



This policy applies to all pupils at Town Close House including those in the EYFS.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

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FOR CHILDREN IN THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Town Close House School places value on educational visits for all of its pupils, including the very youngest, recognising that they provide a unique opportunity to enhance the curriculum and to extend and support class based work. They provide opportunities which cannot be provided on site and can extend the knowledge and understanding of our youngest pupils. All of our visits for this age group are local – most last only half a day.

2. OUR VISITS

2.1 Supervision

Generous staffing levels, close supervisions and proper protective clothing are essential for even the shortest of excursions. For all walks within the enclosed school grounds, the children are supervised by their teacher and a teaching assistant who holds a level 3 statutory qualification (as defined by the Children's Workforce Development Council).

2.3 Staff Ratios and Responsibility

We operate a staffing ratio of 1:6 as a minimum for all off-site visits involving children in our Nursery and Reception classes. There is always at least one teacher, one of whom will have been designated in charge of the visit. Our normal class size is 18, so the teacher is accompanied by 2 qualified teaching assistants. At least one of the teaching assistants is qualified in Paediatric First Aid. We frequently invite parents to volunteer to help with off-site visits. Volunteers are never allowed to supervise children alone and are thoroughly briefed about their role beforehand. Sometimes we make use of the parents who help with our swimming lessons, since these parents already have CRB checks in place and can therefore supervise children alone if necessary. Wherever possible, an extra adult will accompany a group so that there is cover in case of an emergency.

3. KEEPING YOU INFORMED

All parents of children in the Nursery and Reception classes are invited to an annual curriculum meeting at the start of the autumn term, when the aims of the year's curriculum and the methods of delivering the curriculum through play, structured activities and outdoor activities will be briefly explained. Should we plan a special visit off the school site, we will send you a letter well in advance, telling you about the visit and, if appropriate, its cost and whether it involves an extension to the normal length of the school day.

All Nursery and Reception visits, apart from the Pre-Prep Carol Service, return your child to the School at their conclusion. You may take your child home from the Church at the end of the Carol Service.

4. CONSENT

We require your written consent every time that we take your child off-site. Please note that we are unable to take your child without a completed and signed consent form, which includes details of where you may be contacted in an emergency. This can be found on page 13. We are not allowed to use 'blanket' consent forms for this age group. A consent form will be sent to you well in advance and must reach the School at least 2 working days before the visit.

INFORMATION FOR STAFF

5. SAFETY: ADVANCE PLANNING

5.1 Risk Assessments

Safety is our top priority. Even the shortest of visits needs to be thoroughly planned and requires its own risk assessment. This must be reviewed thoroughly before a repeat visit is made.

5.2 Head Counts

The teacher in charge conducts, or arranges for another teacher or teaching assistant to conduct a head count of the children (recording the fact that we have done so):

- Before leaving school
- On sitting down in the coach (If applicable)
- On arrival at the destination
- On leaving the destination
- On arrival back at school

Where we walk, the children walk in pairs, with one adult at the front, one in the middle and one at the back. Children are reminded about basic road safety and of the expected standards of behaviour. When we travel by coach, a member of staff will check that all the pupils are sitting properly and wearing their seat belts. Staff will spread out throughout the bus in order to maintain a good level of supervision.

5.3 Missing Child Policy

Our procedures are structured to ensure that this does not happen, but in the event that a child is missing – either from school, or on a visit, we follow the procedures set out in our Missing Child policy, which can be viewed on our website.

5.4 First Aid Kit and other information

The teacher in charge takes a first aid kit, list of emergency contact numbers and at least two mobile phones (for other members of staff) with them on every outing. The phones should be checked to ensure that the batteries are adequately charged. We carry bottled water on all our longer visits. Epipens,

inhalers, travel sickness tablets and any other relevant medicines must also be collected before departure.

5.5 Delay

The teacher in charge will ring the School if there is any delay, for example, because of heavy traffic. The School Office has copies of all permission slips and will phone the parents to warn them of a delay.

6. ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN CHARGE OF AN EYFS VISIT

Every visit, however local, or short, must be planned in advance by the member of staff who is in charge of it. S/he will have had previous experience of accompanying EYFS children's visits before organising one. S/he will also have consulted with the Head or Deputy Head of the Pre-Prep who hold the appointment of Education Visits Coordinators (EVCs). The teacher in charge either holds a valid Paediatric First Aid Certificate themselves, or ensures that another member of staff accompanying the visit holds one.

7. ROLE OF THE EDUCATION VISITS COORDINATORS (EVC)

The Head/Deputy Head of the Pre-Prep are EVCs for the Pre-Prep and are responsible for approving all requests for visits. They must work closely with the teacher responsible for organising the trip in checking that the paperwork is correct, giving guidance on carrying out risk assessments, ensuring that information is provided correctly (on permission slips), and keep a collection of reports on previous visits. (Staff Shared: Risk Assessments: Visits/trips. File and hard copies will be kept in the Pre-Prep office).

8. PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

Staff in charge of pupils have a duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances. The DCSF Guidance "The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide," (www.teachernet.gov.uk) is required reading for all Teachers in Charge of EYFS visits as part of their training in the responsibilities of the role. It explains that their responsibility is to "act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances." Staff taking 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 Town Close House 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.

