



OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Empowering Futures recognises the educational benefit derived from learning outside the classroom. This policy is applicable to all those involved in the organisation of educational visits for non EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) pupils. There is a separate policy for educational visits for EYFS pupils. This policy and the accompanying guidelines and procedures are designed to ensure that Empowering Futures pupils continue to enjoy these opportunities and that staff feel comfortable in leading them and understand the extent of their responsibilities.
- 1.2 The policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including but not limited to:
- DfE (2018) Health & Safety on Educational Visits
 - HSE (2011) School trips and outdoor learning activities

2. Aims

- To ensure the Health and Safety of pupils whilst participating in a school organized trip.
- To provide an enriched curriculum and learning experience for all pupils.
- To give pupils a chance to develop socially in a residential setting, either curriculum or leisure related.
- To ensure that parents have full knowledge of activities to be undertaken.
- To ensure that the adult:pupil ratios are correct and that all accompanying adults understand the extent of their responsibilities.
- To provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone.
- To promote the independence of our pupils as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

3. Training

- 3.1 It is the Head's responsibility to ensure that all staff are appropriately trained in conducting off-site visits in accordance with this policy.
- 3.2 All new staff will receive training on planning and running school visits as part of their induction.
- 3.3 All offsite visits will have a nominated Group Leader responsible for the organisation and running of the visit. The Group Leader will ensure that all staff allocated to the trip have received the appropriate training.

4. Planning

- 4.1 All off-site visits must be planned in advance by the Group Leader and have permission from a member of the Executive Team. This permission must be obtained before parents are informed of the trip. The School Visits Checklist should be used to assist in the planning of the trip.
- 4.2 Wherever possible, care should be taken to avoid school trips clashing with other planned activities. In the Senior School, staff are requested to complete a 'yellow form' for this purpose, timings are considered by reference to the school calendar. It is accepted that, at times, parents may have to choose between competing visits (for example, during the school holidays).
- 4.3 Other considerations when planning off site visits include:
 - Checking tour company/airline is ATOL/ABTA bonded to ensure cover in the event of bankruptcy of the provider;
 - Undertaking a reconnaissance visit to the location if the school has not visited before, or obtain a reference from another school if a visit is not possible;
 - Establishing minimum and maximum numbers for the trip to be viable;
 - Establishing visa and medical requirements, particularly considering impact on overseas boarders;
 - Compliance with latest travel advice from Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
- 4.4 All off-site visits must be appropriately risk assessed, using the latest proformas available from the Estates Manager; and submitted with sufficient notice. Regular activities, such as sports fixtures with local schools, may be covered in whole-school or departmental 'generic' risk assessments provided that there is the opportunity for such risk assessments to be regularly reviewed and revised.
- 4.5 The Group Leader should obtain copies of risk assessments from professionally operated licensed activity centres and tour operators. These should be submitted with the school risk assessment to form part of the overall assessment of the trip.
- 4.6 All off-site visits must have their overall costs assessed. These costs include, but are not limited to, transport (including the use of school minibuses), food, accommodation, additional insurance and entrance fees and a contingency for delays and emergencies. Wherever possible, food should be provided by the school (e.g. packed lunches). A decision must be made as to whether to charge parents or absorb the costs into departmental budgets. The bursary is able to advise over costs and charges.

- 4.7 The Group Leader must liaise with the Bursar to determine the insurance position of the trip. In particular when planning trips relating to hazardous or adventurous activities a review must be undertaken to arrange for an extension of the policy if necessary. If an extension can not be arranged then the activity must not go ahead. The Group Leader should ensure that a copy of the school travel insurance policy is taken on the trip.

5. Parental Consent

- 5.1 Parents must always be informed in advance of any off-site activity involving their children, including the location, timing, associated costs and any extra safety measures required.
- 5.2 Specific written consent is required in the following circumstances:
- Any off-site activity.
 - Activities outside the 'normal school day'. This should be interpreted as any activity where pupils are unable to arrive at or leave school using the bus network (including the 'late bus') or, for pupils who are too young to catch the bus, where parents will need to make additional transport arrangements. This also includes any 'non-compulsory' weekend activities (therefore does NOT include: boarding activities, Saturday morning sports fixtures, Open Morning or Sports Day).
 - Any visit that requires collection from a different venue
 - Any adventure activity (defined as caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports).
 - Any residential activity.
 - Any overseas trip.
 - Any activity incurring a cost of £50 or more.
 - Any trip where pupils are unaccompanied by staff.
- 5.3 Written consent includes consent given from a parent's or guardian's registered email address or via a Firefly online permission form. The completed consent form will include details of how to contact a parent in the event of an emergency. Consent must be received at least three days before the start of the trip.
- 5.4 In all circumstances parents must be given the opportunity to withdraw their child from the trip and, where a trip occurs during the teaching day, alternative on-site arrangements of similar academic value must be available. The school reserves the right to charge parents for trips should they withdraw their child after a published deadline date.
- 5.5 Where attendance on a trip is not mandatory, the school reserves the right to refuse a place to any pupil where there are fees in arrears.
- 5.6 Parents are expected to support the School in ensuring that pupils follow instructions given by those in charge of the trip. Those in charge of the trip may send home early any pupil who declines to follow reasonable instructions. Any issues of poor behaviour will be documented and dealt with in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

