at the front, one in the middle and one at the back. Children are reminded by the Teacher in Charge about basic road safety and of the expected standards of behaviour – this is reinforced by all adults accompanying the children. When we travel by coach, a member of staff will check that all the pupils are sitting properly and wearing their seat belts. The staff and other adults accompanying the children will be seated in different sections of the coach e.g. at the front, middle and back of the coach and not all in one section.

Missing Child Policy

Our procedures are structured to ensure that this does not happen; but in the event that a child is missing either from school, or on a visit, we follow the procedures set out in our Missing Child policy.

First Aid Kit etc.

The Teacher in Charge takes a First Aid kit, list of emergency contact numbers and a mobile phone with him/her on every visit. S/he may allocate First Aid responsibility to another member of staff. We carry bottled water on all of our longer visits.

Delay

The Teacher in Charge will ring the school if there is any delay, for example, because of heavy traffic. The School Office has copies of all permission slips and will contact the parents to warn them of a delay via our communication system. In addition, communication is written on a mobile white board, placed in the front porch, for the attention of parents arriving at the Junior School.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN CHARGE OF A VISIT

Every visit, however local, or short, must be planned in advance by the qualified teacher who is in charge of it. S/he will have had previous experience of accompanying visits before organizing one him/herself. S/he will also have attended an INSET training session organised by the Head of the Junior School who holds the appointment of Education Visits Coordinator (EVC).

ROLE OF THE EDUCATION VISITS COORDINATOR (EVC)

The Head of the Junior School (the EVC) is responsible for approving all requests for visits.

PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

The members of staff in charge of pupils have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances. The DCSF Guidance “The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide,” (www.teachernet.gov.uk) should be referred to. It is the responsibility of all members of staff on visits to act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances. Staff who take part in visits and activities outside school may feel concerned about the possibility of being held personally liable if an accident should occur. However, they can be assured that Walthamstow Hall, as their employer will always stand behind them in the unlikely event of an accident occurring, provided they have exercised reasonable care and followed the school’s guidelines.

Walthamstow Hall has £15m of Employers’ Liability Insurance and £15m of Public Liability Insurance, as well as a group travel policy that covers any visit made by all school departments. Cover includes cancellation or delay, medical expenses, replacement of personal possessions and money.

USE OF PRIVATE CARS

Private cars are not used to provide transport for school visits and instead, coach, minibus or hire car are arranged in advance. Where, in exceptional circumstances, a member of staff transports pupils in her car, insurance cover is automatically provided through the school’s “occasional business use” motor policy. That ensures that motor insurance claims arising whilst a member of staff is using their own car for school business purposes can be settled without involving their own motor insurer. Children can only be transported in private cars that are fitted with special child seats appropriate to their age and size.

SCHOOL MINIBUSES

No one is allowed to drive the school minibus unless s/he has qualified as a minibus driver. For any minibus journey further than the distance to the Senior School, there should always be a second member of staff (either on board or following in their own car). The school will arrange and fund courses in driving minibuses for all staff who are involved in visits.

USE OF HIRED TRANSPORT

We hire coaches for most school outings. The school has a long-standing relationship with local coach companies that understand that we require all Drivers to have current DBS, and to carry mobile phones. It is a condition of booking that the Driver's name and the number of his/her mobile phone are passed to the Teacher in Charge at the time that the hire arrangements are confirmed. The Teacher in charge will inform the school office of the vehicle's registration number before departure. We only book vehicles with front-facing seats that are fitted with seat belts.

Actions for the Teacher in Charge

Dates need to be fixed at least a term in advance where there may be a need to draw upon accompanying staff from other parts of the Junior School, or where parent volunteers need to be found, where there is additional cost for parents and where bookings/ transport need to be made. The Assistant Head must be asked which members of staff may be available to accompany the visit and they will approach the member of staff. The file of parents willing to accompany school outings is held in the School Office. The Teacher in Charge of the outing should contact available parents.

The Head of the Junior School and the Medical Centre should be consulted about individual children's special and medical needs. Advice should be obtained on any arrangements that may be required for a pupil's individual special and medical needs

The Bursary will need to be informed if tickets and transport need to be reserved.

