

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, HAMPSTEAD

OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

2011 - 2012



Original: 2007-2008
Revised by: Charlotte Hall (Bursar) – March 2011
Review Date: March 2013

MISSION STATEMENT

St Mary's School seeks to provide an education firmly founded on Christ and the Catholic Faith.

Spiritual and moral principles are nurtured in a way that is reflected in daily life.

Within a happy and caring environment and based on the recognition of the dignity and worth of each child, high standards are expected and pursued. Intellectual development is emphasised and fostered along with the pursuit of academic excellence.

St Mary's values the unique contribution of every child within the school community.

St Mary's aims to encourage an active partnership between home, school, parish and the wider community.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

St. Mary's School, Hampstead is an equal opportunities school.

As an equal opportunities school we will not discriminate (directly or indirectly), harass or victimise any individual or groups of individuals on the grounds of:

Ethnicity
Ability
Special needs and disability
Race
Gender
Religion or belief
Culture
Home language
Family background or
Sexual orientation

The school is committed to the advancement of equality of opportunity.

INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the arrangements implemented at St Mary's School, Hampstead with regard to off-site visits and trips as well as residential and trips abroad.

This policy applies to the whole school including the EYFS and must be considered in conjunction with other key policies which ensure the health, welfare and safety of its pupils and staff. Regard has been given to the following regulations, guidance and frameworks:

EYFS Statutory Framework – Every Child Matters

ISI Inspection Standards – Regulation 3 (12)

DfE – Guidance on the Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits and Supplements (HASPEV).

RESPONSIBILITIES – see DfE HASPEV Guidelines

Governing Body / Trust

As the employer the Governing body / Trust should satisfy themselves that the risk assessments have been carried out, that appropriate safety measures are in place and that training needs have been addressed. They should:

- ensure that visits have a specific and stated objective
- that planning complies with regulation
- that they are informed of less routine visits in advance

Headmistress

The Headmistress should ensure that visits comply with regulations and guidelines and the school's health and safety policy and that the group leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

Group Leader

One teacher, the group leader should have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have regard to the health and safety of the group.

Teachers

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the Trust whether the visit takes place within normal hours or outside those hours. Teachers must 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. They should:

- follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline

Adult Volunteers

Non-teacher adults should be clear about their roles and responsibilities. They must follow, at all times, the instructions given by the group leader.

Pupils

The group leader should make clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks
- follow instructions from the leader and other adults
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly
- if abroad be sensitive to local codes and customs
- be aware of danger and risk

BACKGROUND

Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

Aims

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;
- promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

These visits begin with short excursions into the local area in the Early Years, and progress to residential experiences towards the end of Key Stage 2.

Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists).

- English – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;
- Science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens;
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
- History – castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums;
- Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails;
- Art and Design – art gallery visits, use of the locality;
- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches;
- Music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, local schools' orchestra, concerts for parents to hear;
- Design and Technology – visits to local factories or design centres;
- ICT – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools etc;
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.
- PSHE and Citizenship – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

Residential activities

Children in Years 4, 5 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in residential visits. Children in Year 5 spend 4 nights at an activity centre – Skern Lodge. This residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE and PSHCE work. Children in Year 6 visit France for 4 days and 3 nights. These activities are in school time and linked to the National Curriculum and the Independent Schools Curriculum. We however, make a charge for these trips.

We provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

There may be international trips depending on our success in Gymnastics and other sporting events as well as Skiing trips for the older girls.

How visits may be authorised

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the headmistress before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made. [See stage 1 Routine Outing Approval Form]. For Hazardous Activities and residential visits formal written permission must be requested from the Headmistress.

It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

Risk assessment [SEE SAMPLE Below]

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations [see points to consider – rear of Routine Outing Approval Form]:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the Visit Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

Once the preliminary visit has been made and all the necessary information and risk data gathered the Headmistress will make the final authorisation for the trip to proceed [see Stage 2 Routine Outing Approval Form]

A copy of the completed, signed risk assessment will be given to the Bursar / Head

Ratios and Supervision

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

- 1 adult for every 10 pupils (Years 4, 5 & 6) plus an extra member of staff.
- 1 adult for every 5 pupils (Years 1, 2 & 3)
- 1 adult to every 4 pupils (Reception)
- 1 adult to every 2 pupils (Nursery)

Any trip will require a minimum of three adults. However, these are *minimum* requirements, and may *not* provide adequate supervision in all cases.

