



**QUINTON HALL**  
Preparatory School & Nursery

## **Educational Visits Policy**

Owner	<b>MJS</b>
-------	------------

<b>Policy Approved By:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Senior Management Team	June 2021
Presented and Agreed by Staff	June 2021
Review Date:	September 2022

This policy is designed to cover all visits which take place outside the School grounds. It has been written with regard to DfES Guidance: Health and Safety of pupils on educational visits.

### Purpose and Value of Educational Visits

Educational visits should give pupils the opportunity to

- Have fun
- Raise achievement by boosting self-esteem and motivation
- Develop key skills
- Develop social education and citizenship
- Promote education for sustainable development
- Promote health and fitness
- Develop an understanding of risk and responsibility for oneself and as a member of a group

### Travelling off-site

Pupils should, as a matter of course, expect to travel to an off-site visit by:

- Walking
- Using a School minibus
- Using a hired minibus
- Using a hired coach
- Using other means of public transport, e.g. train, ferry, aeroplane.
- Using a staff member's car

### Responsibility

(i) The School will discharge health and safety responsibilities for educational visits through policy and guidance, based on risk assessment and defined standards of competence; will monitor arrangements to ensure compliance and will provide training opportunities, information and advice based upon a knowledge of educational objectives, legal requirements and relevant practical experience.

(ii) Staff will take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety; will co-operate with the School; will carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions and will inform the School of any serious risks.

(iii) The Headmaster will ensure that visits comply with relevant policy documents; will ensure accreditation of external providers; will ensure there is a contingency plan in place; will ensure emergency procedures are in place; will allocate time and resources for staff training and will produce evidence of these.

(iv) The Headmaster and the Educational Visits Coordinator will ensure educational visits meet the School's requirements; will assess the competence of prospective leaders and staff; will ensure risk assessments meet requirements; will organise training and induction; will ensure parents are informed and give consent; will organise emergency arrangements; will keep records of visits, accident or incident reports, and will review systems to monitor practice.

(v) The Visit Leader will have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit, including direct responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of the pupils; will be approved to carry out the visit by being adjudged to be suitably competent and knowledgeable about the relevant School policies; will have prepared and planned for the visit and have assessed the risks; will define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and pupils and will ensure effective supervision of what they do.

### **Risk Assessment and Risk Management**

(i) Generic ... this applies to an activity wherever and whenever it takes place and is prepared by the School

(ii) Visit/event specific ... this is prepared by School staff and amended as needed for different groups; it will include a Plan B activity – or return to School.

(iii) On-going ... judgements and decisions will be made as the need arises and will be recorded after the visit; they will be made by the visit leader.

All risk assessments will identify significant hazards, assess the risk of harm, put control measures in place, check if anything else is needed and use simple language (high, medium, low). A visit-specific risk assessment will be written after visiting the site and taking into account the groups of pupils, the activity undertaken and the group leaders. Pupils will be involved, where possible, in the risk assessment process, to understand better the whole nature of the activity.

### **Competence, Leadership and Supervision**

All visit leaders must be assessed as being competent to assess the risks of all the visits which the School undertakes. Any member of staff who has previously led successfully an educational visit which complied with existing policies and procedures of the School is deemed to be competent; other members of staff need to earn a Certificate of Competence from the Headmaster or a technical expert. All adults involved in an educational visit must be assessed as being competent in their specific tasks. Supervision will be either close, when a group is within sight of, and in contact with, the supervisor, or remote, when the group is working away from the supervisor, but subject to stated controls.

### **Staffing**

All off-site activities must have the approval of the Educational Visits Coordinator. He must be satisfied with the purpose, planning and proposed staffing for the activity. He will consider the mix of staff, experience, gender and seniority and take into account the complexity of the activity. All trips will be discussed at SMT meetings prior to approval.

The ratio of staff to pupils on a visit will be determined by the nature of the activity and the groups of pupils involved. The HASPEV and National Guidance quotes ratios for various age groups, but these are only suggestions. Staff family members may go on a visit, provided their duties are clearly laid out; those who go as a minder for their own children are not allowed to supervise other pupils.

Any adult who is not a member of the School staff needs to be DBS-checked, and will be expected to undergo a suitable training course, given by the School.

Volunteers will not normally be asked to participate in activities which require an overnight stay, but, should this occur, they will not be allowed to participate unless they have previously produced an up-to-date DBS clearance certificate.

### **First Aid**

The level of First Aid provision required is based upon risk assessment. There will be a member of staff with good working knowledge of First Aid on every visit. A First Aid kit will be carried on every visit.

### **Transport**

Any member of staff or other adult who wishes to transport children in a private car must produce evidence of the correct level of insurance cover; the School will give approval for such means of transport. The decision about use of a coach company lies with the School, not the visit leader. If any other type of transport is to be used, permission must be sought from the Headmaster.

