



Meadowbrook Primary

Guidance on School Trips

Status: Non-Statutory

Date: May 2009

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This guidance note is supplemental to the Department for Children and Young People Health & Safety Policy and does not supersede any part thereof.

1 - PURPOSE

The guidance note has been produced to provide schools with information on best practice relating to the organisation of school trips, and includes a model policy that can be adapted to suit the needs of individual schools. The guidance is based on practical experience and the DfEE good practice guide, "Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits". (Copies are available from DfEE.)

2 - LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Health & Safety (H&S) at Work etc. Act, as supplemented by The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, requires that the employer ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees and those affected by its undertaking. To achieve this the employer needs to produce safe systems of work, these being the outcome of risk assessment, and establish emergency procedures, to be implemented if hazards are realised.

Pupils are persons who will be affected by the work activities of schools, and in addition to the H&S requirements, they are owed a general "Duty of Care".

3 - SCHOOL TRIPS

There are a number of different types of school trips, visits and expeditions undertaken by schools. For the purposes of this guidance a school trip is to include **any organised activity where pupils leave the normal school site**. The only exceptions would be where pupils need to move between parts of a split school site, e.g. walk to a detached playing field.

Examples of school trips include:

Swimming - This is a regular outing for many schools with pupils in key stages 1 & 2. It will usually involve one or more classes going from site to a public swimming pool. Depending on the distance this could involve walking or travel in a vehicle.

Inter School Activities - These visits will usually be sport based, e.g. Football or Netball matches, which requires one school to go to the site of another. Depending on the distance this could involve walking or travel in a vehicle.

Cultural Visits - These will usually involve a visit to venues like Theatres, Art Galleries and Museums. Depending on the distance, this could involve walking or travel in a vehicle.

Adventure Activities - These will usually involve attendance at an Activity centre, which offers specialist activities, e.g. canoeing, rock climbing etc. They may, however, be organised by the school, e.g. orienteering. Depending on the distance, this could involve walking or travel in a vehicle.

Foreign Visits - These are trips where the group leave mainland Britain. They can involve adventure activities, be for cultural reasons or to improve language skills. Such trips will usually involve substantial use of transport, which could include use of vehicles, ships or aeroplanes.

Exchange Visits - These are visits, usually abroad, where pupils stay in the homes of volunteers. These visits have recently been highlighted as involving the potential for child abuse. Such trips will again usually involve substantial use of transport, which could include use of vehicles, ships or aeroplanes.

4 - SCHOOL POLICY

Each school must establish its own policy relating to the school trips. It will need to cover the following:

4.1 - Type of Trips School Will Undertake - Schools will need to clearly indicate what trips will be considered. Some schools will only wish to undertake trips which support aspects of the curriculum, whilst others will wish to undertake a much wider range of trips. The decision will be for the governing body. Whatever is decided should then be clearly indicated within the school prospectus.

For certain standard or routine trips the inclusion within the prospectus of the school's arrangements may mean that additional information will not then need to be sent out to parents.

4.2 - Charging Policy - The scope of the information included under this heading will depend on the type of trips the school undertake. Information on charges for school trips is contained in DES Circular 2/89, "Education Reform Act 1988: Charges for School Activities". In summary this indicates that if the trip is:

- **wholly or mainly during school hours** - No charge can be levied on parents. Schools can ask for voluntary contributions, provided it is made clear that they are voluntary.
- **a residential visit** - The cost of board and lodgings can be charged for. This is the case even if the trip is covered by a statutory requirement .
- **an optional extra** - The full costs of such trips can be charged for. These are trips which take place outside of normal school hours, do not form part of the national curriculum, are not part of an examination syllabus and are not covered by the scope of statutory requirements relating to education. Trips during school holiday periods are considered optional extras.

The school will need to indicate what their policy will be on charging and this information should be included in the school prospectus. In particular schools are advised to state, for trips forming part of the national curriculum, if parents will be asked for voluntary contributions or whether the school will cover all of the costs.

4.3 - Procedure to be followed - Having identified the type of trips and school charging policy the school will then need to identify its process for approving school trips. This must involve risk assessment and the risk assessment process must comply with certain standards. A suggested procedure is included within the model policy attached as appendix 1 to this guidance.

4.3.1 - General Identification of Hazards/Risks - A Hazard is defined as the potential outcome of an event whilst Risk is defined as the likelihood of the event being realised. There are many hazards associated with a trip off site and the following are examples of those that have resulted from incidents occurring on school trips

Death, major injuries, assaults, robberies, lost luggage, road traffic accidents, missed transport connections.

The hazards are many and varied but generally trips can be grouped as below to identify a priority for risk assessment.