The factors to take into consideration when deciding on the staff requirements should include:

- Sex, age and ability of group
- Pupils with special educational needs or medical needs
- Nature of the activities
- Experience of the 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
- Behaviour and competence of pupils
- First aid cover

Safeguarding

The group leader will ensure that **all** adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to an Enhanced CRB Disclosure (See Bursar for current CRB checked Volunteers / parents) and that they are suitable and competent to take part on the visit or trip.

All staff attending a trip or visit must understand their role and the lines of communication and responsibility. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

First Aid (See First Aid Policy)

Consideration must be given to the first aid arrangements and requirements of any trip. This should be part of the risk assessment process. There should be a qualified first aider on each trip and in the case of the EYFS a member of staff with Paediatric First Aid certification.

Appropriate first aid kits and equipment must be carried by the leader at all times. The contents of the kits will depend on the type of trip, its length and the nature of location. The medical needs of the pupils should be documented and shared with the relevant staff. Staff must ensure that they have the necessary medication, inhalers and epi-pens etc. needed by their pupils and be fully aware of how to administer any medical treatment / procedure required. These medications need to be readily available throughout a trip and during individual activities.

Transport

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use on a regular basis (J&D Eurotravel) has provided us with details of:

- proper vetting of drivers
- proper insurance

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

Communication with Parents & Consent

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities. This permission must include 'Medical Permission' and consent so allowing medical treatment to be given to their child if required in an emergency. **The signed Permissions Forms must be given to the Bursar after the trip has been completed so that they may be archived.**

For residential and trips aboard a meeting or briefing is held so that parents can be informed, in detail, about the proposed trip. Often, the company or centre providing the activities will make a presentation and be available to answer queries or concerns at this time.

It is here that information on matters that might affect pupil health and safety should be given to parents. The following should be included:

- Dates and times
- Name of leader and staff
- Collection point – telephone tree / CLARION call
- Visit's objective and details of activities
- Modes of travel during the trip
- Size of groups, supervision arrangements
- Expected standards of behaviour -
- Accommodation details with security and supervisory arrangements
- Procedures for pupils who become ill and medical arrangements
- Equipment and clothing requirements
- Details of costs / money to be taken by pupil
- Contact arrangements with parents / pupils during the trip

Parental Consent Form

As well conveying the parents' consent this form should be used to obtain relevant and up-to-date pupil information:

- Medical conditions, allergies and phobias
- Current medication / arrangements
- Any recent illnesses or issues which need to be known
- Name, telephone number and address of GP
- Special / medical dietary requirements
- Whether a pupil suffers from travel sickness
- Information on any toileting difficulties
- Night time tendencies – such as sleepwalking, bed wetting
- Level of swimming ability / safety awareness
- Parent contact details and alternative contacts

Further health and safety considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided (telephone tree).

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

The leader of the trip must take with them the school mobile phone / charger (Number = **0796 825 6276**). The phone is set up for 'roaming' so can be used aboard.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the headmistress the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

Group Leaders' planning

Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:

- *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide – (DfES 1998) and its supplements:*
- *School Health & Safety Policy , First Aid & Medicines, staff handbook*

Visit plan

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

- risk assessment;
- report on preliminary visit;
- applications for approval of visit;
- general information;
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- travel schedule;
- accommodation plan (if applicable);
- full plan of activities;
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;
- guidance for party leaders;
- guidance for the emergency contact and headmistress;
- medical questionnaire returns;
- First-aid boxes.

Preparing Pupils

The group leader should ensure that pupils are well prepared before the visit takes place. This will ensure that pupils get the most out of a visit and be able to make informed decisions and so will therefore be less at risk. The group leader must ensure that pupils understand the key safety information and that they understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit / activity
- who is responsible for the group
- background information about the place to be visited
- if going abroad : basic foreign words / understanding of custom and culture
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules
- why safety precautions are in place
- what to do in an emergency : if separated from the group etc
- Pupils with additional needs should have their own plan so as to allow as full as participation as possible.

Trips Abroad / Residential Activities

It is the policy of the school that for trips abroad and residential activities only reputable and licensed or accredited providers / tour operators are used. A pre-visit is made to all sites including those aboard.

For trips aboard the following additional factors must be considered during the planning and risk assessment process:

- Insurance – travel and medical cover (E111s etc)
- Visa & passport arrangements for the group
- Vaccinations – does this need to be considered?
- Emergency medical facilities – what rights / what is available
- Foreign currency / availability (Bank holidays and local arrangements)
- Details of British Embassy or Consulate
- Language , custom and cultural considerations
- Hazards – coastal area? Lakes and ponds?, crossings, unfamiliar traffic movement (on other side of road!), different sort of traffic lights etc
- Climate / weather (shelter, dehydration..)
- Emergency Plan – early return of pupils, cancellation of trip, unforeseen circumstances.

