

TRIPS AND VISITS POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Within this policy 'we' and 'us' means the Federation.
- 1.2 All staff and volunteers who work here have a duty of care for students to make sure that they are safe and healthy, and are in a position of special trust. All actions whilst on trips and visits must uphold the best interests of the student as a primary consideration. The aim of this policy is to clarify what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to assist staff and volunteers by offering guidance on sensible conduct. Colleagues have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would.
- 1.3 This policy is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences that our students gain from positive interaction with staff. The guidelines help to provide an environment where the safety and welfare of students is assured, and where there is confidence and understanding among staff and volunteers about the standards of professional behaviour to which they should conform.
- 1.4 Members of staff and volunteers, in order to ensure that there is always someone who can verify their conduct, should avoid, if they can:
 - Being alone in a room with a student other than for a confidential interview.
 - Being alone with a student in a car or minibus.

- 1.5 The presence of another student or an adult should be an adequate safeguard. The situation where students are dropped off individually from a minibus or car until there is only one student left with a member of staff or volunteer should be avoided if possible, unless the parents of the student are aware of and agree to the arrangement or where the health and/or safety of the student would be compromised if such transportation was not provided. In such circumstances the student should, if possible, travel in the back of the vehicle.
- 1.6 Staff transporting students in their own cars must adhere to legislation about seatbelts. We have specialist insurance to cover the use of staff cars for business purposes.
- 1.7 Members of staff and volunteers on residential trips should only enter sleeping, toilet, showering or changing facilities when they are satisfied that there is another responsible adult in a position to verify their conduct. They should knock first, announce who they are and seek clearance to enter, except in emergencies.
- 1.8 Members of staff who are the only adult accompanying a school team or travelling with a small group on a residential trip need to be especially careful and sensitive to their own vulnerability. They should ensure that they abide by the general principle set out above of never being alone with a student in circumstances which might be difficult to account for later.
- 1.9 Special oversight and care need to be shown to students on school trips who will be staying with host families. All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the students are not going into a situation of known danger and it is particularly important that students in this situation should have an emergency phone number to contact in the event of problems.
- 1.10 Where it is deemed desirable, staff and volunteers accompanying residential trips should consider establishing age appropriate 'out-of-bounds' areas and curfew times for the protection of some or all students. The staff and volunteers should also ensure that they have an effective procedure for 'signing out/in' and an efficient method of raising concerns if students fail to report back by the required times.
- 1.11 Members of staff and volunteers accompanying residential trips should ensure that access to students whilst under their supervision (especially in their sleeping quarters) is secure.
- 1.12 A school party should normally be composed of students and staff; other adults (e.g. spouses/partners of staff, parents) may also be included to establish the appropriate adult/student ratio, but may not be left alone with children for substantial periods. Adults who have not been DBS checked will not have unsupervised access to students. All volunteers working with us are DBS checked, regardless of how many times they volunteer or whether they have unsupervised access.

2. STAFFING

- 2.1 Staff with no experience of leading educational visits must have taken part in previous visits.
- 2.2 Where responsible adults are included in an educational visit, there must be a majority of school staff on the trip. The preference is that only Federation staff should staff educational visits, except in the case where there is a specific need for other responsible adults. Where there is such a need it should be in a supporting role and not involve sole responsibility for the supervision of students. The Executive Principal will have to be satisfied about the appropriateness, in the circumstances of a particular visit, of including adults other than staff.
- 2.3 Where possible, visits abroad should include a member of staff with reasonable competence in the host language.
- 2.4 Staff are responsible for students in their care for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The responsibility is not lessened because the duty is undertaken voluntarily. It is a professional duty for a teacher to maintain good order and discipline of students and safeguard their health and safety, not only in school, but also when they are taking part in authorised activities elsewhere.
- 2.5 Where coaches are being provided, the party leader must establish the nature of their qualifications and satisfy him/her that they are appropriate.
- 2.6 Members of staff who are a 'couple' will ensure that their public personas are restricted to that of professional colleagues at all times; during residential trips, colleagues remain on duty 24 hours per day.

