

ST. MARY'S BRYANSTON SQUARE POLICY FOR OFF-SITE VISITS 2010

Aims.

This policy aims to ensure that visits are planned and conducted so that:

- the maximum educational benefit is derived from non-residential visits;
- children's health and safety is safeguarded on visits;
- other members of the school community are not inconvenienced;
- children represent the school in the best possible light in public;
- parents are fully informed about their child's activities.

Day visits should be a fully integrated part of the group's curriculum work. The visits must be included in half-termly forward planning.

There are, put in simple terms, 5 types of off-site visits:

- Routine visits to the library, other local schools, swimming pool, etc
- Short walks in the local area to support environmental education, etc
- Visits to indoor venues: museums, workshop events (music, art, etc), etc.
- Outdoor visits: farm visits, environmental studies, etc
- Residential trips (Year 6 school journey) and 'outdoor adventurous activities.'

The first three types of visit may generally be considered 'low risk' and there may be generic risk assessments already filed for these visits.

The last two will usually fall into 'medium risk' or 'high risk' categories and will require a higher level of planning and documentation. As well as complying with this policy the Westminster Policy for School Visits will have to be complied with. Some potentially hazardous visits will require approval by the Director of Education.

For most day visits it will only be necessary for the Headteacher to approve the visit.

Please use the following procedures as a checklist.

Procedures

1. **Discuss the suitability** of the date with the Head Teacher before any confirmations or detailed preparations are made.
2. **Preliminary visits** should be made if at all possible, and in the light of this visit:
 - decide on the mode of transport with regard to safety, behaviour, cost and speed;
 - locate facilities: lunch rooms, shelters, lavatories, postcards, recreation space if necessary, etc.;
 - decide exactly which exhibits or area the visit is to focus on, bearing in mind that a limited exposure with very clearly defined observation / recording tasks is usually more productive than a more vaguely defined over-view;
 - decide whether any available in-house support, eg. guides, worksheets or other resources are appropriate for your planned approach, or whether you will need to prepare your own.
3. **Complete a risk assessment form** (by signing this the Headteacher, or his/her deputy, also implicitly agrees to the visit taking place)
4. **Cost the exercise**, not forgetting the adult fares. Divide the total by the number of children expected to take part.
5. **Inform parents** of the visit's details:
 - purpose of visit
 - the place to be visited
 - date and times of departure
 - return time
 - transport arrangements
 - proposed cost and financial arrangements
 - arrangements for lunch (if appropriate)
 - names of staff accompanying the visit
6. **Obtain permission from parents** if the visit is not 'routine' (library, etc)
7. **Inform other school staff and volunteers**
 - Make arrangements with the kitchen, remembering that the cook needs as much notice as possible because of ordering. Children who normally have a school dinner take a packed lunch from the kitchen. They do not supply drinks.
 - It is almost impossible to find a day for a field visit that does not disrupt some weekly activity, particularly in the Junior department. However, it is our policy to ensure that such activities are cancelled or postponed with suitable notice and minimum disruption to the adults concerned. Activities which may need to be cancelled or changed include:
 - instrumental music instruction
 - volunteer reading helpers
 - SEN support for statemented children

- library visits
- swimming / sports centre visits
- Educational Psychologist working with individuals
- clubs - if late return expected
- St. Marylebone teachers

It is not acceptable for an adult, either professional or voluntary, to arrive to teach or support children who are out on a visit, because they have not been told.

8. Draft a letter to parents, remembering that our policy is:

- to tell the parents the type of work the children will be engaged in, and to make it clear that it is a field trip (and not an outing).
- To inform parents of the travel arrangements.
- to inform parents about the cost of the trip, and to invite them to contribute that amount or as much of it as they can afford.
- to inform parents about rearrangements made for eg. music lessons.
- that children bringing a packed lunch from home bring it in a disposable carrier bag (not their usual lunch box).
- that no fizzy drinks or glass containers are allowed.
- to tell parents the date of the visit, times of leaving and return.
- to require permission on a return slip.
- to specify suitable clothing and turn-out.

Show the draft to the Headteacher.

9. Children should be well prepared

- learning expectations;
- behaviour.
- organisation

- 10.** If, after all reasonable efforts have been made, and after allowing for the available support and nature of the visit, the behaviour of individual children is still deemed to pose an unacceptable level of risk to themselves, the other children, the adults accompanying the group or members of the general public, the school reserves the right not to take those individual children off site.

It is the class teacher's responsibility to arrange a class to accommodate the child(ren) and provide appropriate work.

11. Supervision

- For a short (eg. half day) visit which does not require public transport, two adults to a class may be sufficient, but generally speaking, a suitable ratio of adults to children is 1:6 for infant classes (1:10 for library visits) and 1:10 (1:15 for short, local visits, eg: library, swimming, sports centre) for juniors.
- Decisions about supervision ratios should be made by the group leader, bearing in mind the particular cohort's age, SEN, risk assessments, etc.

If you can arrange exchanges of teacher or classroom support with your colleagues, or arrange trips during your own support time, it is less disruptive to the timetable. Ideally it is better to invite specific parents to accompany the group, rather than issuing a general invitation, but with the decrease in parental availability, you may have to open it to anyone who is available.

Parent volunteers must be deemed competent to supervise their group and be briefed about their role.

- Very large groups (more than one class) are not conducive to the learning atmosphere. Small groups (ten or fifteen) have much more potential. Consider taking or sending this type of group out on your support teacher day.
12. **Details about the visit**, completed risk assessments, contact numbers for the group leader(s) (mobile numbers), etc must be left with the Headteacher.
 13. **Group leaders must take with them contact details** (school, mobiles, pupil contact details, etc) and any medication used by pupils in the group.
 14. **The group leader must be familiar with the school's emergency procedures** in the event that the group are involved in a civil emergency or in the event that the school is involved in an emergency while the group are off site.
 15. The group leader must be familiar with the emergency procedures in the event that someone in the group is involved in an accident or emergency (see attached)
 16. **Following the visit:**
 - The group leader should provide a verbal evaluation of the trip to the Headteacher. Any problems should be followed up - this is the group leader's responsibility in the first instance.
 - children should write thank-you letters whenever it is appropriate.

A 'Going Out' Pack is available from the school office that contains all of the available guidance for planning school visits - school policies, etc as well as Westminster and DfE guidance.

Revised November 2000

Revised April 2003

Revised January 2007

Revised January 2010