Farm Visits

It is the current policy of the school that until further notice pupils will not visit Farms or animal petting zoos.

Costs

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for
- contingency / emergencies (for residential & trips abroad)

Review of Trip / Activity

After a trip or activity it is beneficial to review and evaluate the experience looking at all aspects of the trip from curriculum to practical arrangements. This feedback is essential in the planning of future trips and should be shared with the staff body.

Monitoring and review of policy

This policy is monitored by the Health and Safety sub-committee of the governing body and will be reviewed every 2- 3 years or before if necessary.

APPENDIX 1.

Sample Risk Assessment:

SAMPLE RISK ASSESSMENT :

Preliminary Visit Checklist and Risk Assessment - xxxxxx
visit to Paradise Wildlife Park

Address: White Stubbs Lane
Broxbourne
Hertfordshire EN10 7QA
Phone: 01992 470 490
Email: info@pwpark.com

A map/plan and a flyer for Paradise Wildlife Park is attached to this Checklist. The current Health and Safety Risk Assessment Checklist that the staff at Paradise Wildlife Park have provided, is also attached.

Checklist:

Toilets:

Toilets are located near the Safari Suite restaurant - ([B] on map). There are also toilets located close to the Animal Resource Centre ([F] on map).

First Aid:

The First Aid facilities are located at the entrance to the Car Park 1 ([A] on map) and near the Group Office ([K] on map). We will also take a portable first aid kit containing plasters, sick bags, on the coach. This will be carried by Miss Landman throughout the trip.

Allergies: xxxxx - Penicillin

(No medication is given. Just a reminder that she has an allergy for Penicillin)

Fire/emergency Evacuation Procedures:

There are fire and emergency evacuation procedures in place. We will go over this procedure with the staff and the children upon arrival at the Park.

Storage of Belongings

Lunches/snacks and bags will be stored on the bus and accessed at meal times. Children will have their coats with them as we will be outdoors.

There are covered picnic areas near the restaurant area and open picnic areas near the bird presentation arena for lunch and snack times. (see map)

Safe drop off spot and parking

An area is located for the bus to park. Children will line up alongside the ablution block and will make a quick toilet stop before they follow their group leader to the snack area for snack time. The parking area is open to the public and therefore all adults need to take particular care of their children following them on the outskirts of the parking area.

Meeting Point

Our first meeting point will be near the car park at the snack area where the guide will come and meet with the whole group. The final meeting point at 13:45 will be at the same snack area as in the morning. If it is raining, the meeting points for both the morning and afternoon will be at the undercover area outside the restaurant.

Getting lost procedure

Lost children are taken to the pay cabin and an announcement will be made on the PA system/Radio. Children will be reminded at all times that if they get lost to just stay and sit where they are until an adult comes to get them. All children will have a sticker or band on their wrist, with the school's contact details written on it in case they get lost or separated from their teachers or parent.

Phones

Teachers will all have their mobile phones with them and the school mobile phone. The schools phone number is also saved on the phone along with all necessary contact details.

Drinking water

Drinking water is available around the park area and children will be taken to the snack and lunch area where they will have time to eat and drink.

Physical Hazards

The extra free play areas could potentially be hazardous if adult supervision is not in place at all times. As staff members we have decided not to use the climbing area in the park itself. A safer and more age appropriate play area is located close to the restaurant. Children will be well supervised when climbing viewing platforms to see the animals and will be assisted to climb down from these platforms to ensure they do not slip or fall.

Additional Insurance

None required

Appropriateness

The trip forms as part of our topic on growing. The children will be looking at the different animals and learning about their needs. The learning that will take place incorporates Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Communication, Language and Literacy and Personal, Social and Emotional development.

Worksheets

None provided as these are not appropriate for the age group.

Group sizes

Each adult will have approximately 2 children and some adults will have only one child to support and guide through the park.

Children's Contact details

Each teacher will have each child's contact details, consent forms and the schools contact details. This will include any information regarding allergies or any other medical conditions.

Allergies and Medical Conditions

Each staff member is aware of the allergies or medical conditions of individual children in their class. All necessary medications will be carried in case of emergency. Children with food allergies will only be eating food packed by their parents as part of their packed lunch, as all children are bringing their packed lunch.

Date:

Signed: