



# EDUCATIONAL AND OFF-SITE VISITS & ACTIVITIES POLICY

Including Learning Outside of the Classroom (LOtC)

## Introduction

Educational visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, which take place either at school or outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that offsite activities, in particular, can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our pupils's learning experiences.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our educational visits and activities (including learning outside the classroom), and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities.

The school has regard to the Department for Education ("DfE") guidance *Health & Safety: Advice on legal duties and powers* (Feb 2014). *Health and Safety on Educational Visits (2018)* and *Health and Safety for Learning Outside the Classroom (HASLOC)*, including material on the LOtC website ([www.lotc.org.uk](http://www.lotc.org.uk)). We keep up to date with Health & Safety consultations and make any necessary changes to our procedures in order to ensure continued compliance and best practice. Additional guidance is obtained from the DfE website ([www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)). Also see the Health, Safety & Welfare Policy.

The Educational Visits Coordinator Laura Sardina, ensures that the premises risk assessments are updated regularly and that written risk assessments (where applicable) are completed by teachers prior to their trip and that appropriate safety and pupil welfare measures are in place. Also, her main responsibility in consultation with the Assistant Head, Teaching and Learning, is to facilitate the extension of the curriculum beyond that offered in timetabled sessions, by ensuring a full enrichment programme of educational visits and activities. The EVC will ensure that risk assessments are completed.

The EVC is fully trained.

## Aims

The aims of our educational visits are to:

- Enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils
- Provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site or within the classroom alone
- Promote the independence of our pupils as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments

## Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which can include visits to the school by specialists).

- English – theatre visits, visits by authors, librarians, poets and theatre groups
- Science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens, nature trails
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment
- History – castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums
- Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails, river walks
- Art and design – art gallery visits, use of the locality or design centres
- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches
- Music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, concerts for parents to attend
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy
- SMSC – Houses of Parliament, partner charities, place of worship (mosques, synagogues, temples), Bank of England
- Languages – theatre visits, flamenco classes, talks in the target language

## **Residential activities**

Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is outside of school time (usually around 2-4 days) and most of the activities are linked to the subject specialisms. A charge is made for transport, board and lodging, and specialist instruction for certain activities.

The residential visit enables pupils to take part in outdoor and adventure activities. Qualified instructors are provided for all specialist activities undertaken, and the school ensures that all staff employed by the company have been DBS checked. Detailed risk assessments for all activities are carried out by the provider. For activities involving caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports, the school ensures that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004.

## **Duke of Edinburgh Award**

The Laurels School delivers the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Expeditions at the following levels: Bronze and Silver.

As a Licensed Organisation (LO) the employing body delegates responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of participants and staff to the DofE Award Manager and/or Lead Expedition Supervisor(s). Where Accredited Activity Providers (AAP's) are used to deliver on behalf of the school, responsibility may not necessarily be delegated.

The DofE Manager will ensure the suitability of all expeditions: the preparedness of students, health and safety, emergency procedures and that the Award's 20 conditions are met. This should be in consultation with the DofE Supervisor/AAP/EVC and DofE assessor as appropriate.

There must be a lead Expedition Supervisor who holds the overview of the whole expedition and other expedition supervisors, competent assistants and/or adult helpers. If lone working during expeditions, staff need to be competent and aware of the safety implications including emergency procedures and relevant issues.

Expeditions are carried out using remote supervision. Remote Supervision is a method of managing the safety of a group during a journey, while allowing them the independence to develop their own

skills. Staff use named and manned checkpoints to assess the safety and wellbeing of participants and each group has access to 2 emergency phones from 2 different networks.

## **How visits may be authorised**

A teacher will normally be the party leader responsible for running the visit or activity. The teacher will be involved in the planning and management of all their class off-site visits.

As part of the process they will:

- Ensure that risk assessments are completed.
- Support the SMT in their decisions on approval.
- Assign competent staff and parents (if required) to help with trips.
- Organise related staff training.
- Make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained.
- Keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example a swimming facility).

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the Assistant Head before any commitment is made on behalf of the school.

Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the Assistant Head will seek the approval of SMT before permitting the activity to take place.

