



# Loreto Convent School

Gibraltar

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION & OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES POLICY

***This policy reflects the ethos of Loreto Convent School and has been compiled and reviewed with the involvement of children, staff and Governors.***

***The objective is to maintain opportunities for young people to engage in a wide range of stimulating visits and off-site activities, and to do so through a clear and robust approach to the management of health, safety and welfare.***

The purpose of the following Guide is to provide practical information that might be helpful to group leaders and others, day to day, whilst taking part in an educational visit. It brings together in one place, the advice for group leaders that is spread throughout the college. It does not cover planning arrangements before the visit, which can be found separately.

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy has been written with reference to the DfE guidance 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits – 1998' (HASPEV), and the supplementary guidance published in support of HASPEV in July 2002. Copies of these documents are available on the Department for Education website.
- 1.2 The key responsibility is for staff and accompanying adults to take all reasonable steps to ensure that all children have a safe, appropriate and worthwhile experience during their educational visits.
- 1.3 The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992, made under the 1974 Health & Safety at Work Act require employers to:
  - Assess the risks of activities.
  - Introduce measures to control those risks.
  - Tell their employees about these measures.

Also under the H&S legislation, employees must:

- Take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety.
- Co-operate with their employers over safety matters.
- Carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions.
- Inform the employer of any serious risks.

These duties apply to all school visits. Teachers and other staff in charge of children also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

- 1.4 This policy covers all visits organised by the school including trips to the theatre, away sports fixtures and overnight stays at home and abroad.

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

<b>Activity</b>	Any specific element of the planned programme for a visit.
<b>Adult</b>	Any adult accompanying a visit in a supervisory capacity except teachers employed at the school and employees of third party contractors.
<b>EVC</b>	An Educational Visits Co-ordinator – the member of staff identified by the Headteacher to ensure that all visits are planned in accordance with the school policies.
<b>Group</b>	All those on the visit (principally children, teachers and adults).
<b>Group Leader</b>	A teacher approved by the Headteacher or EVC to plan and have overriding responsibility for the safety of the group, the activities and the procedures involved in the visit.
<b>Instructor</b>	A person with technical skills and qualifications contracted to instruct adventurous activities.
<b>Parent</b>	Includes a person who is not a parent of a pupil but has parental responsibility for him/her or who has care of the pupil.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	A formal process of assessing the potential of an activity, procedure or location to cause harm to an identified person or group and recording steps that can be taken to minimise those risks.
<b>Risk Management</b>	The identification of a procedure or course of action to minimise a potential risk to an acceptable level.
<b>Designated Contact</b>	A member of staff who will be available in the locality of the school to assist with any emergencies and who will hold all the emergency contact information during the duration of the visit.
<b>Teacher</b>	A teacher employed by Loreto Convent School.
<b>Visit</b>	Any venture taking place outside the physical boundaries of the school, and including the entire period between departing and returning to the establishment.

## **2. Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

- 2.1 All reasonable effort is to be made during the course of planning and risk assessment to include any disabled child whose parents have given consent to the activity or visit. The final decision of whether a child may be included on a visit will be made on a case-by-case basis by the EVC, group leader and parent of the child.

### **3. The Role of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)**

- 3.1 Responsibility within each individual school for the approval of visits rests with the Headteacher who delegates much responsibility to the Educational Visits Co-ordinator or other senior member of staff, as appropriate.

The function of the EVC is to:-

- Ensure educational visits meet the school's and the local government's requirements.
- Support the Head and Governors with approval and other decisions.
- Act as a central point of advice and information on educational, health, safety and welfare aspects of visits and off-site activities.
- Assess whether leaders and staff meet identified standards to lead and support particular visits and activities.
- Ensure risk assessments meet requirements.
- Co-ordinate and advise on training and induction.
- Ensure procedures are in place to inform parents and for parents to give consent.
- Ensure emergency arrangements are in place.
- Keep records of visits, accident or incident reports.
- Review systems and monitor practice.