High risk - Trips abroad and/or involving adventurous activities,

Medium Risk - Other residential trips

Low Risk - Short duration trips in the local vicinity or regular trips. This would include visits to local shops, park.

This is a useful way of identifying the extent of the planning required and should inform judgements made relating to timescales. For example a High Risk trip, involving outdoor activities in a foreign country, may require a year's preparation, whilst a trip to a local shopping centre may only require a few weeks.

In order to identify a basic risk rating schools are advised to make use of an Initial School Trip Proposal Form. The aim of this form is to provide schools' senior management with a brief outline of the trip, which indicates what its aims are and the hazards which need to be addressed. This form needs to be completed by the person who proposes the trip or the person identified by senior management to undertake the task. The information contained on the form will be the basis for the formal risk assessment stage. Ultimately approval of the trip will only occur where a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is completed.

4.3.2 - Risk Assessment - The aim of the risk assessment is to identify the arrangements that will need to be in place to ensure the trip takes place safely. Many of the arrangements will be standard ones and there should be a basic framework to be followed for all trips. This will then be supplemented for those trips involving greater risk. A single assessment can cover regular trips, e.g. for swimming or inter school activities, whilst an individual risk assessment will be required for any residential trip.

To achieve this schools should complete a School Trip Risk Assessment Form. This form will identify the hazards associated with the trip and the control measures. (See Appendix 3)

4.3.3 - School Approval - The school will need to identify who on site is responsible for approving each part of the trip. It is advised that a small group, incorporating a senior teacher, teacher and governor/s, be appointed. Approval should be a three-stage process. Stage 1 will be the initial approval to proceed to formal risk assessment, stage 2 will be the approval of the arrangements made following the formal risk assessment and stage 3 will be the final approval once these arrangements have been implemented.

4.3.4 - Communication with Parents - Communication with parents/guardians should start with an initial indication of the trip's aims and its relation to the national curriculum or how it intends to benefit pupils. It will also need to indicate clearly what the charging policy will be for the trip, although this may have been done by inclusion in the school's prospectus. The initial notification should also have a return slip attached, so that parents can indicate how much interest there is, especially where funding will be required from parents, as this will affect the viability of the trip.

5 - RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS AND STANDARDS

The following advice, either based on experience or standards, has been compiled to help inform decision making on what needs to be looked at as part of the risk assessment and/or met when considering the approval of a school trip

Accommodation - Where a trip involves an overnight stay it is important to ensure that the sleeping arrangements are suitable and that accommodation is secure. This is to cover both the risk of unauthorised access into the building and where pupils might be tempted to leave the building, e.g. to sample the night-life. Staff should ideally be accommodated close to the pupils, and pupil dorms/rooms are to be single sex.

It is advisable to obtain, in advance, a layout of the accommodation and the arrangements in place, e.g

- are external doors secured after a certain time?
- is there CCTV in operation?
- are there secure lockers for possessions?
- will pupils be expected to share facilities with others?

It is also advisable to have a walk around the facility on arrival, internally and externally, to check for potential points of entry or egress.

Activities - Any activities or potential activities which may form part of the school trip are to be identified. This must include both the formal activities e.g. abseiling, mountaineering, etc. plus informal ones, e.g. pupils may be allowed to go shopping in a town or swimming. This is essential both to ensure that hazards are identified and risk assessed, and in order to provide parents with a complete picture of what the trip involves.

Disability - Equal opportunities and the Disability Discrimination Act, as applied to school trips, would indicate that pupils with disabilities should be offered the same opportunities as other pupils within schools. In particular where outdoor activities are concerned not all venues as yet cater for persons with disabilities. This is something which will need to be considered if a pupil with a disability wishes to attend. Staff must take all reasonable steps to accommodate such a request.

Emergency Arrangements - Even in a well organised and run school trip incidents can occur, e.g. ill health or injury. Schools need to establish emergency arrangements to be implemented. In particular how to contact local emergency services, possible use of interpretation service and how to send pupils home. Equally a system needs to be available whereby parents/guardians can contact someone at the school, should they need to contact their child/ward. (The Residential School Trip Notification Form usually contains the relevant information.)

Insurance - Where school trips are undertaken as part of school activity the same insurance arrangements will apply as for a normal school day. Teachers and volunteers, where no other insurance will operate, will be indemnified under the terms of the Council's Public Liability Policy whilst undertaking their duties. The Council does not provide Personal Accident benefits for pupils either in school or on school trips.

