



**DANESHILL SCHOOL**

**EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY**

**Reviewed: Sept 2022**  
**Next Review Date: Sept 2023**

# **PART ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

At Daneshill 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 pupils' development and education in the broadest sense of the word.

## **OUR TRIPS & VISITS**

We regularly take pupils on day trips to: historic sites, museums, galleries, natural features, farms and Roman remains to support the curriculum in History, Art, Geography, English, Science and Classics. There are also regular theatre trips for pupils in the Preparatory school.

We run a residential Geography field trip to Devon for pupils in Year 5, a residential French and History trip to Normandy for pupils in Year 6 and a residential Geography and Science trip to Dorset for pupils in Year 7.

We have an active Adventure, Leadership and Service (ALS) Award programme for Years 7&8, involving a range of outdoor activities, services and skills. Our ALS programme involves a Three Peaks expedition at the end of Year 8.

You can find more about the trips, visits and activities that are available to each year group from our website. You may also wish to read our policy on sports, games and pastimes, which is in the parents' handbook.

## **INFORMATION ON PLANNED TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES**

- The school calendar lists the trips and visits that are due to take place over the coming term, together with a list of planned home and away sports fixtures. Weekly sports teams for fixtures are posted on the school website and on the Sports' Notice Board. We very much welcome family and friends at all our matches, both home and away.
- Parents will always be notified in advance and in detail if a child is going to be out of school during the school for a planned trip or activities.

## **CONSENT**

We require parent's specific, individual written consent if we are to take pupils on a trip or visit that extends beyond the normal school day, involves an overnight stay or is an overseas visit. Please note that we are unable to take pupils 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.

## **SAFETY**

Safety is top priority for us. We expect parents to support the school in ensuring that pupils follow the instructions given either by a member of staff, or by a qualified instructor and use 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**

### **INTRODUCTION**

We have a large number of trips, out-of-school activities and visits at Daneshill School, which are an important part of our educational ethos. We expect that every member of 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.

### **MINIBUS USAGE**

No one should drive the school minibus unless s/he has qualified to do so. For any minibus journey that lasts for longer than 4.5 hours, there should be a second member of staff who is also a qualified minibus driver. The school will arrange and fund First Aid courses. At Daneshill School we expect every member of staff to complete a "**Drivers' Declaration Form**" before s/he drives pupils in a school minibus or privately owned vehicle. The templates and completed forms are held by the School Secretary.

### **PROCEDURES FOR SPORTS FIXTURES AND ALS ACTIVITIES**

The following procedures apply to all Group Leaders taking trips to 'Away' sports fixtures at other schools and to ALS activities. Group Leaders should ensure that:

- A "Drivers' Declaration Form" has been completed and given to the School Secretary.
- They have read and acted upon the Medical details relating to any attendees (e.g. allergenic children who maybe consuming a 'match tea' at another school).
- They have a complete medical kit and any other necessary supplies (e.g. water bottles) for the trip.
- A register is taken before departure and before returning to school.
- A minibus check is/has been carried out by the qualified minibus driver.
- All parents and the school secretary are aware of the timings and location of the trip.
- They have a charged and functioning mobile phone (a school mobile is available) and the numbers of the school office, Bursar and Deputy Headmaster.
- They have a clear journey plan and necessary directions/satnav support (which may include ensuring prior to departure they have driven any roads they have not driven before).
- They have written and/or read any Risk Assessments relating to the relevant activities.
- They phone the school secretary (or bursar/deputy headmaster) with any updates to the passenger manifest before returning to school, e.g. if parents have collected their child from the trip location.
- In the event of a traffic accident, their priorities are, first and foremost, the complete safety of all passengers and secondly to contact the school immediately.
- A deputy head has been appointed by the trip organiser (and approved by Dep Head) to run the trip in the absence of the lead. He/she must be aware of all details, have the required experience/expertise and be ready to take over at any point.
- All considerations must be made in relation to Covid-19 protocol and our school policy on that.