Town Close House School has £5m of Employers Liability Insurance and £2m of public liability insurance, as well as a group policy that covers any visit made by the Department. Cover includes cancellation or delay, medical expenses, replacement of personal possessions and money.

9. USE OF PRIVATE CARS

At Town Close House 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 completed forms are held by the Bursar. We do not normally allow staff to use their own vehicles to transport children as the School cannot take responsibility for the maintenance and insurance of their vehicle. Where a member of staff, in exceptional circumstances, transports pupils 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. Reception and Nursery children can only be transported in private cars that are fitted with special child seats. The School can provide a limited number of booster seats for use in cars.

10. SCHOOL MINIBUSES

No one is allowed to drive the School minibus unless s/he undertakes special training provided by the School. For any minibus journey that involves EYFS children, there should always be a second member of staff on the bus. The school will arrange and fund First Aid courses, as well as courses in driving minibuses for all staff who are involved in visits. At Town Close every member of staff must complete a "Driver's Declaration Form" before s/he drives pupils in a school minibus or privately owned vehicle. The completed forms are held by the Bursar.

11. USE OF HIRED TRANSPORT

We sometimes hire coaches for the EYFS trips in the summer term. It is a condition of booking that the coach driver's name, the number of his/her mobile phone, together with the vehicle's registration number and of copy of the vehicle's insurance policy are passed to the teacher in charge at the time that the hire arrangements are confirmed. We only book vehicles that are fitted with seat belts.

12. PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS

Visits made by the EYFS children are all local, but nevertheless, their outline is planned at least two weeks in advance so that dates are agreed with the EVCs. Parents will be told about the visits planned through a letter sent home and made available to them.

12.1 Actions for the Teacher in Charge

Dates need to be fixed at least 2-3 weeks in advance.

A visit should be organised **one term** in advance if it:

- Involves additional costs for parents
- Needs transport to be arranged with a coach hire company, and in accordance with the School's conditions for using hired transport.

At that stage:

- Parents should be invited to express an interest in acting as volunteer helpers.
- The Pre-Prep office staff should be consulted about individual children's special and medical needs

- The Pre-Prep office will need to be informed if tickets and transport need to be reserved.
- The Pre-Prep office should be asked to arrange CRB checks and take up the necessary references for volunteers.

Checklist for 2 weeks in advance of all EYFS trips/outings leaving the premises:

- Order bottled water from the catering department as well as food/snacks needed.
- The parental consent forms should be sent out with a return date specified. Parents should be reminded that their child cannot participate in the visit without a completed form being received within 2 days of departure.
- The travelling first aid kit should be checked and booked by the first aider
- At least two school mobile phones should be booked (the number of phones will actually depend on the size of the group and whether the children will be together throughout the trip)
- Bookings should be finalised
- Check that the driver's name and contact details are known and recorded, and that all required details about the coach have been received. This includes vehicle registration of coach and the vehicles insurance certificate.
- The Risk Assessment should be finalised and approved by the EVCs.
- Parents should be advised if special clothing (sun hats, waterproof clothing, wellington boots, and sun cream) is needed/ advisable.
- Any tickets should be checked and stored in the school safe
- A meeting should take place with other members of staff participating in the visit to discuss risk assessment, the respective roles of the teacher in charge, other staff and volunteers, and emergency procedures.
- Prepare packs for the accompanying staff, EVCs and Pre-Prep office containing:
 - The itinerary including address, phone numbers etc of all locations to be visited
 - The Teacher in Charge's mobile number / the school mobile
 - Mobile numbers of all participating staff who are not using a school phone
 - A list of pupils, together with copies of their parental contact forms (which includes details of each pupil's medical conditions)
 - Emergency contact numbers for the EVCs and the Headmaster/ SMT
 - Contact details for the Pre-Prep Office
 - The name of the driver, the registration number for the coach, the mobile phone number of the driver, a copy of the vehicle's insurance certificate
 - A copy of the risk assessments
 - "Emergency Procedure Guidelines" for the next of kin for all adults accompanying the trip, (see copy of this at the end of the Policy).
 - Have a Plan B in case of emergency

13. THE DAY OF DEPARTURE

- Remind the children of the aim of the visit and of the expected standards of behaviour
- Give information packs to staff and adult helpers (including “Emergency Procedure Guidelines”).
- Collect first aid pack. Check contents
- Collect school mobile phones, ensuring that they are switched on and fully charged
- Collect bottled water and packed lunches/snacks
- Check that driver and coach match the details notified by the company of the booking form

14. DURING THE VISIT

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with the teacher in charge. S/He has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary or cancelling the visit in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. S/He may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out (and recording) head counts of the children on leaving school, on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving a theatre, museum, centre etc.
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour
- Keeping account of all expenditure
- Recording any incidents or near misses

15. ILLNESSES OR MINOR ACCIDENTS

If a pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill, the teacher in charge, or another member of staff will phone his or her parent’s emergency contact number at once and arrange for him/her to be collected. If contact cannot be made, the teacher in charge, or another member of staff, will take him/her to the local hospital or, if the illness is more minor, back to school. A member of staff will remain with the child at the hospital or at school until a parent or carer arrives. If the ratio of adults to children now falls below the legal number, an extra member of staff will travel from school to meet up with the group.

16. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES (see checklist page 13)

In the event of a serious accident resulting in the death or injury of one or more of the pupils and staff, the teacher in charge’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 and would remain with the child/ren until their parents arrived. Ensuring that the rest of the group were safe and looked after, and informing the Head / Deputy of Pre-Prep or a member of the SMT of what had happened would be the next task for the teacher in charge, who would need to give as full, calm and factual account as the circumstances permitted. Where the full facts had not yet emerged, s/he should say so and

ensure that follow-up communications with the Head takes place. S/He would also need to arrange (perhaps using one of the other members of staff, or the Pre-Prep Office) for the parents of the uninjured children to be contacted on their emergency contact numbers and asked to collect their children from either the venue or the school, depending on the circumstances. The School Office would notify the insurers as quickly as possible. A full record should be kept of the incident, the injuries and of the actions taken. Written details of the incident should be made as soon as possible, along with details of any witnesses.

At Town Close House School, depending on the nature of the incident, we may implement our own model communications plan for informing both the families of the injured, and the families of those who are unhurt as swiftly as possible. 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 Headmaster and the SMT. The teacher in charge should refer the media to the School and make no comment.

17. ON RETURN

Each teacher in charge is asked to provide EVCs with a report on the visit together with reports of accidents and near misses on his/her return. Personal observations and lessons learned are always valuable. The teacher in charge should return all school property, together with a report of any lost or damaged property.

17.1 Expenditure

The teacher in charge is responsible for producing a schedule of all expenditure on the trip.

17.2 Report for Governors

The Head of the Pre-Prep Department's termly reports to the Governors always contains a synopsis of all the school trips and visits that have taken place since the last meeting. S/He will therefore invite the teacher in charge to draft a short report of the trip.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF ON CONDUCTING RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR EYFS OUTINGS

1. INTRODUCTION

The EYFS Statutory Framework places additional requirements on schools that cater for the youngest age group. It states:

“Children must be kept safe on outings.

For each type of outing, providers must carry out a full risk assessment, which includes an assessment of required adult: child ratios. This assessment must take account of the nature of the outing, and consider whether it is appropriate to exceed the normal ratio requirements in accordance with providers’ procedures for supervision of children on outings. The assessment must be reviewed before embarking on each specific outing.”

1.1 What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a tool for conducting a formal examination of the harm or hazard to people (or an organisation) that could result from a particular activity or situation.

- A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm
- A risk is an evaluation of the probability (or the likelihood) of the hazard occurring
- A risk assessment is the resulting assessment of the severity of the outcome (E.g. loss of life, destruction of property)
- Risk control measures are the measures and procedures that are put in place in order to minimise the consequences of unfettered risk (e.g. staff training, clear work procedures, preliminary visits and insurance).

1.2 The Starting Point

The starting point for conducting a risk assessment on an outing is to consider the following in turn:

- A pre-trip visit to the venue if the School has not been before or has not been for two years.
- Identify all of the potential hazards, such as a child getting lost, or run over, a traffic accident, a child falling over, sun burn, getting cold or wet on an outing.
- Who might be affected by the hazards? The children, staff, volunteers, school property, school reputation. Children with SENs will need to be considered separately.
- What safety measures will reduce the potential impact of the hazard? Examples include: using a higher staff ratio on all outings than are

used inside the School, ensuring that one member of the party is qualified in Paediatric First Aid, frequent head counts, a clear missing child policy that is known to all, taking a first aid kit and water, asking parents to send appropriate protective clothing to mitigate impact of weather, sound preparation in advance, including briefing all of the parents (staff and volunteers) on their respective roles. Emergency procedures should be rehearsed in advance with the accompanying staff.

2. POLICY

Our policy at Town Close House is **not** to carry out any activity with EYFS children which is rated as **High (1-4) even after the risk reduction measures have been put into effect**. Activities involving our youngest pupils will only be carried out, if they can be awarded a Low (12–16) score or Moderate (5-11) score.

Low rated activities can be:

- **A hazard that is highly likely but is of low residual rating.** For example

The probability of a coach in a city being stuck in traffic would be rated as 4.

The severity of leaving teachers, teaching assistants, and children waiting outside in hot sun/wet weather for an unknown period of time would be rated as 2.

