



Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy, Guidelines and Protocol

Signed:	Hazel Simmons
Position:	Headteacher
Chair of Governors	Tim Coulson
Signed	*approved remotely, pending official meeting for signature
Date Agreed:	December 2019
Next Review:	September 2021

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Organisation of Visits	9
3. Planning Checklist for Off-Site Activities	11
4. Checklist of Information to Parents.....	15
5. Risk Assessment	17
6. Roles and Responsibilities.....	19
7. Emergency Procedures	21
8. Advice of Specific Activities.....	24
9. Transport and Travel.....	27
10. Supervision.....	29
11. First Aid Kit.....	33
12. Protection of Children	34
Appendix A.....	35
Appendix B	36

1. Introduction

This policy covers all off-site activities organised through The Bridge School and for which the Governing Board and Headteacher are responsible.

The Governing Board seeks to ensure that every pupil has access to a wide range of educational experiences as an entitlement. As part of this entitlement the Governing Board recognises the significant educational value of visits and activities which take place away from the immediate school environment.

The Governing Board aims to enable this school to become an educational environment in which all members of the school community can thrive, regardless of race, religion, culture, gender or individual need. We intend to apply this aim to the planning and management of all visits and off-site activities.

Visits and off-site activities support, enrich and extend the curriculum in many subject areas, encourage co-operation, team work and the application of problem solving skills and develop independence and self-confidence.

Residential opportunities, physical challenge and adventure can have a particular part to play in the development of personal and social qualities for all young people. Outdoor education helps young people to be physically active and to understand how to assess and manage risk.

The management of visits and off-site activities places particular responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of all participants on the Governing Board, Headteacher, Educational Visits Co-ordinator, the Party Leader, members of staff and volunteers, pupils and parents. The school also has responsibilities to other members of the public and to third parties. This policy on visits and off-site activities therefore complements the wider school health and safety policy.

It is a priority of this school that all visits and off-site activities are safe, well managed and educationally beneficial.

Responsibilities of the School

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the school must take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and pupils are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This applies to activities on or off school premises.

Regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 set out in more detail what actions employers are required to take which include:

- assess the risks to staff and others affected by school activities in order to identify the health and safety measures that are necessary and, in certain circumstances, keep a record of the significant findings of that assessment.
- introduce measures to manage those risks (risk management); tell their employees about the risks and measures to be taken to manage the risks.
- ensure that adequate training is given to employees on health and safety matters.

The Bridge School is required to ensure that its employees are provided with:

- appropriate guidance relating to education visits and LOTC activity;
- access to training courses to support the guidance to ensure that it is understood;
- suitable systems and processes to ensure that those trained are kept updated;
- access to advice, support and further training from Advisers that have proven expertise and professional understanding of the guidance.

The Bridge School will annually subscribe to Suffolk Evolve. Suffolk Evolve is a web-based system used to provide a clear process for planning, recording, approving and evaluating educational visits. All staff that lead or accompany visits can access their own Suffolk Evolve account, which is set up by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator. As well as being an efficient tool for planning and approving visits, Suffolk Evolve also contains a variety of features including search and report facilities, downloadable resources and information, staff records and visit history, gateway access for parents.

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third-party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management.

Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit. Establishment policy should clarify the circumstances where a preliminary visit is a requirement.

Providers with the LOTC Quality Badge have been nationally recognised by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom for offering good quality activity programmes with a clear structure for managing risk effectively.

If providers do not hold the LOTC Quality Badge a completed Providers Assessment Form is required.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure all visits and off-site activities have specific and appropriate educational objectives;
- Approve all visits and activities, based on compliance with the school's health and safety policy, relevant national guidance and recognised best practice;
- Ensure off-site programmes are led by competent staff who are appropriately experienced and qualified to assess the risks, manage the activity and manage the specific group;
- Check that the staffing ratio is suitable for each visit;
- Delegate tasks to the Educational Visits Co-ordinator;
- Ensure that arrangements are in place for the Governing Board to be made aware of visits so that questions can be asked if necessary;
- Ensure the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996 is adhered to.

Responsibilities of Employees

It is a legal expectation all employees must follow the requirements of the "Policy for the Management of learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC)" (January 2015), the "Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel's (OEAP's) National Guidance", as well as the requirements of this Policy Statement.

Responsibilities of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator

In order to carry out the above responsibilities effectively the Headteacher may delegate specified tasks to a suitable experienced and competent Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC). The Headteacher will be considered to be the EVC where tasks are not delegated to a named member of staff. The EVC will be responsible for carrying out agreed tasks and attending relevant training provided.

Approval of Off-Site Activities

The Headteacher will be responsible for approving all off-site activities. This includes approving the Party Leader for each visit or off-site activity.

The Governing Board will be informed by the Headteacher about visits which:

- Have a residential element;
- Are visits abroad;
- Are visits where there is significant concern about health, safety and welfare.

The Headteacher will monitor off-site visits and activities and will provide a regular report to the Governing Board about the off-site activities which have taken place from the school.