The Council has available, upon request, a "School Journey Insurance", which provides cover for Cancellation, Medical Expenses, Personal Accident, Personal effects and Legal Liability to indemnify each member of the party. Cover is at the discretion of the Governors/Headteacher, but it is strongly recommended that this cover, or equivalent, be arranged for all trips abroad or

where the trip includes an overnight stay. Details on "School Journey Insurance" are obtainable from the Risk & Insurance Unit (extension 5164).

NB: Please ensure that there is a list of all members in the party and contact numbers for each. This is essential both for Insurance & Emergency arrangements.

Personal Needs - This covers the type of clothing/equipment the group and staff will need to take with them, these requirements needing to be established as early as possible. Most outdoor activity providers will have equipment available but this will need to be checked. Pupils may require a packed lunch, decent walking shoes, pocket money, passports, etc.

Security - Security is a key consideration for any trip both in terms of personal safety, e.g. arrangements to minimise potential assaults, and in terms of loss of personal property, arrangements to prevent stealing or vandalism.

To address these concerns arrangements need to be implemented to ensure adequate supervision of the group, provision of contact numbers and identification of areas viewed as high risk. See **Accommodation** above for additional considerations.

Supervision - The school must meet the basic requirements for supervision as listed below. These are viewed as an absolute minimum and will need to be supplemented where pupils have special medical or educational needs, if the trip involves adventurous activities, if the trip is abroad or if any aspect of the trip may require it.

The minimum levels of supervision are to be worked out by the following:

- **If the group is of mixed sex at least one competent adult of each sex should accompany the group.**
- **A competent leader must be in charge of the group**
- ***For years 1 to 3 there must be a minimum of 1 competent adult for every 6 pupils***
- ***For years 4 to 6 there must be a minimum of 1 competent adult for every 15 pupils***
- ***For years 7 and above there must be a minimum of 1 competent adult for every 20 pupils***
- **For trips abroad there must be a minimum of 1 competent adult for every 15 pupils.**

A competent leader is someone who has been assessed as having the necessary skills, training and/or experience to lead the trip. A competent adult is either a teacher or someone who the school/group leader feels to be competent to take on the supervisory role. The competent adult is to have authority with the pupils and preferably be known by them.

NB Any parent/volunteer acting as a competent adult must have undergone a police check whether or not they would be considered to have unobserved access to pupils.

Tour Operators - Where the trip is booked using a tour operator or outside body the school must ensure that the tour operator is reputable and is bonded with an authorised institution.

Transport - This can involve walking, use of school minibus, hiring of vehicles and drivers, booking places on scheduled flights/ferries etc. or a combination of these.

The greater the distance to be travelled the more complicated the arrangements are likely to be. Transport is to be booked well in advance to ensure that it is available. See Transport Section

of H&S Manual for specific information relating to travel by school minibus and parental involvement with transport.

Vetting - Depending on the trip this may simply involve checking the provider is registered, e.g. under the Adventurous Activity Licensing Activities for certain specific activities, to taking up references or arranging police checks, e.g. trips where pupils will stay with families as part of an exchange.

7 - SUMMARY

Some school trips, e.g. involving outdoor pursuits, have a degree of risk associated with them and risk can never be completely removed. This is acknowledged, but most accidents have occurred where risks have not been considered or where inadequate arrangements have been made. This guidance should ensure that trips are organised in a methodical way and thus ensure that school trips continue to be undertaken safely.

MEADOWBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY ON SCHOOL TRIPS

This policy is supplemental to the Departmental and School H&S Policies.

1 - STATEMENT

The school regards trips as a valuable part of a pupil's education and acknowledges the voluntary contribution that teachers and other adults make in enabling pupils to experience a rich variety of visits off the school site.

Such trips do, however, often involve a degree of risk, which is inherent when pupils are placed in unfamiliar places or are undertaking new activities. Some risk is accepted, but by following the procedures included within this policy, the degree of risk will be reduced to an acceptable level.

This policy is of direct interest to any and all staff/volunteers who may propose or participate in any school trip.

2 - DEFINITIONS

School Trip - *This is any activity which involves pupils leaving the site. The only exception would be where pupils need to move between parts of a split school site.*

Outdoor Pursuit Activities - *These are the activities either covered by the list of Outdoor Pursuits, contained in the H&S Manual for School, or by the Adventurous Activities Licensing requirements.*

Residential Visit - *This is any trip whereby pupils will be away from their homes for at least one night. This will include any stay in a hotel or similar and also includes camping.*

Visits Abroad - *For the purposes of these arrangements this is any visit which involves the group leaving mainland Britain.*

3 – TYPE OF SCHOOL TRIPS TO BE UNDERTAKEN & CHARGING POLICY

The School will undertake

- ***a range of school trips and Residential visits relating to the curriculum. These will be funded from the school budget but parents will be asked for voluntary contributions.***

Appendix 1 (cont.)

