



## EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

### PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

#### INTRODUCTION

At Altrincham Preparatory School, we believe that learning outside the classroom is an essential component of our curriculum. It gives our pupils unique opportunities to develop their resourcefulness and initiative and to spend time together in an informal environment. Each trip is different. Some are directly related to the curriculum, some are designed to promote social awareness, or to enhance physical skills, self-reliance and team-working. Others will extend their knowledge of the world. The common factor is that they all make an essential contribution to your son's development and education in the broadest sense of the word.

#### RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTATION THAT ARE REQUIRED OF SCHOOLS

- Administration of Medicines Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Disaster and Emergency Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- EYFS Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Physical Contact Policy
- Recording and Reporting Accidents to staff, pupils and visitors protocol
- Risk Assessment Policy & documents
- Safeguarding Policy
- Taking, Storing & Using Images of Children Policy
- Any trip related curriculum policy

#### OUR TRIPS AND VISITS

We regularly take pupils on day trips to, for example, historic sites, museums, local areas illustrating particular features, farms and Roman remains to support the curriculum. There are regular theatre trips for pupils of all levels. Annually we run a 6 day outward bound /language immersion Year 6 residential visit to France, a 3 day Year 5 residential outdoor activity expedition to the Lake District and a Year 4 ICT residential to Winnmarleigh.

There is also a very active sports' programme of inter-school competition and we regularly participate in music activities off-site, e.g. Altrincham Music Festival.

#### INFORMATION ON PLANNED TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Trips and visits that are due to take place over the coming term, together with a list of planned home and away sports fixtures are on the website. The school will provide a copy on request. You will always be notified in advance:

- If your child has been selected for a sports' team, we very much welcome family and friends at all our matches, both home and away.
- If your child is going to be out of school during the school day in order to visit a local museum, theatre, nature reserve or historic site, we shall always seek your permission if the visit involves an extra charge, supplying a packed lunch or late return to school, or collection from another place, such as a theatre.
- We send details of planned trips and activities well in advance to all parents of pupils of the relevant year group or cohort. Parents who opt for these trips are always invited into the school for a full briefing before their son or daughter departs on a trip or visit that involves staying away from home, either in the UK or overseas.

## CONSENT

We require your specific, individual written consent if we are to take your son on a trip or visit that extends beyond the normal school day, involves an overnight stay, collection from a different venue, an overseas visit or extra cost to you. Please note that we are unable to take your son without a completed and signed consent form, which includes details of where you may be contacted in an emergency. This form will be sent to you well in advance and must reach the school preferably 3 teaching days before the start of the trip.

## SAFETY

Safety is top priority for us. APS staff, as well as the venue being visited, carries out a thorough risk assessment. We expect you, as parents, to support the school in ensuring that your son follows the instructions given either by a member of staff, or by a qualified instructor, and uses the proper equipment. We reserve the right to send any pupil home early, at their parents' expense, if they decline to follow reasonable instructions given for their own safety, or do not follow the school's behaviour code.

## **PART 2: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF INVOLVED WITH SCHOOL VISITS**

### INTRODUCTION

We have a large number of trips, out of school activities and visits at Altrincham Preparatory School, which are an important part of our educational ethos. We expect that every member our staff endorses the educational value of activities outside the classroom. We encourage everyone possible to participate in them and to help with the arrangements. We always welcome suggestions from staff for new trips.

### ROLE OF THE EDUCATION VISITS COORDINATOR

The Deputy Head has overall oversight of the educational visits that take place over the course of any academic year. The Deputy Head, along with the Assistant Heads, are responsible for the curriculum balance within the school. They support the Head Master in the process of approving visits, ensuring that they are spread through the different age groups, and the school year. The Deputy Head and the Assistant Heads are the Education Visits Coordinator (EVC) for their phases within the school. They, if required, help staff involved with organising trips, with, for example, the checking that the annual parental consent form for day trips and the specific consent forms for residential trips are correctly signed and ensuring that records of all previous visits (which can be borrowed) are filed and suitable kept. They also keep reports of any accidents or near misses. The trip leader must report these to the appropriate person at the end of the trip. All new staff have a session on planning school visits as part of their induction training.

**No trip is to be planned without the consent of the Deputy Head, or year group relevant Assistant Head. A trip will NOT take place if the Deputy Head or appropriate Assistant Head considers that it adversely affects the balance of their curriculum provision. This includes sport and music activities. If staff have a concern, their first point of reference is the Deputy Head or the Assistant Head with responsibility for their phase.**

### ROLE OF THE GROUP LEADER

The member of staff who is charge of a trip's organisation must plan each trip or visit, no matter how short, in advance. He or she will always have had experience of accompanying school visits before taking on the role of Group Leader. For trips that involve an overnight stay and/or outdoor pursuit activities, we arrange for the relevant EVC to hold a training session with all potential Group Leaders, which covers practical guidance on conducting risk assessments, emergency procedures, the school's insurance cover, budgeting for visits and the circumstances under which a visit might be terminated or curtailed, for instance if weather suddenly deteriorated. With the exception of the very shortest visits, such as to our local library or museum, we expect all Group Leaders either to hold a valid First Aid certificate themselves, or ensure that one of the other teachers accompanying the visit holds one. A Deputy Leader is nominated for all trips. S/He may not hold the qualifications of the Group Leader; but is nevertheless capable of taking over that role, if necessary.

No one should drive the school minibus unless they hold the appropriate qualifications. For any minibus journey that lasts for longer than 45 minutes, there should be a second member of staff, who is also a qualified minibus driver. The school will arrange and fund First Aid courses, as well as courses in driving minibuses for all staff who wish to qualify as a minibus driver. At Altrincham Preparatory School, we expect every member of staff to complete a "Drivers' Declaration Form" before s/he drives pupils in a school minibus. The completed forms are held by the EVCs. (Copies of the model forms can be downloaded from the model document section of the ISBA web site).

## PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

The law places the Group Leader "in loco parentis". It explains that their responsibility is to "act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances." Staff who take part in visits and activities outside school may feel concerned about the possibility of being held personally liable if an accident should occur. However, they can be assured that Altrincham Preparatory School, as their employer will always stand behind them in the unlikely event of an accident occurring, provided they have exercised reasonable care and followed the school's guidelines.

Altrincham Preparatory School has £10 M of Employers' Liability Insurance and £10 M of public liability insurance, as well as a group travel policy that covers school visits inside the UK and overseas. Cover includes cancellation or delay, medical expenses, replacement of passports, personal possessions and money. The policy covers most school visits, including skiing holidays, but does not cover all adventurous activities. Any member of staff organising an adventurous or hazardous activity should therefore check, via the Finance Officer, whether or not the activity is covered by the school's policy. An extension usually can be arranged. The Group Leader should ensure that s/he takes a copy of the school's travel insurance with him/her on all but the shortest of visits.

Altrincham Preparatory School's policy is to discourage staff from transporting pupils in their private cars, but when this is absolutely necessary insurance is automatically provided through the school's "occasional business use" motor policy. This ensures that motor insurance claims arising whilst a member of staff is using their own car for school business purposes can be settled without involving their own motor insurer. The same "occasional business use policy" is automatically extended to include Governors and Parents of pupils in respect of the use of cars on school business, such as transporting pupils. All Parents are asked to sign and complete a consent form.

## PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS

The amount of advance preparatory work needed will obviously vary considerably with the type of activity. Very little preparation may be needed for walking with a group of pupils to a local museum, spending an hour there and walking back in time for school lunch. By contrast, a visit lasting a week or more to a country outside the EU, requires considerable research and preparation. Repeat visits and shorter visits will need less planning, and can be arranged at shorter notice, though it is always desirable to give parents as much notice as possible when planning visits for school holidays and half-terms. Group Leaders may draw upon each EVC's stock of existing background material when planning regular longer repeat visits to familiar destinations. For most shorter repeat visits, new members of staff are to refer to the Deputy Head or their Assistant Head.