The initial risk rating would be 8 (Moderate risk)

But putting all of the following measures in place reduces its severity to Low

(4 x 3 = 12)

- Teacher in charge and driver are in mobile contact
 - Staffing ratio is 1:4 (instead of the normal 1:6) and supplemented further by parent volunteers
 - Teacher in charge has made a reconnaissance visit, and discovered where the party can wait out of the rain/sun.
 - Bottled water is carried
 - All staff carry visit packs, and can phone the school to advise that there will be a delayed return
 - All parents' emergency contact details are available to the Pre-Prep Office, who phones them and explains that the coach has been stuck in traffic; but there is nothing to worry about
 - All members of staff had held a meeting to discuss the outing and the risk assessment beforehand
- **A hazard may be fairly likely and have a low residual rating.** For example

The probability of a child falling over and grazing a knee on a walk in the countryside would be rated as 2

The initial severity would be 2 or 3

The initial risk rating would be 4 (High) or 6 (Moderate)

But putting the following measures into place reduces the severity to a lower rating ($3 \times 3 = 9$)

- Teacher in charge has First Aid kit
- One member of staff is qualified in Paediatric First Aid
- Teacher in charge has mobile phone
- All members of staff had held a meeting to discuss the outing and the risk assessment beforehand

- **A hazard may be very unlikely; but have a high severity rating.** For example

The probability of a child going missing on an organised school outing headed by a qualified teacher, who has been trained in leading visits, and was appropriately staffed would initially be rated as 3 (remote).

The severity would be 1 (catastrophe).

The risk assessment would therefore be 3 (High)

But putting the following measures into place reduces the probability to 4 (Extremely Remote) and the severity of the hazard to 2, making a total of 8 (Medium).

- Children have been briefed about the purpose of the visit and the expectations of behaviour
- All children understand where they should go if they accidentally become separated from the rest of the group
- Teacher in charge and other staff carry mobile phones
- Normal staffing ratio of 1:6 is supplemented further by parent volunteers
- Teacher in charge has made a reconnaissance visit, and planned the route inside the location (e.g. museum) in advance
- Children are divided into groups supervised by one member of staff, assisted by a volunteer
- All members of staff had held a meeting to discuss the outing and the risk assessment and the Missing Child Policy beforehand.
- All members of staff know what to do in an emergency
- All volunteers have been briefed thoroughly on their respective roles
- All children are wearing school uniform or fluorescent jackets and are readily identifiable
- Head counts are taken on leaving the classroom, on sitting in the coach, on leaving the activity and on returning to the coach. The coach does not leave until everyone is accounted for. Regular head counts should be taken at the destination if there for any length of time, or if the party is split up for any reason.

3. CONCLUSION

The three examples quoted above are intended to illustrate that everyday risk assessments for school outings are no more than practical tools that are designed to assist teachers who are in charge of an outing. The issues:

- What if the coach is delayed?
- What if a child falls over and injures him/herself
- What if a child goes missing?

can arise, and need to be anticipated in advance. However, conducting risk assessments on EYFS outings does not require specialist knowledge.

4. ROLE OF THE EDUCATION VISITS COORDINATOR

The role of the Head/Deputy Head of Pre-Prep in training and supporting staff who are involved in taking and leading visits of EYFS children is explained in the companion policy: "EYFS Policy for Out of School Trips". All new staff have a session on planning school visits as part of their induction training.

Every risk assessment is checked and approved by the Head/Deputy Head of Pre-Prep as part of the process of approving each outing.

5. ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN CHARGE

Again, the role of the teacher in charge, and the training given to those who take on that important role is explained in the companion policy: "EYFS Policy for Out of School Trips". All teachers in charge are given assistance and training with conducting risk assessments, with emergency procedures, as part of their training for the role. They understand the importance of setting clear procedures for everyone in the group – staff, volunteers and children.

6. LIBRARY OF RISK ASSESSMENTS

The School maintains a "library" of risk assessments in the Staff Shared drive on the network which may be drawn on by anyone planning an outing.

CHECKLIST FOR 'GROUP LEADERS' ORGANISING EYFS TRIPS/VISITS OFF SITE

1. Obtain permissions for trip from EVC/Head of Pre-Prep. Complete form indicating date/nature/cost of trip.
2. Conduct appropriate risk assessments.
3. Organise staffing list and seek additional volunteers, as required.
4. Arrange and book transport and make arrangements according to procedures in policy.
5. Inform parents and obtain parental permission and emergency contact details. One copy of these to be left in the Pre-Prep office and the other copies to be taken on the trip/visit and held by the teacher in charge.
6. Order drinks/food as appropriate.
7. Collect emergency contact details of all adults on trip.
8. Collect and record details of coach driver and vehicle number of coach, along with insurance certificate (if outside company being used).
9. Nominate paediatric first aider and ask them to ensure all necessary first aid equipment and any special medication/special dietary requirements of those on trip are catered/provided for.
10. Arrange meeting with all adults going on trip/visit. Ensure all adults are aware of risk assessments, safety measures and emergency procedures. Ensure that expected 'Code of Conduct'/behaviour of children is shared.
11. Nominate an adult to be Deputy Group Leader and to do regular head counts of those children on the trip. A checklist should be provided for **i)** children sitting on the bus/coach, **ii)** children at the venue, **iii)** children leaving the venue, **iv)** children arriving back in school.
12. After the trip is over, write a report for the EVC and the Head. Include unexpected occurrences and any incidents that increased risks. Include registration lists taken during visit/trip. Include registration lists taken during visit/trip. Include name of driver's and coach details.
13. Details of trip risk assessment to be kept on file for reference on intranet in staff shared.



CONSENT FORM FOR EYFS DEPARTMENT TRIPS AND VISITS

A. Visit Information – provided by School

Nursery / Reception visit to
on _____

Teacher in Charge _____

Departing at _____ hours from the school. Returning to the school at _____ hours.

