

# The Educational Visits and Outdoor Activities Policy

This is a Melland High School Policy

Ratified by Governing Body: *February 2018*

Reviewed: *May 2018*

Next Review Date: *May 2020*



# The Educational Visits and Outdoor Activities Policy:

## **Rational:**

The school acknowledges the importance of educational visits and outdoor activities in fulfilling its curricular aims (as stated in the curriculum policy) both within and outside the normal school day. Such experience is required by or does much to enhance the delivery of KS3, KS4 and Sixth Form courses and it contributes in many ways to personal and social development.

## **Purpose:**

This type of curriculum enrichment varies in duration from less than half a day to substantial residential trips both in UK and abroad. The following give an indication of the wide range typical of the school's off-site provision: Work experience; concerts; visits to art galleries, theatres, manufacturing and service industries, a farm and historical sites; sporting events; urban and rural studies; adventure and outdoor pursuits; art and dance workshops; regional and national sporting competitions.

## **Guidelines:**

The need to address any additional risk to the health and safety of participants that arises from such visits and activities is also acknowledged. The school accepts that leaders have a duty to take all reasonable care for the students' safety and to act as a prudent parent/carers would in similar circumstances. Full information to parents/carers about arrangements for any off-site visit or activity is a prerequisite, as is their written agreement to such arrangements. The school also acknowledges that parents/carers should be able to make an informed decision about whether their child should take part in an activity or visit outside of normal school hours. Due regard is taken of the impact of school groups on the environment and on its other users when choices about location and types of activities are made.

## **Approval:**

On behalf of the Governing Body, the Principal gives approval for off-site visits, activities and associated transport arrangements of one day or less in duration in the UK and which are not potentially dangerous. All necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins, the risk assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit;

- all appropriate training needs have been met;
- the governing body has approved the visit if necessary;
- parents have signed consent forms;
- arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the children;
- the mode of travel is appropriate;
- travel times out and back are known;
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover;

## **Behaviour and Safety before and during the Visit:**

- Prior to the visit, staff must ensure that all participants understand what is expected of them. This includes any 'rules' that will be in place. These will be re-emphasised as appropriate during the visit. Monitoring of the visit must be ongoing, and this contributes towards both enjoyment and safety.
- Students are expected to abide by the school Behaviour for learning policy when on educational visits or outdoor activities. Students participating in any residential trip will be expected to sign a Code of Conduct as part of the initial agreement. Parents/Carers will also be expected to sign this.



- If a student is removed from participating on a school non-curriculum trip due to a breach of the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy; parents/carers may not receive a refund on any monies already paid towards the cost of the trip.
- On residential trips, any student whose behaviour is inappropriate or unacceptable will be returned home with any additional costs paid by parents/carers.
- It is primarily the responsibility of the visit leader, in consultation with other staff where appropriate, to modify or curtail the visit or activity (eg Plan B) to suit changed or changing circumstances - for example: over-busy lunch area, rain, rising water levels, etc.

### **Group Leader:**

One teacher, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been appointed by the Principal.

The Group Leader should:

- appoint a deputy;
- be suitable qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;
- have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of pupils below).

### **Other teachers and adults involved in a visit**

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees and will therefore be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours. They will be acting under an agreement with their Principal and Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

Teacher and other adults on the visit must:

- ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- act as loco parentis;
- follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline. Consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

### **Responsibilities of pupils**

The group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks;
- follow the instructions of the leader and other adults;
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly;
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group & tell the group leader about it;
- should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous.

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

### **Parents:**

The group leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits.

The group leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language;

Parents must:



- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s);
- sign the consent form;
- give the group leader relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.

### **Planning off-site visits:**

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

The Principal is responsible for all off-site visits. Detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the group leader, but the Principal must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

The organiser / group leader must agree all plans with the Principal.

### **Risk Assessment:**

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using Melland High School's Risk Assessment proforma. The risk assessment will decide the adult: pupil ratio for each visit and include the following considerations:

- what are the risks?
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to pupil for this visit?

The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- the location;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

### **Exploratory visit:**

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;
- ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.
- If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards.

### **Insurance:**

- The visit leader must ensure that the trip has appropriate insurance cover, by referring to the travel insurance documents on the network and if in doubt with the Business and Finance Manager. Insure participants - staff and students. Top up insurance cover for overseas visits to at least the level stipulated by the Trust Guidelines.
- Personal accident insurance cover is required for all potentially hazardous activities, and for all trips abroad. Insurance should be taken out for all residential visits.
- Insurance cover is obtained for visits and activities which:
  - Are more than one day in duration



- Include foreign travel
- Involve potentially dangerous activities.
- For trips of less than one day obtaining insurance cover depends on the cost of the trip and the nature of the activities. Such cover is not required in the Trust Guidelines, but organisers may consider it advisable in some cases. Some cover may be provided through the school's own insurance policy but staff should check and top up as necessary.
- Parents/carers are informed in writing of the insurance arrangements.