The Co-ordinator will require reassurance from the group leader proposing the visit that:

- 3.2 The educational objectives are clearly defined and commensurate with the age, maturity and capability of the children.
- 3.3 All aspects of the visit, including the granting of approval, are dealt with in accordance with this policy and guidance, and other related policies and procedures including those of the DfE.
- 3.4 All reasonable checks of the safety management systems of external providers has been undertaken prior to booking, including fire safety precautions for overnight stays. (Please ensure that external organisers are licensed for running adventurous activities before booking the trip.)
- 3.5 Written Risk Assessments are to be produced before the visit and are to be reviewed as appropriate, with changes being made in the control measures where identified. Risk assessments are to be cleared with the EVC and recorded centrally at the school and made available to other staff.

In some instances, for example away sports fixtures, existing Risk Assessments may be used. However, the member of staff in charge/ group leader is responsible for reviewing whether any special circumstances apply and should make any suitable amendments for a specific trip in advance.

- 3.6 The EVC should be satisfied that group leaders are competent to lead, manage and control children in the proposed setting. This includes consideration of experience, qualification, organisational skills, personal qualities, fitness, any medical condition, knowledge of the group and environment, and prior experience of leading or assisting in the activity. Training can be arranged and should be requested when necessary.
- 3.7 The EVC should ensure that all paperwork for planning is received in advance of the trip taking place, including risk assessment, possible parental consent forms and an approved budget form.

#### **4. The Approval of Visits**

- 4.1 There are two levels of approval: outline and substantial. Outline approval/consent should be sought from the EVC prior to submitting a trip application form.
- 4.2 Permission should be sought for all trips using the substantive trip application form. For local visits not involving adventurous activities, publication of the date and time in the termly diary is deemed sufficient to confirm that outline approval has been granted. Final approval will only be given if the EVC is satisfied with the arrangements put in place.
- 4.3 For long-distance, adventurous or overnight visits, this policy should be adhered to: permission should be sought from the EVC and parental consent and medical information obtained.
- 4.4 As a matter of courtesy, colleagues should be advised of children participating in visits and cover for any lessons should be organised.
- 4.6 If visits span a Sunday or a religious feast day, arrangements must be made and children advised, in advance, for the group to attend Mass.

#### **5. Responsibilities of the Group Leader**

- 5.1 Every trip must have a clearly designated leader who must be a teacher employed by the school. Everyone should know who is in charge and must take instruction from the leader. It is also advisable to designate a deputy leader where there is a large party or extended trip planned.
- 5.2 Group Leaders are responsible for the safe planning and execution of visits and must be in a position to reassure the EVC on all points identified in Item 3.
- 5.3 Staff are made aware of their continuous pastoral responsibilities, even when using external agencies and/or a technical leader with their group, and are familiar with the Child Protection Policy.