It is our policy that all pupils should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a pupil with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a pupil with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

## **Risk Assessment**

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit, using the HSE guidance '5 Steps to Risk Assessment'. They will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What staff to pupil ratios apply for the trip?
- What steps will be taken if delayed or in an emergency?
- Do any pupils have particular allergies or health needs which may require medication to be administered?

It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the pupils. They will also consider the venue's own approach

to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios for pupil supervision: - 1 adult to 15 pupils. If other adults are involved in activities during school trips, they will be included as part of these ratios. Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

Preferably at least one adult accompanying the pupils should be trained in first aid. Teachers should ensure that they collect the portable first aid kit from the office prior to leaving on their trip, and this should be returned immediately upon their return.

The teacher in charge, and preferably other staff accompanying them, will carry a mobile phone with them in case of emergencies (either the school's mobile phone or their own personal one).

A copy of the completed risk assessment and itinerary is kept in the school office and held digitally. The risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue.

## **Transport**

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- Transport
- Entrance fees
- Insurance
- Provision of any special resources or equipment
- Costs related to adult helpers
- Any refreshments the school has opted to pay for

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use vehicles fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

## **Communication with parents**

The parents of pupils taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit in good time. Parents give their consent in writing at the beginning of each academic year for all off-site activities.

Funding for off-site activities is provided by parental contributions, and costs are usually added to pupils's school accounts at the end of each term. This is made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Head to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

## **Further health and safety considerations**

The DfE guidance mentions ten important areas to consider for the types of activities envisaged.

The essential elements which usually apply are:

- Responsibilities for visits, including pupils' behaviour

- Planning visits, including risk assessments and first aid
- Supervision, including ratios and vetting checks (for example DBS checks for volunteers on overnight stays)
- Preparing pupils, including special and medical needs
- Communicating with parents
- Planning transport
- Insurance
- Types of visits
- Visits abroad
- Emergency procedures, including contact details and permission for emergency
- Medical treatment if the parents cannot be contacted

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

The safety of the party, and especially the pupils, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. All staff have a common law duty of care and, together with other accompanying adults, they should act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances. This involves taking note of any specific health or medical information, and ensuring that pupils are both safe and well looked after at all times. The party leader must ensure that all adults taking part in the visit ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group. The group leader will make it clear to pupils that they must follow the instructions of staff (including those at the venue of the visit) and other accompanying adults, they should behave sensibly and responsibly at all times and must not take unnecessary risks.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual pupil is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the Head the possibility of excluding that pupil from the activity.

### **Group leaders' planning**

A copy of the following guidance notes for off-site activities is available in the Risk Assessments Folder for reference:

#### ***Health and Safety on Educational Visits (2018)***

#### ***Health and Safety for Learners Outside the Classroom (HASLOC)***

- All trips should be supervised by at least two adults (see Trips & Visits Policy for exceptions).
- On larger or longer visits, one adult must hold a recognised and current first aid certificate.
- Where there is more than one teacher/supervisor, there must be an identified group leader.
- Risk Assessments are a legal requirement and must be carried out by the group leader, recorded on the Trip Check List form and approved by the Assistant Head.
- The ratio of teachers and supervisors to pupils is 1 adult for every 15-20 pupils from Year 7 onwards; however, this is only a guideline.
- Trip leaders must ensure that they have telephone numbers and details of how to contact the designated member of the SMT during the trip or visit.

- The trip leader must ensure that she is in possession of all parental consent forms and all contact number details throughout the trip.
- A First Aid box and/or bag should be **taken on all outings**.
- All staff must complete at least three Risk Assessment forms:
  - *All Educational Visits (Form 1)*
  - *All Travel (Form 2)*
  - *Type of Visit/Accommodation/Activity(ies) planned (Forms 3 - 26, as appropriate)*
- As part of the risk assessment process, at the beginning of each year all parents will be required to sign a consent form, providing details of any special medical/ dietary requirements, any specific circumstances which may impact on a trip, and authorise the leader of the party to act on their behalf in an emergency; in the case of trips abroad, they must confirm that her passport is up to date.
- If challenging activities are planned, a member of staff should visit the location to verify safety procedures, conduct a preliminary risk assessment and check the qualifications of any activity supervisors.
- A member of staff who is to lead a group abroad, on a residential visit or on an outdoor activity, should make a special effort to carry out a reconnaissance visit. If this is not possible, a minimum measure would be to obtain specific information by letter from the venue and from reputable organisations who can provide such information.
- Prior to a Language Exchange visit, the group leader should check that a letter to the Headmistress from the Head Teacher at the host school has been received, giving his/her assurance that host families have been vetted appropriately.

