

# **EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY**



BirchfieldSchool

Educational Visits Coordinator : Mrs Annette Ackerley

## **INTRODUCTION**

This policy has regards to DfE guidance 'Health and Safety Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies' ([www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)). This policy applies to all pupils in the School including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. At Birchfield School, we believe that learning outside the classroom is an essential component of our curriculum. It gives our pupils unique opportunities to develop their resourcefulness and initiative and to spend time together in an informal environment. Each trip is different. Some are directly related to the curriculum, some are designed to promote social awareness, or to enhance physical skills, self-reliance and team-working. Others will extend their knowledge of the world. The common factor is that they all make an essential contribution to our pupils' development and education in the broadest sense of the word.

## **OUR TRIPS AND VISITS**

All trips and residential visits are overseen by the Educational Visits Coordinator, in line with the Assistant Head, who checks paperwork and advises staff on preparation. We regularly take pupils on day trips to: historic sites, museums, galleries, natural features, theatres, farms to support the breadth of the curriculum. There are regular theatre trips for pupils of all levels and sports teams take part in away fixtures.

We have an active Birchfield Award programme for pupils in Years 7 and 8 which includes day trips, overnight stays and a camp. In addition, trips abroad do take place on occasion and younger children may take part in residential visits.

## **INFORMATION ON PLANNED TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES**

The school calendar and app list the trips and visits that are due to take place over the coming term, together with a list of planned home and away sports fixtures. Parents will always be notified in advance:

- If a pupil has been selected for a sports team, they will be expected to attend that fixture. We very much welcome family and friends at all our matches, both home and away.
- If a pupil is going to be out of school during the school day in order to visit a local museum, theatre, nature reserve or historic site, we will always seek parental permission if the visit involves an extra charge, supplying a packed lunch or late return to school, or collection from another place, such as a theatre. Permission slips are archived in school.
- We send details of planned trips and activities well in advance to all parents of pupils of the relevant year group or cohort.
- For overseas or residential trips, parents will be invited into school for an introductory meeting as well as a full briefing before their sons and daughters depart.

## **CONSENT**

We require specific, individual written consent by parents if we are to take a pupil on a trip or visit that extends beyond the normal school day, involves an overnight stay, collection from a different venue, an overseas visit or extra cost. We are unable to take a pupil without a

completed and signed consent form, which includes details of where parents may be contacted in an emergency, with more than one emergency contact number provided. This form will be sent to parents well in advance and must reach the school at least 3 working days before the start of the trip.

## **SAFETY**

Safety is top priority for us. We expect parents to support the school in ensuring that pupils follow the instructions given either by a member of staff, or by a qualified instructor, and use the proper equipment. As a safety precaution, pupils should not eat on the minibus while in motion. We reserve the right to send any pupil home early at their parents' expense, if they decline to follow reasonable instructions given for their own safety or do not follow the school's behaviour code. Pupils are required to sign a behaviour code of conduct for residential visits and this is discussed with them in advance.

## **PART 2: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF INVOLVED WITH SCHOOL VISITS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

We have a large number of trips, out of school activities and visits at Birchfield School, which are an important part of our educational ethos. We expect that every member of our staff endorses the educational value of activities outside the classroom. We encourage everyone possible to participate in them, and to help with the arrangements. We always welcome suggestions from staff for new trips.

### **ROLE OF THE GROUP LEADER**

Every trip or visit, no matter how short, must be planned in advance by the member of staff who is in charge of organising and running it. He or she will always have had experience of accompanying school visits before taking on the role of Group Leader and report to the Educational Visits Coordinator. No one should drive the school minibus unless s/he has qualified as a minibus driver.

### **PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE**

The law places the Group Leader "in loco parentis" and recommends a group leader "act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances." Staff who take part in visits and activities outside school may feel concerned about the possibility of being held personally liable if an accident should occur. However, they can be assured that Birchfield School, as their employer will always stand behind them in the unlikely event of an accident occurring, provided they have exercised reasonable care and followed the school's guidelines. Birchfield School has £5M of Employers' Liability Insurance and £10M of public liability insurance. Birchfield School's policy is to discourage staff from transporting pupils in their private cars, and never to allow them to be transported in cars belonging to parent helpers (unless prior agreement has been arranged in advance and in writing with the school).

