

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY



GENERAL INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

At Pennthorpe 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 your son's or daughter's development and education in the broadest sense of the word.

OUR TRIPS AND VISITS

We regularly take pupils on day trips to: museums, galleries, natural features, farms, places of worship and other schools to support the curriculum in History, Art, Geography, Science, R.E., English and Music. There are regular theatre trips for pupils of all ages. We also run many residential trips. We take Year 8 pupils on a Geography field trip to the Isle of Wight during the Autumn Term. Pupils in Years 5 – 8 are given the opportunity to take part in the annual ski trip in December. We run a French Trip, which is open to pupils in Years 7 & 8, every Spring Term. Pupils in Year 3 spend three days and two nights at Dalesdown, as their first school residential experience. In Year 4 pupils are taken to Juniper Hall for another three days and two nights residential visit, which is mainly Science related. In Year 5 we take the pupils to Little Canada on the Isle of Wight to participate in some adventurous activities, which lasts for four days and three nights. Pupils in Year 6, 7 & 8 are then offered the Leadership Challenge Camps, which get progressively more challenging and enable the pupils to develop their independence and teamwork skills.

INFORMATION ON PLANNED TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Your son's or daughter's school calendar lists 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. You will always be notified in advance:

- If your child has been selected for a sports team. We very much welcome family and friends at all our matches, both home and away.
- If your child 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 send details of planned trips and activities in advance to all parents of pupils of the relevant year group or cohort.

CONSENT

We require your specific, individual written consent if we are to take your son or daughter on any trip or visit that extends beyond the normal school day or involves an extra cost to you. A trip may involve an overnight stay, collection from a different venue or be an overseas visit. Please note that we are unable to take your son or daughter without a completed and signed consent form. We take all of the contact details and medical/dietary information held by the school with us for all pupils participating in a visit. If any of the

information needs to be updated the consent form allows for this to be done. We must have accurate details of where you may be contacted in an emergency. This form will be sent to you well in advance and must be returned to the school at least 2 working days before the start of the trip.

SAFETY

Safety is top priority for us. We expect you to support the school in ensuring that your son or daughter follows the instructions given either by a member of staff, or by a qualified instructor, and uses the proper equipment. 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.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF INVOLVED WITH SCHOOL VISITS

INTRODUCTION

We have a large number of trips, out of school activities and visits at Pennthorpe 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 EDUCATION VISITS COORDINATOR

Julie Smith is our Education Visits Coordinator (EVC). She supports the Headmaster in the process of approving visits, ensuring that they are spread throughout the different age groups, and the school year, (although there is inevitably a concentration during the last part of the summer term, when exams have finished and the weather is at its best). She helps staff involved with organising tours. She checks outing forms, letters to parents, risk assessments, parental consent forms and she keeps records of all previous visits, which can be borrowed. She also keeps reports of any accidents or near misses. All new staff will have a session on planning school visits as part of their induction training.

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. At Pennthorpe School we arrange for the EVC to hold regular training sessions with all potential Group Leaders, which cover practical guidance on conducting risk assessments, emergency procedures, the school's insurance cover, budgeting for visits and the circumstances under which a visit might be terminated or curtailed, for instance if weather conditions suddenly deteriorated. We expect all Group Leaders either to hold a valid First Aid certificate themselves or ensure that one of the other teachers accompanying the visit holds one. A Deputy Leader is nominated for all trips. He or she may not hold the qualifications of the Group Leader but will nevertheless be capable of taking over that role if necessary.

No one should drive the school minibus unless s/he holds the appropriate licence and has been assessed as a minibus driver. For any minibus journey that lasts for longer than 2 hours there should be a second member of staff who is also an approved minibus driver. The school will arrange and fund the appropriate First Aid courses, as well as courses in driving minibuses for all staff who are involved in visits. At Pennthorpe School, the

Maintenance Team carry out detailed vehicle inspections on each bus every week. Drivers are required to carry out visual inspections of any vehicle before s/he drives pupils.

PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

The law places the Group Leader "in loco parentis". The DCSF Guidance "The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide", (www.teachernet.gov.uk), should be read by all Group Leaders. It explains 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, they 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. Overseas and residential visits are insured as required and the Group Leader should check requirements with the Bursar. Cover usually includes cancellation or delay, medical expenses, replacement of passports, personal possessions and money. Any member of staff organising an adventurous or hazardous activity is required to ensure all activities are covered by the policy. The Group Leader should ensure that s/he takes a copy of the travel insurance with him/her on all residential visits.

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 helpers (unless the parents make a private arrangement that does not involve the school). Where a member of staff transports a pupil in his/her car, insurance cover is automatically provided through the school's "occasional business use" motor policy. That 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.

PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS

The amount of advance preparatory work will obviously vary considerably with the type of activity. Very little preparation may be needed for walking with a group of pupils to a local site, spending an hour there and then walking back in time for school lunch. By contrast, a visit lasting a week to another country 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, some or all of which may take place during school holidays and half-terms. Group Leaders may draw upon the EVC's stock of existing background material when planning regular repeat visits to familiar destinations.

For ALL off-site visits:

- A letter must be sent to all parents at least two weeks prior to the visit informing them of all necessary details (see Appendix 1). These letters must always be cleared, in advance, by the Headmaster.
- A Consent Form must be sent out with the letter which must be completed, signed and returned before the trip takes place (see Appendix 2)
- A risk assessment must be carried out (see Appendix 3)
- An Outing Form must be completed and handed in to the Headmaster's secretary at least 10 days prior to the visit (see Appendix 4)
- One copy of all of the above documents must be given to Julie Smith, the EVC, prior to the visit

- A list of 'Contact and Medical Information' for all pupils involved in the visit must be taken on the outing, along with all of the Consent Forms (see Appendix 5)

PLANNING THAT A GROUP LEADER NEEDS TO UNDERTAKE:

The list that follows is designed to be as comprehensive as possible for a longer type of visit. The timescale is approximate and may be shortened. Some actions may not be required for trips within the school day, theatre and museum visits or for day visits using school transport.

- Obtain advice from Julie Smith, the EVC, on suitable dates, precedents etc
- Discuss preliminary plan, including purpose, location, transport, hotels, activities, itinerary, number and age of participants with EVO
- 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, 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 recognized qualification from a national body, such as the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority.
- Obtain clear statement from the Centre about their responsibility for the safety of the pupils before making any commitment. Ask for copies of their risk assessments.
- Prepare the risk assessment(s) (see Appendix 3)
- Check the insurance cover if the visit involves hazardous activities (see above)
- Find 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. We hope that Sports Coaches and Music Staff will participate in sports and music tours. They are also welcome to help with other visits. We encourage parents to accompany school visits and we welcome them at all sports fixtures.
- Arrange for any volunteers participating in the trip to obtain an enhanced CRB disclosure. (The Bursar's 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 this is impossible, a reference from another school that has visited the site may suffice).
- 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 center 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)
- Seek the Headmaster's approval.

STAFF/PUPIL RATIOS

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

<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Pupil's Year Group</u>
1:6	1 –3 inclusive (with a higher ratio for the under 5s)
1:10	Years 4 - 6
1:15/20	Year 7 upwards (with a larger ratio permitted for over 16s)
1:10	All visits abroad

1. Ten Months in Advance

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. Ask for acceptance together with a deposit by a specific date. Mention that parents will be given more details nearer the date of departure. Explain any restrictions on numbers. At Pennthorpe School, these letters must always be cleared, in advance, by the Headmaster.
- Brief the pupils about the visit, its dates and purpose.
- Check names (on PASS) of all pupils wishing to participate. Discuss with **EVO** concerns about special arrangements that may be required for handling any specific medical or SEN issues.
- Collect deposits and arrange with the Bursary to set up a unique cost center in the school accounts for the trip.
- Arrange for the Bursary to pay costs, as required
- Finalise the costs with the travel company etc.
- Insist that all coaches are fitted with seat belts.
- Work out the cost for parents (including contingency to cover delays etc)
- Inform parents of the medical and visa requirements, if any
- Arrange for the Bursary to bill parents for the balance of the cost of the trip.
- Arrange for the Bursary to pay the balance of costs, as required
- Arrange with School Network Manager for loan of school mobile with pre-paid SIM card valid for the place to be visited to be available on a specific date.
- Brief and prepare the pupils in advance (ensure that they are given plenty of notice if they need special equipment).

