



FORTIS
Academy

ENRICHING LIVES

Aldridge Road | Great Barr | Birmingham | West Midlands | B44 8NU
Telephone - 0121 366 6611 | Email - secretariat@fortis.shaw-education.org.uk

TRIPS AND VISITS POLICY

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| Staff member responsible: | Deputy Head (Pastoral) |
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FORTIS ACADEMY TRIPS AND VISITS POLICY

Introduction

This academy believes that students' education is enriched significantly by the opportunities trips and visits offer. In order to ensure that students, parents and staff are fully informed about the arrangements for off-site activities and to make every effort to ensure the safety of all personnel on such trips the following procedures are adopted. The responsibility for overseeing the organisation of all trips and visits is delegated to the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) who keeps records of all off-site activities and who ensures that appropriate risk assessments and related tour operator forms are completed before a trip can take place. For all academy visits there is a designated safeguarding officer and a member of SLT on call.

Staff Student Ratios

There is no hard and fast rule about staff to student ratios: variables such as the nature of the activities, and special medical or behavioural needs of students can alter the level of reasonable staffing that the visit needs. At Fortis Academy ratios for trips are as follows:

1:15 for day trip

1:10 for Residential/Overseas/Adventurous activities

However if potentially hazardous activities are involved or if some students require a high degree of support, an increase in the number of supervisors may be necessary. With a mixed group ensure that at least one man and one woman accompany the trip.

Driving the school minibus

Only staff who have passed the Midas test are permitted to drive the minibus.

The EVC must ensure that:

1. The trip/visit has a clear purpose.
2. The Trip Leader is sufficiently experienced and has sufficient planning time. (International trips will require approximately one year, a UK residential will require approximately four months and day trips at least a month).
3. All off-site activities require permission from the Head teacher or Deputy Head teachers.
4. An adequate risk assessment has been carried out and recorded.
5. Emergency procedures are in place.
6. Approval has been obtained as required from Shaw Education Trust, Local Authority.
7. Every trip has a nominated Trip Leader who takes responsibility for ensuring the trip is organised in line with this policy, who recruits and leads a team of Staff (and sometimes parents), in liaison with the Director of Studies. Before and during the Trip Leader takes full responsibility for Health and Safety and for decision making in case of an emergency.
8. Trips are carefully planned with due regard to safety. Where trips are organised through a travel company which organises all the transport and accommodation, only recognised and reliable companies are used and staff must ensure that the relevant forms are completed. When the trip is organised in-house careful guidelines are followed regarding modes of transport (e.g. only recognised coach companies may be used) and chosen routes, especially where the pupils have to walk any distance.
9. All residential and international day trips require the parents to complete the 'Update Consent and Contact Form'. Students may not travel on trips without the necessary Consent Form being completed
10. Without a full DBS parents should not be left alone with a group of students.

The Trip Leader must ensure that:

1. Approval has been obtained from the EVC and Head teacher for the visit.
2. All requirements have been met.
3. They assess the risks involved and take action as conditions change. This risk assessment should be discussed with all staff travelling with the party and should be shared with any parents accompanying the trip on the day. Training is also provided by the EVC for staff who are leading trips in the school for the first time.

4. Gain parental consent.
5. They take overall responsibility for supervision and conduct for the visit to ensure accountability and to avoid potential confusion.
6. In order to provide comprehensive support to staff with regard to student physical and mental well-being for residential trips, as soon as students have paid a deposit Trip Leader must immediately send a list of the students to the Directors of Year and the Educational Visits Co-ordinator.
7. For overseas trips the Trip Leader must always organise at least one, preferably two Parents' meeting in addition to any paper communication. At this meeting, details about the trip are outlined and parents have the opportunity to ask questions.
8. The Trip Leader is responsible for checking the medical details on SIMS of all students travelling on the trip. Some students may require individual risk assessments which are produced in conjunction with the parents, the Trip Leader and the EVC.
9. A first aid kit is always carried on every trip. Wherever possible one of the accompanying staff is a qualified first aider. (On residential trips there must be a first aider).
10. Staffing ratios are laid down by the academy (see Risk Assessment document) and it is the Trip Leader's responsibility, in conjunction with the EVC, to ensure that these are adhered to.
11. The Trip Leader always has an emergency contact phone number back at school for use if required during the trip. This will normally be the DSL, the Academy receptionist during office hours; a Senior Member of staff takes over for out of school hours, 0121-366-6611.
12. The Trip Leader is responsible for ensuring high standards of student behaviour. The latter are briefed before a trip and on frequent occasions during a trip.
13. The academy takes out comprehensive travel insurance which covers all students and staff on the majority of trips. Where adventurous activities are concerned there may be additional insurance policies taken out to cover the trip. Pre-existing conditions including both physical illnesses/conditions and mental conditions including: Anxiety, Stress, Depression, phobias and any mental or nervous disorder including anorexia are not automatically covered by insurance. If the Trip Leader is aware that a student has a pre-existing condition, it is important that the issue is raised with the insurance company, via our EVC, as far in advance as possible. It may be necessary for the parents to get a letter from the student's GP/consultant/medical specialist confirming it is safe for them to go on the trip and take part in all the activities, or it may be necessary for the parents to take out their own insurance