### **PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS**

The amount of advance preparatory work needed will obviously vary considerably with the type of activity. By contrast, a visit lasting a week or more to a country overseas requires considerable research and preparation. Repeat visits and shorter visits will need less planning, and can be arranged at shorter notice, though it is always desirable to give parents as much notice as possible when planning visits for school holidays and half-terms.

### **Appendix I**

Group leader planning guide for a longer type of visit.

It is designed to be as comprehensive as possible. *Text in italics indicates that the action may not be required (or the timescale may be shortened) for: trips within the school day, theatre and museum visits, sports fixtures, or day visits using school transport.*

### Before the trip

- Obtain advice from the Educational Visits Coordinator/Assistant Head, on suitable dates, precedents etc.
- Discuss preliminary plan, including purpose, location, transport, hotels, activities, itinerary, number & age of participants with the Educational Visits Coordinator/Assistant Head.
- Calculate the staff to pupil ratio, (see below)
- Prepare a draft itinerary
- Decide mode of transport for all legs of the journey.
- Prepare fully inclusive costs for the visit and complete a Trip Permission Form to be submitted for authorisation to the Headmistress. Once authorised, this will be passed to the Office Manager, including an appropriate contingency for delays and emergencies. (The costs of the accompanying staff must be included).
- Check that the provider of adventurous activities is licensed, and the individual instructors possess a recognised qualification from a national body, such as the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority. Copies of these qualifications must be added to the risk assessment.
- Obtain clear statement from the Centre about their responsibilities for the safety of the pupils before making any commitment. Ask for copies of their site risk assessment.
- Prepare the school's risk assessment(s) to be checked by the Assistant Head and then submitted to the Headmistress for signature. A copy of the signed risk assessment must be taken on the trip and the original stored in the finance office.
- *Check the school's insurance cover with the Office Manager if the visit involves hazardous activities.*
- Discuss with the Assistant Head names of other members of staff who are willing to participate in the trip, bearing in mind the need to have both male and female teaching staff when both sexes participate in a visit. It is desirable to have at least one member of staff who speaks the language of the country to be visited. Each should always have updated First Aid training and be aware of the need to implement the school's Safeguarding Policy and practice. We encourage parents to accompany School visits if appropriate and we welcome them at all sports fixtures.
- *If parent volunteers participate: Arrange for any volunteers participating in the trip to obtain an enhanced DBS disclosure. (The Finance office will make the necessary arrangements).*
- *Check that the tour company/airline is ATOL/ABTA bonded to provide cover in the event of the bankruptcy of the provider.*
- *Carry out a reconnaissance visit if the location is not one that the school has visited before. (If a reconnaissance visit is impossible, a reference from another school that has visited the site may suffice). Notes relating to this should be added to the risk assessment.*
- *Establish the minimum and maximum numbers for the visit to be viable (bearing in mind that the costs of the accompanying staff will be divided amongst the participants)*
- *Ascertain the medical and visa requirements*
- *Establish when the deposits are required by tour operators/airlines/activity centre etc, and ensure that the size of the deposit requested from parents is sufficient to cover these costs (including the costs of deposits for accompanying staff)*
- *[Depending upon the destination: check with the Travel Advice Unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office]*

- Prepare a written folder of all information for the visit, to be signed off by the Headmistress
- *[If necessary] Attend a First Aid and/or minibus driving course beforehand.*

### Staff/Pupil Ratios

The recommended staff to pupil ratios for visits and off-site activities is:

Ratio	Year Group
1:6	I- 3 inclusive (Reception class trips will have a higher supervision ratio, depending on the nature of the visit and should be judged separately)
1:10	Years 4 – 6
1:15/20	Years 7 and 8
1:10	All visits abroad

A ratio of 1:5 is recommended for high-risk activities. This may vary depending on the nature of the activity and each will be judged separately. Two members of staff accompany pupils in the minibus to a sporting fixture.