- 5.4 Group leaders should:
- Complete a trip application form and budget proposal and seek approval of these before confirming trips with external organisations and/or pupils.
  - Have the experience, training and qualifications to control the group and lead the team of accompanying teachers and adults.
  - Be conversant with good practice in activities planned for the children, including those he/she may not be instructing and if they are instructing, group leaders should have the competency and qualifications to instruct the activity.
  - For potentially hazardous pursuits, the group leader is to have the appropriate qualifications and the ratio of adults to pupils is to be at least 1:5. (See para 4.10 for details on required ratios.)
  - Ensure that all involved in visits are aware of and understand the school emergency procedures in case of major incident.
  - Ensure any limitations on the school insurance have been checked through the Bursary and appropriate arrangements put in place for the trip.
  - Ensure that children will be suitably clothed and equipped for particular activities and conditions likely to be encountered.
  - Determine the level of first aid that may be required and nominate a suitably qualified teacher or other adult to take responsibility for this. That person should then ensure that a first aid 'Trip kit' is prepared and taken on the trip.
  - A first aider must be present on every overseas visit.
  - Ensure visits are evaluated within 7 days of return to inform the planning and operation of future visits.
- 5.5 Group leaders are responsible for preparing and briefing the children, their parents and accompanying teachers and adults. For short visits, an information letter giving details and approximate costs involved should be sent to parents, with the opportunity to opt out if desired. Parents should be instructed to email the school office should they not wish their child to participate in the outing. For all visits involving an overnight stay, the briefing should include formal meetings with the Headteacher to discuss any medical conditions or requirements to take into consideration. Whenever possible, a face to face parents meeting should also be arranged to discuss the trip.
- 5.6 Make and record a full risk assessment and management plan, giving priority to the health and safety of the group at all times. This should include the initial and ongoing suitability of the group in relation to the activities planned. In the case of sporting fixtures and some other excursions, standing Risk Assessments may be acceptable, but must be checked and countersigned.
- 5.7 If possible, children should be involved in the risk assessment process, to a level appropriate to their understanding, including the conduct expected on visits. Responsibility should be given to children consistent with their age, maturity and capability. Children are to be told emergency procedures, such as how they should vacate premises quickly and safely and whether there will be a central meeting point on the trip.
- 5.8 Assess the initial and on-going suitability of the group in relation to the planned activities.
- 5.9 Determine the appropriate levels of supervision. Arrangements for supervision should be

appropriate, agreed and known by all concerned. Staff involved will be required to have a clear understanding of the different strategies required for direct supervision and, when the circumstances are right, for indirect or more remote supervision.

- 5.10 The following ratios are required and are necessarily commensurate with the age of the children involved. The group leader must also consider other factors and ensure that there is an appropriate level of supervision, for example: gender and ability of the group; any special educational or medical needs; the nature of activities (adventure or water sports may require a higher ratio of staff to pupils); experience of supervising staff; duration and nature of the journey; type of any accommodation; competence of staff, both general and on specific activities; requirements of the organisation or location to be visited; competence and behaviour of the children.

<b>Nursery &amp; Foundation Stages</b>	Minimum 1:4
<b>Years 1-3</b>	Minimum 1:6
<b>Years 4-6</b>	Minimum 1:10
<b>Overnight stays</b>	Minimum 2:20

- a) If the minimum ratios are used, this should be specifically justified in the risk assessment.
- b) Ratios for Year 6 onwards are to be no less than one adult per 20 children with an additional adult for each further 15 children, for visits of one day or less. Overnight visits should have no less than two adults per 20 children and an additional adult for each further 15 children. In certain circumstances family members may accompany a trip, but adults with a child among the group will not normally be allowed to assume supervisory status. At least 50% of the supervisors must be members of staff.
- c) For overnight stays at least one of the adult members of the group should be male for parties of boys and at least one should be female for girls. If the visit is coeducational then both genders should usually be represented among the staff.
- d) Ensure that the visit operates in accordance with the school policies and guidance.

## 6. Early Years Foundation Stage

- 6.1 All necessary procedures for the planning, organisation and supervision of educational visits for children within EYFS are to be found within this policy.
- 6.2 Educational visits for children within EYFS are normally local visits. Distant and residential visit are not undertaken.
- 6.3 Adult to child ratios are necessarily higher for this age group. The minimum ratio is one adult to four children. Further information on levels of supervision and the factors which may influence these are contained in section 15.

## **7. The Role of Other Teachers and Accompanying Adults**

- 7.1 Teachers and adults accompanying any visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities. All must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group, and must follow the instructions of the group leader.
- 7.2 Instructors or other staff working for contracted organisations can support teachers and adults in their pastoral duties but cannot assume a full pastoral role.
- 7.3 Each accompanying adult must carry a list of names of children and regular checks on names and numbers must be carried out.
- 7.4 Children must not leave the party without express permission which should not be allowed for young children where they would be unsupervised or at risk. Younger pupils should be encouraged to choose partners in groups of two or three so that partners report if someone is missing or in difficulty.
- 7.5 It will be assumed that children will wear uniform unless a specific request is made and approval given by the EVC.
- 7.6 Teachers and adults accompanying any visit should be aware of and have been given a copy of the risk assessment by the Group Leader at least 48 hours prior to the trip or visit.