3. STAFF/STUDENT RATIOS

- 3.1 Staff/student ratios should be adhered to, but educational visits taking place in school time must not be over staffed in consideration for the supply cover involved. Ratios are only guidelines and are subject to a risk assessment (consider: people, location, activity, time of day) and must also reflect the requirements of SEN/DDA act:
 - Reception 1:4
 - Years 1-3 1:6
 - Years 4-5 1:8
 - Year 6 1:10

Years 7 onwards:

- Residentials 1:10
- Day visits 1:15-20 dependent upon the activity – watch if taking students with medical or educational needs as this may need increasing.

4. STAFF CONSUMPTION OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL ON SCHOOL TRIPS

- 4.1 The taking of drugs by staff on a school trip is strictly prohibited.
- 4.2 A strict no-alcohol approach to staff alcohol use is not taken. At the same time, however, we aim to encourage a safe and responsible attitude to the consumption of alcohol. The moderate consumption of alcohol, in the presence of students, should be restricted to mealtimes only. There should always be two 'duty' members of staff who will not have taken alcohol. Excessive consumption leading to a member of staff being considered 'drunk' is not acceptable. Staff should be aware that a breach of this may result in investigation under our disciplinary procedures.

5. RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 5.1 Risk assessments and risk management are legal requirements and are a key part of preparing for a school trip. For educational visits they involve the careful examination of what could cause harm during the visit and whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more should be done. We aim to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill. Our risk assessments should explicitly cover how special educational needs and medical needs are addressed. It is the responsibility of the trip leader to draw up and communicate the risk assessment to others.
- 5.2 In every educational trip we will ensure that the programme of a visit, as set out in the risk assessment and the consent form, will, where is practicable, be adhered to and will include contingency measures, i.e. a 'Plan B'.
- 5.3 A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Students must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained, then the visit must not take place.
- 5.4 For routine trips there can be a generic risk assessment but an individual site-specific risk assessment is required for a trip which involves a higher than normal risk.
- 5.5 The risk assessment process involves identifying the hazards (something with potential to cause harm), assessing the risk, which is the likelihood that harm will be caused by a particular hazard, and then taking steps to control the risk. Activities should not proceed if risks are assessed to be too high. Guidance emphasises that risk assessment is a process, not a document, and part of the planning. It suggests that the leader first of all produces a plan and then considers what could go wrong and how that could be avoided. The process is then repeated until a final proposal is produced. Where visiting a city or location which may be at risk of a terrorist attack, this must be identified on the risk assessment and appropriate steps identified. This must be shared with students in advance of the trip.

5.6 Risk assessment for visits should be considered at three distinct levels:

- 5.6.1 Generic activity risk assessments, which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place. Some of these may be prepared by the activity provider or tour operator rather than school staff, e.g. water activities (generic risk of drowning – control measures would include assessing the water confidence/ability of participants; use of buoyancy aids), travel (risk of injury in accidents – control measures would include qualified driver, number of drivers, maximum periods of driving, use of seat belts, vehicle maintenance).
- 5.6.2 Visit/site specific risk assessments, which will differ from place to place and group to group. Guidance recommends the group leader should visit the site beforehand to gain first-hand knowledge of the area/route. The knowledge will then inform the risk assessment. An exploratory visit will give the leader greater confidence when taking participants. Leaders are expected to have local intelligence of tides, potential for flooding and plan the itinerary accordingly; local intelligence on safe crossing place of railways, roads, rivers etc. That is not the end of the process. If some aspects of the risk assessment turn out in practice to have been faulty (e.g. because it was impossible to implement certain steps, or because other measures would have been preferable), it is essential the risk assessment be modified for future use. The fact that the original risk assessment was not perfect does not mean that it was negligent; it just proves how difficult it is to foresee every eventuality.
- 5.6.3 On a trip there needs to be ongoing risk assessment. Planned events may change. The weather may change, the risks become too great and the activity be curtailed. A staff member may have become unavailable or required to attend to a sick or injured student. Behaviour may become an issue. Supervision arrangements will constantly need reassessing. These are judgements and decisions taken as they arise. Staff must be able to recognise changed or changing conditions, be aware of the associated implication of these and be able to adapt the activity so as to control the associated risks.