2. Six Weeks in Advance

- Give the Bursary details of requirements for foreign currency/travellers' cheques/pre-paid foreign currency card. (Group Leaders will be responsible for this/these).
- Arrange meeting with parents (or send a letter) to brief them on all aspects of the trip, including:
 - The itinerary, including the meeting and collection points.
 - Contact details for use in an emergency.
 - The number of the school mobile phone issued to the Group Leader.
 - The money, kit and equipment that the pupils need.

- The expected standards of behaviour, and the potential risks of irresponsible behaviour
- 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 (if necessary)
- Send all parents a copy of the consent form with specified return date (see Appendix 2)
- Brief pupils on expectations of behaviour.

3. Two weeks in Advance

- Complete an Outing Form (see below) and hand it in to the School Office
- Chase parents who have not returned their consent forms. Remind them that their child cannot participate unless the form is received within 2 working days of departure.
- Obtain photocopies of each pupil's passport, if necessary.
- Check all tickets for accuracy. Store them in the school safe until collection.
- 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 and for each member of staff, that contain the following information:
 - The itinerary (including address, phone number 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, which includes details of their parental contact numbers and details of their medical conditions and doctors' contact details.
 - Emergency contact numbers for the member of the SMT designated to be on-call
 - A copy of the risk assessment

4. The Day Prior to Departure/The Day of Departure

- Collect tickets and any money or cheques from the Bursary
- Give trip information packs to designated school recipients and to other staff participants
- Remind pupils about the rendezvous, dress code, standards of behaviour etc.
- Remind children to bring passports, if necessary. Ask to see each passport.
- Collect packed lunches (booked via the Outing Form)
- Collect (and check contents of) first aid kit(s) (booked via the Outing Form)
- Collect school mobile phone (if not using a minibus)

DURING THE VISIT OR ACTIVITY

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with the Group Leader. He or she has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. He or she 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 any form of transport, entering or leaving a museum, restaurant, activity center, hotel etc.
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts.
- Checking the fire exits and escape routes
- Ensuring that sleeping accommodation is suitable and located together
- Setting times for pupils to be in their rooms/beds at night.
- Setting agreed times and locations for checking pupils when they work or are allowed out unsupervised in small groups.
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour.
- Looking after – or reminding pupils to look after – passports and valuables.
- Storing cash, cheques and tickets.
- 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 Pennthorpe 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 Headmaster 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 Headmaster are maintained. He or 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 Pennthorpe 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 recognize 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 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 Headmaster. The Group Leader should refer the media to the school. If comment is unavoidable, it should be factual, calm and no attempt to cover gaps in knowledge. Pupils should be discouraged from talking to the media.

DELAYED RETURN

If a visit is delayed, the Group Leader should phone the school office, or the 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.

ON RETURN

Each Group Leader is asked to provide the EVC with a report on the visit, reports of any accidents and near misses on his/her return. Personal observations and lessons learned are always valuable. The Group Leader should return all school property, together with a report of any lost or damaged property. He or she should also instruct all pupils/parents to delete their records of any staff mobile numbers.

EXPENDITURE

The Group Leader is responsible for returning any unused cash or cheques to the Bursary. The pre-paid foreign currency card should be returned, together with all related transaction vouchers. The Group Leader is also responsible for producing a schedule of all expenditure on the trip. Unused balances will be returned to the parents by way of credits shown on the next school bill.

REPORT FOR GOVERNORS

The Headmaster's termly report to the Governors always contains a synopsis of all the school trips and visits that have taken place since the last report. The **EVO**, who prepares this report, will invite the Group Leader to draft a short report.