## **Consent**

*School Permission Request to Plan a Day Trip or Residential Event* forms are available from the Trip Folder on the T Drive. The following should be completed before seeking permission from the Assistant Head (in charge of cover and suitability of trip with regard to curriculum enrichment).

1. Check with the Assistant Head that:

- a. cover for the teachers attending can be guaranteed first (using the normal Leave of Absence form).
- b. That the trip has been approved by her as academically worthwhile.

2. Complete relevant appropriate Risk Assessment forms.

3. Check with the Assistant Head to see if there are any pupils who should not go or if there any other activities that clash.

4. Ensure that parents are informed in writing about the arrangements for the trip so that they request for their pupil to remain in school if they wish. Trip leaders must have an alternative option planned for any pupil whose parents decline permission to go on a trip.

5. In the case of overnight trips, residential and longer journeys, the written consent of the Headmistress must be obtained, at least one term before the pupils are due to leave. All other trips should have at least 4 weeks' notice unless by special dispensation of the Headmistress. Therefore, initial requests should be made as early as possible.
6. For longer trips, particularly those overseas, a Parents' Information Evening should be held several weeks prior to departure. This allows information to be shared, questions to be asked and answered, and reassurance to be given where appropriate.
7. Once consent has been given by SMT, the group leader should contact the School Administrator to discuss costs and payments, as she will take responsibility for all financial arrangements in connection with the trip.
8. A copy of the pupil register should be left at School Office on the day of the visit with up-to-date details of the staff and pupils involved, including telephone numbers, and planned time of return.
9. If a trip is to return outside the normal working day/week, details of the expected time of return to school must also be left with the Site Manager and School Administrator.
10. All pupils must be returned to school unless there are agreed arrangements between the parents and the group leader.
11. Pupils with limited language acquisition are to be supplied with written details to hand to the police in case they become separated from the main party.
12. All groups must keep records of any accidents.
13. In the event of any injury warranting hospital treatment, parents should be informed immediately and should accompany the pupil wherever possible.

### **Payment, Finances and Insurance**

- Requests for cash floats should be made at least 10 days prior to the visit, and collected on the day of the trip from the School Administrator, who oversees petty cash.
- Any insurance documentation must be copied and held by the School Administrator.
- Completed school journey accounts with all accompanying documentation must be given to the School Administrator, who will forward them on to the Finance Manager immediately after the trip to comply with audit requirements.

### **School Journeys Abroad**

In addition to the normal procedures associated with school trips outlined above, the following rules apply in connection with school journeys abroad:

- No school journey abroad may be made unless the consent of, the Headmistress and the parents of pupils concerned has been given.
- No irreversible commitment with parents should occur until consent of the Headmistress has been obtained.

- No unreasonable alterations may be made to the organisation of the journey once it has commenced.
- When parents are notified of arrangements of the proposed trips, they shall be told the manner in which payments are to be made, preferably by crossed cheque, postal order, money order or BACS payment, and the account to which cheques or other payments shall be made payable.
- The group leader must arrange insurance, including loss of baggage if that is not covered by the package provided by the travel company.
- The Headmistress and Governors must be notified if the journey is cancelled.
- A completed Visits Information Form, contained at the end of this document, is to be made available to the Headmistress and the Governors at least 8 months before the journey for Category V.
- A Final Trip Information Form, including an RA, will have been submitted for approval to the Headmistress and Governors at least 8 weeks in advance of the trip.
- A Final Trip Information Form, Risk Assessment(s) and copy of Insurance forms will have been submitted to Assistant Head at least 2 weeks in advance of the trip. The class list will have been e-mailed to the Assistant Head.
- An Insurance Form will have been completed and attached to the Final Trip Information form.
- A meeting for parents will have been held at least 14 days before the trip departs.
- A pupil list with contacts and special considerations, such as diet and medical, will have been prepared 8 weeks before departure; this list will also be taken by the group leader on the trip.
- A photocopied record of passports of all pupils will have been prepared and left with the SMT member who will be the emergency contact.
- A final detailed itinerary, including planned activities and supervision arrangements of pupils will have been submitted to the Headmistress at least 8 weeks before departure.