### **PERSONNEL AND PROCEDURES FOR ALL OTHER TRIPS**

## **ROLE OF THE EDUCATION VISITS COORDINATOR**

The Deputy Headmaster (Mr Angus McDonald) is our Education Visits Coordinator (EVC). He (with the SLT's support) leads the process of approving visits, ensuring that they are spread through the different age groups, and the school year. The School Secretary supports the EVC by taking responsibility for checking all trip correspondence before it is sent out to parents and collating and checking parental consent forms and any other trip documentation. The Bursar should be provided with a list of attendees for appropriate billing. The Bursar will also advise appropriate costs for each educational visit which are to be billed to parents. Angus McDonald will sign off any trip.

## **ROLE OF THE GROUP LEADER**

Every trip or visit, no matter how short, must be planned in advance by the member of staff who is in charge of organising and running it. He or she will always have had experience of accompanying school visits before taking on the role of Group Leader. 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.

## **PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE**

The law places the Group Leader "in loco parentis". The Department of Education's Health and Safety advice for schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools>), provides good advice for all Group Leaders. 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 Daneshill 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.

Daneshill School's policy is to discourage staff from transporting pupils in their private cars (which requires parental permission) unless unavoidable and never to allow them to be transported in cars belonging to parent helpers (unless the parents make a private arrangement that does not involve the school). Where a member of staff transports a pupil in his/her car, insurance cover is automatically provided through the school's "occasional business use" motor policy. That 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.

## **PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS**

The amount of advance preparatory work needed will obviously vary considerably with the type of activity. 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.

The list that follows is designed to cover all the planning that a Group leader needs to undertake for a longer type of visit. It is designed to be as comprehensive as possible. Common sense should prevail and the depth of preparation will obviously vary depending on the nature of each trip.

**Initial Planning Stage - gaining permission from the EVC** (At least a term in advance for a day trip and at least two terms in advance for an overnight trip). Much of the list is included in the school's OSV1 (off-site visit) Form which staff should send to the EVC via email.

- Discuss preliminary plan, including purpose, location, transport, hotels, activities, itinerary, number and age of participants with EVC
- Calculate the staff to pupil ratio (see below)
- Decide 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).
- 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 a 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
- 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 preference 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, and we welcome them at all sports fixtures.
- If parent volunteers participate they must not have unsupervised responsibility for any children (except their own). If this is unavoidable, arrange for any volunteers participating in the trip who may have unsupervised responsibility for children to obtain an enhanced DBS. (The Bursar's office will make the necessary arrangements). Volunteers must read and sign the Volunteers' Consent form. This make them aware too of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 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 will 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
- Assurance should be sought that suitability checks have been carried out for any staff of another organisation taking responsibility for the school's pupils on a site other than the school.
- Working with the Bursar, 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).

### **RECOMMENDED STAFF / PUPIL RATIOS**

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

<b>Ratio</b>	<b>Pupils' Year Group</b>
1:6	1- 2 inclusive (with a higher ratio for the under 5s)
1:10	Years 3 – 6
1:15	Years 7 upwards
1:10	All visits abroad

N.B. These represent recommended ratios and group leaders should endeavour to match these ratios where possible. These ratios cannot always be met (e.g. for sports fixtures and ALS activities) and it is the

group leader's responsibility to ensure that any extension of these ratios does not place anyone on the trip at any greater risk. If a group leader feels that a greater risk is created, they should contact the EVC immediately and before departure.

### **After permission for a trip is granted**

- **Prepare the risk assessment(s) (see below). If the findings of the risk assessment create concerns then permission for the trip maybe revoked.**
- Once the Risk Assessment has been approved by the EVC, write a preliminary letter to send to parents and guardians of the age group, outlining the purpose of the trip and the programme. If the trip is a residential one then please ask for expressions of interest/acceptance, together with payment by a specific date. The letter should be accompanied by the OSV2 Form. Explain any restrictions on numbers. 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. **At Daneshill School we expect that these letters should always be cleared in advance by the EVC.**
- Brief the pupils about the visit, its dates and purpose.
- Check names of all pupils wishing to participate with the School Secretary. Discuss with the EVC concerns about special arrangements that may be required for handling any specific medical or SEN issues.

