



*'ALIS VOLAT PROPRIIS'*

**SEATON HOUSE SCHOOL**

**OFF-SITE VISITS AND ACTIVITIES POLICY**

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## GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STAFF OF SEATON HOUSE SCHOOL ON THE ORGANISING AND RUNNING OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL VISITS

### **BACKGROUND**

Staff at Seaton House School organise a large and varied programme of out-of-school visits during the course of each year. These include sports events against other schools, short walks in the immediate locality of the school, day trips to places of interest, field trips, residential trips and potentially hazardous activities. The Governors of Seaton House School recognise the value of out-of-school visits and are grateful for the energy, commitment and professional skills of the staff involved.

Teachers who take pupils out of school on a school activity are responsible for all pupils in their care just as they are in school during school hours. The teacher's care of duty has been described as *in loco parentis*, i.e. the standard of care of a reasonably careful parent. This legal label was first attached to teachers over 100 years ago when the teacher-pupil relationship was in reality similar to the parent-child relationship. The school environment has grown and changed since then and the literal concept of a teacher being *in loco parentis* either in school or on an –out-of-school visit is a difficult one. In particular, whilst it may be perfectly safe and quite proper for a parent to decide to take a child outdoors on a visit or adventure on the spur of the moment, a teacher could not possibly discharge his or her professional obligation by acting this way in school. However, regardless of the particular label given to the teacher's care of duty, the obligation is to take all reasonable measures to ensure that no pupil is exposed to unacceptable risk. In other words, the requirement is to act *carefully* and not *carelessly*. The law does not expect anyone to do the impossible but an individual, doing what a reasonable person would not do, or failing to do what a reasonable person would do, could be found to be negligent.

This document aims to give guidance that will both minimise the risks to those taking part in out-of-school visits and give as much protection as possible to the teacher in charge of the visit (the Party Leader). Most school visits take place without incident but, following a number of tragic accidents involving school children in the last few years, there is a growing concern about ensuring the safety of pupils on school visits. A balance must be struck between what is desirable and what is feasible. Judges know that the standard of care must not be too demanding. A very high standard would reduce the relationship to that of a nursemaid and witless child – a conclusion unacceptable in the educational context. At the same time parents must be assured that their children will be cared for as best they can in the circumstances.

This document has been produced in response to the concern expressed above and takes note of the development of risk assessment in recent years. It seeks to protect teachers as well as pupils and has regard to the Department for Education ("DFE") guidance *Health & Safety: Advice on legal duties and powers* ((Feb2014) and material on LOfC website ([www.lotc.org.uk](http://www.lotc.org.uk)). We keep up to date with Health and Safety consultations and make any necessary changes to our procedures in order to apply common sense and to ensure continued compliance and best practice.

Mrs Debbie Morrison is the Risk Assessment Coordinator and she ensures that the premises risk assessments are up to date. She also ensures that written assessments (where applicable) are completed by teachers and filed in her office.

## ***INTRODUCTION***

1. It is essential that the utmost care and attention continues to be given to the planning and running of out-of-school visits to ensure that the safety of pupils and staff involved is fully protected. The policy on the organising of these visits needs to be kept under continual review to ensure that best current practice is followed. Every effort should be made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special educational or medical needs.
2. The DfE guidance mentions 10 important areas to consider for the types of activities envisaged. The essential elements which usually apply are:
  - Responsibilities for visits, including pupils' behaviour;
  - Planning visits, including risk assessments and First Aid;
  - Supervision, including ratios and vetting checks (for example DBS checks for volunteers on overnight stays);
  - Preparing pupils, including special and medical needs;
  - Communicating with parents;
  - Planning transport;
  - Insurance;
  - Types of visits;
  - Visits abroad;
  - Emergency procedures, including contact details and permission for emergency medical treatment if parents cannot be contacted

## ***PLANNING AN OUT-OF-SCHOOL VISIT***

3. This document aims to give general guidance and instructions to teachers involved in the planning and running of out-of-school visits.
4. It is School policy that approval for all out-of-school visits must be sought from and given by the Headmistress before a visit takes place. Some visits may require detailed research and planning before approval can be given and the format of some visits may need to be modified before approval can be given. Exploratory visits should be made by the group Leader whenever possible. A sample Approval Request Form is attached at Annex A
5. It has to be stated that some trips are inherently more dangerous than others but the technique of **written risk assessment** must be used in the planning of **all** trips.
6. It is axiomatic that the nature and potential extent of the risk will inevitably impact on the planning and organisation of the trip. Safety must always be the prime consideration: if the risks cannot be contained then the visit must not take place. Further detail on the preparation of risk assessments is given in paragraphs 57 – 66 of this document. Teachers considering organising an out-of-school visit should look at these paragraphs as part of their preliminary planning.
7. Each visit will require its own risk assessment but copies of previous risk assessments can be made available to staff on request.

