



## EDUCATIONAL TRIPS AND VISITS POLICY

### INCLUDING SAFETY AND SUPERVISION ON SCHOOL JOURNEYS

#### Introduction

The Trustees of Rookwood School believe that a child's education is greatly enhanced by their involvement in educational activities outside the classroom. The School provides many such activities and encourages its students to participate in them.

All offsite activities are planned and run with the following criteria in mind:

- Activities should have an educational value to the participating students
- Activities should conform to the highest possible standards of safety for all participants
- Where payment is involved, activities should give value for money to parents

The School has regard for the current Duke of Edinburgh (DfE) Award guidance, *Departmental Advice on Health and Safety in Schools* updated September 2012, Health and safety: advice on legal duties and powers For local authorities, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies February 2014 as well as HSE *School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities* dated November 2011. All off-site school activities should conform to the following procedures.

#### Responsibilities for Activities

The Headteacher, although this may be delegated to the Heads of Schools, on behalf of the Trustees, gives permission, in principle, for an activity to take place. Permission is given on the basis that detailed planning and risk assessment is undertaken by the Group Leader, who will be leading the activity as it takes place. The Group Leader's planning and risk assessment responsibilities are overseen by the Head of School who ensures that all aspects of planning for the activity have been covered. Copies of risk assessments will be kept in the bursary. When satisfied that all planning is complete, especially with regard to safety, the Head of School gives final permission for the activity to take place. The activity cannot take place without this permission.

The Group Leader takes overall responsibility for the safety of pupils during the activity, and should be competent in assessing the risks due to any hazards likely to be encountered during the particular activity. The Group Leader also takes overall responsibility for the behaviour of pupils during the

activity. For some activities, pupils may be required, in advance, to agree to a code of conduct which will be agreed with their parents.

If the activity is classified as adventurous or potentially hazardous (e.g. canoeing, fell walking), the Group Leader (or another supervising adult) will hold a relevant NGB award (if one exists) which demonstrates his or her competence in supervising such an activity.

Other supervising adults also take responsibility for the safety and behaviour of pupils during an activity, under the direction of the Group Leader. All supervising adults do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group, and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances.

### **Planning Activities**

The Group Leader is responsible for the detailed planning of the activity. This planning will encompass factors such as: venue, timing, facilities required, transport, insurance, supervision ratios, informing parents, financial planning and emergency arrangements (N.B. this list is not exhaustive).

The Group Leader will decide on the level of first-aid cover which will be required for the activity including the number of first-aiders in the party and the number of first-aid kits that will have to be carried. He or she will ascertain whether any pupil is taking regular medication.

The Group Leader is also responsible for creating a detailed risk assessment for the activity and will undertake on-going risk assessment during the activity. The group leader is also required to review and hold a copy of the risk assessment of the venue being visited, if one is available.

For activities taking place outside the School's normal working hours, the Group Leader will appoint a school base contact who can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

### **Supervision**

The Headteacher/ Head of School will advise the Group Leader regarding a suitable adult: pupil ratio relevant to the activity. This will depend on the nature and location of the activity and the age of the children, but will be a minimum of one adult supervisor to 20 children. For some types of activity, a higher ratio of adults (with a minimum of 2 adults) is appropriate. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) supervision will be in line with EYFS guidelines. Supervising adults will normally be members of Rookwood staff, although not necessarily teaching staff. Supervising adults who are not members of staff must be Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked if they are likely to have sustained contact with students for example on overnight trips.

On some activities, it may be appropriate (and even desirable) for pupils to be remotely supervised. The Group Leader will establish beforehand that pupils are competent in remote supervision, and

parents will be informed that remote supervision will take place. Pupils will be advised of the minimum number in the group.

### **Preparing Students for the Activity**

The Group Leader will ensure that all pupils, particularly those with special needs, are capable of undertaking the proposed activity, that they understand beforehand what will be expected of them during the activity, particularly with regard to behaviour and safety. Where necessary medical arrangements will also be discussed, including looking after, administering and making available medicines. It may be appropriate for training to take place beforehand e.g. campcraft training for DfE Award expeditions.

### **Communicating with Parents**

Parents will be informed in writing of any off-site activity unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum which they have already been informed of in the school prospectus.

Parental consent will always be sought for residential activities, adventurous activities, visits abroad and activities involving remote supervision. Pupils cannot participate in such an activity without specific parental consent.

In order to be in a position to give their consent, parents will be given all necessary information about the activity, including dates and locations, likely costs, objectives, planned activities, location and times of departure and return, mode of travel, size of group, accommodation (with security and supervisory details), number of accompanying adults, emergency contact details, standards of expected student behaviour, money and clothing required by pupils and for exchange visits, details of host families.

It is the responsibility of parents to inform the Group Leader of any relevant information regarding the pupil, including medical issues, and to give contact details for themselves and the child's GP. Parents will be required to give consent for their child to receive emergency medical treatment in a situation where they cannot be contacted beforehand.

### **Transport**

The Group Leader is responsible for arranging suitable transport for the activity. He/she will take into account passenger safety, the length of the journey, the competence of the driver, contingency arrangements in case of breakdown or emergency and supervision of the children.

The Group Leader will have particular regard for the safety of the children whilst travelling, including crossing roads, waiting at pick-up and drop-off points, during rest breaks and during a breakdown or emergency. Frequent head-counts will be taken when the group is getting off or onto transport.

Where school minibuses are used, the Bursar is responsible for ensuring that the driver has a valid driving licence for minibuses and has undertaken appropriate training or vehicle and driving familiarisation.

If the group is using a private coach or bus, the Group Leader will ensure that it is hired from a reputable company and will ensure that the vehicle is operated in a safe manner at all times. Transport by private cars is not encouraged by the School, but is occasionally necessary. The driver of the car will confirm to the School that the car is roadworthy and an appropriate driving licence is held. The School's insurance will cover the journey.

### **Insurance**

The School's insurance policy covers pupils and supervising adults during off-site activities. It includes cover for activities such as skiing. A copy of the policy can be provided to parents on request. Parents can buy their own insurance if they feel that the School's policy does not provide adequate cover.

### **Residential Visits**

The Group Leader is responsible for ensuring that suitable accommodation is used on residential visits. For mixed groups, there will usually be at least one supervising adult of each gender. There may be occasions, however, when this is not practicable and in such cases, the parents will be told prior to making any decisions about whether their child takes part in the visit. There will be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for pupils and adults. There will be an adequate number of supervisors on standby duty during the night.

On arrival at the accommodation, the Group Leader will ascertain that appropriate fire safety arrangements are in place. He/she will check with the manager of the accommodation that fire alarms and fire exits are operational, and will instruct the group on emergency evacuation procedures.

### **Visits Abroad**

The School strongly recommends to Group Leaders that visits abroad are organised through a reputable, properly licensed tour operator, who will take responsibility for arranging transport, accommodation, itinerary and other aspects of the trip. The Group Leader, however, still retains overall responsibility for the safety and well-being of the group at all times.

Group Leaders will be familiar with local customs and culture, currency, food and drink and emergency procedures, and will prepare students accordingly. He/she will ensure that students' passports and visas are in order, and that students who are not nationals of an EU member state will be able to re-enter the UK on return.

Details of the visit will be available at school while the visit is in progress.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Adults supervising an off-site activity have a duty of care to ensure that children are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would.

The Group Leader would normally take charge in an emergency. When appropriate, he/she will alert the School through the pre-arranged school base contact. At this time, the School's Critical Incident Plan procedures will be implemented. These procedures are detailed in a separate document, but in essence involve the setting up of a Critical Incident Management Team on the School site which takes over management of the emergency.