Category A Trips and Visits (Local)	Category B Trips and Visits (Local) ( Residential/Abroad/Higher Risk)		
4 Weeks before trip	<p>1. Check with the Assistant Head that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. cover for the teachers attending can be guaranteed first (using the normal Leave of Absence form) and</li> <li>b. that the trip has been approved by her as academically worthwhile.</li> </ul> <p>2. Complete relevant/appropriate Risk Assessment forms.</p> <p>3. Check with the Assistant Head to see if there are any pupils who should not go or if there are any other activities that clash.</p> <p>4. Trip letter to parents submitted to the Assistant Head.</p>	At one term before trip	<p>The following made available to the Headmistress and Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorisation from the Assistant Head, Teaching and Learning that cover for the teachers attending can be guaranteed (using the normal Leave of Absence form) and that the trip has been approved by her as academically worthwhile.</li> <li>• Trip Information Form, including an RA, submitted for approval.</li> <li>• An itinerary, including planned activities and supervision arrangements of pupils</li> <li>• Confirmation from the Assistant Head of any pupils who should not go or if there any other activities that clash.</li> <li>• Trip letter to parents has been approved by the Assistant Head.</li> </ul>
2 weeks before trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Trip Information Form, Risk Assessment and copy of the Insurance document submitted to the Assistant Head</li> <li>• Final class list emailed to the Assistant Head</li> <li>• Assistant Head publishes confirmation of trip and list of pupils going on the trip</li> <li>• Meeting held for staff going on the trip</li> </ul>	At least one term before trip	<p>The following made available to the Headmistress and Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Trip Information Form, including an RA, submitted.</li> <li>• pupil list with contacts and special considerations, e.g. diet and medical</li> <li>• staff list, with one designated leader identified</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information to parents, which must include a reasonably accurate schedule of work</li> <li>• copies of insurance certificates</li> <li>• copies of passports</li> <li>• emergency contact numbers of teachers on the journey and two members of SMT which should include the Headmistress, where possible</li> </ul>
10 days before trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petty Cash float requested</li> <li>• A pupil list with contacts and special considerations, such as diet and medical, prepared (to be taken by the group leader on the trip and left with the School Administrator)</li> <li>• Itinerary, including planned activities and supervision arrangements of pupils, submitted to the Assistant Head and the EVC.</li> <li>• EVC will meet the leader and staff and check the documents of the trip with them.</li> </ul>	At least 2 weeks before departure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information meeting for parents held</li> <li>• Meeting for staff going on trip held</li> <li>• Final Trip Information Form, Risk Assessment, detailed itinerary and copy of the Insurance document submitted to the Headmistress and the Assistant Head.</li> <li>• Final class list e-mailed to the EVC</li> <li>• Confirmation of trip and list of pupils going published by the Assistant Head and emailed to teachers.</li> </ul>
On the day of the trip	A copy of the pupil register should be left by the EVC on the day of the visit with up-to-date details of the staff and pupils involved, including telephone numbers, and planned time of return.	10 days before trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petty Cash float requested</li> <li>• Pupil list with contacts and special considerations, such as diet and medical ready: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ to be taken by the group leader on the trip and</li> <li>○ left with the EVC, and a member of SMT</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Insurance form completed and attached to Final Trip Information form</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EVC will meet the leader and staff and check the documents of the trip with them.</li> </ul>
		On the day of the trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All passports photocopied and left with emergency contact SMT member</li> <li>• Full details of the destination: address, telephone number, time of arrival, time of departure and time of return to school left with the Headmistress, designated member of the SMT and the School Administrator</li> <li>• A complete list of names and addresses of pupils going on the trip left at the school A duplicate list taken on the trip</li> </ul>

Title	Educational and Off-Site Visits Activities Policy
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Approved by Governing Body	Yes
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