

Trips and Educational Visits Policy



I. Introduction

Learning outside the classroom is an essential part of a Wycombe Abbey education. Well-planned trips provide exceptional opportunities for personal development: developing skills such as confidence, self-reliance, teamwork, resilience and leadership. They enrich and deepen academic understanding, and provide opportunities for relaxation and social development.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that those running trips understand their roles and are competent to take on their responsibilities; that real risks are managed during trips; and that learning opportunities can be fully realised.

Policy and procedures for trips are based on the Department for Education's guidance in *Health and Safety on Educational Visits* and National Guidance produced by the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP). In the event of discrepancy between this policy and National Guidance, this policy must be followed and clarification sought from the Head of Activities and Trips.

Detailed procedures are contained within the *Trips Planning and Organising Procedures* document.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Council is responsible in law for the safety of all those who participate in school trips. The Headmistress delegates responsibility for overseeing all trips and visits, via the Deputy Head (Strategy and Operations), to the Head of Activities and Trips, who also acts as the School's Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

Detailed responsibilities and functions of the following specific roles can be found in the *Trips Planning and Organising Procedures* document:

- Governing Council;
- Headmistress;
- Deputy Head (Strategy and Operations)
- Head of Activities and Trips (acting as EVC);
- Trip Leaders;
- Other trip staff.

3. Risk assessment

Young people who are able to encounter sensibly managed risk are presented with an unrivalled learning opportunity. Exposure to well-managed risk helps young people manage risks for themselves and improve their ability to look after their own safety. Wycombe Abbey takes a common-sense and proportionate approach to risk management, mindful that effective risk control measures enable pupils to undertake activities safely rather than preventing activities from taking place.

Risk management for trips is a two-stage process. Firstly, it requires the identification of potential benefits to be gained from an activity, along with any risks to the health and safety of those involved. Secondly, it involves implementing a plan to best realise these benefits, using professional judgement to ensure that

the level of risk is proportionate. Risk management is therefore an integral part of the trip planning process and not “tagged on” afterwards.

Trip Leaders are responsible for the risk assessment of trip activities and the implementation of control measures. They are supported in this process by the Head of Activities and Trips (the School’s EVC), who is in turn supported by the Deputy Head (Strategy and Operations). Effective use is made of generic risk assessments where the risk profile is similar across trips.

Dynamic, on-going risk assessment should be carried out continuously throughout a trip. The group and level of risk should be monitored and assessed and, if circumstances dictate, activities should be curtailed or amended. In practice, it is often these on-going decisions of the Trip Leader and trip staff that determine whether the group remains safe.

Further information on the risk management process is outlined in the *Trips Planning and Organising Procedures* document.

4. Approval of trip plans, appointment of Trip Leaders and staff ratios

All trips must be approved and authorised. Processes for approval and authorisation vary between different types of trips and are outlined in *Trips Planning and Organising Procedures*. The Headmistress’ approval is required for residential and international trips. Any trip that has a significantly new and different risk profile is referred to Council. Any trips involving homestays or host families are similarly referred to Council.

The Health and Safety Committee reviews planned trips that are new or that involve more high-risk activities such as mountaineering, canoeing or sailing

Trip Leaders and staff must be competent and confident to lead their specific activities or trips. Trip staff for day trips are approved by the Head of Activities and Trips. Trip Leaders and trip staff for residential and international trips are approved by the Headmistress.

There is no formal staff: pupil ratio for trips. When determining suitable ratios of pupils to staff, several points should be considered, including nature of the activity, age of the pupils, location of the venue, travel to and from the venue, staff experience and competence, and the needs of the group.

5. Induction and Training

The Deputy Head (Strategy and Operations), Head of Activities and Trips (acting in the role as the School’s EVC) and their administrative staff must attend relevant training courses and should undertake formal EVC qualification revalidation every 2-3 years.

Full support and training for staff is provided by the Head of Activities and Trips, with compulsory training for all teaching staff new to Wycombe Abbey and Residential Tutors. Staffing of trips, especially residential or overseas trips, is considered carefully to ensure those staff with less experience have the opportunity to learn from more experienced Trip Leaders.

6. Adult volunteers

Staff who do not have routine and regular contact with pupils as part of their normal duties (such as support staff), require a further enhanced DBS with barred list check to be carried out before appointment as a Trip Leader or member of trip staff.

Adults who are not members of Wycombe Abbey staff may support the organisation of trips as adult volunteers. Adult volunteers should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the trip. They should be carefully selected and, ideally, they should be well known to the School and the pupil group. Should the trip occur once a week or more often, or on four or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight (between 2:00am and 6:00am), volunteers require an enhanced DBS check with barred list check. They accept the normal duty of care towards the pupils. Volunteers must know to whom they are responsible, and if and when they will be expected to act alone without a teacher's support.

Approval for parents or family members to accompany a trip must be made at an Executive Leadership Team meeting. Parents or family members accompanying a trip should not be for recreation only and they should have a clear role and defined responsibilities. If a parent is accompanying the trip, they must be aware of the potential for their parental instincts to compromise the Trip Leader's plans for group management, particularly if there is a serious incident. Careful consideration must be given if parents are assigned a leadership role giving them direct responsibility for their own child.