4 – RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

For any proposed school trip a risk assessment will be completed. This will involve the following steps.

STEP 1 - INITIAL PROPOSAL & HAZARD RATING - The person proposing a trip or, in the case of inter school activities and regular school trips e.g. swimming, the person appointed by senior management (THE PROPOSER) will complete THE INITIAL SCHOOL TRIP PROPOSAL FORM. (See appendix 2)

This form is designed to provide sufficient information to enable the SCHOOL TRIP APPROVAL GROUP to decide whether it should proceed to the formal planning stage.

STEP 2 - INITIAL APPROVAL - The SCHOOL TRIP APPROVALS GROUP, comprising *the Headteacher and school secretary* will assess the information provided and decide whether the trip:

- a) conforms to the type of school trip the school will undertake (see 3 above) and
- b) is able to be organised effectively in order to minimise/control the risks associated with it.

If the assessment indicates that the requirements have not been met or there is insufficient information on which to make a decision, then either additional information will be requested or the suggested trip will be indicated to have been disapproved. If additional information is requested, then the PROPOSER will need to resubmit the INITIAL SCHOOL TRIP PROPOSAL FORM with the additional information.

If Approval is given then an individual will be appointed as the SCHOOL TRIP ORGANISER for the trip and the trip given a risk assessment classification by the SCHOOL TRIP APPROVALS GROUP. The risk assessment classification will be High, Medium or Low. This is based on the following:

High Risk - Trips abroad and/or involving adventurous activities

Medium Risk - Other residential trips.

Low Risk - Short duration trips in the local vicinity or regular trips. This would include visits to local shops, park

This is not an absolute indicator of the risks involved in a trip, but is used to identify the likely timescales required in order to make adequate arrangements for the safe management of the trip.

STEP 3 - SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT - The SCHOOL TRIP RISK ASSESSMENT PROFORMA CHECKLIST, (See Appendix 3) is to be completed by the SCHOOL TRIP ORGANISER. This will include, or have attached, all relevant information about the trip and may involve the SCHOOL TRIP ORGANISER in a preliminary visit to the venue.

This is the key element to the process and it is important that all relevant aspects are considered. These will vary considerably depending on the trip but the higher the risk rating the more complex the arrangements are likely to be.

STEP 4 - FORMAL APPROVAL OF TRIP - Once completed the Risk Assessment Form will be submitted to SCHOOL TRIP APPROVALS GROUP, together with any supporting paperwork. The SCHOOL TRIP APPROVALS GROUP will then decide whether the trip should proceed to the next stage, whether additional information is required or if the trip is no longer felt to be appropriate.

Appendix 1 (cont.)

STEP 5 - PARENTAL INTEREST - A letter is to be sent to parents/guardians explaining in detail what the trip aims to do and asking them to indicate whether they would be prepared for their child/ward to attend. It must also indicate whether they will need to contribute towards the funding of the trip and the likely cost.

Provided sufficient interest is indicated then the process will move to the next step

STEP 6 - CONFIRMATION OF VENUES ETC. - This is where the relevant provisions will be finalised. In particular the venue and transport will be booked and both the numbers of pupils to attend and adult supervisors confirmed.

STEP 7 - LETTER TO PARENTS - Parents will be notified what they will need to provide, e.g. pocket money, packed lunch etc. Parents will also be asked to notify the school of any particular needs of pupils, this covering diet, medication, plus use of non prescribed medication. (See Appendix 4)

STEP 8 - BRIEFING OF PUPILS - This is essential so that pupils know what to expect and what is expected of them. In particular they will need to be advised what is to happen on each day, which must including where they are to meet, clothing etc. required, what papers they need to bring with them

STEP 9 - EMERGENCY - Details relating to Emergency provision will be finalised

STEP 10 - COMPLETION OF NOTIFICATION FORM - If the trip is to involve a residential stay then the RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL TRIPS NOTIFICATION FORM must be sent in to the Health and Safety Unit of the Personnel Section in advance of the trip.

STEP 11 - THE TRIP - The trip takes place.

STEP 12 - DEBRIEF & EVALUATION - Staff and pupils involved will be asked to comment on the trip and identify any concerns and also to highlight where things worked out positively.

5 - REVIEW - This policy is a working policy and will be subject to regular review in practice. The school will periodically review the process to ensure that it continues to work effectively.

Ratification

Signature of Headteacher..... Date May 2009

Signature of Chair of Governors..... Date May 2009

Implementation

Date the policy is to be reviewed May 2012