

# Educational and Off-Site Visits Policy

First Published 14/2/14

Reviewed March 2018



## Legal Requirements

The Education (Independent School Standards) (Wales) Regulations 2003 state that independent schools must draw up and implement effectively a written policy to safeguard and promote the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school

- the policy must have regard to *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV)*.
- And 'Keeping Learners Safe' Guidance doc number 158/2015

## Introductory Statement and Duty of Care

Off site visits form a very important part of the curriculum provision at The Lifehouse. The School recognises the educational value of off-site visits and their contribution to the personal and social development of the pupils. The purpose of this policy document is to ensure that all off-site visits are correctly planned, managed and supervised so that pupils can safely participate in the opportunities that are offered.

The standard of care required of a teacher is that which can reasonably be expected from teachers generally, applying skill and awareness of children's problems, needs and susceptibilities. It is expected that a teacher will do that which a parent, with care and concern for the safety and welfare of his or her own child, would do. However, the legal duty of care expected of an individual teacher is that which a caring teaching professional would expect of themselves.

The legal liability of a teacher or head teacher for an injury which is sustained by a pupil on an off-site visit depends on whether or not the injury to the pupil is a direct result of some negligence or failure to fulfil the duty of care on the part of their teacher or head teacher. There is no legal liability for any injury sustained by pupils unless there is proven negligence.

## 1 Administrative Procedure

- 1.1 The organiser has initial discussions with the manager and/or Head to consider the feasibility, prospective dates, curriculum issues, appropriateness, costing etc.
- 1.2 If required, the organiser seeks advice and support on issues such as risk assessments, supervision requirements, information for parents, administrative arrangements

1.3 Due consideration is given and hopefully errors are spotted at this stage, in which case the application will be returned to the organiser for re-submission.

1.5 The application is approved by the Head and/or the Managing Director

1.6 The organiser assembles a Contact Folder (which may be electronic). The folder must be given in to the office at least 24 hours before departure. The Contact Folder must contain the following:

- Group List of pupils and supervisors;
- Finalised itinerary;
- Copy of all the information given to parents;
- If issued, a photocopy of both sides of the Parental Consent Form;
- Contact details for the organiser and group throughout the visit;
- Copy of the risk assessment(s);
- Emergency contact information for supervisors.

1.7 After the visit the following should be undertaken by the organiser:

- A written record of any injuries and/or significant illnesses
- An evaluation of the visit to the Head to include notification of any incidents, accidents or significant illnesses. This should include details of any disciplinary action taken during the visit along with recommendations for any further action;
- Notification to other staff of any problems associated with specific pupils and risk assessments adjusted accordingly.

## **2 Emergency Procedures**

2.1 Staff should carry an 'aide-memoire' outlining what their response should be in an emergency. This should be a summary of the emergency procedures outlined below (2.2 – 2.17) as well as a list of all the key telephone numbers, including the School Contact.

2.2 Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.

2.3 Ensure that all the group are safe and looked after.

2.4 Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.

2.5 Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures.

2.6 Ensure that an approved adult supervisor (whose name appears on the Consent Form signed by the parents) accompanies casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group is adequately supervised at all times and kept together.

2.7 Notify the police if necessary.

2.8 Inform the School Contact. The School Contact can be used to inform parents and next of kin of both pupils and supervisors.

2.9 Details of the incident to pass on to the School Contact should include:

- Nature, date and time of incident;
- Location of incident;
- Names of casualties and details of their injuries;
- Names of others involved so that parents can be reassured;
- Action taken so far;
- Action yet to be taken (and by whom)
- Contact details for the group and group leader.

2.10 If applicable, notify the insurers, especially if medical assistance is required (this may be done by the School Contact).

2.11 If applicable, notify the provider/tour operator (this may be done by the School Contact).

2.12 Ascertain telephone numbers for future calls. Mobile phones may be subject to technical difficulties and should not replace usual procedures.

2.13 Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence.

2.14 Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident.

2.15 No-one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to their families. Media enquiries should be referred to the School Contact or to the Head

2.16 No-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.

### **3 First Aid**

3.1 First aid should form part of the risk assessment. Before any off-site activity takes place, the group leader should assess what level of first aid might be needed.

3.2 For adventurous activities, visits abroad, residential visits and sports events at least one of the adult supervisors should hold a current first aid qualification.

3.3 A suitable first-aid kit, provided by the School, must be taken on all visits.

## **4 Information for Parents and Preparation of Pupils**

4.1 Parents are aware that pupils at The Lifehouse undergo local visits to various public destinations as a regular part of their curriculum. However, any trip that is outside of our 'norm' should always be notified to parents and written consent obtained

4.2 It is possible to obtain consent by email where this is the normal mode of contact with parents. They will receive written information on all visits in which their child is participating. The amount of information provided for parents will obviously vary according to the type of trip and the time spent away.