The School will use a hired minibus only if the member of staff proposing to drive it is in possession of a current MIDAS certificate. He/she will be allowed to drive a hired minibus only for trips approved by the EVC and Head and the following conditions will be adhered to:

- The minibus will be hired from a reputable, approved source
- The driver will have completed the Driver's Declaration Form supplied in advance by the School and will adhere to the safe driving expectations listed on the form
- A second member of staff will travel in the vehicle at all times; this second adult will be deemed to be in charge of the group during the journey and will carry a mobile phone, which will be switched on at all times during the journey
- The second adult will not be allowed to drive the minibus at any time, unless he/she holds a current MIDAS certificate
- Agreed rest stops are notified as part of the risk assessment
- The driver's mobile phone will be switched off throughout the journey

### **Charging for Visits**

If the School levies a charge for a visit, parents will be informed.

### **Pupils with Special Needs**

Requirements for pupils with special needs will be assessed as part of the normal risk assessment process; this includes dietary, medical and mobility issues. Such needs will be catered for as appropriate. Medicines will be administered in line with the School policy on the administration of medicines (see First Aid Policy).

### **Insurance**

All members of a School visit are covered by the School's insurance policy, subject to the terms and conditions laid down therein. If any extra insurance cover is required, parents must be informed and a failure to take out such insurance when requested will exclude the pupil from the visit. For all trips abroad, all members of the group will carry the relevant form.

### **External Providers**

The decision to use an external provider rests with the Headmaster and Governors. Checks will be carried out to ensure all aspects of the operation of the provider are satisfactory.

Risk assessment of the activity is the responsibility of the provider. Only providers with an AALA licence will be used. Any tour operators used will comply with ATOL/ABTA; financial agreements will be with the School, not parents.

### **Water Margin Activities**

All staff will be conversant with “Group Safety at Water Margins”: DfES/CCPR. The visit leader will be suitably experienced, with their competence ratified by the School or Headmaster.

### **Day Visits**

Health and Safety routines will be followed at all times.

### **Adventure Activities**

These fall into three categories:

- (i) those which present no significant risks, e.g. walking in parks or non-remote country paths
- (ii) higher risk, e.g. walking in non-remote country, camping, cycling on roads or non-remote off-road terrain, low-level initiative challenges
- (iii) activities which, if not School-led, would be within the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996.

If organised in-house, all staff will be qualified (NGB or statement of competence by a technical advisor); all the equipment used will be suitable and maintained and all risk assessments and operational procedures will be in place.

If an external provider is used, the activity must be licensed and the provider must be AALA licensed.

### **Residential Visits**

Accommodation in the UK will be covered by a Fire Certificate.

Accommodation overseas will comply with Health and Safety regulations of the country concerned.

Appropriate security arrangements will be in place for possessions and pupils and staff. There will be separate accommodation and washing facilities for males and females; staff accommodation will be close at hand.

Foreign exchange visits are not supported by the School.

Ski trips will only be organised by a person holding a Ski Course Organiser Award; all instructors will be appropriately qualified and competent; any staff leading a skiing activity will hold an Alpine Ski Course Leader Award or a statement of competence from a technical advisor.

Overseas expeditions involving adventure activities are supported by the School only for pupils in P6; the pupils' competence to participate in such activities will be carefully ascertained beforehand.

### **Exploratory Visits**

These will be made by the visit leader to any unfamiliar location, any overseas location or any residential location prior to a planned visit in order that an adequate assessment of the risks can be made; if such a visit is not feasible the visit leader will need to consider how best to complete assessment of the risks.

## **Plan B**

There will be a fully risk assessed Plan B in place for all visits, or the trip will be terminated and will return to School.

## **Communication with Parents**

Visit leaders will communicate with parents

- (i) before a visit, so parents may make an informed decision about consent;
- (ii) during a visit only in the case of an accident or incident;

Parental consent is required for one-off visits, when an extra charge is to be made, when overnight accommodation is involved, when adventurous activities are to be undertaken and for all visits overseas. No child will be excluded from a visit except by express permission of the Headmaster. If a visit is not listed on the School calendar it will not take place without permission of the Headmaster.

## **Supervisory responsibilities**

### **The Visit Leader**

The Visit Leader should take overall responsibility for the group at all times during the visit or journey. Where there is more than one school involved an overall group leader should be identified, usually the person with the most experience in leading such visits

### **Supervision on trips**

Visit Leaders and visiting staff remain responsible for the well-being of their party members at all times, although clearly the visit centre will have a duty here, particularly during activity sessions. Discuss and confirm with the centre staff the level and type of supervision that they will undertake. In particular, there must be a clear understanding of 'passing the baton' – i.e. who is responsible and when. It must be remembered that instructors are responsible for the safe running of an activity. The group supervisors remain responsible for their general welfare.

