

COVENANT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Out-of-School Visits Policy

This policy refers to all school visits except residential activities. These are covered in the Outdoor Education Policy.

School visits provide teachers with many opportunities to enhance the learning in the classroom. They may be used to significantly develop children's understanding of the world and their skills in observation. They are often the most memorable of lessons and the focus of the study of a particular topic. At Covenant Christian School we encourage teachers to undertake school visits whenever it is appropriate to do so. Our very small classes make this task relatively easy. However, that does not mean visits should be undertaken with less attention. We are stewards of the children God has put in our hands and are answerable to Him for the care they receive.

The Law

Various legislative acts apply to school visits. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 makes school proprietors of schools responsible for the health, safety and welfare of their employees at work. This requires employees to take care of their own and others health and safety; co-operate with proprietor over safety matters, carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions; and inform the proprietor of any serious risks. Further, related legislation has followed notably the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Under the latter the proprietor must tell the employees what risk assessments have been prepared and what measures have been taken to implement them.

Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a duty under common law to act as a reasonably prudent parent would.

Responsibilities

All those who lead a school visit, long or short, must study and follow this policy. Further information can be found in the DfE booklets 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits 1998' and 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: a Good Practice Guide 1988 (reprinted in 2001)'. The former booklet contains a number of useful model forms.

The head teacher should check that the group leader has the competence to manage the visit and monitor the risks. He or she should check that all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins. This includes checking that a suitable risk assessment has been prepared and the ratio of adults to pupils is satisfactory. Child protection procedures must be adhered to and there must be appropriate provision of first-aid and the application of medicines and provision for children with disabilities or special needs.

The head teacher should also be sure that the mode of travel is appropriate and the necessary insurance cover is in place. He should further check that the group leader has all the contact details needed including those in the case of delay or emergency and that all the necessary preparations to make the trip safe have been expedited.

To this end he or she should examine the Out-of-School Visits Checklist and sign it only when it is satisfactorily completed. This should include

- a) safeguarding matters;
- b) the risk assessment has been completed and the safety measures are in place;
- c) the group leader has experience supervising school trips with the proposed age group;
- d) the adults on the trip are competent to manage the group;
- e) the parents have signed the consent forms;
- f) adequate provision has been made for first-aid, medical needs, special education needs and disabled children as far as is possible.

The group leader must undertake the costing, planning and preparation of the visit. He or she must ensure that there is a comprehensive risk assessment and the visit checklist is completed. There must be a consent form to cover every child. This may be a generic consent form or one specially issued for the visit. In either case parents must be told what the visit entails. The leader must also ensure all the adults on the trip have all the information they need to make the visit safe including the mobile numbers of the parents and the school telephone number.

All adults on the trip must consider cancelling the trip or aborting it if the risks to the children or themselves become unacceptable.

Pupils are expected to follow instructions, to behave sensibly and to avoid taking risks. If they might be a danger to themselves or others, they may be barred in advance from taking part.

The school will endeavour to ensure that school trips are available to all pupils who wish to participate. It does not undertake activities involving remote supervision.

Planning

The visit must be carefully researched and planned so that its educational benefit is maximized and it can be conducted safely. If at all possible, the group leader should check out the journey and the venue first and the associated dangers. Before booking he or she should obtain details of the venue's own safety risk assessment.

The leader should then put together a thorough assessment in line with the school's risk assessment policy and make contingency plans to cover all eventualities eg failure of transport, illness, loss of pupils and/or teachers. All applicable aspects of the Out-of-School Visits Checklist must be covered. Use may be made of the Health and Safety Executive's booklet 'Five Steps to Risk Management'. When a school is making frequent visits to the same location it may

only be necessary to update an existing assessment. If these visits are to a sports centre, the leader should have assessed the risks associated with the changing accommodation and the showers including safeguarding issues.

If some aspect of the visit might expose pupils to an unacceptable level of risk, then the visit must not take place.

Planning should include coping with an accident. One of the adults should be in charge of first-aid arrangements and medicines, be familiar with the corresponding policy and bring the first aid box. This should contain

- a) a leaflet giving advice on first aid;
- b) six individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes);
- c) one large (approximately 18cm x 18cm) sterile unmedicated wound dressing;
- d) two triangular bandages (preferably sterile);
- e) two safety pins;
- f) individually wrapped moist cleaning wipes;
- g) a resuscitator; and
- h) one pair of disposable gloves.

A copy of the flowchart in the DfE booklet Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits showing the steps required to plan a visit is included with this policy.

The visiting team should be formed early and involved in the planning process as soon as possible. In choosing the team the leader should take into account the nature of the visit, the competence of the adults, the gender, age, ability and condition of the pupils and the safeguarding protocols. (All adults on the trip must be on the single central record.) The recommended pupil ratios are

for children in years 1 to 3, one adult to six children,
for those in years 4 to 6, 1 to 10 and
for older children, 1 to 15.