Responsibilities of the Party Leader

The Party Leader will:

- Have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit or activity; Obtain the Headteacher's approval before any off-site visit or activity takes place;
- Follow the policy and procedures of the school;
- Assess the risks involved and amend as appropriate any previously recorded risk assessment;
- Use the school planning checklist to ensure all procedures have been followed;
- Inform parents fully about the visit and gain their consent, where appropriate;
- Reassess risks while the visit or activity takes place;
- Ensure there is contingency plan (Plan B) should a significant change to the programme be necessary due to weather etc.;
- All activities will be available to all pupils regardless of ability. The Party Leader should establish what additional equipment or specialised transport needs to be provided and this will be built into the total cost of the trip.

Responsibilities of additional members of staff taking part in visits and off-site activities

Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

Assist the Party Leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of young people on the visit;

Be clear about their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in a visit or activity.

Responsibilities of pupils

Whilst taking part in off-site activities pupils also have responsibilities about which they should be made aware by the Party Leader or other members of staff, for their own health and safety and that of the group. Young people should:

- Avoid unnecessary risks;
- Follow instructions of the Party Leader and other members of staff;
- Behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct;
- Inform a member of staff of significant hazards.

Responsibilities of parents

Parents have an important role in deciding whether any visit or off-site activity is suitable for their child. Subject to their agreement to the activity parents should:

- Support the application of any agreed code of conduct;
- Inform the Party Leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit;
- Provide an emergency contact number;
- Sign the consent form.

The provision of training and information

A copy of this policy and associated school procedures will be made available to all staff within the school who may be responsible for leading off-site visits and activities and to any parent requesting a copy.

The EVC will make additional information available to staff to help ensure the safe management of off-site activities.

Appropriate training will be made available to leaders and other adults taking part in off-site activities in order to reflect identified school health and safety priorities and educational priorities. The School Business Manager will maintain a record of the qualifications held by staff and volunteers involved in outdoor activities including first aid, life-saving, minibus driving and specific hazardous activities. This includes checking for DBS clearance for all staff and volunteers.

Action in the case of emergency

The Headteacher will ensure that emergency arrangements are in place, known to staff and in line with school policy, to cover the range of activities undertaken from the school and the times at which they take place.

This will include emergency contact numbers for designated senior members of staff. First aid provision and training of staff will be in accordance with school expectations.

Accidents and incidents

Any accidents and incidents that occur during off-site visits and activities will be reported and recorded in accordance with the school health and safety policy. Accidents and incidents will subsequently be reviewed within the school to identify any learning points. (Forms from School Office).

Management of specific provision

The following arrangements apply to the management of specific provision for off-site visits and activities:

- Mini Bus Policy

Monitoring and review policy and practice

The Governing Board will review this policy:

- Every two years;
- At such time as there are significant changes to national guidance on the management of Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities;
- Should significant issues be brought to the attention of the Governing Board through the report of the Headteacher.

2. Organisation of Visits

Supervision

When working with groups of children or young people it's important that there are enough adults to provide the appropriate level of supervision.

Staffing and supervision ratios can sometimes be difficult to judge. It is important that there are always enough staff and volunteers to ensure children are safe, and that these adults are suitable to undertake various tasks as needed.

It may not always be possible to stick to recommended ratios. However, every effort should be made to achieve the best level of supervision of children at all times.

It is important to have a suitable ratio of adult supervisors to participants for any excursion. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Sex, age and ability of the group;
- Those with additional support or medical needs;
- Nature of activities;
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- Duration and nature of the journey;
- Type of any accommodation;
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;
- Requirements of the organisation / location to be visited;
- Competence and behaviour of participants;
- First aid cover.

If Suffolk County Council have set levels of supervision for off-site excursions these must be adhered to.

In addition to the Party Leader there should be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When excursions are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

Staff and volunteers will need to have:

- An understanding of their responsibility to keep children and young people safe;
- Insurance for certain activities;
- Codes of practice which they understand and agree to follow.

Three categories of activities and associated approval systems are established:

Category	Examples of programmes	Approval procedure
A	Visits, journeys and environmental studies for which the element of risk is similar to that encountered in daily life e.g. farm visits, visits to sites of historic, commercial or cultural interest, most fieldwork, sports tours and leisure centre visits, local walks, journeys to the zoo or theatre.	EVC
B	Hazardous outdoor and adventurous activities which take place within the regional area, having an element of risk and for which there is a county system of leader registration, except those listed within Category C.	Head EVC Local Governing Body approval, dependent on school procedures.
C	All visits abroad. All other hazardous activities or which include multi-pitch, rock climbing, caving with pitches over 18m, white water canoeing or kayaking, coastal sailing journeys, sea journeys by canoe or kayak, windsurfing on tidal waters.	Head Local Governing Body approval, dependent on school procedures.

3. Planning Checklist for Off-Site Activities

This checklist is to help the Headteacher, EVC and the Party Leader to ensure:

- The health, safety and welfare of young people and staff;
- The maximum educational benefit to pupils;
- Effective management, planning, organisation and leadership.

1. Party Leader

Is there a clearly identified Party Leader, sufficiently experienced and competent to assess the risks and manage the proposed visit or activity?

2. Purpose

Is there a clearly identified purpose for the whole programme and any of its constituent parts, appropriate to the age and ability of the group?

3. Risk Assessment

Has the Party Leader assessed the risks involved in all aspects of the visit or activity and recorded the significant findings (or made reference to a previous record, with amendments as necessary?)
Take a copy of the risk assessment on the visit.

