

Oakwood School

Educational and Off-Site Visits & Activities Policy for PACT Prep Schools

This policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS

CONTENTS:

<u>Paragraph number & heading</u>	<u>Page number</u>
0. Definitions	1
1. Introduction	1
2. Aims	2
3. Curriculum links	2
4. Sports activities	2-3
5. Residential activities	3
6. How visits may be authorised	3
7. Risk assessment	3-4
8. Transport	5
9. Communication with parents	5
10. Further health and safety considerations	5-6
11. Monitoring and Review	6

Definitions:

"DBS"	Disclosure & Barring Service
"DfE"	Department for Education
"DVLA"	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
"LOtC"	Learning Outside the Classroom
"MIS"	Management Information System
"SEN"	Special Educational Needs

1 Introduction

- 1.1** Educational visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place either at school or outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities, in particular, 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.
- 1.2** In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our educational visits and activities (including learning outside the classroom), 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 learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

1.3 The school has regard to the DfE guidance *Health & Safety : Advice on legal duties and powers (Feb 2014)* and material on the LOtC website (www.lotc.org.uk). We keep up to date with Health & Safety consultations and make any necessary changes to our procedures in order to apply common sense, ensure continued compliance and best practice. Additional guidance is obtained from the DfE website (www.education.gov.uk).

1.4 Mrs Lobo is the Risk Assessment co-ordinator, and she ensures that the premises risk assessments are updated regularly and that written risk assessments are completed by teachers prior to any trips.

2 Aims

2.1 The aims of our educational visits are to:

- 1 enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- 2 provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site or within the classroom alone;
- 3 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 a residential experience towards the end of Key Stage 2.

3 Curriculum links

3.1 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, librarians, poets and theatre groups;
- science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens, nature trails;
- 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, river walks;
- 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;
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.

4 Sports activities

4.1 Some PE lessons for junior children are held at our sister school, The Cedars, in Coombe Road, Croydon, and these children also compete in sports matches throughout the year at a variety of local schools.

4.2 The children travel by school minibuses and occasionally staff vehicles, and seatbelts are worn at all times. Separate insurance policies exist for the minibus and staff using their private vehicles to carry pupils.

4.3 The teacher in charge of the sports session will carry out a head count both at the start of the lesson or match and prior to leaving any sports ground.

4.4 Two adults representing the school will always accompany the children in case there is an emergency. A first aid kit is situated in the school minibus and at least one member of staff on site will be trained in first aid. They will also carry a mobile phone for emergencies.

4.5 Staff will use reasonable discretion when in extreme weather conditions (eg. allowing the children access to plenty of water in the heat and ensuring that children are warmly dressed in the cold).

4.6 Some children in Years 1 & 2 participate in a local swimming activity with written permission from their parents. A minimum of 2 adults will accompany the children, and they are taken by school minibus. The school ensures that their staff have been DBS checked.

5 Residential activities

5.1 Children in the upper juniors have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is outside of school time (usually around 2-3 days) and some activities are linked to the National Curriculum. A charge is made for transport, board and lodging, and specialist instruction for certain activities.

5.2 The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities. Qualified instructors are provided for all specialist activities undertaken, and the school ensures that all staff employed by the company as well as any adults accompanying the children overnight have been DBS checked. Detailed risk assessments for all activities are carried out by the provider, and the teacher in charge also carries out their own written risk assessment. For activities involving caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports, the school ensures that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004.

6 How visits may be authorised

6.1 A teacher will normally be the party leader responsible for running the visit or activity.

6.2 The teacher will be involved in the planning and management of all their class off-site visits. As part of this process they will:

- 1 ensure that a written risk assessment is completed (using the generic template provided in the Staff Handbook);
- 2 support the Head in his decisions on approval;
- 3 assign competent staff and parents (if required) to help with trips;
- 4 make sure that all necessary permissions and medical information are obtained.

6.3 Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they will refer to the list of 'pre-approved trips' and if necessary seek and obtain the approval of the SMT before any commitment is made on behalf of the school.

6.4 Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the Head will seek the approval of the governing body before permitting the activity to take place.

6.5 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.