7. Assessing external providers

All trip providers and facilities must meet acceptable standards of quality and safety.

Many of the School's trips are with providers or facilities that have been visited on previous occasions and there is good knowledge of the standard of quality and safety. Trip Leaders should report any significant changes or concerns regarding the quality or safety of these providers and facilities to the Head of Activities and Trips.

For new providers and facilities, national accreditation schemes should be used as far as possible to confirm that proposed providers meet acceptable standards. These include the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge. This award is a credible assurance of appropriate Health and Safety management systems with no further verification being necessary.

When selecting a new facility or provider not in possession of this accreditation, appropriate checks shall be made to ensure quality or safety. These might include asking local independent schools for details of their providers, membership of professional bodies (for example, visiting a HMC school for a fixture) or membership of a well-known commercial brand (such as a chain hotel). Where appropriate, a Provider Form should be requested to confirm compliance with relevant regulatory requirements including data protection, health and safety, and safeguarding.

It is not normally necessary to ask for copies of facilities' or providers' risk assessments, but Trip Leaders should seek any information specifically aimed at helping trip organisers manage group visits.

8. Parental communication and consent

Specific, separate parental consent is not necessary for most day trips. Parents complete a consent form for their child when they first join the School giving permission for their child to participate in a wide range of trips.

Parental consent is required for residential trips; overseas trips; trips costing more than £25; trips involving adventurous or particularly hazardous activities; and trips where data privacy extends beyond Wycombe Abbey Privacy Notices and outside of the UK. Parents should be informed of the benefits of participation, costs and an outline of any particularly hazardous activities before consent is given.

9. Inclusion

Every effort should be made to ensure that trips and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate. All pupils should be encouraged to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible. If a trip is to cater for pupils with special needs, reasonable adaptation or modification will be made to ensure accessible participation in an integrated way with peers. Those pupils in receipt of Bursaries may also receive appropriate financial support in order to facilitate participation in the trip and activities.

10. **Emergency procedures**

The Responsible Person (RP) acts as first point of contact between the Trip Leader and the School in the event of a critical incident. A RP is on duty during every trip, with access to relevant trip information. If the RP is not a senior member of staff themselves, they are able to contact a senior staff member on duty 24-hours a day. The RP will record details of any incidents or emergencies, and inform relevant senior staff of the situation. If necessary, the RP or the senior member of staff on duty may contact the Headmistress or Bursar to initiate the School's Emergency Response Plan.

In the event of an incident, accident or near-miss, Trip Leaders should complete the Trips Incidents & Near Miss Report Form as soon as possible. Any accident involving a pupil should be recorded on CPOMS.

11. **Behavioural management**

Trip Leaders are responsible for briefing pupils on behavioural expectations for each trip and maintaining a high standard of behaviour. For residential and overseas trips, parents and pupils are made aware of possible sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. Parents agree when providing consent that the School may send a child home at parents' expense for significant behavioural issues and/or risking personal safety or the safety of other trip participants.

12. **Monitoring and evaluation of trips**

The Head of Activities and Trips leads and takes part in a sample of trips each year in order to evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of policies and procedures. These include a variety of day, residential and overseas trips. Evaluation is done in such a way that it is a positive experience for leaders, with supportive feedback to enable them to reflect upon and improve their practice.

Trip Leaders are encouraged to conduct reviews of their trips and evaluate the logistical side (food, transport, quality of activities etc.) at the departmental level. Major deficiencies in these aspects should be reported to the Head of Activities and Trips. All incidents, accidents and near misses are reported through the Trips Incidents & Near Miss Report Form and reviewed by the Head of Activities and Trips.

A termly summary of residential and overseas trips, and a snapshot of day trips and weekend activities are provided to the Governing Council.

The *Trips and Educational Visits Policy* and the *Trips Planning and Organising Procedures* document should be reviewed and updated annually.

13. **Insurance**

The School has Employers' Liability Insurance of £30m and Public Liability Insurance of £50m. The School also holds a group worldwide travel policy providing travel cover for visits in the UK and overseas with CHUBB Insurance which is renewed every September. The policy includes a Winter Sports Extension. Some specified hazardous activities require an additional premium, (e.g. those involving motorised activities) and Trip Leaders must check the travel insurance if there is any doubt that the activity is not covered.

14. Finance

All trips must be carefully budgeted to ensure that they offer good value for money and that parents are not overcharged. Any trip costing requiring a charge of more than £25 requires communication with parents and the opportunity to opt out. For almost all trips, charges to parents should be made to termly bills in advance of the trip. Only in very exceptional circumstances should charges be made after the trip has taken place.

Financial help with the cost of trips is available for pupils who receive bursary support. This is discretionary and varies between pupils according to a number of factors. Trip Leaders should consult the Finance Department for guidance.

A 3-year overview of proposed trips is published to parents annually for information and planning purposes.

Member of staff

Deputy Head (Strategy & Operations)

Reviewed

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