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EDUCATIONAL

VISITS POLICY

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Reviewed by: Quality Assurance Team

Approved By: Proprietor/Governors

Effective Date: February 2024

Next Review Date: February 2026

Introduction

Orion recognises the importance of school trips and visits to improve the quality of pupil's education and also improve pupil's social and emotional skills. School visits are an integral part of Orion's curriculum and school life, furthering the education of pupils.

This policy outlines the arrangements in maintaining the health, safety and welfare of pupils on educational trips and visits.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body (Proprietor and School Governors) has the ultimate responsibility for authorising all trips and visits, to ensure the safety of all pupils and staff. The governing body will approve any residential trip involving one or more nights' stay. It will delegate approval for all other trips and visits to the Head of School.

The Head of School

A Head of School will work closely with the proprietor, governors and staff to ensure that for every trip and visit all pupils and staff will be safe. Approval in principal for all trips and visits must be sought by the Head of School before firm bookings are made. All staff will liaise with the Head of School concerning the arrangements and follow the guidelines in this policy.

Trip Organiser

The trip organiser will be a nominated staff member with the appropriate experience and skills who will be appointed by the Head of School to lead a particular visit.

The trip organiser will have full operational control during the visit.

- Nominated staff who plan a day or residential visit have responsibility to make sure the visit is properly organised.
- The trip organiser is responsible for completing a full risk assessment of the trip. This must be approved by the Head of School before bookings and firm arrangements for the proposed trip can go ahead.
- The trip organiser will be responsible for co-ordinating and delegating tasks to all staff participating in the visit.
- Staff accompanying pupils on visits will ensure that they are familiar with national guidelines and best practice and that they fully comply with the responsibilities and roles assigned to them by the trip organiser.

For curricular visits, clear aims and objectives must be identified by the trip organiser and clearly communicated to the other accompanying staff, parents and pupils. Visits are not taken in isolation. Pupils will be well-prepared for the visit and, subsequently, put the experience to good effect as a stimulus for work in class.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of every pupil and member of staff will be the prime consideration when planning or carrying out a school trip: all appropriate health & safety and child protection procedures must be followed. All risks will be assessed and reported prior to the event and all possible measures to minimise risk will be taken. Staffing will adhere to recommended supervisor pupil ratios as per Dfe guidelines.

The trip organiser will consider whether the nature of the activities requires the normal ratios to be exceeded. Staffing for every off-site visit must include a member of staff who has an appropriate first aid qualification. Appropriate first aid provision will be available at all stages of the trip.

Teachers, assistants and volunteers accompanying school trips will be suitably DBS checked and appropriately trained in procedures. All transport arrangement and venues will be checked for suitability and safety beforehand. Risk assessments will be completed and approved for all aspects of the trip.

Communications with Parents and Carers

The involvement and agreement of parents and carers is critically important, so Orion will arrange for every educational visit that information and, where appropriate meetings are held to inform parents. Completion of additional parental agreement forms may be required which go beyond the annual consent form. This particularly applies to medical consent forms and information about dietary needs and medical conditions. At the start of each academic year parents will be asked to sign a consent form for their child to participate in regular off-site activities such as visits to local sports amenities, churches and for sports fixtures against other schools.

Such regular events do not then require further parental consent but are otherwise regulated by this policy.

- Parents will be notified about the details of all other school visits well in advance and permission for any school trip must be received from parents/guardians in writing prior to the visit date.
- Parents will be told specifically if a day visit involves a return to school after the end of the normal school day
- Parents will be required to notify the trip organiser of their child's special or medical needs and of any other considerations affecting the welfare and safety the child and of staff and other pupils
- Parents are asked to sign a consent form for emergency medical treatment
- For residential visits Orion will hold an information meeting for parents and pupils at the early stages planning. An information meeting may be held for other visits as appropriate

- Pupils emergency contact details, medical information and any other relevant information will be collected prior to the visit. This information will be taken on the visit. The admin team will collate this information onto a single spreadsheet for distribution to staff participating on the trip. The trip organiser will take copies of parents' consent forms
- Costs for visits will be calculated in advance. Parents will be notified of the cost of the trip well in advance to enable them to make suitable arrangements to pay for the trip. All trips must be paid for prior to departure
- The trip organiser will complete a written evaluation form after the visit, reporting back to the Head of School any problems/issues and particular successes
- Orion's Behaviour Policy applies to all pupils on off-site visits. The trip organiser is responsible for good behaviour on all visits.