For school trips that take place during a school day, staff should refer to the APS Risk Assessment Policy on school trips/visits protocol. The APS Risk Assessment **MUST** be complete, in full detail, and signed off by the Head Master, or the Deputy Head in his absence, no later than a week prior to the trip. Venue and/or activity Risk Assessments **MUST** be obtained from the venue being visited. *Appendix 1*

For longer residential visits the procedure that follows is designed to cover all the planning that a Group leader needs to undertake. It is designed to be as comprehensive as possible. *Text in italics indicates that the action may not be required (or the timescale may be shortened) for: trips within the school day, theatre and museum visits, sports fixtures, or day visits using school transport.*

### At least 6 to 9 months in advance

- Obtain permission and advice from the Deputy Head, the EVC with overall oversight of trips and visits, on suitable dates, precedents etc
- Discuss preliminary plan, including purpose, location, transport, hotels, activities, itinerary, number & age of participants with their EVC
- Calculate the staff to pupil ratio, (see below)
- Prepare a draft itinerary
- Liaise with school office to cost mode of transport for all legs of the journey.
- Prepare fully inclusive costs for the visit, including an appropriate contingency for delays and emergencies. (The costs of the accompanying staff must be included). Seek advice from the school Finance Officer.
- Check that the provider of adventurous activities is licensed and the individual instructors possess a recognised qualification from a national body, such as the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority.
- Obtain clear statement from the Centre about their responsibilities for the safety of the pupils before making any commitment. Ask for copies of their risk assessments
- Prepare the risk assessment(s), (see below),
- *Check the school's insurance cover, (see above) if the visit involves hazardous activities.*

- Find other members of staff who are willing to participate in the trip, bearing in mind the need to have both male and female teaching staff when both sexes participate in a visit. It is desirable to have at least one member of staff who speaks the language of the country to be visited. We encourage parents to accompany school visits related to the curriculum, although we welcome them at all sports fixtures.
- *If parent volunteers participate: Arrange for any volunteers participating in the trip to obtain an enhanced CRB disclosure. (The Finance Officer's office will make the necessary arrangements).*
- *Check that the tour company/airline is ATOL/ABTA bonded to provide cover in the event of the bankruptcy of the provider.*
- *Carry out a reconnaissance visit if the location is not one that the school has visited before. (If a reconnaissance visit is impossible, a reference from another school that has visited the site may suffice).*
- *Establish the minimum and maximum numbers for the visit to be viable (bearing in mind that the costs of the accompanying staff will be divided amongst the participants)*
- *Ascertain the medical and visa requirements*
- *Establish when the deposits are required by tour operators/airlines/activity centre etc, and ensure that the size of the deposit requested from parents is sufficient to cover these costs (including the costs of deposits for accompanying staff)*
- Prepare a written case, to be counter-signed by the EVC, seeking the Head Master approval.
- *If necessary, attend a First Aid and/or minibus driving course beforehand.*

### Staff/Pupil Ratios

The DCSF recommended staff to pupil ratios for visits and off-site activities is:

Ratio	Pupils' Year Group
1:6	1- 3 inclusive (with a higher ration for the under 5s)
1:10	Years 4 – 6
1:10	All visits abroad

The numbers for any APS trip are, however, at the Head Master's discretion.

### The Risk Assessment

All Group Leaders at Altrincham Preparatory School understand and know (instruction has been received) how to conduct risk assessments on the potential hazards involved in a visit, trip or activity that they are planning.

Professionally operated licensed activity centres and tour operators specialising in school visits will conduct their own risk assessments. The Group Leader should ask for copies at the planning stage. Provided that he/she is satisfied, it will meet the requirements of Altrincham Preparatory School, for the activity part of the visit. Additional risk assessments will probably be needed to ensure complete coverage of all aspects of the visit. Risk assessments carried out by the school for previous visits can generally be updated and re-used, unless there has been a change of circumstances. At Altrincham Preparatory School, the Office maintains a dossier of generic risk assessments that cover sports fixtures, theatre and museum visits and most of our regular visits.

The APS Risk Assessment (Appendix 1) **MUST** be complete, in full detail, and signed off by the Head Master, or the Deputy Head in his absence, no later than a week prior to the trip. Venue and/or activity Risk Assessments **MUST** be obtained from the venue being visited.