Parents must:

1. Inform the academy of any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit.
2. Provide emergency contact details, read and sign the consent form.
3. Support the academy by preparing their children for the visit especially with regard to expected behaviour conduct.
4. Parents complete an Annual Medical Information and Consent Form for all Category A, low risk day trips. Residential trips (or day trips with any degree of risk involved) require trip-specific consent forms. These forms also include emergency contact numbers for parents (or parentally nominated alternates) during the trip.

Students must:

1. Adhere to advice and instructions provided by staff both before and during the trip/visit.
2. Agree that normal rules apply in relation to mobile phones. Mobile phones may be collected in on a residential and kept in a hotel safe or they may be kept out of sight by individual students until permission is given by the Trip Leader for their use.
3. Sixth Form trips are common. It is usual for these students to make their way to and from the venue independently, meeting the staff at a stated time and location. In this case parents give written permission and staff carry mobile phone numbers of all the students in addition to the emergency contact numbers of the parents. The students are also provided with a mobile phone number (school phone number) for the Trip Leader.

Guidelines and Advice for Residential Trips

The following guidelines and advice are useful tips to follow when organising a residential trip. For further details please speak to our EVC.

Writing to parents

Letters providing information or asking for consent for school trips should always go via the Head or other senior staff member. Always seek parental consent: never take implicit consent for granted. Parents are within their rights to withhold consent for a visit, in which case the students in their care should not accompany the trip. If the proposed trip is residential, or will involve unusual or high-risk activities, it is advisable to invite parents to a meeting where an outline of the activities can be given, and questions can be asked and answered.

When writing to acquire consent, it is also advisable to ask to be made aware of any allergies, medication and relevant medical history. You might also need to ask about the level of a student's swimming ability or the location, dosage and administration of a particular medication.

Regardless of the type of visit, information such as the student's name and address, full contact and emergency details and the name and number of the family doctor are a must.

Finally, it is often helpful to supply parents with information about the following:

- academy insurance policy
- necessary equipment, clothing and footwear
- guidelines on the supply and amount of pocket money
- expected behaviour, including rules on smoking and drinking as appropriate
- notification that if the rules of the visit are broken by a student, the parent may have to collect that student from the care of the Group Leader at their own expense

Parents' Meeting

All staff supporting a school trip will be expected to attend all parent meetings and staff briefing meetings. For residential trips this is an essential part of the organisation as parents feel reassured they can talk to the staff looking after their child(ren) whilst they're away. This will also provide invaluable support for the party leader and give important information regarding the itinerary.

Pastoral responsibilities

All members of staff on a residential trip have a duty of care to look after the students. This includes travel to and from venues where the students should be supervised by all travelling members of staff. The Trip Leader may split the students into sub-groups and assign a member of staff to each group. This gives the students a first point of contact and is useful for spreading out the tasks such as collection of passports, staff acting as a 'bank', head counts etc.

Staff should make every effort to familiarise themselves with the students in their group before departure and should be prepared to step in to support other groups when necessary.

Contingency Funds

Even with the best planning, residential trips do present unexpected costs from time to time. It is therefore acceptable to add a surplus to the cost quoted by the tour company to the students balance. This should be a common sense figure and the Trip Leader needs to bear in mind that any surplus left at the end of the trip needs to be returned to the parents.

Staff Food and Drink

Under normal circumstances, accommodation, breakfast, lunch and evening meal should be paid for out of the contingency fund by the Trip Leader. This includes non-alcoholic drinks with meals. Any snacks, coffee & alcoholic drinks should be paid for by the staff themselves.