### The Risk Assessment

All Group Leaders at Birchfield School need to conduct risk assessments on the potential hazards involved in a visit, trip or activity that they are planning. Risk assessments are always required in situations where the level of risk is beyond the accepted norm ('exceptional circumstances'). A previous pre-visit risk assessment may be used for a second visit, but a trip risk assessment should be produced each time and submitted at least one week before the trip to the Assistant Head for checking. The risk assessment will take into account the following points when deciding upon supervision needs :

- (i) the age, sex and ability of the pupils;
- (ii) the number of pupils involved;
- (iii) pupils with medical needs;
- (iv) pupils with special dietary needs;
- (v) pupils' previous experiences of being away from school/home and of the activities involved;
- (vi) the degree of responsibility and discipline shown by the group;
- (vii) the type of visit and the nature of the activities involved;
- (viii) the amount of risk;
- (ix) the location and travel arrangements;
- (x) the time of year;
- (xi) the experience and quality of the supervisory staff available;
- (xii) the requirements of the organisation or location to be visited;
- (xiii) first aid cover.

The steps that they should follow are set out in the model risk assessment form that is part of DfE Guidance "The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide," ([www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk)). This form can be downloaded and guides the user in:

- Identifying the potential hazards of the place being visited.
- Listing the groups of people that are especially at risk from the significant hazards.
- Listing existing controls or notifying where the information may be found.

- Considering how he/she would cope with the hazards which are not currently identified or fully controlled.
- Carrying out continual monitoring of hazards throughout the visit.

Professionally operated licensed activity centres and tour operators specialising in school visits will conduct their own risk assessments. The Group Leader should ask for copies at the planning stage. Provided that he/she is satisfied, it will meet the requirements of Birchfield School, for the activity part of the visit. Additional risk assessments will probably be needed to ensure complete coverage of all aspects of the visit. At Birchfield School, the finance office maintains a dossier of generic risk assessments that cover sports fixtures, theatre and museum visits and most of our regular visits.

#### After Permission is Granted

- Write a *preliminary letter* to send to parents and guardians of the target age group, outlining the purpose of the trip, *the programme and the expected maximum cost*. The letter should state that pupils are not to bring any form of electronic device e.g camera, mobile phone or pocket money for trips, unless this is specially requested. Ask for *expressions of interest/acceptance*, together with a *deposit by a specific date/payment*. *Mention that parents will be invited to a briefing meeting within six weeks of departure*. Explain any restrictions on numbers.
- At Birchfield School, we expect that these letters should always be cleared in advance with the Headmistress via the Assistant Head.
- Brief the pupils about the visit, its dates and purpose
- Organise with the kitchens if packed lunches are required and request individual water bottles for pupils and staff to ease transport.
- Check names of all pupils wishing to participate with the First Named Aider. Discuss with her concerns about special arrangements that may be required for handling any specific medical or SEND issues. Group Leaders are then responsible for collating medical bags for pupils in their care.
- Collect *deposits* and arrange with the Office Manager to set up a unique cost centre in the school accounts for the trip.
- Arrange for the Office Manager to pay *deposits on hotels, flights, activity centre etc/the costs of tickets*.
- Inform parents of any specific clothing that is required (may need time to acquire e.g skiing).

#### At least Three Months in Advance

- Finalise the costs with travel company etc.
- Insist that all coaches are fitted with seat belts. (*This may not be possible in every country*).
- Work out the cost for parents (including contingency to cover delays etc).
- Inform parents of the medical and visa requirements. Advise parents of non-British passport holders that they are responsible for ascertaining the visa requirements of the country to be visited.
- Arrange for the balance of the cost of the trip/Collect the balance directly from the pupils and hand to Office Manager for crediting to the trip account.
- Arrange for the Office Manager to pay the balance to the airline, hotel, travel company etc.
- Brief and prepare the pupils in advance.
- Ensure that they are given plenty of advance notice if they need special equipment (e.g. for skiing).

#### Six Weeks in Advance

- Arrange meeting with parents to brief them on all aspects of the trip, including:
  - The itinerary, including the meeting and collection points.
  - Contact details for the hotels/hostels/ names and addresses of the host families.
  - The money, kit and equipment that the pupils need. The dress code of the country.
  - The medical and visa requirements.
  - The expected standards of behaviour, and the potential risks of irresponsible behaviour and the ground rules for behaviour in host families' houses
  - Remind parents those pupils who ignore or flout the behaviour code risk being sent home at their parents' expense. Pupils remain subject to school rules throughout the visit.
  - Arrangements for handling illness and accidents, and arrangements for informing parents in such circumstances.
  - Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event that the return is delayed.
  - The need to notify the school in the event of contact with an infectious disease within four weeks of traveling.
  - The reasons why a completed consent form is essential.
  - The need for a copy of each pupil's passport.
- Send all parents a copy of the consent form with specified return date
- (If appropriate,) book packed lunch from Catering Department
- Brief pupils on expectations of standards of behaviour and cultural differences.
- Book traveling first aid kit from the Named First Aider.

