



VLC

Caring Education

## School Trips/Visit Policy

### **School Trips/Visits**

Students at the VLC can benefit from taking part in trips/visits. They have the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom; visits help to encourage greater independence. They also encourage personal and social development. This is very important for students who are attending VLC as they are often lacking in confidence and self esteem and lack social and independent skills.

Parents will give permission for outings at the beginning of term rather than on a daily basis. However all of the safeguards listed below will be taken into account.

### **Planning Visits**

It is essential that formal planning takes place before setting off. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them, in the form of a risk assessment.

The group leader and other staff/volunteers should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action as necessary.

The group leader/trip organiser should take the following factors into consideration:

- The type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.
- The location, routes and modes of transport.
- The competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff.
- The ratios of teachers to students
- The group members' fitness, competence and temperament and the suitability of the activity.
- The special educational or medical needs of pupils.
- The quality and suitability of available equipment.
- Seasonal conditions.
- Emergency procedures.
- How to cope when a student becomes unable or unwilling to continue.
- The need to monitor the risks throughout the visit

Other considerations which should form part of the planning stage include:

- Communication arrangements.
- Supervision ratios.
- Contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return.
- Information to parents.
- Preparing students.
- Emergency arrangements.
- Arrangements for sending students home early.

### **Financial Planning**

The group leader should ensure that parents have early written information about the cost of the trip, if any. Parents should be given enough time to prepare financially for the trip.

Any trip or visit with a financial cost should have approval from a member of SLT. The Principal should ensure that banking arrangements are in place to separate the trip's receipts from other school funds.

### **First Aid**

On any trip the group leader should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that an adequate first aid box is taken. At least one member of staff should be a qualified first aider.

The minimum first-aid provision for a visit is:

- A suitably stocked first-aid box.
- A person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

Other considerations when considering first-aid should include:

- The numbers in the group and the nature of the activity.

### **Supervision – Responsibilities**

Teachers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all teachers should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision. As a minimum:

- SEN pupils with an EHCP, adult/child ratio 1:1,
- One teacher/adult for every 8 pupils in years 1 to 3
- One teacher/adult for every 10-12 pupils in years 4 upwards.

Regular head counting of pupils should take place, particularly before leaving any venue.

The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the group.

For the protection of both teachers and adults, all teachers should ensure that they are not alone with a pupil wherever possible.

The suitability of potential supervisors should be assessed by the group leader and head teacher at an early stage of the planning process.

All adult helpers, including teachers and volunteer helpers, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. Supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the instructor must be suitably competent to lead or instruct pupils in the activity. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) award where it exists.

All supervisors should carry a list of all pupils and adults involved in the visit at all times.

The teacher in charge remains responsible for pupils even when not in direct contact with them.

### **Preparing Pupils**

Pupils who are involved in a trip's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school trip. Pupils should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the trip will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed.

### **Participation**

The teacher in charge should ensure that the pupils are capable of undertaking the proposed activity. They should not be coerced into activities of which they have a genuine fear.

Pupils whose behaviour is such that the teacher in charge is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. The teacher in charge should consider whether such pupils should be sent home early. Parents and pupils should be told in advance of the visit about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a pupil will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

## **Information to Pupils**

The teacher in charge should decide how information is provided, but ensure that students 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.
- What standard of behaviour is expected from students
- Appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct.
- Who is responsible for the group.
- What to do if approached by anyone from outside the group.
- Rendezvous procedures.
- What to do if separated from the group.

## **Transport**

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

- Arrive on time and wait for transport in a safe place.
- Do not rush towards the transport when it arrives.
- Wear your seatbelt and stay seated whilst travelling on transport.
- Never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or driving controls.
- Bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions.
- Never attempt to get on or off the moving transport.
- Never lean out of or throw things from the window of the transport.
- Never kneel or stand on seats.
- Never disturb or distract the driver.
- If you feel unwell, tell a teacher or supervisor.

The group leader must give careful thought to planning transport. The main factors to consider include:

- Passenger safety.
- Type of journey – local or will it include long distance driving, i.e. motorways.
- Traffic conditions.
- Weather.
- Journey time and distance.
- Stopping points on long journeys for toilet and refreshments.
- Supervision.

All minibuses and coaches which carry groups of 3 or more children aged between 3 and 15 years inclusive, must be fitted with a seat belt for each child.

The group leader is responsible for the party at all times, including maintaining good discipline.

All group members should be made aware of the position of the emergency door and first-aid and anti-fire equipment on transport.

Factors that the group leader should consider when planning supervision on transport include:

- Drivers of buses and coaches must comply with legislation covering maximum periods of driving and minimum rest periods.
- Head counts, by the group leader or another delegated teacher, should always be carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport.
- Responsibility for checking that seat belts are worn.
- Travel sickness tablets should only be administered to a pupil with previous authorisation from the parents.

## **Hiring Coaches and Buses**

The group leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. Operators must have the appropriate public service vehicle (PSV) operator's licence. When booking transport, the group leader should ensure that seat belts are available for pupils.

If any of the group uses a wheelchair, the group leader should ensure that transport used has appropriate access and securing facilities.

## **Private Cars**

Teachers and others who drive pupils in their own car must ensure their passengers' safety and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying the students.

Volunteers should be carefully vetted (as per VLC's Safer Recruitment Policy) by the school before they are permitted to drive pupils in their car. The driver is responsible for making sure that pupils have a seat belt and use it at all times.

## **Insurance**

The group leader must ensure, well before the group departs, that adequate insurance agreements are in place.