Nature of Activity: _____

Maximum number of pupils _____, who will be accompanied by _____ members of staff as well as volunteers.

(Any parent who is interested in volunteering to help on this visit should contact _____. S/he will normally be asked to consent to the school obtaining a CRB disclosure.)

Transport: _____

B. I give consent for my child _____ Class _____
to attend the trip detailed above.

C. Medical Information – to be completed by Parent/Carer

Any allergies or sensitivities to food, pets or to insect stings (epipen): _____

Any chronic or recurring medical conditions needing regular or occasional medication or treatment: _____

Does s/he require any special arrangements to be made? If so, please describe them briefly below: _____

Does s/he suffer from travel sickness? If so, may we have your permission to give him/her a travel sickness tablet that is suitable for children aged 3 and over (the medicine will be in the original packaging and will state the advised dosage)? _____

Does s/he suffer from any phobia which might make it unsafe for him/her to participate in any of the planned activities? _____

Date of last tetanus injection: _____

Consent to Emergency Treatment

I / We authorise the teacher in charge, or an authorised deputy acting on his/her behalf to consent, on the advice of an appropriately qualified medical specialist, to my/our child receiving emergency medical treatment, including general anaesthetic, blood transfusion and surgical procedure under the NHS if s/he is unable to contact me/us.

Signature of parent(s) or guardian(s): _____

D. Emergency Contact Details for the period covered by the visit – to be completed by parent/carer

Name: _____ Tel. No. _____ Mobile: _____

Work No. _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Tel. No. _____ Mobile: _____

Work No. _____ Email: _____

Family Doctor: _____ Tel No: _____

Address: _____

Behaviour Code

I understand that my child will be subject to the normal school rules of behaviour throughout the visit. I agree to him/her following the guidance on health and safety given by a member of staff (or by an Instructor at a centre) at all times.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____

Please note that your child will not be allowed to participate in this visit unless this form is completed and returned to school by 2010



SCHOOL OUTINGS – EMERGENCY PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

- Please follow instructions from the nominated group leader or his / her deputy.
- In the event of staff members being unavailable, please use the following “Emergency Procedures”

Ensure safety of remainder of group and yourself

Contact emergency services who will need to know:

Your name
Your phone number
Exact location
Nature of incident
Number in group

Administer First Aid

Contact TCH - be ready to repeat above details

Pre-Prep Office - 01603 620180
If no answer - Mrs Walwyn - 07979 766 645
If no answer - Prep Office - 01603 620180

- All communications with children’s parents will be co-ordinated by the school where emergency procedures are in place.
- All communications with your own next-of-kin will be co-ordinated through the school.
- All communications with the media will be co-ordinated through the Headmaster. Please do NOT give media interviews.
- Please do NOT discuss legal liabilities with other parties.
- Keep written notes of times and events after the incident including witness details.

FOR CHILDREN IN YEARS 1 – 8

GENERAL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

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

2. OUR TRIPS AND 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 History, Geography, English Biology and Classics. There are regular theatre trips for pupils of all levels.

We run several residential trips throughout the school year:

- Year 4 visit Kingswood Residential Adventure Activity Centre on the North Norfolk coast
- Year 6 visit Belgium on the annual Humanities Trip
- Year 7 visit Normandy, France for the annual French Trip
- Year 8 visit Holt Hall on the North Norfolk coast for a Geography field trip
- Year 8 visit the National YMCA centre on Lake Windemere in the Lake District for the annual post Common Entrance trip

We have sent rugby, hockey, netball, cricket and rounders teams on tours to Australia, France and Ireland.

We have taken various parties of school children on ski trips to France, Austria and Switzerland

We run an activity called Adventure Service Challenge and the children in Years 5, 6 and 7 go on camping trips to Surlingham, North Norfolk and Thetford respectively.

3. INFORMATION ON PLANNED TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Your son's or daughter's School Calendar usually lists the trips and visits that are due to take place over the coming [term/academic year], together with a list of planned home and away sports fixtures. You will always be notified in advance:

- If your child has been selected for a sports team. (We very much welcome family and friends at all our matches, both home and away).

- If your child is going to be out of school during the school day in order to visit a local museum, theatre, nature reserve or historic site. (We will always seek your permission if the visit involves an extra charge or late return to school). We send details of planned trips and activities well in advance to all parents of pupils of the relevant year group or cohort.

4. CONSENT

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

5. SAFETY

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

6. GUIDANCE FOR STAFF INVOLVED WITH SCHOOL VISITS

6.1 Introduction

We have a large number of trips, out of school activities and visits at Town Close House School, which are an important part of our educational ethos. We expect that every member our staff endorses the educational value of activities outside the classroom. We encourage everyone possible to participate in them, and to help with the arrangements. To make this possible, we set reasonable timetables, with plenty of non-contact time, as we do not want this important function to become burdensome. We always welcome suggestions from staff for new trips.