4.3 As a basic minimum, the following details should be given well in advance in respect of all trips:

Destination and purpose of the trip;

- Names of the organiser, other staff and other adults;
- Dates and times of departure;
- Dates and times of return;
- Method of travel;
- Arrangements for delayed return;
- Requirements for the journey;
- Clothing and personal equipment that needs to be brought;
- Specific rules and code of conduct;
- Details of potential hazards and their management;
- Explanation about any financial aspects;
- Notification of any remote supervision with details of the supervision arrangements;
- Name and telephone number of the School Contact, emphasising that this is for emergency use only.

4.4 Additional advance information, as appropriate, may include:

- A statement of whether insurance cover is included or not;
- Details of any insurance cover with the names and addresses of the insurers;
- Activities and visits in which pupils will be allowed to participate and whether these are included in the cost of the trip;
- Cost and method of payment if appropriate;
- Name and address of any travel company through whom any arrangements are made;
- Name and address of any third party provider of adventure activities and a statement confirming that the provider is licensed under the 'Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996'.
- General information about accommodation (eg. type, domestic arrangements, recreation facilities, other users etc);

- Documents that need to be brought (eg. passports, visas, student identity cards, European Health Insurance card etc);
- Specific vaccination and medical requirements;
- Address and telephone number where the pupils will be staying;
- Address and telephone number where the organiser and staff can be contacted by parents.

4.5 Although all the relevant information must be given in writing, it is advantageous for organisers and staff to invite parents and pupils to an 'information evening' before any extended residential trip.

4.6 Pupils should be involved in the planning of the visit wherever appropriate in order for them to be well prepared, to understand any potential dangers, to understand what is expected of them, to take informed decisions and be less at risk.

4.7 The group leader should decide how information is provided but must ensure that the pupils understand key information. For some pupils on overnight visits it will be their first experience away from home on their own and in the close company of other pupils.

4.8 Pupils should understand:

- The aims and objectives of the visit or activity;
- The background information about the place to be visited;
- How to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- Why safety precautions are in place;
- Why safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- What standard of behaviour is expected from them;
- Appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct, including sexual activity;
- Who is responsible for the group;
- What not to bring back e.g. drugs and knives;
- What to do if approached by anyone from outside the group;
- Rendezvous procedures and what to do if separated from the group;
- Emergency procedures;

4.9 Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- Arrive on time and wait for the transport in a safe place;
- Do not rush;
- Always show respect for people inside AND outside of the vehicle
- Wear seat belts and stay seated whilst travelling, do not kneel or stand on seats and do not throw things from the windows;
- Never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or controls, or distract the driver
- Bags must not block the aisles or cause obstructions;

- Use the Green Cross Code when crossing roads in the UK.

4.10 Every effort should be made to include all our pupils with special educational or medicinal needs. Special attention should be given to supervision ratios and additional safety measures.

4.11 The group leader should discuss the any special individual needs of each pupil with the parents.

4.12 Attention should always be given by the group leader to the following factors and they should always be taken into consideration:

- Is each pupil capable of taking part in and benefitting from the activity?
- Can the activity be adapted to enable the pupil to participate at a suitable level?
- Will additional or different resources be necessary?
- Is the pupil able to understand and follow instructions?
- Will additional supervision be necessary?

## **5 Permission and Parental Consent**

5.1 all off-site visits must have the permission of the day manager, Head or Managing Director

5.2 Parents and guardians must be notified in writing of each off-site visit that is beyond our 'normal and routine' visit locations for which we already have parental consent e.g. Newtown or Welshpool shopping, Gregynog, Dolfowyn and other very local and short visits. Organising staff have a responsibility to inform parents and guardians fully on all aspects of any bigger visit.

5.3 Consent from a parent or guardian must include consent for an accompanying member of staff to act on their behalf in an emergency and to approve medical treatment (including anaesthetic, operation and blood transfusion) as is deemed necessary upon the advice of a qualified medical practitioner should contact with the parent or guardian be impossible, including the signing of consent forms required by medical authorities where those authorities are of the opinion that it would be inadvisable to wait for the signature of a parent or guardian. Loco parentis forms for each pupil should be held for each pupil and should be checked by the trip organiser.

5.4 Parents or guardians must provide the organiser with details of any medical needs or conditions applicable to their child. This must include authority for an accompanying member of staff to administer medication as prescribed by a medical practitioner or as indicated by the parent or guardian.

5.5 Any parent or guardian who is not prepared to give their full consent or who does not wish to supply information to the organiser should be referred to the management by the organiser, and the child will be unable to participate in the visit.

5.6 The published collection arrangements for pupils at the end of a visit can only be changed with the permission of a parent. Permission can be given in writing or by speaking with the parent but a third party cannot give permission on behalf of a parent.