## **Pupils with Special Educational and Medical Needs**

Every effort should be made to include pupils with special educational or medical needs to ensure equal access to the opportunities of the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios, and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- Is the pupil capable of taking part in and benefiting from the activity?
- Can the activity be adapted to enable the pupil to participate at a suitable level?
- Will additional/different resources be necessary?
- Will additional supervision be necessary?

The teacher in charge should discuss the visit with the parents of SEND pupils to ensure that suitable arrangements have been put in place to ensure their safety.

## **Pupils with Medical Needs**

All teachers supervising visits should be aware of a student's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures. If the student's safety can not be guaranteed, it may be appropriate to ask the parent to accompany a particular child.

Parents should be asked to supply:

- Details of medical conditions.
- Emergency contact numbers.
- The child's GP's name, address and phone number.
- Written details of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times) and parental permission to administer.
- Parental permission if the pupil needs to administer their own medication or agreement for a teacher to administer.
- Information on any allergies/phobias.
- Information on any dietary requirements.
- Information on any toileting difficulties.
- Parental home and daytime phone numbers and address
- Special transport needs for pupils who require help with mobility.

Enquiries should be made at an early stage about access and facilities for securing wheelchairs on transport and at the visit location, etc.

All teachers supervising the visit should be given the opportunity to talk through any concerns they may have about their ability to support the child. Extra help should be requested if necessary.

If teachers are concerned about whether they can provide for a student's safety or the safety of other students on a trip because of a medical condition, they should seek general medical advice from SLT or the child's parents.

### **Communicating with Parents**

The following information on matters that might affect pupil health and safety should be given to parents:

- Dates of the visit.
- Visit's objectives.
- Times of departure and return – parents must have agreed to meet their child on return, or transport (re)arranged to collect the student.
- Modes of travel.
- Size of the group and the level of supervision
- Details of provision for special educational or medical needs.
- Procedures for students who become ill.
- Names of leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults.
- Details of the activities planned.
- Standards of behaviour expected (this information may take the form of a code of conduct which parents should sign).
- What pupils should not take on the visit or bring back.
- Clothing, food and equipment to be taken/worn.
- Money to be taken, to cover any food or souvenirs.
- Details on the cost of the visit (if any).

### **Parental Consent**

The Principal should seek specific parental consent for one-off activities.

Lunchtime and afternoon activities (eg. visiting the shops, playing football and going for a walk) may occur weekly so permission should be obtained at beginning of term. This includes travelling in a staff member's car.

If parents withhold consent absolutely, the pupil should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible. If the parent gives a conditional consent, the Principal will need to consider whether the pupil may be taken on the visit or not.

A parental consent form should be completed for each student in the group.

Some general issues to consider include:

- Allergies/phobias the pupil may have.
- Any contagious or infectious diseases suffered within the family during the preceding 4 weeks, and any recent illnesses suffered by the pupil.
- Whether the student suffers from travel sickness.
- Any other information which the parent thinks should be known.
- Parental home and daytime phone numbers and addresses.

An alternative contact, with their phone number and address.

### **Medical Consent**

This should form part of the parental consent form. Parents should be asked to agree to the pupil receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If parents do not agree to this, head teachers may decide to withdraw the child from the visit – given the additional responsibility this would entail for the group leader.

### **Early Return**

The group leader should tell parents if they will be expected to fund the early return of a student whose conduct gives cause for concern on a visit. A written agreement may be necessary.

### **Pupils' Contact with Parents**

Parents will have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the visit or late arrival home. Parents should have destination details.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life saving action in an extreme situation.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school visit.

If an accident happens, the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation.
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group.
- Attend to the casualty.

Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident.

### **Who Will Take Charge in an Emergency?**

The group leader would usually take charge and would need to ensure that emergency procedures are in place and that back up cover is arranged. The group leader should liaise with the representative of the tour operator, if applicable.

### **Pre-arranged School Home Contact**

The school contact's main responsibility is to link the group with the school and the parents, and to provide assistance as necessary.

All those involved in the school trip, including teachers, pupils and parents, should be informed of who will take charge in an emergency and what they are expected to do in an emergency.

### **Emergency Procedures Framework during the Visit**

If an emergency occurs on a school visit, the main factors to consider include:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that all the group are safe and looked after.
- Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.
- Ensure that all group members who need to know, are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures.
- Ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together.
- Notify the police if necessary.
- Inform the school contact.
- Details of the incident to pass on to the school should include: nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, names of casualties and details of their injuries, names of others involved so that parents can be reassured, action taken so far, action yet to be taken (and by whom).
- Notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required.\*
- Notify the tour operator.\*

\*This may be done by school contact.

- Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence.

- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible.
- No one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to their families.
- No one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.

The main factors for the school contact to consider include:

- Ensuring that the group leader is in control of the emergency, and establishing if any assistance is required from the home base.
- Contacting parents. The school link is the contact between the group and parents. Parents should be kept as well informed as possible at all stages of the emergency.
- The school contact should act as a link between the group, the WELB and the chair of governors and arrange for the group to receive assistance, if necessary.
- Liaison with media contact.
- The reporting of the incident using appropriate forms, if necessary.

### **Media Contact**

Education Authorities usually have a designated person to deal with media enquiries. The media contact should liaise with the school contact, the group leader and, where appropriate, the emergency services. In the event of an emergency all media enquiries should be referred to WELB via the Principal. The name of any casualty(s) should not be given to the media.

### **After a Serious Incident**

It is not always possible to assess whether uninjured group members have been traumatised or whether pupils or staff in school have been affected. Schools in this situation have sometimes found it helpful to contact support services and to seek professional advice.