Refer to the *Risk Assessment Policy*

### After Permission is Granted

- Write a preliminary letter to send to parents and guardians of the target age group, outlining the purpose of the trip, the programme and the expected maximum cost. Ask for expressions of interest and acceptance, together with a preliminary deposit by a specific date. Invite Parents to a briefing meeting within six weeks of departure. Clear all letters and other forms of communication in advance with the appropriate EVC.
- Book transport for trip – school office to arrange
- Complete External Visits form (*appendix 2*) – give a copy to office for filing
- Brief the pupils about the visit, its dates and purpose
- Check names of all pupils wishing to participate. Discuss with the appropriate EVC concerns about special arrangements that may be required for handling any specific medical or SEN issues.
- Arrange with the Finance Office the payment method for the trip; invoiced with fees or direct payment. Ask the Finance Officer to set up a unique cost folder in the school accounts for the trip.

- Arrange for the Finance Office to pay deposits on hotels, flights, activity centre etc.

#### At least Three Months in Advance

- Finalise the costs with travel company etc.
- Insist that all coaches are fitted with seat belts. (this may not be possible in every country).
- Work out the cost for parents (including contingency to cover delays etc).
- Inform parents of the medical and visa requirements. Advise parents of non-British passport holders that they are responsible for ascertaining the visa requirements of the country to be visited.
- Arrange for the Finance Office to pay the balance to the airline, hotel, travel company etc.
- Make certain the school mobile with pre-paid SIM card valid for the country to be visited to be available to be taken on the trip.
- Brief and prepare the pupils in advance.
- Ensure that they are given plenty of advance notice if they need special equipment (e.g. for skiing).
- Where relevant, collect the balance directly from the pupils and pass to the Finance Office for crediting to the trip account

#### Six Weeks in Advance

- If a residential trip, arrange a meeting with parents to brief them on all aspects of the trip, including:
  - The itinerary, including the meeting and collection points.
  - Contact details for the hotels/hostels/ names and addresses of the host families.
  - The number of the school mobile phone issued to the Group Leader.
  - The money, kit and equipment that the pupils need.
  - The medical and visa requirements.
  - The expected standards of behaviour, and the potential risks of irresponsible behaviour
  - Remind parents those pupils who ignore or flout the behaviour code risk being sent home at their parents' expense. Pupils remain subject to school rules throughout the visit.
  - Arrangements for handling illness and accidents, and arrangements for informing parents in such circumstances.
  - Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event that the return is delayed.
  - The need to notify the school in the event of contact with an infectious disease within four weeks of travelling.
  - The reasons why a completed consent form is essential.
  - The need for a copy of each pupil's passport for each trip abroad.
- Send all parents a copy of the consent form (see annex) with specified return date
- (If appropriate,) book picnic lunch from Catering Department
- Brief pupils on expectations of standards of behaviour and cultural differences.
- Book traveling first aid kit from the school office.

#### Two Weeks in Advance

- Ensure that all participating staff are comfortable with their domestic and the school arrangements
- Chase parents who have not returned their consent forms. Remind them that their child cannot participate unless the form is received within 5 working days of departure
- Obtain photocopies of each pupil's passport (if travelling abroad)
- Check all tickets/itinerary for accuracy. Store them in the school safe until collection
- Meet with the other members of staff to discuss the itinerary, the risk assessment, the respective roles of the Group Leader and other accompanying staff, and emergency procedures.
- Prepare **trip information packs** for the School Office and for **each** member of staff, that contain the following information:
  - The itinerary (including address, phone numbers etc of all locations where the party is staying).
  - The Group Leader's the school mobile,
  - Mobile numbers of all participating staff,
  - A list of pupils, together with copies of their parental contact forms (which includes details of each pupils' medical conditions),
  - Copies of all passports and travel documents,
  - Emergency contact numbers for the Head Master, Deputy Head, and Senior staff members designated to be on-call.
  - A copy of the tickets, travel insurance document (including emergency contact details).

- A copy of the risk assessment.