6.2 Role of the Education Visits Coordinator

Mr Keith Ruffell and Mrs Rosamund Walwyn are our Education Visits Coordinators (EVC). They support the Head in the process of approving visits, ensuring that they are spread through the different age groups, and the school year, (although there is inevitably a concentration during the last part of the summer term, when exams have finished and the weather is at its best). They help staff involved with organising tours, with checking parental consent forms and keep records of all previous visits (which can be borrowed). They also keep reports of any accidents or near misses. All new staff have a session on planning school visits as part of their induction training.

6.3 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 organizing and running it. He or she will always have had experience of accompanying school visits before taking on the role of Group Leader. At Town Close House School we arrange for the EVCs to hold a short training session with all potential Group Leaders, which covers practical guidance on conducting risk assessments, emergency procedures, the school's insurance cover, budgeting for visits and the circumstances under which a visit might be terminated or curtailed, for instance if weather or sea conditions suddenly deteriorated. With the exception of the very shortest visits, such as to our local library or museum, we expect all Group Leaders either to hold a valid First Aid certificate themselves, or ensure that one of the other teachers accompanying the visit holds one. A Deputy Leader is nominated for all trips. S/He may not hold the qualifications of the Group Leader, but is nevertheless capable of taking over that role, if necessary.

6.4 Minibus Procedure

No one should drive the school minibus unless s/he has qualified as a minibus driver. For any minibus journey that lasts for longer than 1 hour, there should be a second member of staff who is also a qualified minibus driver. The School will arrange and fund First Aid courses, as well as courses in driving minibuses for all staff who are involved in visits. At Town Close House 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. Blank forms are held by the Bursar, who with the assistance of her secretary will determine the qualifications of a driver before authorizing him/her to use the School vehicles.

6.5 Use of private cars

At Town Close House 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 completed forms are held by the Bursar. We do not normally allow staff to use their own vehicles to transport children as the School cannot take responsibility for the maintenance and insurance of their vehicle. Where a member of staff in exceptional circumstances transports pupils 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. Reception and Nursery children can only be transported in private cars that are fitted with special child seats. The School can provide a limited number of booster seats for use in cars.

7. PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

The law places the Group Leader "in loco parentis". The DCSF Guidance "The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide," (www.teachernet.gov.uk), should be read by all Group Leaders. It explains that their responsibility is to "act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances." Staff who take part in visits and activities outside school may feel concerned about the possibility of being held

personally liable if an accident should occur. However, they can be assured that Town Close House 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.

Town Close School has £5m of Employers' Liability Insurance and £2m of public liability insurance, as well as a group travel policy that covers most visits inside the UK and overseas. Cover includes cancellation or delay, medical expenses, replacement of passports, personal possessions and money. The policy covers most school visits, including skiing holidays; but does not cover all adventurous activities, such as climbing or scuba diving. Any member of staff organizing an adventurous or hazardous activity should therefore check, via the Bursar, whether or not the activity is covered by the school's policy. An extension usually can be arranged. The Group Leader should ensure that s/he takes a copy of the school's travel insurance with him/her on all but the shortest of visits.

8. PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS

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

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.

8.1 At Least two Months in Advance

- Obtain advice from the EVC, (Mr K Ruffell or Mrs R Walwyn) on suitable dates, precedents etc
- Discuss preliminary plan, including purpose, location, transport, hotels, activities, itinerary, number & age of participants with EVC
- Calculate the staff to pupil ratio, (see below)
- Prepare a draft itinerary and complete form seeking permission to go on the trip (pass this to the Head/EVC's).
- 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 recognized qualification from a national body, such as the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority.

- Obtain clear statement from the Centre about their responsibilities for the safety of the pupils before making any commitment. Ask for copies of their risk assessments and obtain copies of CRB checks
- Prepare the risk assessment(s).
- Check the School's insurance cover, (see above) if the visit involves hazardous activities.
- Find other members of staff who are willing to participate in the trip, bearing in mind the need to have both male and female teaching staff when both sexes participate in a visit. It is desirable to have at least one member of staff who speaks the language of the country to be visited.
- If parent volunteers participate: Arrange for any volunteers participating in the trip to obtain an enhanced CRB disclosure. The Bursar's office will make the necessary arrangements.
- Check that the tour company/airline is ATOL/ABTA bonded to provide cover in the event of the bankruptcy of the provider.
- Carry out a reconnaissance visit if the location is not one that the School has visited before. If a reconnaissance visit is impossible, a reference from another school that has visited the site may suffice. On arrival the Party Leader should become familiar with the location before the children disembark
- Establish the minimum and maximum numbers for the visit to be viable (bearing in mind that the costs of the accompanying staff will be divided amongst the participants)
- Ascertain the medical and visa requirements
- Establish when the deposits are required by tour operators/airlines/activity centre etc, and ensure that the size of the deposit requested from parents is sufficient to cover these costs - including the costs of deposits for accompanying staff.
- Depending upon the destination: check with the Travel Advice Unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
- Prepare a written case, to be counter-signed by the EVC, seeking the Headmaster's approval.
- If necessary, attend a First Aid and/or minibus driving course beforehand.

