

## **POLICY FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS ON ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL**

The provision of day and residential visits at Gateways enables girls to enjoy a variety of experiences. Off-site visits support the social, moral, physical and academic needs of the pupils and have clear educational objectives. Residential visits involve teamwork and offer valuable lessons in leadership, tolerance, participation and understanding as well as social benefits. The safety and welfare of the pupils is paramount at all times and all visits are planned in accordance with the DCFS Guidance 'The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits'.

### **Responsibility for Visits**

The Headmistress has ultimate responsibility for visits and must be satisfied that:

- All visits have a stated educational objective
- Visits are planned in accordance with legal requirements (The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974) and DCFS Guidelines
- Staff are appropriately trained and experienced to lead visits
- Proposed staff:pupil ratios are adequate
- Risk Assessments have been carried out
- Parental Consent has been received

The group leader, in conjunction with the Extra-Curriculum Co-ordinator, is responsible for detailed planning and preparation including ensuring that staff involved are aware of their roles and responsibilities and pupils understand what is expected of them.

Based on information provided, parents are responsible for deciding whether their daughter takes part in visits offered to her.

### **Planning Visits**

Approval in principle to a proposed visit is obtained through discussion with the Faculty Head and the Deputy Headmistress. In the case of residential visits, the Headmistress's approval in principle should also be sought. Approval in principle covers key aspects of a visit:

- Objectives
- Venue
- Date
- Staffing
- Estimated cost

Detailed planning follows, including:

- Booking of venue
- Planning/organising transport
- Risk Assessment
- Exploratory visit if required
- Letter to parents containing full details with consent slip attached (see below).

Once all the steps above have been carried out, final approval for the visit is obtained from the Headmistress.

A qualified first-aider should accompany residential and adventurous activities and a fully equipped first aid kit is sent out with every visit. The group leader is informed of any specific medical needs of pupils. The group leader carries a mobile phone for emergency use and to enable the school to contact the group at all times.

### **Supervision of Visits**

Staffing ratios depend on group composition and the exact nature of the visit, but general guidelines are followed:

- Transition - Upper I                    1:6
- Lower II – Lower III                    1:10
- Upper III and above                    1:15

A minimum of two members of staff will accompany any visit. If the group leader is male, a female will also accompany the group. If any of the girls has special educational needs, she will be accompanied on a one-to-one basis. Staff numbers are sufficient to ensure that required ratios could be maintained in the event of one member of staff being required to look after a sick/injured pupil.

Parents and volunteers accompanying day and residential visits will be CRB checked.

### **Preparing pupils**

Preparation covers:

- Aims and objectives of visit
- Information about venue
- Safety precautions to be followed
- Expected behaviour
- Provision for special/medical needs

### **Communicating with parents**

Parental consent is sought for all off-site visits. Letter to parents includes:

- Date/time of visit
- Aims and objectives
- Transport and collection arrangements
- Information regarding remote supervision situations (where applicable)
- All planned activities
- Specialised clothing/equipment needs
- Money required (where applicable)
- Cost and methods of payment available

For residential visits, this includes information regarding medical and dietary/allergy issues, consent for emergency medical treatment if necessary and request for contact number for period of visit. Parents' information meetings are arranged for all residential visits.

### **Planning transport**

All coaches are hired from reputable companies whose vehicles are fully fitted with seat belts and whose drivers are CRB checked.

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If staff or cars are to be used, parental consent is obtained. (Insurance is in place for the use of staff cars to transport pupils)

### **Insurance**

All visits are insured through the school's comprehensive Off-Site Visits Insurance Policy. Residential visits booked through tour operators are also insured through the companies concerned eg Interski, NST Group Travel.

### **Types of Visit**

Adventurous Activity visits involving caving, climbing, trekking or watersports are only arranged through AALA registered providers.

Where qualified instructors lead activities, school staff are required to act in a supervisory capacity.

On residential visits, staff accommodation is located adjacent to pupils' rooms and pupils are told how to contact staff at night in case of emergency, illness etc.

### **Visits abroad**

Visits abroad are, in the majority of cases, organised through tour operators specialising in educational visits, all of whom have in place an externally audited and regularly reviewed safety management system. The main exception is the German Exchange visit organised by GSAL in which Gateways participates. Gateways' participants in this are covered by our off-site insurance and the visit is risk assessed by GSAL.

### **Emergency procedures**

An off-site visits contact sheet is displayed in the office for the duration of any visit. This includes contact numbers for the group leader, the venue/provider and transport company and a list of all staff and pupils taking part.

The Extra-Curriculum Co-ordinator is the nominated school contact for all visits, accessible 24 hours a day, who should be informed of any problems encountered. In case of accident to a pupil, it is the group leader's responsibility to assess the situation, ensure the safety of the rest of the group, attend to the casualty and inform both the emergency services (if necessary) and the school contact.

The school contact holds all relevant information about the group and the visit and is responsible for informing appropriate individuals. If parents cannot be contacted, it is the responsibility of the Headmistress to consent to emergency medical treatment on behalf of the parents.

In the event of a later than anticipated return from a visit, the School Comms system is used to inform parents.

The organisation of all off-site visits incorporates contingency planning in the event of unforeseen circumstances eg adverse weather conditions, travel delays.

### **Evaluation**

In order to assess the success of off-site visits and to assist with future planning, group leaders are asked to complete an evaluation form on their return and to discuss their assessment with the Extra-Curriculum Co-ordinator. Completed evaluation forms are passed to the Headmistress for information.

This policy and its procedures is whole school and includes out of school care.

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