## **Registers, head-counts and buddy systems**

- i. A 'face-to-face' identification and registration should happen whenever the party leaves a venue, whenever there is a change of transport and whenever there is any group reorganisation;
- ii. Regular head-counts are an essential part of supervision and are especially important when moving from place to place within a venue;
- iii. Take care to identify each pupil counted;
- iv. Avoid identification on young people that could put them at risk – e.g. name-badges;
- v. Identify arranged rendezvous points; It is a good idea to develop a buddy system, where the young people are involved in watching out for other members of their group.

## **Recreation time**

Remote supervision may be appropriate for unstructured sessions, where young people may wish to relax in their rooms or participate in informal games in a safe open area.

This is valuable time for young people and is to be encouraged. Supervisors need not have direct input but the party leader should ensure that unstructured time is properly supervised. Too much, or improperly supervised, recreation time can lead to mischief, bullying, homesickness and wandering off from the body of the group.

It is good practice to:

- Ensure there is a named supervisor responsible for each recreation session;
- Consider making appropriate games equipment available (indoor and outdoor), to occupy young people.

It must be stressed that 'free time' or 'unsupervised time' is unacceptable; there must always be a plan in place for the supervision of young people, although it may be remote or fairly informal.

### **Being 'on duty'**

Whether it is day or night, those designated 'on duty' should either be directly supervising the party or be immediately available as required.

### **Planning time off for supervisors**

Residential visits are extremely demanding of supervisors and young people alike and it is important that supervisors are given some time off when they are not on duty. Otherwise, supervisors may become overtired, reducing their ability to effectively supervise activities. Time off is likely to be in the evenings and should be organised through some form of rota system that ensures adequate supervision at all times.

### **Staff & Alcohol**

It should be noted that it is a potential disciplinary offence for a teacher to be at work (as they are when accompanying a School trip) when affected by drink (even if not 'drunk' in the everyday sense of the word) or indeed by other substances which may affect their judgement and behaviour (other than those medically prescribed and of which the School is aware) because being in such a state potentially puts pupils and colleagues at risk and may also undermine discipline and good order and perhaps bring the School into disrepute.

There is a strict no smoking and no alcohol policy on all trips.

During residential trips, smoking is only permitted in identified areas by the provider, whilst the member of staff is off duty. They should not return to duty smelling of smoke.

In practical terms, even when accompanying staff, parents or other adults are drinking alcohol, all QHS staff must refrain from doing so.

No alcohol should be purchased by QHS staff from the trips funds, for any other adults.

### **Emergency Procedures**

An emergency contact person will be in place for the duration of all visits, on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week basis, if necessary.

There will be a written emergency plan in place for every visit.

The visit leader will ensure that parental contact information is up to date and is carried on each visit; that a Panic card is carried by all adult supervisors in the group and that a media

contact policy is in place and has been read and understood. The visit leader will also carry on the visit consent forms, pupil medical records and a collection of blank RIDDOR forms.

### **Evaluation**

Visits will be evaluated upon completion; a report may be published in the Newsletter and on the School website. Any areas which have not complied with the correct procedure will be investigated and the member of staff concerned will be interviewed and given guidance about future participation.

### **Review and Monitoring**

This will occur following any significant incident.

On-going small-scale reviews will take place as needed.

There will be a regular major review every three years or whenever there is a significant change to School policies and procedures introduced by the Governors.

### **The threat from terrorism**

The Risk Assessment pack, which is completed by all part leaders, contains advice on the threat of terrorism on School trips, from 'National Guidance'. The School's position is that school trips will not run in Central London, should the threat level from the Security Services be at 'Critical'. (<https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels>)

As the Threat Level has been at 'Severe' for nearly three years the School believes that trips should go ahead unless the school receives advice for them not to run them. The advice contained in the guidance identifies areas staff need to be mindful of at all times and these include:

During the visit:

- Be vigilant and aware of your surroundings – know where the exits are and where you would run to.
- Be aware of the possibility of suspicious items. Refer to the 4Cs protocol in the NCTSO guidance on Recognising the Terrorist Threat – <https://tinyurl.com/y6wjajzp>
- When staying at any place for more than 30 minutes, identify emergency meeting points in case the group is forced to move and becomes split.
- Avoid congregating too long around entrances to major public sites.
- At ports and airports don't linger unnecessarily on the public side of security screening.
- Be aware of the 'Stay Safe' principles: 'Run, Hide, Tell' and know what to expect if you encounter armed response officers (Refer to section 2 of the NCTSO guidance on Recognising the Terrorist Threat – see the link above).
- The experience of the National Counter-Terrorism Security Office is that decisive leadership is key.

Should the threat situation change at any point on a visit, staff should contact the School and consider safe areas or venues nearby and or alternate routes away from the visit site. These will be discussed at the planning stage.

*The EYFS and Pre-Prep departments follow this policy.*

Fr Mike Still

Reviewed June 2021