8.2 Staff/Pupil Ratios

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

Ratio	Pupils' Year Group
1:6	1- 3 inclusive (with a higher ratio for the under 5s)
1:10	Years 4 – 6
1:15/20	Years 7 upwards (with a larger ratio permitted for over 16s)
1:10	All visits abroad

8.3 The Risk Assessment

All Group Leaders at Town Close House School are trained in conducting risk assessments on the potential hazards involved in a visit, trip or activity that they are planning. The Risk Assessment should do the following:

- Identify the potential hazards of the place being visited.
- List the groups of people that are especially at risk from the significant hazards.
- List existing controls or notifying where the information may be found.
- Consider how he/she would cope with the hazards which are not currently identified or fully controlled.
- Carry 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 Town Close House 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.

8.4 After Permission is Granted (At Least two Months in Advance)

- Write a *preliminary* letter to send to parents and guardians of the target age group, outlining the purpose of the trip, the programme and the expected maximum cost. Ask for [*expressions of interest*]/[acceptance], together with a deposit by a specific date along with final payment dates. Mention that parents will be invited to a briefing meeting within six weeks of departure. Explain any restrictions on numbers. At Town Close House School, we expect that these letters should always be cleared in advance with the EVC.
- Brief the pupils about the visit, its dates and purpose.
- Check names of all pupils wishing to participate with the office and check medical details. Discuss with EVC concerns about special arrangements that may be required for handling any specific medical or SEN issues.
- Collect payments as necessary.
- Arrange for the Bursary to pay deposits on hotels, flights, activity centre etc/the costs of tickets.

8.5 At least one Month in Advance

- Finalise the costs with travel company etc.
- Insist that all coaches are fitted with seat belts. (This may not be possible in every country).
- Work out the cost for parents (including contingency to cover delays etc).
- Inform parents of the medical and visa requirements. Advise parents of non-British passport holders that they are responsible for ascertaining the visa requirements of the country to be visited.
- Arrange for the Bursary to bill parents for the balance of the cost of the trip/Collect the balance directly from the pupils and hand to Bursary for crediting to the trip account.

- Arrange for the Bursary to pay the balance to the airline, hotel, travel company etc.
- Arrange for a school credit card to be issued for the duration of the visit.
- Arrange with School Network Manager for loan of school mobile with pre-paid SIM card valid for the country to be visited to be available on a specific date.
- Brief and prepare the pupils in advance.
- Ensure that they are given plenty of advance notice if they need special equipment (e.g. for skiing).
- Ensure that parents with children who have specific medical or dietary requirements can be catered for.
- Arrange meeting with parents to brief them on all aspects of the trip, including:
 - The itinerary, including the meeting and collection points.
 - Contact details for the hotels/hostels/ names and addresses of the host families.
 - The number of the School mobile phone issued to the Group Leader.
 - The money, kit and equipment that the pupils need. The dress code of the country.
 - The medical and visa requirements.
 - The expected standards of behaviour, and the potential risks of irresponsible behaviour, and the ground rules for behaviour in host families' houses.
 - The ground rules on consumption of alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances.
 - 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 (Section C) with specified return date.
 - If appropriate,) book packed lunch from Catering Department.
 - Brief pupils on expectations of standards of behaviour and cultural differences.
 - Book traveling first aid kit from the First Aider.
 - Have a Plan B which will normally be to return to school.

8.6 One Week 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.

- Check all tickets for accuracy. Store them in the school safe until collection.
- Collect travellers' cheques from bank (if not collecting from airport terminal). Note their serial numbers before storing in safe until collection, with the foreign currency ordered by the Bursary/ in safe. Give copy to Bursary.
- Meet with the other members of staff to discuss the itinerary, the risk assessment, the respective roles of the Group Leader and other accompanying staff, and emergency procedures.
- Prepare packs for the School Office, and for each member of staff, that contain the following information:
 - The itinerary (including address, phone numbers etc of all locations where the party is staying).
 - The Group Leader's mobile school mobile number.
 - Mobile numbers of all participating staff.
 - A list of pupils, together with copies of their parental contact forms (which includes details of each pupil's medical conditions).
 - Copies of all passports and travel documents.
 - Emergency contact numbers for the Headmaster, Member of the SMT designated to be on-call, the EVC.
 - Out of hours contact details for the SMT.
 - The address and contact details of the nearest British Consul.
 - A copy of the tickets, travel insurance document (including emergency contact details).
 - A copy of the risk assessment.
 - Location of local hospital.

8.7 The Day Prior to Departure/The Day of Departure

- Collect tickets and foreign currency from the safe.
- Give trip information packs to designated school recipients and to other staff participants.
- Give each pupil the names, addresses and phone numbers of their accommodation.
- Remind pupils about the rendezvous, dress code, standards of behaviour etc.
- Remind pupils of the potential risks of irresponsible behavior.
- Remind pupils to bring passports. Ask to see each passport.
- Collect traveling first aid kit(s). Check contents.
- Collect packed lunch.
- Collect School Mobile and charger.

9. 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. S/He may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Ensure that all mobile phones are charged and switched on
- 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.
- 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).
- Ask all pupils to write their mobile numbers on a sheet of paper. Give all pupils the number of the School's mobile if they are going to be allowed out in small, unsupervised groups.
- 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, travellers' cheques and tickets in the hotel safe.
- Keeping an account of all expenditure.
- Recording all accidents and near misses.