4. Location

Is the proposed location of the visit suitable for the activity to be undertaken and manageable for the group?

5. Advice

Have you sought advice from someone with expertise or technical competence where there is uncertainty about safe practice? This may be a member of staff who has a co-ordinating role for off-site activities within your establishment.

6. Approval

Does the proposed activity fall within Category C? If so, it will also need to be assessed by the Headteacher or EVC at the planning stage. Does the proposed activity fall within Category B?

7. Venue

Does the visit involve hazardous activities booked through commercial, charitable or private providers?

8. Staff

Are members of staff, instructors or adult volunteers leading hazardous activities suitably qualified and experienced, i.e. competent, to do so? Have members of staff or adult volunteers been vetted, regarding child protection, where necessary? Safeguarding policy. Does staffing include male and female supervision, where necessary?

9. Staff/Pupil Ratio

Will the group have an acceptable staff/pupil ratio necessary for the activities proposed? Do plans and staffing ratios reflect the needs of young people with disabilities?

10. Preliminary Visit

Has the Party Leader made a preliminary visit to the site or centre to be visited, to check arrangements? (e.g. travel time, access and permission, facilities and equipment, leisure or recreational facilities for residential stays, staff support, guides or programmes of work, potential health and safety issues, shelter, toilets, costs, accommodation, contingency arrangements, references from previous users.) If not, has action been taken to ensure the Party Leader is aware of potential hazards and opportunities?

11. Parental Consent

Has parental consent been obtained for the visit, and for any hazardous activities which are planned?

12. The Programme

Do young people and staff have the appropriate clothing and equipment necessary for the activities proposed and allowing for a range of weather conditions? If not, will another provider be offering additional appropriate equipment? Are the young people prepared for and physically capable of taking part in the proposed activity? Is the programme suitable for all participants? Is there an alternative programme in the event of poor weather?

13. Medical Needs

Are sufficient staff aware of dietary and medical needs of young people and staff? Have suitable and sufficient first aid arrangements been made?

14. Transport

Transport is appropriate and legal transport available? Are there suitable and sufficient qualified drivers for any planned minibus journey? Will departure and return times be made known to staff, young people and parents? Is there a contingency plan, in the event of a delay or early return?

- 15. Organisation**
Has the procedure for organising trips and activities been followed?
- 16. Finance and Insurance**
Has the activity been costed and signed off by the EVC? Is there adequate and relevant insurance cover?
- 17. Briefing for Young People**
Will the young people be properly briefed on the activities they will undertake during the visit? The briefing may need to include:
- Appropriate clothing and equipment
 - Rendezvous procedures
 - Safety risks of jewellery
 - Groupings for study or supervisory purposes
 - A system of recall and action in emergencies
 - Agreed codes of conduct and behaviour
 - Significant hazards
 - Relevance to prior and future learning
- 18. Briefing for Staff**
Will the Party Leader also brief adults and voluntary helpers? The briefing may need to include:
- Anticipation of hazards and the nature of the programme
 - Defining roles and responsibilities of staff
 - Careful supervision, to cover the whole time away
 - Standards of behaviour expected from young people
 - Regular counting of participants
 - How much help to give to young people in their tasks
 - A list of names of people in sub groups
 - Emergency procedures
- 19. Emergency Contact**
Has a named point of contact been identified at home or at "base" in the event of an emergency, who has a contact list of the group members, including staff, and a programme of the group's activities? Are sufficient staff aware of procedures and relevant phone numbers in the event of an emergency?
- 20. Preparation and Communication**
Is there adequate time and opportunity to prepare for the visit or activity? Have other staff and colleagues whose work may be affected been notified or planned arrangements?

21. School Organisation

- Lists for staff room / School Office;
- Departure and return times;
- Has Reception been informed?
- Have Site team been informed for gate etc.
- Contact details for Pupils
- School Emergency contact details
- Cover

22. Follow Up

Have arrangements been considered for appropriate follow up work and evaluation after the visit? Has a report been provided for the Head or EVC where appropriate, to share positive aspects of the visit and learn from problems or incidents? Have other records been completed related to vehicles or equipment, for example? Have financial records been completed?

4. Checklist of Information to Parents

The list below gives the information which should be given in writing to parents before obtaining their written consent for journeys abroad or residential visits in the UK. Parents need less information regarding day visits but, if the return is after school hours and/or hazardous activities are included, most of the information below will be required.

Local visits on foot, in school time, to non-hazardous venues do not normally need written parental consent. It may be appropriate to inform parents of this principle at the beginning of their children's school career or in the handbook for parents.

A specific programme of events occurring over a period of time, such as a term, may only require one consent form. However, parents will need to be kept informed of other specific arrangements for each part of the programme.