Staff & Alcohol

Some countries and certain organisations prohibit the possession and consumption of alcohol, whether by minors or adults. It should be noted that it is a potential disciplinary offence for a teacher to be at work (as they are when accompanying a school trip) when affected by drink (even if not 'drunk' in the everyday sense of the word) or indeed by other substances which may affect their judgement and behaviour (other than those medically prescribed and of which the school is aware). Being in such a state potentially puts students and colleagues at risk and may also undermine discipline and good order. It may perhaps bring the academy into disrepute. Staff must not drink alcohol in the presence of students. Staff should remember;

- The core responsibility of staff, who are in loco parentis, must take priority over all other considerations.

- Staff must be able to respond in any emergency or unforeseen circumstances, for example during the evening, or where more than one teacher is needed.
- The example which students take from the behaviour of staff
- The nature and age range of the pupils and the context of the trip
- Any particular factors, such as the presence of guests, younger children, etc.
- The possible effect on the academy or the MAT's reputation, including how this may be perceived by others.

Students & Alcohol

Students are not allowed to drink alcohol on either residential or day trips.

Telephone calls

Staff who need to make or receive frequent business calls when out of the office or outside normal working hours will be provided with a school mobile telephone. This should be used for business calls. Students should not have access to staff personal numbers.

General

The same level of professionalism should be adopted on a residential trip as in day to day school life. Punctuality is essential for the smooth running of a trip from both students and staff. Roles and responsibilities for staff should be clearly defined before the day of departure. This should be carried out in a meeting led by the Trip Leader. All staff on the trip should have an input into the risk assessment after the initial draft has been drawn up by the Trip Leader.

Checklist

The following is intended as a source of information to which teachers can turn when planning a visit or trip. A well-planned trip is key in inspiring confidence in parents, colleagues and students alike. Nobody can legislate for accidents: as long as reasonable care is taken by adult supervisors, the trip is likely to be hugely enjoyable and thoroughly worthwhile.

Three months before the trip:

- Secure approval for the visit from Headteacher and the EVC.
- Select possible dates for the trip, liaising with the appropriate authorities in the academy.
- Research activities/activity centres you are interested in.
- Provisionally book your activities with the education centre, or equivalent.
- Compile a rough budget for the trip and inquire into sources of funding.
- Look into methods of transport and special group-rate fares.

One month before the trip:

- Draft a letter to parents outlining dates, cost, equipment needed and the school's liability. Get the letter checked by the EVC before sending it out. EVC checks all trip documentation including risk assessment and costing proposal and allocates a trip number.
- EVC obtains sign off from the Business Manager for costing proposal. A signature or sign off from the relevant budget holder must be included in order to finalise the budget for the trip.
- Pay for the activities you have booked.
- EVC obtains Head teacher signature for the letter and creates a parental consent form. A copy of each are given to the Trip Leader along with an Educational Visit's Procedure cover sheet detailing emergency contact numbers and reminders.
- If possible, make a visit to the trip location to look for toilets, places to eat, rest, and park.
- Make sure the relevant member of staff is made aware of any cover requirements necessitated by staff supervision of the visit.
- Draw up a risk assessment for the trip, which should then be approved by your Headteacher.
- Assess the special needs of your group and ensure that staffing levels and experience are appropriate to meet these needs.
- Meet with staff supervising the trip to discuss your plans.

One week before the trip:

- Trip Leader completes green capitation forms for all expenses and hands these into Finance.
- Trip Leader completes all pink slips for staff (signed by Director of Subject) and hands these in to LG/Admin.
- Trip Leader ensures all consent forms are returned.
- Trip Leader makes sure the academy is informed of the names of students attending.
- Inform teachers and tutors of students who will be missing school to participate in the visit.
- Give an information sheet with points of contact, an academy mobile phone number and times of departure and arrival to relevant members of SLT.
- Compile a list of medical information about students attending the visit.
- Telephone all activity centres, coach drivers, and other organisations involved in the visit to confirm exact times and numbers.
- Meet again with staff supervising your visit to finalise times, plans and the special needs of students attending the visit.
- Meet again with students outlining expectations for high standards of: etiquette, dress, behaviour, punctuality and cooperation

The day before the trip:

- Photocopy itineraries, including a mobile phone number, to give to other group leaders.
- Compile a folder containing all the documentation for the trip, including emergency contact numbers, insurance documents, medical information and names of pupils attending.
- Obtain a first-aid kit – one for each coach - appropriate to the nature and duration of the activities you will be undertaking.

