

Horizons Independent School

EDUCATIONAL VISITS **POLICY**

Procedure/Guidance

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1. Introduction and Aims

This policy summarises the aims of Educational Visits at Horizons Independent School, cites the detailed advice to be followed, sets out clear advice about staffing ratios, identifies key elements of staff status and qualifications, and itemises the procedure followed for organising and implementing Educational Visits at Horizons Independent School. It also explains where further information can be found. Horizons Independent School's policy and aims in organising an immensely wide range of Educational Visits.

1.1 Policy and Educational Philosophy

Educational Visits are integral to the Horizons Independent School curriculum for a number of reasons

- Educational Visits are an integral part of the co-curriculum and provide some of the most profound learning experiences for our pupils
- They complement the taught classroom-based curriculum and provide both extension and enrichment
- Educational visits reflect our core learning philosophy of learning not merely by being told or shown, but by 'doing'
- All students should be encouraged to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible.

1.2 Aims

Horizons Independent School's policy is to ensure that educational visits are:

- Of educational merit, to provide appropriate extension and enrichment as part of the curriculum
- Co-ordinated and sanctioned within school by the Educational Visits Coordinator, and managed appropriately within the demands of the calendar and curriculum for each year-group
- Undertaken according to the DfE guidelines, within the framework of this Policy document, according to the Educational Visits Coordinator

- Undertaken with the health, welfare and well-being of students as paramount, in adventurous pursuits managing the level of risk appropriately
- Thoroughly and appropriately risk assessed and managed
- Staffed by appropriate numbers of appropriately qualified teachers and other staff as required and appropriate according to the DfE Guidelines as a minimum
- Appropriately supervised and monitored by staff on a trip, whilst recognising that the aims and objectives of any given trip may or may not be compatible with direct staff supervision at all times
- Organised in good time
- Promoted effectively to all pupils, who should be well-informed about the nature and purpose of the trip or activity and able to participate appropriately in the trip or activity
- Promoted with regard to Equal Opportunities, with every effort made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of Special Educational Needs, Medical Needs, ethnic origin, sex, religion, etc...
- Accessible to any pupil whose family are in evidenced financially straitened circumstances, in which case, Horizons Independent School would consider covering some or all costs in particular instances.
- Reviewed and evaluated periodically, to ensure maximum educational gain

2. Department for Education Advice in Detail

The main source of DfE Advice on organising educational visits used to be the Department for Education's 1998 good practice guide *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV: HSPV2 1998)*.

A three-part supplement to this good practice guide was also produced in **2002: Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits** sets out the functions of the Educational Visits Coordinator in schools and the levels of risk management that Local Authorities and schools could use.

Standards for Adventure is aimed at the teacher or youth worker who leads young people on adventure activities.

A Handbook for Group Leaders is aimed at anyone who leads groups of young people on any kind of educational visit. It sets out good practice in supervision, ongoing risk assessment and emergency procedures.

Also, **Group Safety at Water Margins** is aimed at anyone who organises learning activities that take place near or in water, such as a walk along a river bank or seashore, collecting samples from ponds or streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow water.

These documents have recently been superseded by simplified guidelines, which may be accessed via

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00191759/departamental-adviceon-health-and-safety-for-schools> and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/faqs.htm>

- Whilst these guidelines are simpler than those within HASPEV, the more detailed HASPEV guidelines may nevertheless remain useful for staff carrying out Risk Assessments for higher risk activities. Therefore, a number of extracts from HASPEV continue to be included below, as colleagues have found these useful in previous years.
- This Policy draws on advice and recommendations from these sources. However, detailed study in advance of the regulations and advice set out in appropriate sections is appropriate for Group Leaders and staff accompanying a trip or visit.

3. Staffing Ratios

3.1 General Staffing Ratios

Our advice on staffing ratios remains based on the original HASPEV Good Practice Guide advice from the DfE and on the recent updates noted above. The advice from HASPEV spells out the following:

“It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- *Sex, age and ability of group*
- *Pupils with Special Educational Needs or Medical Needs*
- *Nature of activities*
- *Experience of adults in off-site supervision*
- *Duration and nature of the journey*
- *Type of any accommodation*
- *Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities*
- *Requirements of the organisation / location to be visited*
- *Competence and behaviour of pupils*
- *First Aid cover”*

“Staffing ratios are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources. However, a general guide for visits to local historical sites and museums or local walks, in normal circumstances, might be:

- *1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3 (under 5s reception classes should have a higher ratio)*
- *1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in school years 4 to 6*
- *1 adult for every 15-20 pupils in school year 7 onwards”*

“The above are examples only. Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. There should be a minimum of one teacher in charge.”