## **8. Vetting of staff and volunteers**

- 8.1 An adult who is known to the school may accompany a local visit without obtaining an enhanced DBS disclosure, subject to there being a written risk assessment. However, they are not to be permitted to have substantial unsupervised access to children. An enhanced disclosure must be sought for any adult accompanying overnight stays and anyone who is to have regular contact with children (i.e. – more than three occasions during one month.)
- 8.2 All external contractor staff likely to have access to children as part of their normal duties will need to be DBS checked. This information needs to be checked by the Group Leader as part of the planning process. Please see the Child Protection (Part of Safeguarding) Policy for more details on vetting requirements. As far as recruitment is concerned, it is best to err on the side of caution.

## **9. Exploratory or Pre-Visits**

- 9.1 Exploratory visits by the Group Leader to the venue form an important part of the planning process for educational visits. They ensure that there is good prior knowledge of the places to be visited and that site-specific risk assessments are appropriately completed.
- 9.2 Where the venue is a familiar one i.e. a visit has taken place there at least once in the year immediately preceding the proposed visit date, the Group Leader may contact the venue management by telephone, email or fax and gain information about any changes to the venue since the last visit. If these changes are substantial, a new exploratory visit may be needed to enable a site specific risk assessment to be completed.

9.3 Costs of any pre-visits will be met by inclusion in the total cost of the trip charged to parents.

## **10. Insurance**

10.1 Where relevant, and particularly for trips abroad, parents are to be informed of the insurance that is applicable to the expedition and whether the individual school normal insurance policies will be supplemented with travel insurance.

10.2 There are certain exclusions in the range of activities covered, and the Group Leader should ascertain whether the range of activities planned within the visit is within the terms and conditions of the insurance policy. Where necessary and on request, the office staff will contact the insurance company to ensure adequate cover for any visit.

## **11. Finance**

11.1 All charges associated with educational visits are normally passed on to the parents of the children concerned. A budget proposal is to be drawn up and agreed with the Headteacher and/or EVC as part of the Approval process. As a general rule, charges should be kept as low as possible, with the costs of any pre-visits included as part of the total cost of the trip charged to parents.

11.2 A deposit should be requested in order to secure a child's place on a visit. This can be added to the child's bill but can also be made as a separate payment towards the trip in part or in full. A deposit should be requested at least one term prior to the planned date of the trip. All deposits will usually be non-refundable.

11.3 The booking of transport, tickets etc should be booked using travel agents and/or bus companies. Payment should always be via the main office.

11.4 Cheques from parents should be made payable to Loreto Convent and never to an individual member of staff.

11.5 Written accounts are always to be kept. These need only be simple and the School Accountants Leigh-Anne Cruz and /or Suzy Kirkby, will be pleased to advise on what is necessary. Any expenditure of cash must be supported by a clear invoice or receipt. Advanced bookings should be made through our accounts staff. The final cost of each trip, with the amount that each child is to be charged, should be given to the accounts staff as early as possible in the proceedings and no later than 7 days after returning. For major trips involving overseas travel or individual costs in excess of £100, the cost should ideally be given to the school accountant at least one term prior to the date of the planned trip.

11.6 For major trips, complete and detailed accounts of income and expenditure are to be handed in to the school accountant on return.

11.7 Free staff places will be determined by required staff: pupil ratios (see para 4.3) for the visit concerned and will be determined on a case by case basis during the approval stage of the trip planning process. Staff are deemed to be 'at work' whilst supervising a visit, with all the responsibilities that this entails, even if the visit is during school holidays.