Orion will provide parents with full and complete written details regarding the organisation and administration of a visit. This will normally include:

- Activities and venues
- Specialist equipment and/or clothing necessary for activities
- Packed meal requirements
- Teachers/leaders, their experience and expertise when required
- Total costs and methods for payment
- Insurance cover, including medical cover and exemptions
- Passport requirements, if any

A signed parental consent form must be obtained for each participating pupil, agreeing to emergency treatment and medication to be given if needed and for staff to act in 'loco parentis'.

Procedures for Organising a Visit

General Information

Plans for visits and trips will be formulated well in advance. All off-site visits and activities must be approved by the Head of School, who are kept fully informed throughout the planning stages. Residential visits and trips overseas must be authorised by the Governing Body, who must be kept informed of progress in planning to facilitate continued approval. Activities of an outdoor pursuits or adventure nature must be within the ability of the pupils participating and the accompanying staff, although it is appreciated that in the majority of such trips external outdoor pursuits leaders will be appointed.

Preliminary Planning

A written outline plan of the visit will be presented to the Head of School for approval prior to more detailed plans being made. Once outline permission has been granted and any particular conditions set, one or more meetings of the proposed staff involved will be held to formalise the administration and organisation of the visit. Specific duties, and the names of the pupils for whom each person is responsible, are identified if necessary. Discussions will take place with Head of School about any other school events or trips which may be occurring at a similar time in order to ensure that the school is not overstretched. Once the trip is approved, parents will normally be informed and provided with as much information as is appropriate. Greater detail will be expected for trips overseas or involving overnight stays. Preparing for such trips will include an information meeting for parents.

The provision of information to parents will normally include the following, as appropriate:

- Information about accommodation
- Itinerary
- Emergency Contacts/Medical Forms
- Staffing/Grouping Details
- Personal Items/luggage requirements
- Insurance Details
- Finance Arrangements
- Spending Money
- Information about the coach company and any other transport arrangements

Insurance

The trip organiser will liaise with the Head of School to check that insurance cover for all pupils and staff involved in the visit is appropriate. Extra insurance cover may be needed for residential visits, trips abroad and any activities of a hazardous nature. If insurance cover is not provided by the commercial/activity centre or tour company, it will be arranged by the Head of School through the Finance Manager and added to the cost of the visit. Parents will be provided with precise details of the insurance policy, so that there is no doubt about the cover and, in particular, what eventualities fall outside such cover.

Preliminary Visits

Except in the case of repeated visits, an exploratory visit by the trip organiser or another designated member of the accompanying staff will usually be made. In the case of repeat visits, the trip organiser should contact the venue(s) to establish that there have been no significant changes to the premises or arrangements, which may affect the organisation of the visit. A preliminary visit should establish at first hand:

- That the venue is suitable

- That the venue can cater for the needs of pupils and staff
- An assessment of potential areas and levels of risk, completing Risk a Assessment with details being given to the Head of School. This will incorporate any risk assessment provided by the venue/tour operator
- Familiarity with the area before taking the pupils
- Information concerning staff qualifications, if not already known
- Confirmation regarding DBS-checking of staff at the venue to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils.

In certain circumstances, for example when all the activities are run by the centre's own staff, to whom the risks and area are well known, a preliminary visit is not always necessary. Nevertheless, a visit may be needed to establish such matters as a safe place for a picnic lunch, the safe use of toilet facilities, distances to walk from car parks etc.

If it is not possible to make a preliminary visit, every endeavour must be made to acquire information about the accommodation and the area, before the visit. If a preliminary visit has not taken place, as a matter of priority when the party arrives, the trip organiser will inspect the facilities and accommodation and any areas where there might be dangers or potential hazards. Where necessary, risk assessments will be revised following the visit.