#### The Day Prior to Departure/The Day of Departure

- Collect tickets and monies/foreign currency from the safe.
- Give trip information packs to designated school recipients and to other staff participants
- Remind pupils about the rendez-vous, dress code, standards of behaviour and what to do if they become separated from the party etc.
- Collect travelling first aid kit(s). Check contents.
- Ensure have appropriate mobile connectivity to school
- Ensure all who need to know have the name, address and phone number of the accommodation
- Remind pupils about appropriate behaviour and the potential risks associated with behaving incorrectly

#### DURING THE VISIT OR ACTIVITY

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with Group Leader. He or she has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. He or she will liaise with the centre providing accommodation and/or other facilities. S/He may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out a head count on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving a museum, restaurant, activity centre, hotel etc.
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts.
- Checking the fire exits and escape routes at the hostel. Ensuring that every pupil walks through the emergency escape route at the hostel.
- Ensuring that sleeping accommodation is suitable and located together.
- Setting times for pupils to be in their rooms at night. Conducting checks (using the other staff).
- Setting agreed times and locations for checking pupils when they work or are allowed out unsupervised in small groups.
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour.
- Looking after passports and valuables
- Storing cash and tickets securely.
- Keeping an account of all expenditure.
- Recording all accidents and near misses.

#### ILLNESS OR MINOR ACCIDENTS

If a Pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill, the Group leader, or another member of staff will take him to the local hospital or clinic. If the trip is outside the UK, s/he will notify the insurers on their helpline to arrange (where possible) for the medical bill to be sent directly to the insurance company for settlement. If the accident is more serious (such as a broken leg when skiing), the school's medical insurers may arrange for the pupil, accompanied by a member of staff to be repatriated to the UK. At Altrincham Preparatory School we expect the **Group Leader** to phone the pupil's parents if their child has suffered an accident or injury that is serious enough to require medical treatment – as opposed to minor cuts and bruises.

#### EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

##### **Staff are to refer to the Disasters and Emergency Policy**

In the event of a serious accident resulting in the death or injury of one or more of the pupils and staff, the Group Leader's first priority would be to summon the emergency services, and to arrange for medical attention for the injured. One of the accompanying members of staff should accompany the injured pupil(s) to hospital. Ensuring that the rest of the group were safe and looked after, and informing the Head Master or Deputy Head of what had happened, would be the next tasks for the Group Leader, who would need to give as full, calm and factual account as the circumstances permitted. Where the full facts had not yet emerged, he or she should say so, and ensure that follow-up communications with the Head Master are maintained. He/she would also need to arrange (perhaps using the Deputy Leader or another member of staff) for the school's insurers to be contacted as quickly as possible, together with the British Consul, if the accident happened overseas. A full record should be kept of the incident, the injuries and of the actions taken.

At Altrincham Preparatory School, depending on the nature of the incident, we may implement our own model communications plan for informing as swiftly as possible both the families of the injured, and the families of those

who are unhurt. We recognise that in an era of instant communications, it may not be possible for us to be the first to break the news. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that we have an important duty to speak personally to the parents of any pupil who has suffered some injury or mishap. We will use mass communication methods (SMS and messages on our web) for communicating with those whose boys are not affected.

Communication with the media should be left to the Head Master. The Group Leader should refer the media to the school. The default position is that **no** member of staff, whether involved with the trip or not, should speak to the media. However, if comment is unavoidable through being an involved party, it should be factual, calm and no attempt made to cover gaps in knowledge. **Pupils are not to talk to the media.**

#### DELAYED RETURN

If a visit is delayed, the Group Leader should phone the school office, or the Head Master/Deputy Head (out of school hours), who will in turn phone all the parents on their contact numbers to alert them to the delay and the revised time of arrival.

#### ON RETURN

Each Group Leader is asked to provide the appropriate EVC with a **report** (either orally or in a written form as appropriate) on the visit as a whole, as well as reports of any accidents and near misses on his/her return. Personal observations and lessons learned are always valuable. The Group leader should return all school property together with a report of any lost or damaged property.

#### Expenditure

The Group Leader is responsible for returning any unused cash to the Finance Office. The Group Leader is also responsible for producing a schedule of all expenditure on the trip. Unused balances will be returned to the parents by way of credits shown on the next school bill.

#### Report for Governors

The Head Master's report to the Governors always contains a verbal synopsis of all the school trips and visits that have taken place since the last visit. This report is informed by the Deputy Head's views, and those of the appropriate EVC.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of the Board of Governors.

Updated : 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 (N. Birch Senior Teacher and EVC co-ordinator)

Review Date : September 2016

# Appendices