There should be enough adults to cope with an emergency. All adults should have with them a list of the children on the trip.

The leader should also liaise with staff who will be losing pupils from their class and with anyone who may have to cover a lesson.

After the trip is over the group leader may evaluate the visit using DfE booklet model form 5.

Information to Parents and Pupils

Parents should be informed in writing well in advance, giving all relevant details including:

- a) the purpose and place of the visit;
- b) the date and time of the visit, especially time and place of departure and return;
- c) the means of transport;

- d) the names of adults escorting the group and their contact details;
- e) the equipment and clothing required; and
- f) money.

Parents must identify any particular needs their child(ren) may have on the visit such as medication or particular problems, for example, allergies.

Ideally pupils will be prepared for the visit during a lesson sometime beforehand. This will give them the purpose of the trip and the background knowledge they need to know about the venue. At this stage they should be told who is leading the trip.

Prior to leaving they should be told how to be safe on the visit. They also need to know what to do if they get separated from the group and if there is an emergency.

The standard of behaviour expected and the need to follow rules must be clearly spelt out especially when the group is using transport.

One of the adults will then pray.

The group leader should then list all members of the visit party in the special attendance book. **The group should not set off for the visit until the Out-of-School Visits Checklist, the Risk Assessment and the Cover Sheet have been completed and signed off.**

Transport

Since the school has always worked with very small classes it has been possible to transport children using two or three cars. When this happens it is important that the drivers are appropriately insured and have the appropriate licence. They must be informed that they are legally responsible for the safety of their passengers. The school expects them to

- a) be aware of travel conditions;
- b) know the route to be taken;
- c) take all steps to ensure passenger safety;
- d) drive carefully;
- e) travel in convoy; and
- f) know the arrangements for picking up and dropping their pupils.

Ideally at least one driver should use a satellite navigation device.

Occasionally it may be preferable to hire a minibus. The group leader should check that the hire company has a good reputation and the correct licences, including a Public Service Vehicle licence and, if required, provision for disabled pupils. Their drivers must be qualified to drive minibuses.

Venues with Greater Risk

Every place the school may wish to visit has associated risks but some places have particular dangers. Before even planning begins the group leader should consult the DfE booklet Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits especially paragraphs 181 to 186.

Adventure activities are provided by commercial companies and trusts. To offer some activities including caving, climbing, trekking and watersports, these organisations must hold a licence and this should be checked before their services are used. Where no licence is needed, the visit group leader should obtain an assurance in writing that the following conditions are met;

- a) the activity will be led by a competent, qualified instructor,
- b) operating procedures conform to national guidelines,
- c) the equipment is appropriate and safe,
- d) safety systems are in place, and
- e) the organization has appropriate first aid and emergency procedures in place.

If the activity is organised and carried out in-house, the proprietor must ensure

- a) the group leader has the necessary competence to follow safety procedures and plan the visit and the activity will be suitably supervised;
- b) amongst the school group there is a competent supervisor holding the relevant National Governing Body Awards;
- c) a satisfactory risk assessment has been completed;
- d) the equipment is safe;
- e) each pupil is equipped to undertake the activity; and
- f) first aid and emergency procedures in place.

No swimming activities should take place unless it is in an area or swimming pool where there are a sufficient number of qualified lifeguards. The group leader should

- a) check the water temperature is appropriate and of a suitable depth;
- b) be aware of local conditions;
- c) ensure pupils have not eaten before swimming;
- d) explain the alarm system;
- e) ensure the activity is appropriate for the pupils including those with disabilities; and
- e) remind pupils how to behave in and around the water and of the dangers even of paddling.

DfE model form 10 should be used for checking swimming pools.

Should the school make a visit to the coast it should assess the risks associated with incoming tides, and dangerous items on the beach and take due notice of warning signs and flags. Cliff top walks should be avoided.

Farms are also a source of danger from machinery and biological contamination. Before visiting the farm the school should ascertain that the farm is well managed, has good safety standards and washing facilities. Pupils must be instructed not to

- a) touch the animals face except when feeding them and then to wash their hands immediately;
- b) eat animal food or drink from farm taps;
- c) touch farm machinery or ride on tractors unless this forms part of the trip; and
- d) play while at the farm except in designated farm areas.

Emergency Procedures

Planning for the visit must include contingency plans in case of emergency. Teachers should not hesitate if such arises and, if necessary, to take life saving action. A designated person should take charge to implement the emergency procedures. The adults in the party should

- a) establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible;
- b) obtain medical attention to the casualties immediately;
- c) inform the emergency services and the police, if necessary;
- d) contact the school so that parents can be informed;
- e) if necessary, make arrangements so that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital;
- f) remind the party not to talk to the media or discuss legal liabilities; and
- g) record full details of the accident and the action taken subsequently.

After the accident a member of the party should complete an accident report form. At that stage the school should appreciate that some pupils will be traumatised and should be treated with special consideration.

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