“In addition to the teacher in charge there should be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly. The same consideration should be given to visits abroad.... Or residential visits.... Some non-residential visits with mixed groups will need a teacher from each sex.”

Particular Types Of Trips Or Activity

3.2 Staffing ratios for all adventurous activities

In general ratios should have the same 1 adult to 10 pupils minimum ratio and may be more favourable depending on the activity, group, location and other factors (see paragraphs 157-171, Section 8 of HASPEV Guidelines).

4. Responsibilities for Visits, Staff Status, Qualifications and Specific Procedures

4.1 Responsibilities for Visits and Activities

4.1a The Senior Staff

Senior staff agreement (generally delegated to the Educational Visits Coordinator) must be obtained before a visit takes place. Senior staff must ensure that the following apply (in practice, most of these points are ensured through staff following the School Educational Visits Procedures).

- Visits and Activities comply with regulations and guidelines and the School's Health and Safety procedures
- The Group Leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the Visit or Activity
- Adequate child protection procedures are in place
- All necessary actions have been completed before the Visit begins
- Risk Assessments have been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place
- Training needs have been assessed by a competent person and the needs of the staff and pupils have been considered
- The Group Leader has experience in supervising the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- The Group Leader or another teacher is competent to instruct the Activity and is familiar with the location / centre where the activity will take place
- Group Leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise the Visit properly
- Non-teacher supervisors on the Visit are appropriate people to supervise children
- The ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate
- Parents have signed consent forms where this is deemed necessary
- Arrangements have been made that are appropriate for the Medical Needs and Special

Educational Needs of all pupils

- Adequate First Aid provision will be available
- Travel arrangements are appropriate, pick up and drop off points and times are known
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- A school contact has been nominated and the Group Leader has details
- The Group Leader, group supervisors and nominated school contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures, and the names of all adults and pupils travelling with the group, contact details of parents and the teachers' and other supervisors' next of kin
- There is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home

4.1b Group Leader

The Group Leader, a teacher or regular Horizons Independent School employee, will have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the Visit and should have regard to the Health and Safety of the group. The Group Leader should be appointed or approved by the Headmaster or Educational Visits Coordinator. The Group Leader should:

- Obtain Senior staff's or Educational Visits Coordinator permission / agreement before any off-site visit takes place
- Follow the School regulations, guidelines and Policies
- Appoint a deputy
- Clearly define each group supervisor's role and ensure that all tasks have been assigned
- Be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age
- Be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity and be familiar with the location / centre where the activity will take place
- Be aware of child protection issues
- Ensure that adequate First Aid provision will be available
- Undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the Visit including the briefing of group members and parents
- Undertake and complete a comprehensive Risk Assessment
- Review regularly undertaken Visits / Activities and advise the Headmaster where adjustments may be necessary
- Ensure that teachers and other supervisors are fully aware of what the proposed Visit involves
- Have enough information on the pupils proposed for the Visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed
- Ensure that the ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate to the needs and age of the group
- Consider stopping the Visit if the risk to the health or safety of the pupils is unacceptable, and have in place procedures for such an eventuality
- Ensure that the Group Supervisors have details of the School contact, have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures, and the names of all adults and pupils travelling

with the group, contact details of parents and the teachers' and other supervisors' next of kin

- Ensure that during the Visit regular and frequent head counts of pupils take place, rendezvous points are established, and pupils are briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group
- Establish whether pupils are competent in remote supervision and ensure that parents have agreed to this if part of the aim of the trip is to encourage independence and investigative skills etc...; and ensure that pupils are briefed in the stages of establishing and managing remote supervision on part of the Visit.
- Where a licensed provider is used to provide an adventurous activity, the Group Leader must check that the provider holds a licence (for example for activities such as caving, climbing, trekking, and watersports), or with an unlicensed provider, should obtain in writing that risks have been assessed, the provider's staff are competent and qualified, equipment is appropriate and in safe condition, operating procedures conform to guidelines of the National Governing Body for the activity, there is clear management of safety systems in place, there is appropriate provision for First Aid, and that there are emergency procedures and the provider's staff are competent in these procedures.

4.2 Staff Status

The Group Leader must always be a regular Horizons Independent School employee (normally a teacher) with the relevant experience and qualifications to lead the Visit.

Parents / volunteers may be used to supplement the supervision ratio, so long as they have been carefully selected and are well known to the School and the group, vetted by the Group Leader, senior staff or Educational Visits Coordinator as appropriate, not left alone with a pupil, and DBS checked unless the risk assessment for the trip makes this unnecessary.

4.3 Staff Qualifications

Staff and in particular, the Group Leader should be appropriately qualified and experienced for the type of Visit, including relevant Leadership, Mountain Leadership, Life-Saving, or other adventurous pursuits qualifications, as required by the nature and type of the Visit. The Group Leader and other supervisors must be competent to lead and instruct in, for example, canoeing, if the School is leading such an activity. Competency is usually demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body Award where it exists.