1. Date
2. Objectives of visit or activity
3. Times of departure and return, including location for meeting parents.
4. Method of travel including name of any travel company.
5. Accommodation with address and telephone number, including details of host families for exchange visits.
6. Emergency contact arrangements at home and away, if all young people are not at centre. Consider the value of a "telephone tree" to make easy and rapid contact with a large group of parents, e.g. regarding changed transport arrangements.
7. Names of leader and accompanying staff.
8. Names and status (e.g. parent) of other accompanying adults who will exercise some responsibility during the visit.
9. Details of activities planned. Any activity involving special hazards must be clearly specified.
10. Charges or voluntary contributions. What they cover and do not cover.
11. Methods of payment and cancellation arrangements.
12. Insurance effected for the group members in respect of baggage, personal accident, cancellation and medical cover. Send photocopy of insurance schedule to all parents or state that a copy of schedule may be obtained from the Party Leader.
13. Clothing/footwear and other items to be taken. Prohibited items.
14. Money to be taken.
15. Code of conduct; details relating to the standard of behaviour expected from the group during the visit, including, for example, rules on general group discipline, smoking, sexual behaviour, illegal substances and alcoholic drinks.
16. Parents should complete a medical form for all except day educational visits and give their written consent for emergency medical treatment.

The Headteacher and Party Leader will realise the benefits of inviting parents to a planning meeting, particularly where residential experience is involved, visits abroad or where the activity constitutes a “new direction” for the group members or the establishment. There is then the opportunity for all involved to be fully informed and to raise issues which may be difficult to put down in writing.

5. Risk Assessment

Risk assessment and risk management are legal requirements. For education visits they involve the careful examination of what could cause harm during the visit and whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more should be done. The aim is to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill. The control measures should be understood by those involved. Risk assessments should explicitly cover how special educational needs and medical needs are to be addressed. The programme of a visit, as set out in the risk assessment and the consent form, should not be deviated from and should include details of contingency measures – Plan B. Risk assessments must be recorded and reviewed. It is recommended to use pupils in the process of assessing risk assessment.

Risk assessment for education visits can be usefully considered as having three levels:

- **Generic activity risk assessments** which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place. Repeated events e.g. sports fixtures;
- **Visit/site specific risk assessments** which will differ from place to place and group to group; and
- **Ongoing risk assessments** that take account of, for example, illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activity.

Controlling and Reducing Risk

Well-disciplined pupils
Pupils who have been involved in planning
Pupils carrying out own risk assessment
Your training
Your forethought and planning
Recognise that what can go wrong will go wrong

Strategies to Reduce Risks

Mobile phones
Pre-planning visits
Use internet and multi map to give pupils hand-outs of locations and rendezvous points
Pupils carry cards with addresses and phone numbers
Buddy system
Explain risks and practise procedures
First aid training
Plenty of adult helpers
Home contact
School contact
Registers/lists

Ongoing Risk Assessment

Risk assessment does not end when the visit begins. Changes to the itinerary, changes to the weather, incidents (whether minor or major), staff illness – all or any of these may bring pupils face to face with unexpected hazards or difficulties and give rise to the need to re-assess risk.

The Party Leader (and other adults with responsibility) prepares ongoing risk assessments while the visit is taking place. These normally consist of judgements and decisions made as the need arises. They should be informed by the generic and visit or site specific risk assessments.

It is good practice to have briefings each night to take stock and assess the circumstances for the next day, and to spend time early the next morning explaining arrangements to the pupils.

Check the local weather forecast

- To inform decisions on appropriate clothing;
- To be aware of whether water activities might be in areas prone to flash floods, high winds etc.;
- To be aware of whether trekking or climbing at altitude might be subject to dramatic changes of weather; potential for fallen trees, avalanches etc.

Seek local knowledge of potential hazards, e.g.

- Tides;
- Rivers/streams prone to sudden increases in flow;
- Difficult terrain;
- Crossing points for road, rail or water;
- Unstable cliffs.

Plan B

- Good forward planning will always include alternative plans in case the itinerary needs to be changed;
- A flexible itinerary can allow activities from later in the visit to be substituted for earlier activities if those are prevented by unexpected circumstances;
- The Party Leader faced with potential difficulties will feel more confident to change the itinerary if a pre-assessed alternative is available;
- Regardless of whether alternatives have been pre-assessed, always take time to reassess risks if the itinerary changes;
- On arrival at an alternative site or activity that has not previously been risk assessed, we recommend the Party Leader should risk assess the situation before allowing the pupils to disembark from the transport;
- An unknown location might involve hazards not covered in the original risk assessment, for example if the original intention to visit a land-only site has to be changed at short notice to a lake or seaside location.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Party Leader

The Party Leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit or activity and should be approved by the Headteacher or EVC. In particular the Party Leader should:

- Obtain EVC approval before any off-site visit or activity takes place;
- Follow school policy guidelines;
- Assess the risks involved and amend as appropriate any previously recorded risk assessment;
- Consider the planning checklist to ensure all procedures have been followed; Inform parents about the visit and gain their consent, where appropriate;
- Reassess risks when the visit or activity takes place.

Additional Members of Staff and Volunteers

Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

- Assist the Party Leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all young people on the visit;
- Be clear about their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in a visit or activity;
- Appropriate checks in place for volunteers depending on the visit e.g. DBS

Pupils and Young People

Whilst taking part in off-site activities young people also have responsibilities they should be made aware of by the Party Leader or other members of staff, for their own health and safety and that of the group. Young people should:

- Not take unnecessary risks;
- Follow instructions of the Party Leader and other members of staff;
- Behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct;
- Inform a member of staff of significant hazards.