8. *Teachers involved in the supervision of teams for scheduled away fixtures should be aware of the contents of this document and should note the relevant points, particularly those relating to the transporting of pupils.*
9. Detailed guidance follows but it is stressed that teachers in charge of out-of-school visits must leave, as a minimum, the following information with the School Office before the pupils leave the School premises on a visit:
  - a) a list of all pupils and staff on the visit with contact telephone numbers
  - b) a visit itinerary with date(s) and timings
  - c) a contact procedure for the School to make a quick link up with the party
  - d) procedures for informing the School of any enforced change to the planned time of return and details of arrangements for informing parents of any change of plan.

### ***STAFF / PUPIL RATIO***

10. There should be a **minimum** of two members of staff on each visit, with the following recommended staff / pupil ratios being adhered to:

Nursery	1 : 3
Reception	1 : 4
Forms I - II	1 : 6
Forms III – VI	1 : 8

**Many visits will require a higher ratio of supervisory staff to pupils.** Exceptionally, the Headmistress may use her discretion to reduce the minimum number of staff, depending on the nature of the visit and the number of pupils involved. (ie a theatre visit; no use of public transport or a location that has no other members of the public present) Wherever possible, all adults accompanying the visit should be members of staff employed by the School, but the Headmistress may, at her discretion, allow other adult helpers to accompany the visit provided that a qualified teacher employed by the School is always in. Parents/volunteers used to supplement the supervision ratio should be carefully selected and well known to the school and the pupil group. On one day trips, wherever possible, parents/volunteers should possess and enhanced DBS disclosure certificate. If this is not possible, parents/volunteers should not be left alone or unsupervised in charge of children. Any volunteer who accompanies a residential trip should possess and enhanced DBS disclosure certificate.

11. The Party Leader is responsible to the Headmistress for ensuring that a group is adequately staffed. In considering whether a higher ratio of staff to pupils will be necessary for any particular visit, the following points should be taken into account:
  - a) the ages of the pupils involved
  - b) the duration and circumstances of the visit

- c) the method of travel
- d) the nature of the locality and the activities to be undertaken
- e) whether any hazardous activities are involved and the experience levels of the pupils in such activities
- f) special needs of any pupils taking part
- g) the experience of the supervising teachers

### ***INFORMATION TO PARENTS***

12. It is essential that parents are fully informed, **in writing**, about the nature of proposed visits, and any special activities involved, well in advance. Where appropriate (and always in the case of any visits of more than one day's duration) parents should be invited to the School to discuss details with the party organisers. Pupils participating in the visit should also be present at the meeting or another meeting should be scheduled for them.
13. The written information to be given to parents will depend on the nature of the visit and whether or not an overnight stay is involved, but the following should be borne in mind:
- a) date of visit and duration
  - b) details of travel arrangements
  - c) cost and method of payment
  - d) itinerary
  - e) activities in which pupils will be allowed to participate
  - f) information about insurance cover
  - g) advice about clothing and equipment
  - h) names of the Party Leader, members of staff and any other adults accompanying the party
  - i) details of any particular health requirements and inoculations that may be necessary
  - j) advice on pocket money
  - k) advice on what meals are provided on the visit, and whether or not pupils need to provide packed meals, or bring money to buy food

- l) **Code of Conduct: details relating to the standard of behaviour expected from the pupils during the visit.** Parents should also be advised that the School reserves the right to exclude a pupil from a visit on behavioural or medical grounds.

14. For visits taking place wholly within normal school hours it is assumed that the emergency contact number will be that of the School Office). There are occasions when parents may need to convey urgent information to children and the nominated contact should be fully briefed on the composition of the school party and its planned locations and movements. The Party Leader is responsible for arranging a nominated contact and must ensure that the nominated contact is kept informed of any significant changes to timings, locations etc, and is updated on any problems which may have arisen.

### ***CONSENT / INDEMNITY FORMS***

15. Pupils should not be allowed to participate in a school visit unless an appropriate consent form has been signed by their parents / guardians and returned to the Party Leader. The consent form should provide parents with the opportunity to point out any special needs, medical details or allergies, of which the staff responsible need to be aware. This form is filled in at the start of the academic year and it covers all trips and outings. Parents are reminded that they need to inform the school of any changes to their daughter's details (physical or otherwise) before each individual trip.

### ***USE OF PRIVATE CARS FOR CONVEYING PUPILS***

16. It is recommended that, where possible, pupils should be transported either by coach, minibus or by train. The use of private cars is discouraged in principle **but it is recognised that the use of private cars may be required when transporting pupils to and from certain places.**
17. Before allowing a member of staff to use his / her car to transport pupils, the Headmistress should check that the member of staff has:
  - a) a valid driving licence
  - b) fully comprehensive insurance

The School also has a comprehensive car insurance policy which covers all employees who have the permission of the Headmistress to use their car in connection with school business. One to one contact should be avoided.