## **6 Competency, Currency and Third Party Compliance to Standards**

6.1 For an adventure activity, the Headteacher must ensure that the organiser and other adult supervisors are suitably competent and currently qualified to lead or instruct pupils in the activity.

6.2 The relevant National Governing Body award, where it exists, is the preferred indicator of competence. Other factors such as the level of training, experience and personal qualities can also be considered by the Head in determining the level of competence.

6.3 Organising staff have a responsibility to assess the quality of a third party provider, especially in terms of learning and safety. Public liability insurance must also be confirmed. Lifehouse staff should check whether the provider is an assured member of the School Travel Forum (STF) and is accredited with the award of a Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge.

6.4 Organisers have a responsibility to check that third party providers offering hazardous activities are licensed under the 'Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996' and have a current AALS license.

6.5 Third party expedition providers of foreign trips involving remote adventurous activity must comply with British Standard 8848 and with the standards of the Expedition Providers Association (EPA).

6.6 Competence also applies to non-adventurous activities. A teacher must not organise a trip without first obtaining experience and guidance.

## **7 Remote Supervision**

7.1 The aim of some visits may be to encourage independence and investigative skills, and some of the time on visits such as trips abroad and fieldwork may be unsupervised. Remote supervision is obligatory for some activities and visits e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions. The organiser should establish during the planning stage of the visit whether the pupils are competent to undertake the activity without direct supervision.

7.2 Parents should be made aware, at the time of consent, whether any remote supervision will take place and what the arrangements for remote supervision are.

7.3 During any time that remote supervision takes place the group leader must ensure that pupils are aware of the ground rules and are adequately equipped to be on their own in a group. The size of each group should also be considered.

7.4 Pupils should have the following:

- Telephone numbers and emergency contacts;
- money;
- Maps and plans and any other information for them to act efficiently;
- Knowledge of how to summon help;
- Knowledge of out of bounds areas and activities;
- Means of identity and a rendezvous point.

7.5 It is important that pupils are told not to go off individually and are given clear instructions about permitted remote supervised activities. They need to understand and accept these rules.

7.6 Pupils should not normally be allowed to leave a residential centre without adult supervision. Depending on the age of the pupils and the environs of the residential centre, then permission to leave without adult supervision may be appropriate, but only after clearly identified guidelines are established:

- A signing in-and-out book should be used;
- Pupils should never be allowed to wander individually;
- The geographical area the pupils are allowed to wander must be made clear;
- Occasions when pupils can be off-site need to be specified;
- Potentially dangerous activities (e.g. swimming) must be banned.

7.7 The main organising member of staff remains responsible for pupils even when not in direct contact with them.

## 8 Risk Assessment

8.1 A risk assessment should be completed for each off-site visit in the following categories.

- **Routine visits that are part of the school day.** For these visits a risk assessment need only be done once each year and a copy should be kept in the school IT system/risk assessment file. The organiser should monitor the visits and revise the risk assessment if conditions change. On each occasion a pupil is taken off site their personal risk assessment will be taken into account.
- **Non-routine visits.** The organiser should complete a risk assessment for each visit and submit this, along with the other documentation at the time of the written

application. Many trips that are repeated will have very similar (if not identical) risk assessments but it is essential that organisers treat each visit on its own merits.

- **All residential/overnight visits.** Risk assessments should be completed for these visits even though they may be established sporting fixtures in the school calendar. The risk assessment should be submitted at the time of the written application.

8.2 Risk assessments are checked by the Head and Managing director at the time of the written application for each off-site visit. Organisers will be notified of any concerns or suggested modifications at this stage.

8.3 Organisers should ensure that all participants (pupils and adults) are notified of the hazards and that appropriate instruction is given.

8.4 If conditions change significantly (e.g. weather, age composition of the group, precise location) between the risk assessment and the commencement of the trip, then organisers should revise the risk assessment accordingly. A final agreed copy must be taken on the visit.

8.5 Before booking a visit the group leader should obtain a written or documentary assurance that third party providers such as tour operators have themselves assessed the risks and have appropriate safety measures in place.

8.6 Organisers should continually monitor risks throughout the duration of the visit as potential hazards are identified and they must record a change of plan as a risk becomes apparent.

8.7 Organisers must always consider the need to change the itinerary or programme during an off-site visit. A typical example is adverse weather conditions increasing the risk for an activity above acceptable levels. Organisers must therefore have a 'Plan B' which must be included on the initial risk assessment for the visit.

8.8 A copy of each risk assessment, together with a record of any change in plan, should be put in the Electronic Contact Folder.

8.9 Organisers must obtain risk assessments carried out by a third party provider and the Head and the managing Director must be satisfied that such risk assessments are thorough and appropriate.