Parents

Parents have an important role in deciding whether any visit or off-site activity is suitable for their child. Subject to their agreement, parents should:

- Inform the Party Leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit;
- Provide an emergency contact number;
- Sign the consent form.

Safeguarding Children at The Bridge School

The Bridge School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The Bridge School safeguarding / child protection policy can be issued when appropriate to volunteers on educational visits. The level of individual checks (DBS) will depend on the type of visit and decision made on each individual case.

7. Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a visit or off-site activity.

Ensure that you know where help can be sourced and where the nearest A&E facility is located.

If an accident occurs the priorities are to:

- **Assess the situation**
- **Safeguard the rest of the party**
- **Attend to the casualty**
- **Inform the emergency services**

An emergency is difficult to define. It may be a fracture, food poisoning or a fatality, or an illness requiring immediate medical treatment. It may on the other hand be missing children who are soon found or a coach crash in which no serious injuries are sustained. The following notes are for guidance. The procedures listed will not all apply to all emergencies.

1. Assess the nature and extent of the emergency.
2. Make sure all other group members are safe from danger and are looked after.
3. Render first aid and attend to any casualties.
4. Call the emergency services as required. As a minimum you will need to know:
 - Precise location
 - Description of the accident
 - Time of the accident
 - Number of casualties
 - Nature of injuries
 - Total number in the party
 - Your telephone number
5. Supervise and support the remainder of the group and arrange for their return to base.
6. Contact Headteacher or designated senior member of staff with the information listed under (4) above and:(contact card from School Office).
 - Names and telephone numbers, if necessary of individuals involved
 - Names of other members in the party
 - Action taken so far
 - Action to be taken and by whom
 - Telephone numbers for future communication.
 - For a serious incident, where the media may be involved, identify alternative 'phone numbers at "home" and "off-site base" as other lines will quickly become jammed.

Preparation

By their nature, emergencies are usually unexpected. But careful emergency planning can mitigate the trauma of being caught up in an emergency. It is good practice for the Party Leader to:

- Agree an emergency action plan, which includes 24- hour (i.e. constant cover) contact points at the school and clear roles for the group leader, school, headteacher;
- Ensure that all members of the group know what action to take if there is a problem;
- Hold evening briefings with supervisors to discuss issues for the next day;
- Spend time early the next morning explaining arrangements to the pupils;
- Have, or ensure that other adults in the group have, up-to-date competence in First Aid and other life-saving competence as necessary for the activities;
- Ensure that the First Aid kit is properly stocked and accessible;
- Ensure that all pupils' medical needs (e.g. asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis) are known and that staff are competent to handle them;
- Recognise that many of the health problems of pupils on longer visits are caused by lack of food, or liquid or of sleep;
- If appropriate, advise group members about the dangers of over-exertion in the heat and of dehydration, which can cause headache, dizziness and nausea;
- In warm climates, keep fluid levels high, take extra salt and wear loose, lightweight clothing – preferably made of cotton or other natural fibres – and use suitable factored sun protection creams and sun hats/glasses;
- Ensure that drivers take adequate rest breaks on long journeys;
- Ensure that all pupils understand and follow the code of conduct;
- Practise emergency drills e.g. evacuation of mini-bus;
- If abroad, know where the nearest British Embassy or Consulate is located and the telephone number. Depending on the age of the pupils, it may be appropriate to ensure that they have this information to hand.

Emergency procedures framework during the visit

If an emergency occurs on a school visit the group leader should maintain or resume control of the group overall. 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 any casualties' names and get immediate medical attention;
- Ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital with any relevant medical information, and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together;

- Notify the police if necessary;
- Ensure all group members who need to know are aware of the incident;
- Ensure all group members follow the emergency procedures and the roles allocated to them, revise procedures and re-allocate roles as necessary;
- Inform the school contact and provider/tour operator. The school contact number should be accessible at all times during the visit;
- 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);
- School contact should notify parents, providing as full a factual account of the incident as possible.
- Notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required (this may be done by the school contact);
- Notify the British Embassy/Consulate if an emergency occurs abroad;
- Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve vital evidence;
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident;
- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible;
- No-one in the group should speak to the media.

8. Advice on Specific Activities

Coastal Visits

The group leader will want to bear the following points in mind when assessing the risks of a coastal activity:

- Tides, rip tides and sandbanks are potential hazards timings and exit routes should be checked;
- Group members should be aware of warning signs and flags;
- Establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- Look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc.;
- Some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. The Party Leader should consider which areas of the terrain are out of bounds, and whether the risk assessment allows swimming in the sea;
- Cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to a safe distance from the cliff edge at all times – a “buffer zone” between the pupils and the hazard. Be aware that cliff falls can mean that cliff paths stop abruptly at the cliff edge;
- The Party Leader should not normally allow pupils to ride mountain bikes on any route that is near a sheer drop e.g. coastal path or canal towpath. If the risk assessment indicates that the risk could be managed adequately, then there should be a small known group of skilled and experienced riders accompanied by appropriately qualified staff;
- The local coastguard, harbour master, lifeguard or tourist information office can provide information and advice on the nature and location of hazards.

Swimming in the sea or other natural waters

Swimming and paddling or otherwise entering the waters of river, canal, sea or lake should never be allowed as an impromptu activity. The pleas of children to be allowed to bathe – because it is hot weather, for example, or after a kayaking exercise – should be resisted where the bathing has not been prepared for. In-water activities should take place only when a proper risk assessment has been completed and proper measures put in to control the risks. The activities should be formal and supervised.