### **THE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The steps that Group Leaders should follow are set out in the model risk assessment from the DfE. This form can be downloaded and guides the user in:

- Identifying the potential hazards of the place being visited.
- Listing the groups of people that are especially at risk from the significant hazards.
- Listing existing controls or notifying where the information may be found.
- Considering how he/she would cope with the hazards which are not currently identified or fully controlled.
- Carrying out continual monitoring of hazards throughout the visit.

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 Daneshill 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 Daneshill School, the EVC maintains a dossier of generic risk assessments that cover sports fixtures, theatre and museum visits and most of our regular visits.

### **Six Weeks in Advance**

- Brief parents (in person or via a letter cleared by the Bursar) on all aspects of the trip, including:
  - The itinerary, including the meeting and collection points.
  - Contact details for the hotels/hostels/ names.
  - The number of the school mobile phone issued to the Group Leader.
  - The money, kit and equipment that the pupils need.
  - 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 traveling.
- The reasons why a completed consent form is essential.
- The need for a copy of each pupil's passport
- Send all parents a copy of the consent form with specified return date.
- (If appropriate) book picnic lunch from Catering Department.
- Brief pupils on expectations of standards of behaviour and cultural differences.

### **Two Weeks in Advance**

- Chase parents who have not returned their consent forms. Remind them that their child cannot participate unless the form is received within 3 working days of departure.
- Obtain photocopies of each pupil's passport (if relevant)
- 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.
- Send the Final Details OSV3 and Checklist OSV4 to the EVC. A trip cannot take place without approval following this submission.
- Prepare packs for the School Office, the School 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 mobile number/the school mobile.
  - Mobile numbers of all participating staff and the contact details for the school office.
  - 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 Deputy Head [the EVC] and the Bursar for any necessary out of hours contact.
  - The address and contact details of the nearest British Consul.
  - On exchanges, the names and contact details of the exchange school and the host families that are accommodating each pupil.]
  - A copy of the tickets, travel insurance document (including emergency contact details)
  - A copy of the risk assessment
  - Location of local hospital

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

- Collect tickets, credit card, and 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 etc.
- Remind pupils of the potential risks of irresponsible behaviour
- Remind pupils to bring passports. Ask to see each passport.
- Collect traveling first aid kit(s). Check contents.
- Collect packed lunch



## **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 partner school in the event of difficulties between a pupil and their host family. 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 each hotel or hostel. Ensuring that every pupil walks through the emergency escape route at each hotel.
- Ensuring that sleeping accommodation is suitable and located together (preferably not on the ground floor).
- 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 - or reminding pupils to look after - passports and valuables
- Storing cash and tickets in the hotel safe.
- 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/her to the local hospital or clinic. If the trip is outside the UK, s/he will notify the Head and / or EVC immediately so that they can make contact with the School insurers 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 Daneshill School we do not 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 the Head or a member of the SMT will be tasked with this.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

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 EVC or Bursar of what had happened would be the next task 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 EVC/Bursar are maintained. He/she would also need to arrange (via the Bursar) 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 Daneshill 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, email, messages on our website, local radio) for communicating with those whose children are not affected. Where possible, communication with the media should be left to the Head. The Group Leader should refer the media to the school. If comment is unavoidable, it should be factual, calm and no attempt made to cover gaps in knowledge. Pupils should be discouraged from talking to the media.

## **DELAYED RETURN**

If a visit is delayed, the Group Leader should phone the school office, or EVC/Bursar, 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 EVC with a report on the visit, reports of 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 Bursary. The pre-paid foreign currency card and the school credit card should be returned, together with all related transaction vouchers. The Group Leader is also responsible for producing a schedule of all expenditure on the trip.