## **12. Transport**

- 12.1 Coaches contracted from a third-party company should be roadworthy, insured and comply with the minimum standards associated with the country in which they are registered. Where coaches are hired from companies who do not regularly provide transport for the School, evidence of public indemnity and liability insurance should be sought by the Group Leader prior to contracting. If the coach is hired through a tour operator or other provider, then the Group Leader must ensure that the tour operator has vetted the coach company in question including the competence and training of drivers, including valid DBS checks.
- 12.2 In exceptional circumstances only a private car may be used for transporting children on an educational visit. The car may belong to a member of staff or another supervising adult associated with the visit. The member of staff in charge of the trip must reassure themselves that drivers are satisfactorily insured and that cars are roadworthy.

## **13. Prior to Departure**

- 13.1 For local or short visits and sports fixtures, details of the trip should be lodged with the **designated person** at the school, including itinerary, timetable and children's names.
- 13.2 For visits involving an overnight stay, more detailed information is required. An emergency contact, from among the staff, must be 'on call' for the duration of the visit. This person and the Headteacher must be given:
- A detailed itinerary including flight information and hotel/hostel addresses and telephone numbers.
  - Names, addresses and telephone contacts of all supervising adults.
  - Copies of the Parental Consent forms, with full emergency contact information, for every student travelling.
  - Contact information for any tour operator who may be involved.
- 13.3 Ensure that you take with you contact numbers for the person on call and for the Headteacher, as well as copies of the parental consent forms.
- 13.4 Parents of those participating should be given a contact number for the group leader and the person on call, for use in an emergency only.

## **14. Emergency Procedure**

- 14.1 In case of accident or emergency the following procedure should be followed:
- Ensure the injured receives appropriate medical attention and ensure the safety of the remainder of the party.
  - Alert police, rescue team or other authorities as necessary.
  - Inform the person on call and the Headteacher.
  - A school representative will inform the parents concerned.
  - Do not speak to the media. Statements will be prepared and issued by the individual school.
  - Parents must be informed as soon as possible if a child sustains anything but a minor injury or fall. If a serious incident occurs, a full report must be submitted, including statements from eye witnesses.

## **15. Information and Training**

- 15.1 Academic staff who wish to lead groups on educational visits should have the experience of shadowing the Group Leader on a distant visit or residential tour prior to taking Group Leader responsibilities. Where this is not possible, an experienced leader should be included in the supervisory group and should act as a mentor to the Group Leader on his/her first visit/tour experience.
- 15.2 Risk assessments and approval forms will be filed in a central location to have access to and refer to if planning a similar trip in the future. Over time a database of information about the range of educational trips will be developed.
- 15.3 The Group Leader will also gather risk assessments from school tour companies and other external providers and if appropriate, recommend these for approval by the Headteacher.
- 15.5 The School will undertake training, as required. They will also arrange additional training for staff where required or requested, such as risk assessment sessions and other support and guidance.

## **PROCEDURES**

The policy and procedures for outdoor education visits and off-site activities is attached. In accordance with this policy the following is the list of processes which should be gone through for any off-site activity, whether it be a short session, a daily activity, or a longer residential activity.

- 1.1 Complete Form **SOE1 "Offsite Activities Proposal Form**.
- 1.2 Carry out a risk assessment.
- 1.3 Return the above forms to designated person in school/Headteacher.
- 1.4 On approval, issue **Form SOE3 "Parental Consent for Off Site Activities"**.
- 1.5 When using an activity centre provided by a commercial, charitable or private organisation, use the letter headed **FORM SOE5** to obtain details of facilities provided, staff qualifications at the centre etc.
- 1.6 Prepare an outline of the emergency procedure, which would be undertaken in the event of there being any problem.
- 1.7 Leave an accurate copy of the register list, the emergency procedures, and the proposal form with the Headteacher on the day of your departure.
- 1.8 To communicate activities to the whole staff, make sure that notification of any activity is to be included in the Weekly Bulletin some time before the activity and also on the school's web-site and calendar where possible.

- 1.9 When the activity is finished, complete the **Evaluation FORM SOE7**. This is especially important if you have used external organisations, or if the activity was notable in *positive terms*, or gave rise to *serious concerns*.

**Seen by Governing Body:**