## **9 Safety**

9.1 It is essential that the utmost care is taken to ensure that staff, adult supervisors and pupils involved in any off-site visit are safe and that appropriate procedures are followed at all times to achieve this.

9.2 The organiser must complete a written risk assessment for each off-site visit as indicated in the section on risk assessment (Section 8). Organisers should continually monitor risks throughout the duration of the visit as additional potential hazards are identified.

9.3 All staff, other adult supervisors and pupils should be made aware of any potential hazards that are likely to occur and must be briefed by the organiser of any emergency procedures.

9.4 All off-site visits occurring outside school hours must have a designated School Contact.

9.5 The organisers must ensure that a mobile phone is taken on each visit. For visits occurring outside the UK, the organiser must check in advance that the mobile phone(s) will function abroad.

9.6 Third party providers offering hazardous activities must provide a copy of their licence under the 'Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996'. Third party providers should also confirm that they have a public liability insurance certificate.

9.7 All incidents involving accident or injury must be notified to the Managing Director and the Head.

9.8 In the event of a serious incident, accident or fatality, organisers should refer all press and media enquiries to the Managing Director or Head.

## **10 Supervision**

10.1 Organisers and other adult supervisors act 'in loco parentis', that is, as a sensible and careful parent would do. However, the legal duty of care expected of an individual teacher is that which a caring teaching profession would expect of itself. This includes responsibility twenty-four hours a day for the duration of the visit and is in no way lessened because the duty of care is undertaken voluntarily.

10.2 Unless the Head advises otherwise, in normal circumstances there should be a supervision ratio of 1 adult for every 3 pupils. Care must be taken that

- Any pupil/staff ratios specific to age ranges are adhered to;
- Resources and equipment are appropriate for the age range;
- Additional supervision required for age ranges is provided when necessary.

10.3 The Head and organiser should assess the risks and consider an appropriate supervision level for the group. Some visits will require a higher staffing ratio depending on factors such as:

- The age and abilities of the pupils;
- Nature of the activities;
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- Duration and nature of the journey;
- Type of accommodation;
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;
- Requirements of a third party provider.

10.4 Organisers of residential visits must ensure that a member of staff or other nominated adult supervisor remains at base at all times when pupils are present and have free time and/or leave to go out. The only exception is for activities and visits for which the Head has previously agreed permission and guidance for remote supervision.

10.5 Pupils on residential trips must be accompanied by at least one male adult supervisor.

10.6 At the Heads discretion, adult supervisors other than staff may accompany a visit, provided that at all times a member of staff is in overall control. All staff of The Lifehouse are adult supervisors and can be used to calculate the staffing ratio, provided that they are fully covered by the school's insurance.

10.7 All adult supervisors accompanying a residential trip must have been subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure.

10.8 Where pupils on off-site activities are looked after by third parties, the School will gain assurance that relevant suitability checks have been carried out on staff provided by those third parties.

10.9 For the protection of both adults and pupils, it is advised that adult supervisors are not left alone with a pupil unless unavoidable

10.10 Supervisors who are accompanied by a family member count as zero in the overall staffing ratio. Additionally, they must not be left in the sole charge of a group which includes their family member. Children who are not members of the school must not take part in any off-site visit.

10.11 Organisers have a responsibility to ensure that all staff and supervisors know the times when they are on duty and when they are able to have 'down time'.

## **11 Transport**

11.1 Most school visits are undertaken using the Lifehouse owned cars and are insured as such under a school business policy for drivers approved by the directors.

11.2 Minibuses and coaches used for school trips must be fitted with approved seat belts. Seat belts must be worn at all times when travelling.

11.3 Teachers and others who drive pupils in their own cars must ensure their passengers' safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy, and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying pupils. The driver is responsible for making sure that pupils have a seat belt and use it at all times.

11.4 The permission of a parent must be obtained before their child is transported in another parent's car.

11.5 Drivers who are not accompanied by another adult must be DBS approved before transporting pupils.

## **12 Water Based and Water Margin Activities**

12.1 Water based activities are regarded as adventurous activities and must be strictly controlled. All water based activities must conform to the appropriate national governing body guidelines.

12.2 Water margin activities are regarded as 'learning activities' near or in water. These could include Geography fieldwork, Ecology pond dipping, and beach and lake shore activities. Parental consent must be obtained for these activities. There must be no remote supervision with water margin activities unless the arrangements have been agreed by the Head and communicated to the parents.

12.3 Swimming can be formal in purpose built pools (with or without a life guard in attendance) and informal such as in lakes, rivers and seas. In both cases, parental consent must be obtained. If no life saving facilities or expertise is available then parents must be informed.

12.4 An adult supervisor must always be present and observing from out of the water when pupils are swimming





