Day of the visit (safeguarding):

- All students must be registered on to the coach by staff. This total number is to be used as a head count for getting students back on to the coach.
- A paper copy of this register must be given to Reception before the coach leaves the school site and Reception must be notified of any missing students.
- Students should be supervised as per risk assessment and registered at key points throughout the day.

Upon return:

- The Trip Leader should ensure that all students get home safely.
- The EVC should be notified of any incidents that would mean amending the risk assessment.
- The Trip Leader should keep all parental consent forms. EVC only keeps consent forms from a residential or high-risk trip.

Health and safety

Every aspect of school-trip planning comes back to health and safety advice. Check our academy's Health and Safety Policy and our LA guidance on school trips. The key documents are "Standards for adventure" (details of supervision, risk assessments and ratios for adventure activities); "Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits" (which makes clear the responsibilities of the EVC, the Academy Council and the Headteacher); and "A handbook for Group Leaders" (a very accessible and practical guide to all aspects of the off-site visit). These publications are available on the DfES website.

Insurance

No trip should be contemplated before talking through insurance provisions with our EVC. Insurance policies vary in their provision of cover, but the major areas to be aware of are personal injury (which covers fatality and serious injury) and public liability (which covers the school and its teachers in the event of a claim following an injury or fatality). It is important to check that the policy meets the needs of the proposed visit:

- Is the personal effects cover high enough?
- Are you insured for dangerous or unusual activities?
- What happens if the trip needs to be cancelled?

When you send out a letter of consent to parents, inform them of the insurance cover in case they need to take out supplementary insurance to cover the loss of valuables that their child may bring.

What are you responsible for?

Ultimate responsibility for the visit rests with the MAT, but you have a duty to draw up and circulate the necessary documentation: risk assessments, proposed itinerary, emergency contact numbers and any special needs that must be accommodated. Remember that even though a risk assessment has been drawn up, you are responsible for managing that risk throughout the trip.

Trip Leader must take care to put the best interests of the party first when reacting to incidents or accidents. There are some provisions that should be made regularly by the Trip Leader, such as head counts, checks on seat belts and whole-party briefings. In the event of a serious incident, as soon as you have made yourself and your party safe, you should contact the academy, MAT or LA.

Risk assessments

The DfES publication "Five steps to risk assessment" is very useful in formulating an accurate risk assessment for a school trip, identifying questions that must be asked of every trip. Which permanent hazards might the group face? Who is at risk? How high is the risk and what would be its outcome? How will you factor the risk into your planning, and how would you propose to react to it?

Remember that risks are assessed twice for each trip, once by the EVC and once by the LA's educational visits officer. The idea is to ensure that risks are kept low - the price you might pay for a low-risk trip is the omission of one or more of its proposed activities from the itinerary.

Overnight stays

If you're planning a trip that will involve a residential visit, all the usual guidelines apply. However, there are some extra aspects that must be factored into your planning. You will not be able to supervise pupils 24 hours a day, so it is important to think about the security of the rooms in which pupils will be staying. It is advisable to put questions to the accommodation provider well in advance of your stay. Increased risks of drug or alcohol abuse among older children also come with residential visits, as does the danger of bullying. Take reasonable steps to make sure students are aware of the rules, and make provision in the letter sent to parents for sanctions to be enforced if students are found to be behaving in a dangerous or anti-social manner. Ensure that there is an awareness of what the party should do in case of fire or other emergency. Aim to ensure students are given privacy; that girls and boys are - as far as possible - accommodated separately; and that teachers' rooms are near student accommodation.

GDPR Considerations

- Photographs of students attending the trip can only be used if consent is given. If consent isn't given, the venue must also be made aware of this and they should not use the photographs of students where consent is denied.
- During the trip, all copies of forms which include personal data should be held securely by the Trip Leader and not be shared with anyone who does not need access to it.
- At the end of the trip, all copies of forms which include personal data should be shredded. The EVC will save a copy when required.
- The sharing of personal information with other organisations (e.g. hotels, coach companies, etc), particularly on trips abroad, should be limited to the absolute minimum.
- Safeguarding always trumps data protection so if data is required to be shared for a safeguarding reason, this should be a consideration.