The Party Leader must seek out recognised bathing areas that have official surveillance, i.e. qualified lifeguard cover. But, even then the Party Leader should be aware that pupils might mingle with members of the public and be lost to view. Pupils should always be in sight and reasonable reach of their supervisors.

The Party Leader should:

- Be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers;
- Ascertain for themselves the level of the pupils' swimming ability;
- Check the weather;
- Be aware of the local conditions – such as currents, weeds, rip tides, a shelving, uneven or unstable bottom – using local information from the lifeguard, coastguard, harbourmaster, police or tourist information office;
- Beware of rocks, breakwaters and other potential hazards;
- Look out for warning signs and flags: a red flag means it is unsafe to swim; yellow flags mean that lifeguards are on patrol in the area between the flags; a black and white flag means it is an area used by surfers and not suitable for swimming;
- Designate a safe area of water for use by the group;
- Brief the group about the limits of the swimming area;
- Avoid crowded beaches where it is harder to see pupils;
- Be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water;
- Be aware of the dangers of paddling especially for young pupils;
- Ensure that pupils have not eaten (at least half an hour) before swimming;
- Ensure the activity is suitable for the pupils, especially any with special needs or disabilities;
- Adopt and explain the signals of distress and recall;
- Ensure that buoyancy aids, lifejackets etc. are used where appropriate;
- Carry out regular head counts;
- Be aware that it is not always possible to tell when someone is in difficulties.

Supervisors should:

- Have clear roles – at least one supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance, even where lifeguards are on duty;
- Take up a best position from which to exercise a constant vigilance;
- Divide their careful watching between staff who stand in the sea and look landward towards the group and staff who stay on land and watch the group from that vantage point;
- Give the children their full, undivided attention;
- Always follow the advice or directions of a lifeguard;
- Never swim themselves unless it is to help a child in distress;
- Not join in any of the children's games;
- Ensure that no child is allowed to wade out or swim further than his or her waist height;
- Nevertheless, be aware that it is possible to drown in one's own depth, and to act immediately when a child appears to be in difficulties';

- Ensure that children leave the water immediately if they get too cold, especially if the toes and fingers look blue or feel numb – this could suggest the onset of hypothermia;
- Recognise that a child in difficulty is unlikely to wave or shout – all of their energies will be used in trying to keep afloat.

Leadership Qualifications

The Party Leader should hold the RLSS Bronze Award (General) or its equivalent. Any assistants should be capable of effecting a rescue within the defined area.

9. Transport and Travel

The Party Leader and Headteacher should be aware of the high level of accidents related to the use of minibuses and cars and the drivers' liability to prosecution in the event of breaking the law. When journeys are planned, Headteachers and the Party Leader must be satisfied that drivers are aware of the constraints which affect any journey by road. Some of the major constraints are:

- Passenger safety;
- The competence and training of the driver to drive the proposed vehicle and whether the driver holds the appropriate valid licence;
- The experience and capacity of the driver to maintain concentration;
- The type of journey; long distance or local;
- Traffic conditions;
- Weather conditions;
- The journey time and distance, including the length of the driver's day;
- Emergency arrangements;
- Insurance cover;
- Supervision;
- Stopping points on longer journeys for toilets and refreshments;
- Suitability of vehicle for the nature of the journey.

Prior to the journey a check should be carried out on basic safety items including tyres, lights, windscreen wipers. A similar check should be carried out by volunteers or parents on any car they may provide. These checks should complement regular school-based procedures and garage servicing. Note that it is the driver who is responsible for a vehicle during any off-site journey.

Staff and volunteers should not drive when taking medication, drugs or alcohol or undergoing treatment that might affect their ability or judgement.

Seat Belts

- Minibuses and coaches used to carry three or more young people aged 16 or less must be fitted with seat belts and a forward-facing seat for each young person;
- Young people riding in the front passenger seats of minibuses are required by law to use a seat belt;
- Every young person travelling in a car should wear a seat belt;
- Vehicles without seat belts should not be used;
- Lap belts are a less effective, but acceptable, alternative;
- Where small children are carried a booster seat or other special seat should be used.

Supervision

The level of supervision required should be considered as part of the overall risk assessment. To ensure adequate supervision a second adult may be needed, unless the journey is local, the group size is small or young people are responsible. Where young people are carried in teachers' or parents' cars every effort should be made to ensure that precautions have been taken to minimise the risks of injury.

Parents' and Volunteers' Cars

Where parents'/volunteers' cars are used on school activities the Party Leader should notify parents/volunteers of their responsibilities for the safety of pupils, to maintain suitable insurance cover and to ensure their vehicle is roadworthy. The Headteacher or the Party Leader will need to consider the suitability of parents or volunteers to carry young people in their car and whether vetting is necessary. It is advisable that teachers, parents or volunteers are not put in a position where they are alone with a young person. (See School Safeguarding Policy)

Long Journeys

On long journeys the Party Leader should operate within the Passenger Carrying Vehicles driver's regulations. In summary these state the maximum period of continuous driving should be 4.5 hours after which a break of 45 minutes should be taken or up to three breaks of up to 15 minutes taken during this time. The maximum period of driving to be undertaken in one day is 9 hours after which a period of rest of at least 11 hours should be taken. For longer journeys there should be more than one driver, to avoid fatigue.