Pupil Behaviour and Supervision

The trip organiser has responsibility for the good conduct of pupils on the trip. All accompanying staff have a duty of care and it is expected that the majority of staff will be teachers. Teachers should be briefed that they are in loco parentis at all times on the visit and thus are legally responsible for the well-being and safety of the pupils and also for their behaviour, which should be impeccable at all times. Pupils should never be on their own, but always remain in a group, and must be supervised by an adult at all times. Groups and their leaders should be decided in advance and well publicised. On residential visits, close supervision of the pupils in the hostel, centre or hotel during the night must be maintained. Adults' rooms must be located in close proximity to the pupil's rooms. Staff should be allocated 'on call' responsibilities on a rota basis and those adults should refrain from the consumption of alcohol in order to be able to perform their duties properly in the case of an emergency.

Risk Assessments

To ensure the safety of all pupils and staff and also give 'peace of mind', trips and visits will only be approved after an assessment of the risks involved has been carried out.

Arrangements for risk assessments for off-site educational visits are as follows:

The trip organiser will prepare written risk assessments for individual visits and activities. The appropriate proformas and the bank of risk assessments for repeated activities (travelling by

public transport, crossing the road, escorting children along a footpath at a roadside etc.) are available on the shared drive.

Final authorisation for each visit will be made by the Head of School and only then if she is satisfied that an adequate risk assessment has been carried out. In order that the safety of pupils and staff can be as thorough as possible, the following time scales must be adhered to:

One Week Prior to Trip

All risk assessments, including those from the place to be visited, must be handed to the Head of School with a list of pupils involved, details of any particular requirements for pupils with special or medical needs, parental consent forms and all letters sent to parents. This will form part of the information file detailed under 'information and final arrangements' below.

In the event of consent forms not being returned by the specified time, the pupil will not be allowed to travel.

Two Days before Trip

The risk assessments and forms noted above, having been checked and signed off by the Head of School should be copied for staff on the trip and the school office. In the case of residential visits and trips taking place outside term time, these should also be copied to the nominated contact at school. Staff on the trip (excluding the organiser who should be in possession of them all) need only the consent forms of the pupils in their care for the trip, plus the summary sheet of pupils details. It is the responsibility of the trip organiser to check that all the consent forms and medical details for each pupil have been successfully collected by the deadline. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to give final consent to the trip going ahead after reading the Risk Assessment. If there are no concerns or uncertainties, the trip organiser should be informed formally by email.

Information and Final Arrangements

Final details of the visit, including the final version of the risk assessment, must be submitted to the Head of School for approval one week before the visit. This information will be retained for future reference. The trip organiser will hold the same information for the duration of the visit and will check immediately prior to departure for any late changes, for example due to pupil illness or absence. Such changes will be noted and an amended copy submitted to the Head of School.

As a minimum, the information should include details of:

- Itinerary
- Contact points
- Pupils and staff emergency contacts
- Contact information for staff while on the trip
- Copies of Parental Medical Consent Forms
- Information about any pupils with individual special or medical needs, including their medical plans as appropriate
- Copies of any insurance documents, contracts, etc
- Emergency procedures
- Risk assessment

On Departure and During a Visit

Communication

The trip organiser must take a school-provided working mobile phone (plus phone charger) in which all relevant numbers have been entered by the admin team, to save time for the trip organiser. In advance of the trip, pupils should be given clear safety instructions based upon the nature of the activities and the associated risks.

First Aid

All accompanying staff must be familiar with the school's first aid and medical policy, a copy of which should be included in the trip organisers' information file. On departure, the trip organiser or staff nominee must collect the first aid kit for school visits from the school office. This must be returned to the office after the visit together with details of any items used. The trip organiser must also ensure that any special medical equipment or medication such as inhalers, EpiPens, etc, are taken on the trip. The regulations for the reporting of accidents (RIDDOR) apply to educational visits and can be found in the Orion's Health and Safety Policy. When the trip involves the use of a venue which provides first aid facilities, the trip organiser must ensure that all staff are aware of the arrangements and the location of first aid points.

Transport

It is the Orion's policy that only coaches or minibuses with seat belts are booked. Vehicles used should comply with the current requirements on seat belts. All seats should be forward-facing and seat restraints should comply with legal requirements.