10. 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 insurers on their helpline to arrange (where possible) for the medical bill to be sent directly to the insurance company for settlement. If the accident is more serious (such as a broken leg when skiing), the school's medical insurers may arrange for the pupil, accompanied by a member of staff to be repatriated to the UK. At Town Close House School we expect the Group Leader to phone the pupil's parents if their child has suffered an accident or injury that is serious enough to require medical treatment – as opposed to minor cuts and bruises.

11. EMERGENCY

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 Headmaster or on-call member of the Senior Management Team of what had happened would be the next tasks for the Group Leader, who would need to give a full and factual account as the circumstances permitted in a calm manner. Where the full facts had not yet emerged, he or she should say so, and ensure that follow-up communications with the Headmaster are maintained. He/she would also need to arrange (perhaps using the Deputy Leader or another member of staff) for the school's insurers to be contacted as quickly as possible, together with the British Consul, if the accident happened overseas. A full record should be kept of the incident, the injuries and of the actions taken, together with the details of any witnesses.

At Town Close House 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 web, local radio) for communicating with those whose children are not affected.

Where possible, communication with the media should be left to the Headmaster. 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.

12. DELAYED RETURN

If a visit is delayed, the Group Leader should phone a member of the SMT, who will in turn phone all the parents on their contact numbers to alert them to the delay and the revised time of arrival.

13. 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]. He or she should also:

- Instruct all pupils to delete their records of the school mobile and of any staff mobiles.
- Remind all staff to delete any records of pupils' mobile numbers that they may have acquired during the visit.

14. GUIDANCE FOR STAFF TAKING A SCHOOL TEAM ON A SPORTS FIXTURE

(This information can also be found in the Physical Education Policy Document)

Teachers taking a school team off-site are responsible for:

- Making sure all players/parents know the arrangements for the fixture by publishing two team sheets (one to be displayed on the ground floor of the Dearnaley Building and one in the Sports Hall Entrance foyer. A copy of the team sheet must be given to the School Secretary. At least 24 hours notice must be given.
- Team sheet to include the following information
 1. Players involved in the match
 2. Date of the match
 3. Start time
 4. Departure time
 5. Expected arrival back at Town Close

6. Venue
7. Method of transport
8. Players' code of conduct
9. Information to tell the parents how to find the venue

- Registering the players before departing from Town Close and informing the School Secretary, who should also be informed as to which bus each pupil is on when the mode of transport is minibus
- Collecting keys, mobile phone, first aid kit and pupils' contact details (if possibility of returning after 6pm) if a minibus is the mode of transport. If travelling by coach then keys are obviously not required.
- Supervising the children on the journey. If travelling by minibus, then a second adult must be present.
- Supervising the children at the venue, ensuring that their behaviour is such that it conforms to the School behaviour policy and is a credit to the School.
- Ensuring that the children are excellent hosts for visiting teams and parents.
- Informing the children and School Secretary if the match has been cancelled. Children may then be allowed to contact their parents by phone to inform them of the cancellation.
- Ensuring that the catering staff at the venue are informed of any additional dietary requirements.
- Ensuring that all the players have all relevant medication for the match.
- Ensuring that all the players have the correct kit required for the match (children must have mouth guards and shin pads for hockey and mouth guards for rugby)
- Ensuring that excellent standards of sportsmanship and self-discipline are evident and that the players treat fellow members and opponents with respect.
- Informing school/parents if the arrival time is later than expected.
- Supervising the children until they are collected by a parent/helper. Two members of staff must be present until the last child has departed.

15. EXPENDITURE

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

16. REPORT FOR GOVERNORS

The Headmaster's termly report to the Governors always contains a synopsis of all the school trips and visits that have taken place since the last report. The EVC, who prepares this report, will invite the Group Leader to draft a short report.

References:

A Legal Requirement & an ISI Reporting Standard

References:

- a) The Revised Handbook for the Inspection of Independent Schools: Part 3: The Regulatory Requirements of Independent Schools, March 2009 version. (www.isi.net).
- b) "The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide," DCSF guidance, 2004 (www.teachernet.gov.uk)
- c) "Good Practice in Adventure Activities within the Education Sector," An Adventure Licensing Authority guidance document (www.aals.org.uk)
- d) "School Trips" and "Minibus Safety", ROSPA guidance documents (www.rospa.com)
- e) "Health & Safety on Educational Excursions" Scottish Government guidance document (www.scotland.gov.uk)
- f) School Trips: Glenridding Beck," and "Five Steps to Risk Assessment," Health & Safety Executive guidance documents (www.hse.gov.uk)
- g) Child Safety Education Coalition (www.csec.org.uk)
- h) "Taking Students Offsite" ATL guidance document (www.atl.org.uk)
- i) "What is Outdoor Learning?" and "Why does Outdoor Learning Matter?" Institute for Outdoor Learning guidance documents, (www.outdoor-learning.org)
- j) "The Drivers' Declaration Form," an ISBA model document by D E Ford Insurance Brokers, 2009 (www.deford.co.uk)

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