



**WALTHAMSTOW HALL**  
SEVENOAKS

## **POLICY ON EDUCATIONAL VISITS FOR THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **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 children in the Early Years. This policy has been produced in response to our concern for keeping the youngest members of our School safe whilst benefitting from such experiences. Considerable preparation is needed to take a group of very young children safely out of School in compliance with the regulations and we acknowledge the need for additional requirements for Nursery-aged and Reception-aged pupils in our Early Years class, as detailed in the EYFS Statutory Framework. In the Early Years, the majority of our visits are local and School minibuses are used wherever possible. We do not take Early Years children on overnight or foreign visits.

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

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021.
- The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide, DCSF guidance.
- Health and Safety on Educational visits, DFE, November 2018
- National guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom (<https://oeapng.info/guidance-documents/>)
- Independent Schools Inspectorate Handbook for the Inspection of Schools.

### **OUR VISITS**

#### Supervision

Generous staffing levels, close supervision and proper protective clothing are essential for even the shortest of excursions. For all walks within the enclosed School grounds, the children are supervised by their Teacher and a Classroom Assistant who holds at least a Level 3 statutory qualification (as defined by the Children's Workforce Development Council). 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. The pupils are always briefed in advance about the visit and of the standards of behaviour which we expect.

#### Staff Ratios and Responsibility

We operate a minimum staffing ratio of 1:4 for our Nursery-aged pupils and 1:6 for those Early Years 2-aged pupils in Early Years for all off-site visits. There is always at least one qualified Teacher, one of whom will have been designated in charge of the visit and at least one qualified Classroom Assistant, depending on the number of pupils on the outing. A

Teacher/Classroom Assistant qualified in Paediatric First Aid is always present on an outing. We frequently invite parents from other year groups to volunteer to help with off-site visits involving Reception-aged pupils. Parents of Nursery-aged pupils may be invited, at the discretion of the teacher in charge of the trip, to accompany their own daughter on local trips. Parent volunteers are never allowed to supervise children alone and are thoroughly briefed about their roles beforehand by the teacher in charge of the visit.

### Early Years - Nursery-aged pupils

We do not take our younger Nursery-aged pupils off-site during the Autumn Term. They need time to settle into the routine of going to School, and there are plenty of opportunities for daily outdoor play in the Early Years well-equipped, secure outdoor play area. Every pupil in Early Years is regularly accompanied by their Teacher and their Classroom Assistant on walks inside the School grounds, and attend Forest School.

During the course of the year, Nursery-aged pupils may be taken on local walks which involve leaving the School premises. A blanket consent form signed by the parents at the beginning of the year gives permission for children to leave the School site with the appropriate staff / pupil ratios and all correct procedures are followed. The older Nursery-aged pupils will have an outing in the Summer Term. They have visited Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve most recently.

### Early Years - Early Years 2-aged pupils

By the time that they are of Early Years 2 age, we believe children are ready for more visits off-site and for a wider range of new experiences. During the year, in addition to regular Forest School visits, pupils will visit:

- Knole Park.
- Eagle Heights.
- Lullingstone Park.
- Godstone Farm.

(The venue for such visits may be subject to change).

## **KEEPING YOU INFORMED**

Through meetings, notices via Parent Portal and weekly newsletters the Early Years teacher will keep parents informed about the aims of the curriculum, the topics that will be studied and the methods of delivering the curriculum through play, structured activities and outdoor activities. The School calendar lists the visits that are due to take place over the coming term. A letter will be sent well in advance, informing parents about every visit and, if appropriate, its cost. All Early Years visits return pupils to the School at their conclusion. All visits are optional.

## **CONSENT**

The School requires written parental consent in order to take pupils off-site. A consent form will be sent to parents via My School Portal well in advance and must be completed at least 3 working days before the outing or visit. Please note that we are unable to take pupils on visits without a completed and signed consent form, which will include details of where you may be contacted in an emergency. 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 pupils to be taken off

site within a one mile of the School to enhance their educational experiences. Parents will sign a form to acknowledge a visit is taking place every time that we take pupils off-site.