### First Aid:

- For all visits there will be a responsible adult with a good working knowledge of first aid appropriate to the environment (e.g. urban, remote, water, etc).
- 'Basic Skills' is a level which may be suitable for routine urban visit.
- On visits where first aid is more likely to be needed, or where access by the emergency services may be delayed, a qualified first aider must be present. Based on the nature of the particular visit, the EVC (or visit leader) will make a professional judgement regarding the level of first aid required.
- Any residential visit or adventurous activity will be accompanied by, or have access to, qualified first aid provision (minimum 2-day award). For residential visits the visit leader should ensure that first aid is available at all times.
- A first aid kit appropriate to the visit will be carried, along with medical details for trip participants, and there should always be someone who is nominated to deal with first aid issues. This person is responsible for ensuring the correct first aid equipment is taken.
- The visit leader must have details of any medical conditions, and medical treatment consent forms (if appropriate to visit) with them at all times.
- First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first-aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The contents of a first-aid kit will depend on what activities are planned.

### Supervision:

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit.

The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group;
- special needs of pupils;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation;
- There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.
- All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.
- For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a pupil.
- If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the school/academy or Governing Body must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity.

### Information to pupils:

It is for the group leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information. Pupils should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit / activity;
- background information about the place to be visited;



- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- why safety precautions are in place;
- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- what standard of behaviour is expected from pupils;
- who is responsible for the group;
- what to do if approached by a stranger;
- what to do if separated from the group
- emergency procedures
- rendezvous procedures.

### **Transport and pupils:**

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- arrive on time and wait for the transport away from the road, track, etc.
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- wear your seatbelt and stay seated while travelling on transport;
- make sure your bags do not block aisles on the transport
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- never throw things out of the transport vehicle's windows;
- never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- never run about while transport is moving or pass someone on steps or stairs;
- never kneel or stand on seats or otherwise impede the driver's vision
- never distract or disturb the driver;
- stay clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport;
- after leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road;
- if you have to cross roads to get to the transport always use appropriate safety procedures
- if you feel unwell while travelling, tell a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group.
- Parents/carers must be made aware of the intended form of transport, and their consent obtained.
- Coaches must have seatbelts and school will adhere to carrying capacity regulations
- Staff drivers of minibuses must hold either an LEA certificate of competence or a PSV licence.

### **Emergency Procedures:**

- Visit leaders must carry all emergency information with them during the visit e.g. emergency contact phone numbers, medical information.
- School/Home contact: The school Emergency Contact must have immediate access to all visit information, including itinerary, venue details, names, medical information and emergency contact details for all participants including staff.
- All staff should carry the emergency incidents information card with them at all times.
- In the event of being contacted by the visit leader (or other member of staff involved in a visit), the home contact will:
  - Confirm the phone number at which the caller can be contacted back on;
  - Note their location;
  - Determine the nature of the emergency;
  - Determine the type of help required.
- If the incident does not involve serious injury or fatality, and/or is not likely to attract media attention:
  - Provide the required assistance if possible;
  - Seek further advice or pass on details to other establishment contacts that may be able to assist.
- **If the incident does involve serious injury or fatality, and/or is likely to attract media attention, the Principal or Vice Principal must be contacted immediately.**

### **Communicating with Parents / Carers:**

Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place - 'in loco parentis' - and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on



matters that might affect pupils' health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in letter to parents / carers prior to a visit:

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- visits objectives;
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation and medical cover, clothing and equipment to be taken;
- money to be taken;
- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to.

### Parental consent:

The School's parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

- Section 35 of the Education Act 2004 states: *'Where a visit is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time, then parental consent is not necessary although it is recommended good practice to ensure that parents are informed'*.
- For regular, routine activities within the local community (e.g. sporting venue) parents/ carers give annual consent / written consent on entry to the school. Risk assessments will be available on request
- For all other visits, parents/carers are made fully aware of the likely risks and their management, so that consent or refusal can be given on a fully informed basis.
- Information to parents must include full details of the activities to be undertaken and venues, together with the supervision arrangements and any other relevant information.
- All possible alternative activities (including 'Plan B' arrangements) must also be included within the information given to parents.
- Parents/carers must inform school of any medical conditions or health issues which may impact upon a trip. Failure to do so may result in a student/pupil not being covered by the school insurance policy. Parents/Carers will be liable for any costs arising from a pre-existing medical/health condition which has not been shared with the school prior to the trip.
- In addition to a pupil/student participating in the trip/visit, the signing of the consent also gives permission for a student to receive emergency first aid if necessary, for residential trips a medical form must be completed. Emergency contact details must be available for all trips and activities.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that all necessary inoculations are up to date, any medication required prior to the trip is taken as prescribed and that staff have been advised of any relevant existing medical conditions
- For complex activities (such as residential visits, overseas visits and visits involving adventurous activities) parents/carers will be invited into school for a pre-visit briefing session. This will allow opportunities to ask questions and to ensure that there is a proper understanding of what the trip/visit will involve

### Residential visits:

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the young people's - we will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance;
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group;
- access by staff to student rooms must be available at all times;
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults;
- ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions / exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key personnel;



- security arrangements - where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors;
- ensure that locks / shutters etc. work on all the rooms used by the group;
- storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables;
- adequate lighting - it is advisable to bring a torch;
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

### **Coastal visits:**

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. The group leader should bear the following points in mind in the risk assessment of a coastal activity:

- tides and sandbanks are potential hazards so timings and exit routes should be checked;
- ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags;
- establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc;
- some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to the path at all times. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.