#### Two Weeks in Advance

- Chase parents who have not returned their consent forms. Remind them that their child cannot participate unless the form is received within 3 working days of departure.
- Obtain photocopies of each pupil's passport
- Check all tickets for accuracy.
- Meet with the other members of staff to discuss the itinerary, the risk assessment, the respective roles of the Group Leader and other accompanying staff, and emergency procedures.
- Prepare packs for the School Office, the Finance Office, Headmistress and for each member of staff, that contain the following information:
  - The itinerary (including address, phone numbers etc of all locations where the party is staying).
  - The Group Leader's mobile number
  - Mobile numbers of all participating staff,
  - A list of pupils, together with copies of their parental contact forms (which includes details of each pupils' medical conditions),
  - Copies of all passports and travel documents,
  - Emergency contact numbers for the Headmistress and the Member of the SMT designated to be on-call.
  - Out of hours contact details for the School.
  - The address and contact details of the nearest British Consulate.
  - A copy of the tickets, travel insurance documents & emergency contact details).
  - A copy of the risk assessment.
  - Location of local hospital
  - Book any money that is required for the trip with the Office Manager.
  - Identification cards for each child in appropriate languages giving their name and address, accommodation and teachers' contact details.

#### The Day Prior to Departure/The Day of Departure

- Give trip information packs to designated school recipients and to other staff participants
- Collect money from the Office Manager
- Collect mobile phones, charger, camera and/or SAT NAV
- Give each pupil the names, addresses and phone numbers of their accommodation
- Remind pupils about the rendezvous, dress code, standards of behaviour etc.
- Remind pupils of the potential risks of irresponsible behaviour
- Remind pupils to bring passports. Ask to see each passport.
- Collect traveling first aid kit(s). Check contents.
- Collect packed lunch if applicable

### **DURING THE VISIT OR ACTIVITY**

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with Group Leader. He or she has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. Accompanying staff must be First Aid trained, be aware of implementing the School's Safeguarding Policy at all times and must also take at least one working mobile telephone belonging to the school; personal mobile telephones must not be used for school business and alcohol must not be consumed during the trip. In accordance with the Prevent Strategy, participating staff must be mindful of the threat posed to the children by adults during the outing. S/He may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out a head count on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving a museum, restaurant, activity centre, hotel etc.
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts.
- Checking the fire exits and escape routes at each hotel or hostel. Ensuring that every pupil walks through the emergency escape route at each hotel.
- Ensuring that sleeping accommodation is suitable and located together (preferably not on the ground floor).
- Setting times for pupils to be in their rooms at night. Conducting checks (using the other staff).
- Setting agreed times and locations for checking pupils when they work.
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour.
- Looking after – or reminding pupils to look after – passports and valuables
- Storing cash, pre-paid travel cards and tickets in the hotel safe.
- Keeping an account of all expenditure.
- Recording all accidents and near misses.

### **ILLNESS OR MINOR ACCIDENTS**

If a pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill, the Group leader, or another member of staff will take him/her to the local hospital or clinic. If the trip is outside the UK, s/he will notify the insurers on their helpline to arrange (where possible) for the medical bill to be sent directly to the insurance company for settlement. If the accident is more serious (such as a broken leg when skiing), the school's medical insurers may arrange for the pupil, accompanied by a member of staff to be repatriated to the UK. At Birchfield School we expect the Group Leader to phone the pupil's parents if their child has suffered an accident or injury that is serious enough to require medical treatment – as opposed to minor cuts and bruises.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

In the event of a serious accident resulting in the death or injury of one or more of the pupils and staff, the Group Leader's first priority would be to summon the emergency services, and

to arrange for medical attention for the injured. One of the accompanying members of staff should accompany the injured pupil(s) to hospital. Ensuring that the rest of the group were safe and looked after, and informing the Headmistress or on-call member of the SMT of what had happened would be the next tasks for the Group Leader, who would need to give as full, calm and factual account as the circumstances permitted. Where the full facts had not yet emerged, he or she should say so, and ensure that follow-up communications with the Headmistress are maintained. He/she would also need to arrange (perhaps using the Deputy Leader or another member of staff) for the school's insurers to be contacted as quickly as possible, together with the British Consul, if the accident happened overseas. A full record should be kept of the incident, the injuries and of the actions taken.