## **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 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 pupils (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 pupils walk in pairs, with one adult at the front, one in the middle and one at the back. Pupils are reminded about basic road safety and of the expected standards of behaviour. When we travel by coach, a member of staff will check that all the pupils are sitting properly and wearing their seat belts.

### Missing Pupil Policy

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

### First Aid Kit etc.

The Teacher in charge takes a First Aid kit, list of emergency contact numbers and a mobile phone with them on every outing. 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 will contact the parents to warn them of a delay via our communication system as required.

## **ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN CHARGE OF AN EARLY YEARS VISIT**

Every visit, however local, or short, must be planned in advance by the member of staff who is in charge of it. She/he will have had previous experience of accompanying Early Years visits before organising one him/herself. She/he will also have attended a training session organised by the Assistant Head of the Junior School, who holds the appointment of Education Visits Coordinator (EVC). The Teacher in Charge either holds a valid Paediatric First Aid Certificate or ensures that another member of staff accompanying the visit holds one.

## **ROLE OF THE EDUCATION VISITS COORDINATOR (EVC)**

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. 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 £20m of Employers' Liability Insurance and £20m 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 their 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. Early Years children can only be transported in private cars that are fitted with special child seats.

## **SCHOOL MINIBUSES**

No one is allowed to drive the School minibus unless they have qualified as a minibus driver. For any minibus journey that involves Early Years children, there should always be a second member of staff. The School will arrange and fund First Aid courses, as well as courses in driving minibuses for all staff who are involved in visits.

## **USE OF HIRED TRANSPORT**

We usually use School minibuses for our EYFS outings. However should we hire coaches, the School has a long-standing relationship with local coach companies that understand that we require all Drivers to have current DBS checks, and to carry mobile phones. It is a condition of booking that the Driver's name, the number of their mobile phone, together with the vehicle's registration number are passed to the Teacher in Charge at the time that the hire arrangements are confirmed. We only book vehicles with front-facing seats that are fitted with seat belts.

## **PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS**

Visits made by Early Years children are usually local; but nevertheless, their outline is planned at least half a term in advance, when dates need to be agreed with the EVC. Parents will be

told about the visits planned for the ensuing year at the annual Parents' Information Meeting held in the Summer Term. At that stage, it will probably not be necessary to finalise the dates of all the short, local visits planned for the Spring and Summer Terms; but a general indication can be given.

### 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 Junior School Management Team 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. The Bursary have produced a guide to planning trips, and staff are encouraged to make use of this tool when initially planning a visit.

### At least two weeks in advance:

- The Parental consent forms should be sent out via Parent Portal with a return date specified.
- The travelling First Aid kit should be booked if necessary.
- 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 A copy should be sent to the Bursar.
- 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 within 3 days of departure.
- 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 and emergency procedures.
- Order packed lunches and snacks from the Junior School Kitchen.
- 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 confirmation 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 EVC, 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.

#### The day of departure/ day prior to departure

- Remind the pupils 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 bottled water, lunches, snacks etc.
- Collect School wristbands (with the name of the School and phone number).

### **DURING THE VISIT**

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with the Teacher in Charge. They have sole responsibility for amending the itinerary or cancelling the visit in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. She/he 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 pupils 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 as required. 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 pupil 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. The Teacher in Charge must ensure the rest of the group remain safe and looked after, the inform the Headmistress and The Junior School Management Team of what had happened Be prepared to provide as full, calm and factual account as the circumstances permitted. ***The School's Major Incident Procedure must be followed.*** Where the full facts have not yet emerged, the Teacher in Charge should say so, and ensure that follow-up communications with the Headmistress are maintained. At School, communication will be managed by the Major Incident Team. 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 via MSP or the School website, 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 June 2021  
Next Review Date June 2022

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Mrs J Adams  
Chairman of the Governing Body