At least two weeks in advance:

- The parental consent forms (Annex A) should be sent out with a return date specified.
- The travelling First Aid kit should be booked
- A school mobile phone should be booked from the School Office
- Bookings should be finalised
- The Risk Assessment should be finalised and approved by the EVC (Head of Junior School)
- Parents should be advised if special clothing (e.g. sun hats, waterproof clothing, wellington boots, sun cream) is needed/advisable

One Week in Advance

- Parents should be chased to return their consent forms. They should be reminded that their child cannot participate in the visit without a completed form being received.
- Any tickets should be checked and stored in the school safe
- A meeting must be held with other members of staff participating in the visit to discuss risk assessment, the respective roles of the Teacher in Charge, other staff and volunteers, allocation of groups of children to supervising adults and emergency procedures
- Prepare packs for the accompanying staff, EVC, the School Secretary, the Caretaker (as necessary) containing:

- The itinerary (*including address, phone numbers etc. of all locations to be visited*)
 - The Teacher in Charge's mobile number/the school mobile
 - Mobile numbers of all participating staff
 - A list of pupils, together with copies of their parental contact forms (which includes details of each pupils' medical conditions)
 - The Incident Management Procedure (to be printed from the network) which includes the emergency contact numbers for the Head of the Junior School (the EVC), Assistant Head, School Secretary and Caretaker
 - The name of the Driver, the registration number of the coach, the mobile phone number of the driver
 - A copy of the risk assessment.
- Order packed lunches, snacks and bottled water from the Junior School Kitchen.

The Day of Departure/ Day Prior to Departure

- Remind the children of the aim of the visit and of the expected standards of behaviour
- Give information packs to recipients
- Collect First Aid pack. Check contents
- Collect school mobile phone
- Collect lunches and snacks etc.
- Collect school wristbands

DURING THE VISIT

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with the Teacher in Charge. S/he has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary or cancelling the visit in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. They may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out (and recording) head counts of the children on leaving school, on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving a venue
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour
- Keeping account of all expenditure
- Recording any accidents or near misses

ILLNESS OR MINOR ACCIDENTS

If a pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill, the Teacher in Charge, or another member of staff will phone their parent's emergency contact number at once and arrange for them to be collected. If contact cannot be made, the Teacher in Charge, or another member of staff, will take them to the local hospital or, if the illness is more minor, to the School's Medical Centre. A member of staff will remain with the child at the hospital or Medical Centre until a parent or carer arrives.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The Teacher in Charge must be fully aware of the school's Major Incident Procedure and ensure that it is followed in the event of any emergency.

In the event of a serious accident resulting in the death or injury of one or more of the pupils and staff, the Teacher in Charge's first priority would be to summon the emergency services, and to arrange for medical attention for the injured. One of the accompanying members of staff should accompany the injured pupil(s) to hospital and would remain with the child/children until their parents arrived. Ensuring that the rest of the group were safe and looked after, and informing the Head of the Junior School of what had happened would be the next task for the Teacher in Charge, who would need to give as full, calm and factual account as the circumstances permitted. ***The school's Major Incident Procedure must be followed.***

At Walthamstow Hall, communication will be managed by the Major Incident Team at school. We recognize that in an era of instant communications, it may not be possible for us to be the first to break the news. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that we have an important duty to speak personally to the parents of any pupil who has suffered some injury or mishap. The Major Incident Team will use mass communication methods (SMS, email, messages on our web, local radio) for communicating with those whose children are not affected.

As stipulated in the Major Incident Procedure, communication with the media should be left to the Headmistress. The Teacher in Charge should refer the media to the school; they should make no comment.

ON RETURN FROM A VISIT

Each Teacher in Charge is asked to provide an evaluation on the visit, reports of accidents and near misses upon their return. Personal observations and lessons learned are always valuable. The Group leader should return all school property, together with a report of any lost or damaged property.

Expenditure

The Teacher in charge is responsible for producing a schedule of all expenditure on the visit.

This policy has regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Walthamstow Hall policies are approved, ratified and reviewed regularly by the Governing Body in the light of statutory requirements.

Revised September 2019
Next Review Date September 2020

Signed: Date:

Mrs J Adams
Chair of Governors