

# EARLY YEARS VISITS POLICY



## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

### INTRODUCTION

Pennthorpe School places great value on educational visits for all of its pupils, including the very youngest, recognising that they provide a unique opportunity to enhance the curriculum and to extend and support class based work. They provide opportunities which cannot be provided on site and can extend the knowledge and understanding of our youngest pupils.

### OUR VISITS

#### Supervision

Generous staffing levels, close supervision and proper protective clothing are essential for even the shortest of excursions. For all walks within the enclosed school grounds, the children are supervised by Staff who hold a minimum of Level 3 statutory qualification (as defined by the Children's Workforce Development Council). They also take a mobile phone with them. The children are always briefed in advance about the visit and of the standards of behaviour expected.

#### Staff Ratios and Responsibility

There is always at least one Teacher, who will have been designated in charge of the visit and will not be counted into the staffing ratio. We operate a staffing ratio of 1:5 for all Reception Class off-site visits and 1:3 for all Kindergarten offsite visits.

Normal year group sizes do not exceed 36, so the Lead Teacher will be accompanied by sufficient additional qualified staff, at least one of whom will be qualified in paediatric first aid.

Parents are frequently invited to volunteer to help with off site visits. Volunteers are not allowed to supervise children alone and are thoroughly briefed about their roles beforehand.

#### The Kindergarten

Honey Pot children are never taken off site during the year as there are plenty of opportunities for daily outdoor play. Both the Honey Pot and Beehive have well equipped, secure outdoor play areas.

In both the Honey Pot and Beehive, the children are taken on occasional walks inside the school grounds to extend their outdoor and observational learning opportunities in line with the Early Years Foundations Stage principles.

During the summer term, the Beehive children together with their Teachers, Assistants and approved Volunteers visit a local farm, where they learn about the animals and the workings of a farm.

The Beehive children also enjoy occasional theatre trips to enhance their literacy and language learning.

For all off site trips, the children travel by coach, fitted with front facing seats and seat belts, from one of our regular coach companies, who comply with our conditions for using hired transport.

## **Reception**

By the time that the children move to the Reception class, they are ready for more excursions off-site and for a wider range of new experiences in addition to occasional walks within the grounds.

During the spring term, the children visit Ladyland Farm, a Tudor farmhouse where they are hands on with the farm animals.

During the summer term, the Reception children visit RHS Wisley where they participate in the "Ready, Steady, Grow" programme.

Reception children also attend a weekly swimming session off site, which is led by qualified Swimming Teachers at a ratio of 1:12 and supported by Class Teachers and Assistants.

For all off site trips, the children travel by coach, fitted with front facing seats and seat belts, from one of our regular coach companies, who comply with our conditions for using hired transport.

## **KEEPING PARENTS INFORMED**

The school calendar lists all visits due to take place during the term. In addition to this, letters are sent well in advance of any visit, detailing all arrangements, costs and any potential extension to a normal school day.

All visits are optional.

## **CONSENT**

We require specific, individual written consent each time we take the children off site for a visit. It is not the School's policy to accept a "blanket" consent form. We are unable to take children for whom we do not hold a completed and signed consent form.

## INFORMATION FOR STAFF

### SAFETY: ADVANCE PLANNING

#### Risk Assessments

Safety is top priority. Even the shortest visit needs to be thoroughly planned, and requires its own risk assessment, which must be reviewed thoroughly before a repeat visit is made.

#### Head Counts

The Teacher in Charge conducts, or arranges for another Teacher or Teaching Assistant to conduct a head count of the children (recording the fact that we have done so):

- Before leaving school
- On sitting down in the coach (if applicable)
- On arrival at the destination
- On leaving the destination
- On arrival back at school

Children should always walk in pairs, with one adult at the front, one in the middle and one at the back. Children are reminded about road safety and of the expected standards of behaviour. When travelling by coach or minibus, a member of staff will check that all pupils are sitting properly and wearing their seat belts.

### MISSING CHILD POLICY

Procedures are structured to ensure this does not happen; but in the event that a child is missing – either from school or on a visit, staff must follow the procedures set out in the Missing Child Policy.

### FIRST AID KIT ETC

The Teacher in Charge takes first aid kit, asthma inhalers and epipens, a list of emergency contact numbers and a mobile phone with him/her on every outing. Bottled water should be carried on all longer visits.

### DELAY

The Teacher in Charge will ring the school if there is a delay, for example, because of heavy traffic. The School Office will then notify parents accordingly.

## ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN CHARGE OF AN EARLY YEARS VISIT

Every visit, however local or short, must be planned in advance by the member of staff who is in charge of it. S/he will have had previous experience of accompanying Early Years visits before organising one him/herself. S/he will also have received guidance from the School's Education Visits Coordinator. The Teacher in charge must either hold a valid Paediatric First Aid Certificate or ensure that another member of staff accompanying the visit holds one.

## ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL VISITS COORDINATOR

The EVC is responsible for approving all requests for visits. S/he will check that the paperwork is correct, gives guidance on carrying out risk assessments, budgeting for visits and on permission slips and keeps a "library" of documentation on previous visits.

## PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

The DCSF Guidance "The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide," ([www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk)) is required reading for all Teachers in charge of an Early Years visit as part of their training in the responsibilities of the role. It explains that their responsibility is to "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 all staff can be assured that Pennthorpe 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.

Pennthorpe School has £20m of Employers Liability Insurance and £20m of Public Liability Insurance.