Supervision on Transport

- At least two members of staff should supervise the pupils getting on and off the bus/coach – one on the bus/coach and one by the steps

- A roll call must be taken at regular intervals, including each occasion when pupils embark and disembark
- Pupils should not sit on the first two seats facing the front window or next to the emergency exit
- Staff should sit at intervals spaced through the bus/coach to ensure proper supervision
- All pupils must be settled before setting off and must wear their seat belts throughout the journey, unless told to remove them in an emergency
- The trip organiser should delegate a staff member to check for lost property and litter when the group leaves the bus/coach
- At least one qualified teacher should be on each bus/coach or minibus and have a **mobile phone with them (Ideally a school-provided mobile)**

Other Transport

- If school staff use their own cars to transport pupil they must have appropriate car insurance. Staff concerned must liaise with the Head of School to ensure that their own insurance is appropriate (e.g. Social, domestic and business use), with documentary proof provided to the Head of School.
- Specific written permission must be obtained from parents. Other than in exceptional circumstances, a member of staff should never use their own cars to transport a single pupil.
- If parents are transporting pupils, their cars should be fully insured; relevant legislation relating to pupils sitting in the front and the use of booster seats must be followed. Seatbelts must be worn. Specific written permission must be obtained from other parents and documentary proof of insurance must be provided to the Head of School.
- Parents should be fully informed of the time and place to collect the children.
- A school mobile phone for staff should be taken to the event in case of emergency.
- It is the responsibility of the trip organiser to look after pupils not collected after a visit.
- Pupils must not be left unsupervised and appropriate efforts should be made to contact parents if no information has been received about their late arrival.
- For transport by other means (train, ferry, aeroplane etc.) detailed risk assessments must be included in the overall risk assessment for the trip.

Emergencies

Despite the best planning and organisation, emergencies still arise that require a speedy and safe response by the trip organiser and other staff. While ensuring that pupils are safe, staff should contact the appropriate emergency/rescue service immediately either by dialling 999 or by sending a message with suitable adult team members. The Head of School should be contacted as soon as possible.

Emergency Procedures

If an accident or other emergency occurs, the trip organiser or appointed staff member should do the following:

- Assess the situation
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- If there are injuries, establish immediately the names of the injured people and the extent of their injuries
- Attend to the casualty/ies, liaising with the group's trained first aider
- Inform the emergency services, and everyone who needs to know, about the accident
- Follow the school's first aid and medical policy as appropriate including, when possible, the procedures for recording the accident and contacting parents
- Notify the police if necessary
- Share the problem; advise all other group staff that the accident/emergency procedure is in operation. Make sure every member of the group is accounted for
- Ensure that the injured are accompanied to hospital, preferably by an adult whom they know
- Ensure that the rest of the group understands what has happened, is adequately supervised and kept together
- Inform the Head of School and pass on all the details, including names of casualties, their injuries, action taken and names of others involved. If abroad, contact the British Embassy/Consulate, if advisable notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required
- Notify tour operator
- Ascertain telephone number for future calls
- As soon as possible, write down accurately relevant facts and witness details
- Preserve any vital evidence
- Keep a written account of subsequent events, times and contacts after the incident
- Complete accident forms
- No-one in the group should speak to the media. All media enquiries should be politely referred to the Head of School
- No-one in the group should discuss legal liabilities with other parties As soon as possible, liaise with the school's appointed first aider to fulfil Orion's legal requirements in relation to reporting of accidents (RIDDOR)
- Where pupils have mobile phones insist that they do not ring home or friends, as inaccurate or incomplete information is likely to cause unnecessary concern and upset

After a Visit

After the visit the trip organiser must complete a visit evaluation form, which is submitted to the Head of School. The views of other staff accompanying the visit should be taken into account. This should identify any area for improvement, including the guidance on organising trips, and should also highlight the successes of the trip. The risk assessments for the visit should be reviewed to enable any necessary improvements to be made for future visits.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually or at an earlier date if changes are required due to changes in Orion's educational visits process or legislation and or guidance.

Lockdown Arrangements

Safeguarding and health and safety in the context of a global pandemic takes priority over school visits. If a lockdown is imposed in the near future it may be impracticable or impossible for the school to be able to conduct trips safely protecting the health and welfare of staff and pupils. The school will however endeavour to provide as many virtual educational experiences to children in the meantime if this should happen.

