

WAKEFIELD GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOUNDATION

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Safely managed educational visits with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

1. Overview

Safely managed educational visits with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of a broad and balanced curriculum. They are an opportunity to extend the learning of all pupils, including an enrichment of their understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. They can be a catalyst for improved personal performance, promote a lifetime interest and in some cases lead to professional fulfilment. Educational visits are to be encouraged.

Educational visits should be available to all pupils and should be organised accordingly, with particular consideration being given where possible to any pupils with a disability, especially when selecting venues and organising transport.

This policy on Educational visits and trips applies to all schools within the Foundation. WGSF will fully comply with the Department for Children, Schools and Families best practice on educational visits and trips as set in 'Health and Safety of pupils on Educational Visits' (HASPEV) document and associated supplements.

2. Procedures

Procedures for organising and taking an Educational visit are in the schools' individual policies or Staff Handbooks as appropriate. These are updated annually.

Guidance on staff pupil ratios is as follows:

- Years 1-3 = 1 adult for every 6 pupils
- Years 4-6 = 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils
- Years 7 and above = 1 adult for every 15-20 pupils

Other factors that may be considered are:

- the sex, age and ability of the group
- the nature of the activities
- the experience of the teachers/leaders or competence on specific activities
- the duration of the journey/visit and the type of accommodation
- first aid cover available

Occasionally adults known to the school (ex-members of staff or spouses of members of staff) may be asked to provide supplementary staff supervision. This must be approved by the Head in advance.

3. Key principles

3.1 For Staff

All visits will have a clear, recorded educational purpose and will be planned sufficiently well in advance in accordance with good practice and effective planning procedures. All appropriate risk assessments must be completed and be signed off in advance of a trip taking place.

The Head will be responsible for the approval of all educational visits, or he/she may designate this function to the school's Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC). A trained Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) has been appointed to support the Head in all Foundation schools.

There will be a named and approved Group Leader (and where appropriate, a named Deputy) on all educational visits. This group leader will be specifically competent for the role. Working with the EVC as necessary, the Group Leader will be responsible for all aspects of the planning, risk assessment and organisation of the visit. The Group Leader will assume full responsibility during the visit, including ongoing risk assessment.

- The standard of care required of a teacher is that which from an objective point of view can reasonably be expected from teachers generally applying skill and awareness of children's problems, needs and susceptibilities.
- The law expects that a teacher will do that which a parent with care and concern for the safety and welfare of his or her own child would do.
- The law demands that each teacher will maintain a standard which a caring teaching profession would expect of itself.
- A teacher must ensure supervision of the pupils throughout the journey or visit as professional standards and common sense demand.
- Reasonable steps must be taken to avoid exposing pupils to dangers which are foreseeable and beyond those with which the pupils can reasonably be expected to cope.
- The need for direct supervision has to be judged by reference to the risks involved in the activity being undertaken. Instructions given to pupils are not always enough. The possibility that they may disobey has to be taken into account together with the risk they may encounter if they disobey.
- Whoever has responsibility for the visit must make all proper preparations and ensure that the party leaders and helpers have the ability, experience, training and health to undertake the responsibility of the care and welfare of pupils in a different environment.
- Where the school visits a residential or outdoor activity centre, the teacher can reasonably allow children to be supervised by the centre's own staff, provided that he/she is satisfied that they are able to do so safely. To assist with the process the 'centres' Risk Assessment should be carefully analysed. Similarly, if teachers have taken reasonable steps to ensure that the premises where children stay are safe, then, in normal circumstances, no more needs to be done.
- Teachers should not participate in a journey or visit which they believe is not being adequately prepared and organised.
- All staff organising a journey or educational visit should closely follow the Foundations agreed policy and procedures).

- Liability goes with fault. In the case of a pure accident no-one bears liability and this is covered by 'no fault' insurance.
- Employers have 'vicarious liability' for the negligence of their employees at work. This means generally that the employer takes responsibility if employees do not fulfil their safety obligations at work properly. Where a claim is made following an accident and there is a suggestion of negligence on the part of the teacher, the claim will most likely be made against the governors. If, however, a teacher is guilty of gross negligence (through drunkenness for example) a right of recourse exists for the governors against the teacher.

3.2 For Parents

Informed parental consent is required for all educational visits by young people up to the age of eighteen years unless a specific recorded decision to the contrary has been made by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator.

Parents will be given sufficient written and supplementary information about an educational visit to enable them to make an informed decision and give written consent together with medical and emergency contact details. Whenever appropriate for high risk, residential and foreign visits a briefing meeting with parents will be arranged.

Expectations with regard to behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents. This information will include the necessity of meeting additional costs and making collection arrangements in certain circumstances.

3.3 For Pupils

Wherever appropriate, pupils should be involved with the planning of an educational visit, establishing codes of conduct, assessing and managing risk and evaluating their own learning, development, attitudes and behaviour.

Pupils should be adequately briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all educational visits. Ongoing briefings are an important element of learning and safety.

4. Other Policies to be read in conjunction with the Educational Visits Policy

- School Transport Policy
- Minibus Policy

Appendix I

HEALTH & SAFETY: RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS

These regulations set out the legal framework, under health and safety law, in which employers and employees work and the powers, under education law, which help employers and employees to ensure compliance. They apply to all educational visits. The employer retains overall responsibility for health, safety and welfare. In other words, the Foundation is legally responsible for the health and safety of educational visits. Employees also have significant responsibilities as follows:

- Take reasonable care of their own and others health and safety.

- Co-operate with their employers.
- Carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions.
- Inform the employer of any serious risks.

A teacher has a Common Law Duty of Care. This means that:

- A teacher has a duty of care for young people under their supervision.
- A higher duty is expected of teachers as a result of their specialised knowledge.
- The age of the young person and the nature and location of the activity help to determine the degree of supervision required.

With reference to any civil claims of negligence made against a teacher, an injury or damage that may not be reasonably foreseeable is deemed to be an accident. Foreseeable is defined as something that has happened in the past of which the supervisor has knowledge or something that one can visualise happening. Negligence may arise from the lack of due care. The questions likely to be asked in a court of law are:

- Was there a duty of care?
- Was there a breach of that duty?
- Did harm result directly from the failure to exercise reasonable care?

Should the answer to all three questions be “Yes”, then most probably negligence did occur.