Staff should either hold First Aid qualifications or ensure that appropriate First Aid cover is in place.

4.4 Specific Staff Procedures on Particular Types of Trip and Activity

A range of specific checks and procedures for different types of Visit or Activity (such as adventurous pursuits, residential Visits, farm Visits, watersport activities, etc...) are specified in DfE Guidance.

5. Students

Students may sign up for Educational Visits at the invitation of the Trip Leader. Opportunities for Educational Visits are numerous at Felsted. However, permission to go on a trip is always conditional on:

- Consent of HM or HoP, which is normally routine, but which will be withdrawn if there are serious concerns about the student in question.
- Consent of Parents. See Section 7.

6. Planning Educational Visits

This is a simplified version of the full set of procedures for Educational Visits. For one-off Educational Visits that are outside the normal school routine, the Trip Leader should follow these four stages:

- Stage One: Initial Approval and Budgeting
- Stage Two: Signing Up and Obtaining Consents – (with EVC)
- Stage Three: Final Planning – (with EVC)
- Stage Four: Evaluation – (with EVC)

6.1: Signing Up and Obtaining Consents

Once Initial Approval has been granted, the Trip Leader should:

- 1) Sign up students
- 2) Sign up staff, bearing in mind the correct staffing ratios and the need to authorise staff absence before treating staff arrangements as confirmed.
- 3) Send letters of information to parents or guardians. (see Section 7).
- 4) Send Parental Consent Forms (see Section 7).

Once all members of the trip party are confirmed, their details should be recorded in Stage 2 of relevant Educational Visits Form (or in an equivalent document) and final planning can begin.

6.3: Final Planning

As soon as possible, but certainly by no later than one week before the trip, the Trip Leader should:

- 1) Confirm Logistical Details and ensure that these are fully accurate in all stages of the relevant Educational Visits Form: This will involve finalising:

- Staffing

- Budget and any currency requirements
- Transport Arrangements
- Accommodation
- Itinerary
- Insurance Arrangements

2) Carry out a Risk Assessment and complete Stage 3 of the relevant Educational Visits Form, to ensure students are safeguarded. For all trips, this will involve:

- Carefully studying the generic risks and control measures in the relevant Educational Visits Form
- Considering whether there are any additional risks specific to the trip that go beyond normal everyday risks, and especially assessing whether the trip includes any medium or high risk activities, such as an overnight stay, travel abroad or one or more potentially hazardous activities
- Recording any such additional risks and appropriate control measures in Stage 3 of the relevant Educational Visits Form, taking advice from appropriately qualified adults regarding control measures as necessary
- Attaching additional risk assessments for any specific potentially hazardous activity, as provided by the official organiser of that activity, and referring to the existence of these in Stage 3 of the relevant Educational Visits Form.
- Studying any Medical Information from completed Consent Forms and MIS lists, and double-checking details with the Medical Centre as necessary, ensuring that control measures are in place to safeguard any student whose underlying medical condition means that one or more activities carries additional significant risks for them.
- Study the relevant sections of the CR Manual to double-check that all categories of risk have been fully considered. Once the risk assessment is complete:
- Fully brief all staff and students on the trip regarding the potential risks and appropriate control measures.
- Continue to assess unforeseen risks and allocate additional control measures at any stage before or during the trip.
- Ensure that staff request cover for any commitments they will miss.
- Ensure that any additional emergency contact details are recorded in Stage 3 of the relevant form.
- Inform all those who need to know of the itinerary, list of students, and emergency contact details. Senior staff will grant final approval once these procedures are complete and a full set of official paperwork has been received and approved.

7. Parents

7.1 Period of Notice

Parents or guardians will normally be informed at least one week in advance of any educational visit for which their son or daughter has signed up. The period of notice will

be much longer than this for the majority of trips, and certainly considerably longer than this for any medium or high risk trip.

7.2 Written Notification

Parents or guardians can expect to receive written notification regarding any one off trip for which their son or daughter has signed up. The exception is for regular off-site activities; where parents have received previous notification of a series of connected off-site activities, they will not receive additional individual notifications unless new risks have emerged or the arrangements have changed.

7.3 Written Consent

For any trip written consent from parents will be required before the student is permitted to go on the trip.

7.5 Itinerary

If a trip is departing or returning outside of normal school hours, parents or guardians of day students can expect to receive specific communications regarding the trip timings, including an update on the return time if necessary.

8. Review

The educational trips and activities will be reviewed periodically and both individually and as a complementary whole. The mechanism for review will vary according to the trip or activity.