6. Staffing

- 6.1 The minimum staffing ratios are given in the table below. For the Prep School any trip will require a

minimum of two adults. Throughout this policy, adults assuming responsibility for pupils includes any

school employee aged 18 or over. Non-employees, such as parents or teachers' partners, may be used provided that statutory checks have been completed and the Head has been informed.

6.2 Employees or volunteers under the age of 18 and Empowering Futures pupils aged 18 or over cannot be included in the staffing ratios.

6.3 Sixth Form may attend day trips unaccompanied by staff provided that this has been agreed in advance with the Head of Sixth Form and parents have given written consent.

6.4 *Adult:Pupil Ratios*

Early Years	1:3
Years 1 – 3	1:6
Years 4 – 6	1:10
Years 7 – 11	1:18
Residential – UK	1:10
Day - abroad	1:10
Residential– abroad	1:8

6.5 These ratios may be tightened for adventure activities. A full risk assessment must be completed and an appropriate adult:pupil ratio determined.

6.6 At least one accompanying adult must be first aid trained (one day certificate). Where a pupil is known to carry an 'epi-pen', for example due to a nut allergy, at least one first aider must be trained in its safe application. For higher risk activities, such as adventure, residential, overseas or whole-school activities, the minimum number of first aiders and their level of qualification should be separately risk-assessed.

6.7 There must always be at least two adults on any residential or overseas trip.

6.8 The Group Leader has overall responsibility for the trip and for the staff accompanying the trip. All staff must follow the staff code of conduct and remain responsible for the pupils in their charge at all times.

6.9 The Group leader must contact the relevant Student Manager or Head of Sixth Form before the trip. This is to ascertain whether any pupil attending the trip has pastoral needs which need monitoring during the trip, and to ensure continuity of care.

7. **Emergency Contact**

7.1 For every off-site visit, someone must be designated as the Emergency Contact. The Emergency Contact must be specifically named on the risk assessment and will normally be:

- For activities which occur during the school day – the school receptionist
- For sporting activities – the Director of Sport
- For boarding activities – the relevant housemistress
- For all other activities – a member of the Executive Team.

- 7.2 The Emergency Contact must have access to the list of pupils and adults on the trip, the contact details of parents and guardians, the contact details of any adults on the trip, any relevant medical information, the risk assessment and the trip itinerary. The Group Leader should ensure that this information is provided to the Emergency Contact in advance of the trip.
- 7.3 The Emergency Contact will liaise with the trip leader and relevant parents in the case of any unexpected incident or significant delay to the trip. Parents must know how to reach the Emergency Contact.
- 7.4 In the event of an illness or minor accident to a pupil whilst on the trip, the Group Leader or another member of staff will accompany the pupil to the local hospital or clinic. If the trip is outside the UK, the Group Leader will notify the school's insurers on their helpline and follow guidance from the insurers.
- 7.5 The Group Leader will telephone the pupil's parents if their child has suffered an accident, injury or illness that is serious enough to require medical treatment.
- 7.6 The Group Leader is responsible for ensuring that contemporaneous accident reports and near misses are completed and that these are shared with the school nurse and the emergency contact.
- 7.7 In the event of a serious incident resulting in the death or serious injury of one or more of the pupils or staff, the Group Leader's first priority is to summon emergency services. Thereafter, the Emergency Contact will be telephoned and the school's emergency plan procedures followed. The Head should always be contacted in these circumstances. Staff should not engage with the Media, and any communications should be handled by the Head in the first instance or alternatively the Director of External Relations.

8. Evaluation

- 8.1 The Group Leader should provide a summary of the trip and submit to Exec, within two weeks of return. Off-site activities should be routinely evaluated and any concerns relating to pupils or staff, reported to the Head so that this policy and its associated procedures may be revised where necessary.
- 8.2 All accident or incident reports should be reviewed by the school nurse and the Health and Safety Officer as well as included in reports to the Health & Safety Committee.
- 8.3 The Head should provide Governors with an annual overview of off site visits undertaken by the School. The Deputy Head Academic and the Head of Prep have overall responsibility for the oversight of school trips and the Bursary Assistant maintains a register of residential trips.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Off-Site Activities Procedure
Request for Activities and Visits Form ('yellow form')
Letter to Parents

Schools Visits Check List
Off-Site Activity Risk Assessment
Nut Policy
Staff code of conduct
Behaviour policy
Medical and First Aid Policy
Check List – In the Event of Serious Incident While a Group is Off Site.

Reviewed by Director: October
2024