Emergency Procedures

Should a vehicle need to stop in an emergency the occupants of the vehicle should remain together under the direct supervision of a responsible adult until the arrival of required assistance. The group leader should normally evacuate the vehicle and move the group to a position behind the safety barrier on a motorway or well away from moving traffic.

Vehicle Loading

The driver is responsible for any load carried. Uninterrupted access must be maintained to all doors; luggage and equipment must not block gangways or doors or access to them. Doors must be left unlocked when the vehicle is carrying passengers.

10. Supervision

Advice on supervision ratios, vetting suitability of supervisors and brief advice on responsibilities, competence, head counts and remote supervision. This section aims to give more practical advice on supervision “in the field”.

Responsibility

The Group Leader is responsible overall for the group at all times. In delegating supervisory roles to other adults in the groups, it is good practice for the group leader to:

- Allocate supervisory responsibility to each adult for named pupils;
- Ensure that each adult knows which pupils they are responsible for;
- Ensure that each pupil knows which adult is responsible for them;
- Ensure that all adults understand that they are responsible to the group leader for the supervision of the pupils assigned to them;
- Ensure that all adults and pupils are aware of the expected standards of behaviour.

It is good practice for each supervisor to:

- Have a reasonable prior knowledge of the pupils including any special educational needs, medical needs or disabilities;
- Carry a list/register of all group members;
- Directly supervise the pupils (except during remote supervision) – particularly important when they are mingling with the public and may not be easily identified;
- Regularly check that the entire group is present;
- Have a clear plan of the activity to be undertaken and its educational objectives;
- Have the means to contact the group leader/other supervisors if needing help;
- Have prior knowledge of the venue;
- Anticipate a potential risk by recognising a hazard, by arriving, where necessary, at the point of hazard before the pupils do, and acting promptly where necessary;
- Continuously monitor the appropriateness of the activity, the physical and mental condition and abilities of the group members and the suitability of the prevailing conditions;
- Be competent to exercise appropriate control of the group, and to ensure that pupils abide by the agreed standards of behaviour;
- Clearly understand the emergency procedures and be able to carry them out;
- Have appropriate access to First Aid and know how to use it.

Each pupil should:

- Know who their supervisor is at any given time and how to contact him or her;
- Have been given clear, understandable and appropriate instructions;
- Rarely if ever be on their own;
- Alert the supervisor if someone is missing or in difficulties;
- Have a meeting place to return to, or an instruction to remain where they are, if separated;
- Understand and accept the expected standards of behaviour.

Head Counts etc.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. It is good practice for all supervisors to:

- Carry a list/register of all pupils and adults involved in the visit at all times;
- Ensure that pupils are readily identifiable, especially if the visit is to a densely populated area. Brightly coloured caps, T-shirts or a school uniform can help identify group members more easily;
- Avoid identification that could put pupils at risk e.g. name badges (though some schools find it useful to provide pupils with badges displaying the name of the school or hotel and an emergency contact number, or for visits abroad a note in the language of the country being visited);
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of rendezvous points;
- Ensure that all pupils know what to do if they become separated from the group.

Remote Supervision

Supervision can be close or remote.

- Close supervision occurs when the group remain within sight and contact of the supervisor;
- Remote supervision occurs when, as part of planned activities, a group works away from the supervisor but is subject to stated controls. The supervisor is present though not necessarily near or in sight, but his or her whereabouts are known;
- Down time (or recreational time) – may involve close or remote supervision, but should not be unsupervised – the supervisors continue to be in charge;
- It is essential that everyone involved in the visit understands the supervision arrangements and expectations.

When supervision is remote:

- Groups should be sufficiently trained and assessed as competent for the level of activity to be undertaken, including First Aid and emergency procedures. Remote supervision will normally be the final stage of a phased development programme;
- Pupils will be familiar with the environment or similar environments and have details of the rendezvous points and the times of rendezvous;
- Clear and understandable boundaries will be set for the group;
- There must be clear lines of communication between the group, the supervisor and the school. Do not rely exclusively on mobile phones;
- The supervisor should monitor the group's progress at appropriate intervals;
- The supervisor will be in the expedition or activity and will be able to reach the group reasonably promptly should the group need support in an emergency;
- There should be a recognisable point at which the activity is completed;
- There should be clear arrangements for the abandonment of the activity where it cannot be safely completed.

Down Time

Group leaders should ensure that pupils continue to be properly supervised during down time before, between and after activities, including the evenings on residential visits. A group occupied in study or activity is far safer than a group left to its own devices in an unfamiliar environment. Too much unstructured free time in a residential programme can allow time for mischief, bullying, homesickness and wandering off from the body of the group.