At Birchfield School, depending on the nature of the incident, we may implement our own model communications plan for informing as swiftly as possible both the families of the injured, and the families of those who are unhurt. We recognise that in an era of instant communications, it may not be possible for us to be the first to break the news. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that we have an important duty to speak personally to the parents of any pupil who has suffered some injury or mishap. We will use mass communication methods (Clarion, SMS, email, messages on our web, local radio) for communicating with those whose children are not affected.

Where possible, communication with the media should be left to the Headmistress. The Group Leader should refer the media to the school. If comment is unavoidable, it should be factual, calm and no attempt made to cover gaps in knowledge. Pupils should be discouraged from talking to the media.

Visits should be evaluated after completion and records kept of incidents, accidents and near misses.

#### **DELAYED RETURN**

If a visit is delayed, the Group Leader should phone the school office, or the Headmistress or on call member of the SMT (out of school hours), who will in turn phone all the parents on their contact numbers to alert them to the delay and the revised time of arrival.

## MODEL CONSENT FORM

[Year                  ] Visit to .....  
(The proposed itinerary is attached).

Departing at .....hours on..... from [the school],  
And returning [to the school] at .....hours on .....

Maximum number of pupils [ ], who will be accompanied by [ ] members of the teaching or medical staff, including both male and female staff.

*[Where a proposed visit is over-subscribed, places will be offered on a first-come basis].*

Type of accommodation: (1) [Hotel in ... for ....nights]. Pupils will be accommodated in [ ] bedded rooms.  
(2) [Youth Hostel in .....for ....nights where there is simple dormitory accommodation]

Transport: (1) School to [ ] by coach /school minibus  
(2) Outward Flight No [ ] on [ ] hours on [ ], Air [ ] to [ ]  
(3) Coach to hotel  
(4) Inbound Flight No [ ] on [ ] hours on [ ], Air [ ] to [ ], arriving at [ ] hours.

*[Please note that although it is school policy always to book coaches fitted with seat belts, this is not always possible outside the UK]*

### **Medical Information**

Any allergies or sensitivities to food, medication, pets or to insect stings:

Any chronic or recurring medical conditions needing regular or occasional medication or treatment:

Does he/she suffer from travel sickness? If so, may we have your permission to give him/her a travel sickness tablet?

Do we have your permission to give him/her a non-prescription pain reliever, such as paracetamol?

To the best of your knowledge, has he/she been in contact with any infectious disease over the past four weeks? If so, please give brief details.

Does he/she suffer from any phobia which might make it unsafe for him/her to participate in any of the planned activities?

Date of last tetanus injection?

## **CONSENT TO EMERGENCY TREATMENT**

I/ We authorise the Group Leader, or an authorised deputy acting on his/her behalf to consent on the advice of an appropriately qualified medical specialist to my/our child receiving emergency medical treatment, including general anaesthetic, blood transfusion and surgical procedure [under the NHS]/[ under the school's travel insurance cover] if he/she is unable to contact me/us time.

Signature of both parents: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Contact Details for the period covered by the trip:**

NAME:..... Tel .no:.....Mobile: .....

Email: ..... Work no:.....

NAME:..... Tel .no:.....Mobile: .....

Email. :..... Work no: .....

Emergency Contact Name : ..... Tel. No : .....

Emergency Contact Name : ..... Tel. No : .....

FAMILY DOCTOR:..... Tel .no:.....

Address:  
.....  
.....

### **Behaviour code:**

I understand that my son/daughter will be subject to the normal school rules of behaviour throughout the visit under the school's Behaviour Policy. I accept that where his or her disregard for the code of behaviour either causes danger to him/herself and to others, or offence to the local customs or is a serious breach of school discipline, appropriate sanctions will apply. I agree to him/her following the guidance on health and safety given either by a member of staff [or by an Instructor at the Activity centre] at all times.

Signed: ..... Signed.....

Name: ..... Name:.....

Date: ..... Date: .....

Please note that your son/daughter will not be allowed to participate in this visit unless this form is completed and returned to the group leader at Birchfield School at least one week before the visit date.