## USE OF MOTOR VEHICLES

### Private Cars

Pennthorpe 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 volunteers (unless parents make a private arrangement that does not involve the school). Where a member of staff transports pupils in his/her car, insurance cover is automatically provided through the school's "occasional business use" motor policy. This ensures that motor insurance claims arising whilst a member of staff is using their own car for school business purposes can be settled without involving their own motor insurer.

Booster seats must be used for Early Years children transported in private cars.

## School Minibuses

No one is allowed to drive the school minibus unless s/he holds the correct licence and has received Driver Awareness training. For any minibus journey which involves Early Years children, there should always be a second member of staff, who is also a qualified driver.

The school will arrange and fund courses in driving minibuses for all staff who are involved in visits. All school vehicles are thoroughly inspected each week however it is also the responsibility of every Driver to carry out a visual inspection of a vehicle before setting off. Defects must be reported immediately to the Bursar.

## Hired Transport

The school has long standing relationships with several local coach companies, each of whom understands that we require all Drivers to hold a current CRB disclosure and to carry a mobile phone. It is a condition of booking that the Drivers name, the number of his/her mobile phone, together with the vehicle's registration number is passed to the Teacher in charge at the time the arrangements are confirmed. We only book vehicles with front facing seats that are fitted with seat belts.

## PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS

### Teacher In Charge

Outline visit plans are made at least a term in advance, particularly those that:

- Involve additional cost for parents
- Need to be booked in advance
- Need transport to be arranged

At that stage the dates must be agreed with the EVC.

### In addition, the Teacher in charge must:

- Create an outline budget and determine the approximate charge to parents
- Seek advice on any arrangements that may be required for any individual's special or medical needs
- Inform the Administrative Staff of any tickets or orders that may be required
- If required, ask the Bursar to arrange CRB checks and carry out any additional safer recruitment checks on Volunteers.

### Two Weeks In Advance

- An information letter detailing the trip must be sent to the Parents and EVC.
- Parental consent forms should be sent out with a return date specified.

- First aid kits should be booked from Matron.
- Packed lunches and bottled water (if required) should be booked from the Caterers.
- School minibus (if required) must be booked from the Main School Office.
- A school mobile should be booked from the Premises Manager.
- All other bookings, including venue and coach transport should be finalised.
- The risk assessment should be finalised and approved by the EVC.
- Parents should be advised if special clothing (sun hats, waterproof clothing, wellington boots, sun cream etc) is needed/advisable.

### **One Week In Advance**

- Parents should be chased to return their consent forms. They should be reminded that their child cannot participate in the visit without a completed form being received before departure.
- Tickets should be checked and stored in the school safe.
- Meet with other members of staff participating in the visit to discuss the risk assessment, their respective roles and emergency procedures.
- Prepare packs for the Teacher In Charge, the EVC and the School Office including:
  - The itinerary (including addresses, phone numbers etc of all locations to be visited);
  - The Teacher in Charge's mobile number or the school mobile number;
  - Mobile numbers of all participating staff and volunteers;
  - A list of pupils, together with copies of their parental contact details and details of each pupils' medical conditions;
  - Emergency contact details for the Headmaster, Head of PrePrep and the EVC;
  - The name of the Coach Driver, the registration number of the coach and the mobile phone number of the Driver;
  - A copy of the risk assessment.

### **Day of Departure**

- Remind the children of the aim of the visit and of the expected standards of behaviour.
- Give information packs to the appropriate personnel.
- Collect first aid packs and any inhalers or epipens and check contents.
- Collect school mobile phone.
- Collect packed lunches and bottled water.
- Carry out visual checks on the school minibus.

- Check that the Driver and coach match the details notified by the company on the booking form.

## **DURING THE VISIT**

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with the Teacher in Charge. He or she has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary or cancelling the visit in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. S/He may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out (and recording) head counts of the children on leaving school, on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving a venue.
- Checking that all pupils are wearing seat belts.
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour.
- Keeping account of all expenditure.
- Recording any accidents or near misses.

## **ILLNESS OR MINOR ACCIDENT**

If a pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill, the Teacher in Charge, or another member of staff will phone his/her parent's emergency contact number and arrange for the child to be collected. If contact cannot be made, the Teacher in Charge, or another member of staff, will take him/her to the local hospital, or if the illness is more minor, contact the School Matron. A member of staff will remain with the child until a parent or carer arrives.

## **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 Teacher in Charge'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 and would remain with the child/ren until their parents arrived. Ensuring the rest of the group were safe and looked after, the Teacher in Charge will then contact the Headmaster and EVC to inform them of what had happened. The Teacher in Charge 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 follow up communications with the Headmaster are maintained.

At Pennthorpe School, we have our own Emergency Action Plan which would be implemented and covers communication with both the families of the injured, and the families of those who are unhurt as swiftly as possible.

Where possible, communication with the media should be left to the Headmaster and Governors and the Teacher in Charge 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.

### **ON RETURN**

Each Teacher in Charge is asked to provide the EVC with a report on the visit, reports of accidents and near misses on his/her return. Personal observations and lessons learned are always valuable. The Teacher in Charge should return all school property, together with a report of any lost or damaged property.

### **EXPENDITURE**

The Teacher In Charge is responsible for producing a schedule of all expenditure on the trip.

### **REPORT FOR GOVERNORS**

The Headmaster's termly report to the Governors always contains a synopsis of all school trips and visits that have taken place. The EVC prepares this report and will invite the Teacher in Charge to contribute, preferably illustrated with photographs.