

ST. MARY'S BRYANSTON SQUARE

POLICY FOR OFF-SITE VISITS

Aims.

This policy aims to ensure that visits are planned and conducted so that:

- the maximum educational benefit is derived from non-residential visits;
- children's health and safety is safeguarded on visits;
- other members of the school community are not inconvenienced;
- children represent the school in the best possible light in public;
- parents are fully informed about their child's activities.

Day visits should be a fully integrated part of the group's curriculum work. The visits must be included in half-termly forward planning.

There are, put in simple terms, 5 types of off-site visits:

- Routine visits to the library, other local schools, swimming pool, etc
- Short walks in the local area to support environmental education, etc
- Visits to indoor venues: museums, workshop events (music, art, etc), etc.
- Outdoor visits: farm visits, environmental studies, etc
- Residential trips (Year 6 school journey) and 'outdoor adventurous activities.'

The first three types of visit may generally be considered 'low risk' and there may be generic risk assessments already filed for these visits.

The last two will usually fall into 'medium risk' or 'high risk' categories and will require a higher level of planning and documentation. As well as complying with this policy the Westminster Policy for School Visits will have to be complied with. Some potentially hazardous visits will require approval by the Director of Education.

For most day visits it will only be necessary for the Headteacher to approve the visit.

Please use the following procedures as a checklist.

Procedures

1. **Discuss the suitability** of the date with the Head Teacher before any confirmations or detailed preparations are made.
2. **Preliminary visits** should be made if at all possible, and in the light of this visit:
 - decide on the mode of transport with regard to safety, behaviour, cost and speed;
 - locate facilities: lunch rooms, shelters, lavatories, postcards, recreation space if necessary, etc.;
 - decide exactly which exhibits or area the visit is to focus on, bearing in mind that a limited exposure with very clearly defined observation / recording tasks is usually more productive than a more vaguely defined over-view;
 - decide whether any available in-house support, eg. guides, worksheets or other resources are appropriate for your planned approach, or whether you will need to prepare your own.
3. **Complete an approval form and risk assessment form** (*Westminster Off-Site Visits Policy*)
4. **Cost the exercise**, not forgetting the adult fares. Divide the total by the number of children expected to take part.
5. **Inform parents** of the visit's details:
 - purpose of visit
 - the place to be visited
 - date and times of departure
 - return time
 - transport arrangements
 - proposed cost and financial arrangements
 - arrangements for lunch (if appropriate)
 - names of staff accompanying the visit
6. **Obtain permission from parents** if the visit is not 'routine' (library, etc)
7. **Inform other school staff and volunteers**
 - Make arrangements with the kitchen, remembering that the cook needs as much notice as possible because of ordering. Children who normally have a school dinner take a packed lunch from the kitchen. They do not supply drinks.
 - It is almost impossible to find a day for a field visit that does not disrupt some weekly activity, particularly in the Junior department. However, it is our policy to ensure that such activities are cancelled or postponed with suitable notice and minimum disruption to the adults concerned. Activities which may need to be cancelled or changed include:
 - instrumental music instruction
 - volunteer reading helpers

- SEN support for statemented children
- library visits
- swimming / sports centre visits
- Educational Psychologist working with individuals
- clubs - if late return expected
- St. Marylebone teachers

It is not acceptable for an adult, either professional or voluntary, to arrive to teach or support children who are out on a visit, because they have not been told.

8. Draft a letter to parents, remembering that our policy is:

- to tell the parents the type of work the children will be engaged in, and to make it clear that it is a field trip (and not an outing).
- To inform parents of the travel arrangements.
- to inform parents about the cost of the trip, and to invite them to contribute that amount or as much of it as they can afford.
- to inform parents about rearrangements made for eg. music lessons.
- that children bringing a packed lunch from home bring it in a disposable carrier bag (not their usual lunch box).
- that no fizzy drinks or glass containers are allowed.
- to tell parents the date of the visit, times of leaving and return.
- to require permission on a return slip.
- to specify suitable clothing and turn-out.

Show the draft to the Headteacher.

9. Children should be well prepared

- learning expectations;
- behaviour.
- organisation

10. If, after all reasonable efforts have been made, and after allowing for the available support and nature of the visit, the behaviour of individual children is still deemed to pose an unacceptable level of risk to themselves, the other children, the adults accompanying the group or members of the general public, the school reserves the right not to take those individual children off site.

It is the class teacher's responsibility to arrange a class to accommodate the child(ren) and provide appropriate work.

11. Supervision

- For a short (eg. half day) visit which does not require public transport, two adults to a class may be sufficient, but generally speaking, a suitable ratio of adults to children is 1:6 for infant classes (1:10 for library visits) and 1:10 (1:15 for short, local visits, eg: library, swimming, sports centre) for juniors.