It is good practice to:

- Ensure that all staff and pupils understand the standards of behaviour that apply at all times, not just during activities;
- Ensure that handover between activities is properly supervised, with a named supervisor responsible for the group if there is down time between activities;
- Ensure that all supervisors understand that their supervisory role continues in the evening – See Appendix 1.
- Use of down time in the evening or at the beginning of the day to brief the group on the planned activities for the day to come, e.g. the planned learning outcomes, specific health and safety issues, meal and break times etc.;
- Use down time after activities for individual reflection on personal learning outcomes, and group discussions about the highs and lows of the day;

- Apply the advice contained in Remote Supervision above, adapted as necessary, if it is felt reasonable to allow pupils some time without close supervision;
- Occupy the group with mildly active, non-academic activities in the evening, e.g. craft activities, environmental activities, quizzes, team challenges, led-walks.

Night Time

Group leaders should ensure that:

- The group's immediate accommodation is exclusively for the group's use;
- Teachers (of both genders where appropriate) have sleeping accommodation on the same floor immediately adjacent to the pupils' accommodation;
- There is a teacher present on that floor whenever the pupils are there;
- Child protection arrangements are in place to protect both pupils and staff;
- Where hotel / hostel reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visits;
- In the absence of 24-hour staffing of reception, external doors should be made secure against intrusion and windows closed as necessary to prevent intrusion;
- Where possible, internal doors should be lockable, but staff should have reasonable access to the pupil accommodation at all times;
- Where pupils' doors are locked, teachers have immediate access, as necessary, to a master key;
- All staff and pupil know the emergency procedures/escape routes in the event of a fire. Where windows and doors are locked against intrusion at night, ensure that alternative escape routes are known and that all fire doors function properly.

11. First Aid Kit

For all activities and the associated journey an appropriate first aid kit should be available from the school secretary and its stocks regularly replenished. The group leader and other staff should be aware of its contents and know how they should be used. All staff should know how to contact the emergency services, in this country or abroad, if relevant.

A minimum of equipment in a first aid kit should include:

- Guidance card giving general first aid advice
- Plasters in a variety of different sizes and shapes
- Small, medium and large sterile gauze dressings
- Triangular bandages
- Crepe rolled bandages
- Safety pins
- Disposable sterile gloves
- Tweezers
- Scissors
- Alcohol-free cleansing wipes
- Sticky tape
- Cream or spray to relieve insect bites and stings
- Burn gel
- Antiseptic cream
- Distilled water for cleaning wounds
- Eye wash and eye bath

12. Protection of Children

All The Bridge School employees whose work involves regular or unsupervised access to young people under the age of 18 are screened by The Bridge School, all staff have DBS checks.

It is also a requirement that volunteers, including those working on specific projects or providing services for the school, should be checked if they have regular or unsupervised contact with pupils.

The Headteacher or EVC who give approval for off-site activities will therefore need to consider whether volunteers, including parents, who accompany such activities have unsupervised access to children and whether this is appropriate.

Please note that the first stage of the screening process can be undertaken in one or two days, if a Head has concerns about the role of a volunteer, although the DBS checks take significantly longer.

Appendix 1

Protocol - Residential visits

1. Communication

Information to parents will be provided regarding itineraries, equipment, staff attending and other essential information. It will also include information on emergency procedures. Students will be fully briefed on how to contact staff during the night or when away from direct supervision. Staff will make themselves available for contact at all times during the residential. The briefing should include measures to take in the event of loss of contact e.g. no phone signal or battery or becoming detached from the group.

2. Medical Intervention

- Risk assessments will identify the nearest Accident and Emergency Department or medical centre to the trip base, activity centres and other key locations used on the trip.
- Staff ratios should always be sufficient to allow a member of staff to accompany a child to hospital and ensure that ratios are maintained with the remainder of the group.
- In the case of injury, when in doubt, medical opinions MUST be sought. This is particularly true if swelling is evident.
- If a child is hurt or becomes unwell. Parents should be informed as soon as is practical.
- Written records must be kept of any medication administered by staff.
- Accident forms must be completed on return for all cases of accident and injury.

3. Consumption of alcohol

Staff should consider themselves on duty at all times for the duration of a residential. This enables all members of staff to act appropriately and effectively in the case of an emergency. No alcohol should be consumed at any time by any member of staff employed by The Bridge School for the duration of the residential activity. Volunteers who are participating in the trip as part of the staff/student ratio should also not drink alcohol as they too will be directly responsible for the safety and wellbeing of students. Parents and other volunteers not employed by the school and not part of the staff/student ratios should make their own decisions on alcohol consumption but must never compromise other adults or behave in a manner which is inconsistent with the standards expected of adults associated with The Bridge School. This policy safeguards students and staff in the event of major and minor incidents and malicious allegations.

Appendix 2

Protocol - Reducing the impact on teaching and learning when trips and activities are arranged during the school day.

To maintain and develop enrichment activities which enhance teaching and learning.

- Plan visits with Assistant Headteacher in terms of the dates and amount of cover that will be required. Following confirmation, the visit must be put in the school calendar by the member of staff responsible for visit and follow the visits procedure.
- Staff will need to be flexible when considering setting dates and understand some events have set dates beyond our control. In the event of a clash of dates the Assistant Headteacher will make the decision.
- Staff need to balance absence from teaching. Consider the effect of absence from teaching on the learning of other teaching groups. Reference to the whole picture of staff absence (training, illness etc.). Visits should be seen to directly contribute to Teaching and learning.
- Consider use of non-teaching staff on the visit where possible. e.g. TA's, invigilators, Governors etc.