5.7 Various factors will be relevant in assessing risks:

- The activity/activities and how well these are matched to the group.
- Location.
- Quality and suitability of facilities and equipment.
- Travel arrangements.
- Experience and qualifications of supervisory staff, including any centre staff.
- Staff/student ratios.
- Group members' age, competence, fitness, temperament, as well as the special educational or medical needs of the students in the group.
- Seasonal and environmental conditions, including weather.
- Communications.
- Emergency procedures.

5.8 All participants should help devise the risk assessments and must have a strong working knowledge of them. The need for a 'Plan B' to provide alternative activities of educational value if the main objective cannot be delivered is a priority in planning for a trip.

6. WATER

6.1 Many incidents affecting students have occurred by or in the sea, and special care is needed when students enter water. The group leader or colleague should have a relevant lifesaving award (in open water, where appropriate), be fully aware of local conditions such as tides and currents, designate a safe bathing area and establish emergency procedures, including what to do if a student is in distress. The group should know recall procedures. Students should always be in sight of supervisors and one supervisor should stay out of the water for better supervision. Local conditions can be obtained from the local coastguard, lifeguard or tourist information.

6.2 See also reference to the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) and guidance on the 'unexpected panicker' – a factor in some recent drownings. They believe it to be a reasonably foreseeable risk and it can be managed under Anticipation, Prevention and Recovery.

6.3 Records must include risk assessments, letters to parents, notes of pre-trip staff meetings and guidance to any adult volunteers. In the event of an accident, the trip leader should record carefully and as soon as possible his/her version of events and all action taken to minimise harm and protect students. The trip leader or another member of staff should contact the Academy and speak to a member of the senior team as soon as is practical, or telephone the designated senior leader if outside of the working day.

7. INVESTIGATION OF SERIOUS INCIDENTS

7.1 If there has been a serious incident there will be a formal investigation. The purpose of the investigation will be to:

- Determine the cause of the incident.
- Determine whether there are lessons to be learned.
- Provide information to bereaved parents.
- Exchange information with statutory investigation bodies as required.
- Manage media enquiries.

7.2 A serious incident would include a fatality of a student or adult, but might also include serious injuries and incidents where no serious injury occurred but where the risk of injury was high.

7.3 A clear risk assessment point is needed if any teacher wishes to bring one of their own children, for this can cause a conflict of interest. Implications must be built into risk assessments.

8. EMERGENCY TRIPS PROCEDURES

8.1 These guidelines are to be followed in the event of an emergency, for example a student or member of staff sustaining a serious injury or a transport accident.

- Establish the nature and extent of emergency promptly.
- Contact the emergency services if needed. If in doubt, call them.
- Ensure all other members of the group are safe and deploy staff to supervise them.
- Establish the names of casualties and arrange immediate medical attention. Look out the relevant medical forms.
- Ensure a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital, providing doctors with any relevant medical information.
- Ensure you have a pen and paper available so you are able to take down instructions from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or tour operator.
- Inform us by contacting SLT (01572 770066). If out of hours, contact the emergency contact allocated for the trip. Contact the tour operator if you are using one. You will need to explain the following during these phone calls:
 - the nature, date and time of the incident;
 - where it happened;
 - names of casualties and information about their injuries;
 - what has been done so far and action yet to be taken.
- SLT will notify the British Embassy or Consulate if an incident occurs abroad (you need to ensure this number is on your risk assessment).
- Agree with the SLT member how they will notify parents and, normally, insurers.
- Write down what happened as soon as convenient, and where appropriate include photographs.
- Note witnesses and preserve vital evidence, ascertaining phone numbers for future calls.
- On return to the Academy, complete an accident report. Note that serious accidents or incidents involving violence may need to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive.
- Please avoid discussions about legal liability.

8.2 If an accident occurs on a trip, a record must be kept, and returned to keep with the Trips Form documentation. This might be in the form of a note for something minor, e.g. 'John Smith, tripped on paving slab, cut knee, date'. For something more serious, a serious miss or communicable disease, you will need to complete Form F2508. You will need to write a report and take witness statements. Records must be kept at least until the participating student is 18 plus a further 3 years.

8.3 If an accident has occurred at a centre on a residential visit and the centre has completed an accident report, staff must still report all incidents so that our own systems are fulfilled.