- Decisions about supervision ratios should be made by the group leader, bearing in mind the particular cohort's age, SEN, etc.

If you can arrange exchanges of teacher or classroom support with your colleagues, or arrange trips during your own support time, it is less disruptive to the timetable. Ideally it is better to invite specific parents to accompany the group, rather than issuing a general invitation, but with the decrease in parental availability, you may have to open it to anyone who is available.

Parent volunteers must be deemed competent to supervise their group and be briefed about their role.

- Very large groups (more than one class) are not conducive to the learning atmosphere. Small groups (ten or fifteen) have much more potential. Consider taking or sending this type of group out on your support teacher day.

12. **Details about the visit**, completed risk assessments, contact numbers for the group leader(s) (mobile numbers), etc must be left with the administrative officer

13. **Group leaders must take with them contact details** (school, mobiles, pupil contact details, etc) and any medication used by pupils in the group.

14. **The group leader must be familiar with the school's emergency procedures** in the event that the group are involved in a civil emergency or in the event that the school is involved in an emergency while the group are off site.

15. The group leader must be familiar with the emergency procedures in the event that someone in the group is involved in an accident or emergency (see attached)

16. **Following the visit:**

- The group leader should provide a verbal evaluation of the trip to the Headteacher. Any problems should be followed up - this is the group leader's responsibility in the first instance.
- children should write thank-you letters whenever it is appropriate.

A 'Going Out' Pack is available from the school office that contains all of the available guidance for planning school visits - school policies, etc as well as Westminster and DfES guidance.

Revised November 2000

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EMERGENCY PROCEDURES (from Westminster Policy for School Visits)

1. Framework for party leaders.

Despite good planning and organisation there may be accidents and emergencies which will require on the spot response by the leaders. Adequate provision for minor first aid must be available when the party is 'in the field' and the leader should ensure that the levels of supervision are sufficient to allow the group to be split where necessary. A mobile phone is a useful aid. Emergency flares, whistles etc should be carried where appropriate.

Activity centres should have their own emergency procedures. These should be obtained in advance of the visit and compared with the recommended framework below. If the centre procedures are significantly different or appear inadequate the school should agree with the centre management what procedures should be followed. **Centre staff and school/youth service staff supervising the party should be made fully aware of what is agreed.** If there is any doubt about the safety of the arrangements the trip should not take place.

2. Recommended Procedures:

- a) Establish the nature and extent of the emergency;
- b) Make sure all other members of the party are accounted for and safe;
- c) If there are injuries immediately establish their extent, so far as possible, and administer appropriate first aid;
- d) Establish the names of the injured and call whichever emergency services are required;
- e) Advise other party staff of the incident and that the emergency procedures are in operation;
- f) Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies the injured to hospital;
- g) Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout and arrange for their early return to base;
- h) Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all children are accounted for;
- i) Control access to phones until contact is made with the head teacher, emergency contact point or designated senior member of staff and he or she has had time to contact those directly involved;

Give full details of the incident to the Headteacher or designated contact:

- Name;
- Nature, date and time of incident;
- Location of incident;
- Details of injuries;
- Names and telephone numbers of those involved;
- Action taken so far;
- Telephone number for further contact.

3.0 Serious Incidents

3.1 For serious incidents where the media may be involved, try to identify alternative telephone numbers at "home" and "off-site base" as other lines will quickly become jammed. It is not for the party leader or other party members to discuss matters with the media: procedures for this are given below. Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be divulged to the media.

3.2 The headteacher or designated senior staff member should alert the Director of Education, Westminster, giving details as above. They may identify further actions or help required (which might include financial assistance). Alternative and additional phone lines may need to be identified at an early stage.

3.3 The head teacher or designated senior staff member should arrange to contact parents/carers of those involved. For a serious incident the headteacher or designated senior staff member should contact parents of all party members. It is also his/her responsibility to act as a link between the group involved, the Chairman of Governors or management committee, the LEA and parents.

3.4 If it is necessary to talk to the media, the Westminster Council Press Office will do this initially. A member of the Press Office staff will be designated as the point of contact for the media and all involved should direct questions and requests to this person. This person will liaise with the emergency services, possibly on site.

3.5 The party leader should write down, as soon as practicable, all relevant details while they are still fresh in the memory. Other staff members might also be asked to do so. A record should be kept of the names and addresses of any witnesses. Any associated equipment should be kept in its original condition.

3.6 Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.

3.7 All accident forms should be completed as soon as possible and Insurers, the Health and Safety Executive and the Health and Safety Adviser for Education should be informed as appropriate.