7 Risk assessment

7.1 A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. This will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate

measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment is based on the following considerations:

- 1 What are the hazards?
- 2 Who might be affected by them?
- 3 What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- 4 Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- 5 What staff : pupil ratios apply for the trip?
- 6 What steps will be taken if delayed or in an emergency?
- 7 Do any children have particular allergies or health needs which may require medication to be administered?

7.2 A written risk assessment is required for all trips (regardless of whether or not staff have been to a particular place before, or if it is on the SMT pre-approved list). The generic off-site RA template in the Staff Handbook should be annotated by hand and given to Mrs Lobo at least one week prior to a trip. Any new or higher risk trips must be signed off by the Head.

7.3 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 often 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 they lack the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

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

- 1 adult to 8 pupils in Years 3 to 6 (juniors)
- 1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 2 (infants)
- 1 adult to 4 pupils in the Early Years

These ratios may be adjusted slightly depending on the venue and nature of the trip (for example travelling in the school minibus as opposed to public transport, or if other adults are involved in the activities on site).

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

7.5 At least one adult accompanying the children must be trained in first aid. In the case of Early Years trips, one member of staff must have completed their Paediatric First Aid training. Teachers must collect the portable first aid kit from the office prior to leaving on their trip, and this should be returned immediately upon their return (and office staff informed if any supplies have been used).

7.6 The teacher in charge, and preferably other staff accompanying them, will carry a mobile phone with them in case of emergencies.

8 Transport

8.1 The costing of off-site activities will include any of the following that apply: Transport; entrance fees; provision of any special resources or equipment; costs related to adult helpers; any refreshments the school has opted to pay for.

- 8.2** Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use vehicles fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.
- 8.3** Where private cars are used for transport (either for school trips or sports activities), an extension on the PACT insurance policy is in place which covers vehicles belonging to staff. The teacher in charge will ensure that all drivers have clear directions and will ensure that everyone arrives and departs safely.
- 8.4** All the seats in our minibus have seat belts and we instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to use their seat belts. Help is provided by staff if needed.
- 8.5** Although not required by law, booster seats are available for any trips involving children in the Early Years.
- 8.6** For anyone driving the school minibus, a copy of the driver's licence is also kept on file. The DVLA online system will be used to check annually for any entitlements, endorsements, disqualifications or penalty points for regular drivers.

9 Communication with parents

- 9.1** The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity are provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit in good time. Parents give their consent in writing when their children first start at the school for all off-site activities. Parents give separate consent for the Year 6 Residential Trip.
- 9.2** Funding for off-site activities is provided by parental contributions, and costs are usually added to children's school accounts at the end of each term. This is made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.
- 9.3** The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Head to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

10 Further health and safety considerations

- 10.1** The DfE guidance mentions ten important areas to consider for the types of activities envisaged. The essential elements which usually apply are:

- responsibilities for visits, including pupils' behaviour;
- planning visits, including risk assessments and first aid;
- supervision, including ratios and vetting checks (for example DBS checks for volunteers on overnight stays);
- preparing pupils, including special and medical needs;
- communicating with parents;
- planning transport;
- insurance;
- types of visits;
- visits abroad (not usually applicable to our school);
- emergency procedures, including contact details and permission for emergency medical treatment if the parents cannot be contacted.

- 10.2** 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.

- 10.3** 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. All staff have a common law duty of care and, together with other accompanying adults, they should act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances. This involves taking note of any specific health or medical information, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times. The party leader must ensure that all adults taking part in the visit ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group. The group leader will make it clear to children that they must follow the instructions of staff (including those at the venue of the visit) and other accompanying adults, they should behave sensibly and responsibly at all times and must not take unnecessary risks.

Any risks which a teacher attending a venue feels should be highlighted must be reported to the Risk Assessment co-ordinator as soon as possible, who will inform other members of staff if need be. Any significant findings must be recorded in writing.

- 10.4** 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 Head the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1** It is the responsibility of the Head to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.
- 11.2** This policy will be formally reviewed every two years, however it will be amended earlier if legislation or school procedures change prior to that time.

Signed: C Candia

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years	
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This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related policies:
Health, Safety & Welfare; Risk Assessment.