18. Before allowing a parent to transport pupils in his / her private car, the teacher i/c of the visit should confirm to the Headmistress that the parent has signed a declaration acknowledging that s/he has:
  - a) a valid driving licence
  - b) comprehensive insurance cover

c) current road tax and MOT certificate

19. Except in emergencies, written parental consent is to be obtained before a pupil is transported in a private car.
20. Attention is drawn to the fact that the law currently makes it the driver's responsibility to ensure that all children up to 135cms in height must wear the correct child restraint, whether sitting in the front or rear seat. Children over 135 cms in height must wear a seat belt if it is available.
21. Drivers or co-drivers must not have consumed alcohol within twelve hours of commencing a journey. No alcohol is to be consumed at any time during the journey or during any breaks in the journey.

### ***INSURANCE***

22. The School has comprehensive **Public Liability Insurance** cover. This covers staff, pupils and accompanying adults with supervisory or other duties relating to the visit for liability in negligence. For all visits abroad or for visits of more than one day in the UK, Travel Insurance should be obtained. This insurance can be arranged through the School. It is important that parents of pupils participating in the visit are provided with full details of the insurance cover available.
23. The School's **Employers Liability** policy covers the School's legal liability for damages in respect of injury, death, disease or illness of members of staff arising out of and in the course of their duties.

### ***HAZARDOUS OR UNUSUAL ACTIVITIES***

24. Where unusual or hazardous activities are involved, it is important to ensure that members of staff accompanying the visit are properly qualified. Where possible, these activities should be undertaken at a specialist centre where appropriate equipment and qualified staff are available. It is important that parents are informed, in writing, of any hazardous activities involved, and that these are specifically mentioned when applying for school travel insurance.
25. In a supervised public pool it is acceptable to assume that a lifeguard will be on duty, but, given the age range of pupils attending Seaton House, **swimming in the sea or a river is NOT permissible except as part of kayaking, canoeing or surfing activities on field trips supervised by a recognised instructor.**
26. When using local swimming pool facilities, the recommended safe supervision levels of 1 adult to 12 pupils for Forms IV to VI should be followed. Form III and below should be higher.
27. Where a visit or activity is likely to take place away from a built-up area, a mobile phone should be carried.

## ***FARM VISITS***

28. Risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E Coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections.
29. An exploratory visit should be arranged to check that the farm is well-managed, it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare, it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas.
30. Safety rules should be communicated to pupils regarding handwashing, touching the animals, sampling animal foodstuffs, drinking from taps, farm machinery, playing in the farm area.

## ***FIRST AID***

31. It is recommended that a first aid kit with appropriate content to meet the needs of children be carried on each out-of-school visit. Ideally there should be a qualified first aider on every visit. For outings involving Nursery and/or Reception there must be at least one person who holds a current paediatric First Aid certificate.

## ***RESIDENTIAL VISITS***

32. All visits involving a period of residence away from home need ideally to be planned at least two terms and preferably a year ahead.
33. Whether at home or abroad, residential visits will include periods of time which are not taken up with organised activity. Pupils may want to shop for souvenirs, take a walk etc. Guidelines must therefore be laid down by the Party Leader and clearly understood by all members of the party. Pupils should not be allowed out of the group accommodation after the evening meal except in escorted parties accompanied by members of staff.
34. If the party is likely to be in a hotel or staying in a town, pupils should be reminded that it is an offence under British law for persons under 18 to buy alcohol in public houses, off licences or shops.
35. Pupils away from home may well strike up acquaintances with pupils from other school parties or the locality. This is a problem only if it leads to further assignations at times when the group is supposed to be engaged on organised activities or safely in its accommodation. Requests to go for a walk at unusual times should be regarded with some suspicion, and unexpected absence carefully noted and investigated.
36. The group register should be checked at meal times and whenever the party is due to move from one location to another e.g. by coach or on foot. It is often convenient to give small groups responsibility for one another, reporting to the Leader if anyone is missing.
37. If the group is staying in a hotel or other accommodation shared with members of the public, particular care must be taken to ensure that pupils do not make a noise in the corridors or in public rooms and that they talk quietly in their own bedrooms after a certain time in the evening. The group should ideally have adjoining rooms with teachers' rooms next to the pupils. The leader should obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in

advance. The immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the group's use. The Party Leader should draw up a list indicating the occupants of each room being used. Pupils should be made aware of the rooms occupied by members of staff.

38. The manager of the accommodation booked should be asked for assurances that the staff, including temporary workers, have been checked as suitable for work with young people.
39. The whole group should be made aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its regulations and routines and key personnel.
40. The Party Leader should check the fire exits in any group accommodation and ensure that pupils are aware of them.
41. Locks on doors should work in the group's rooms, but appropriate access should be made available to teachers at all times.
42. There should be an appropriate number of group supervisors on standby duty during the night.
43. Every residential trip should have at least one nominated contact whose telephone number has been given to parents of pupils on the trip. The School Office should also have a telephone number at which the party can be contacted, details of the planned itinerary including time of return to school and a nominal roll of pupils and staff on the trip. In the case of serious injury or illness, contact should be made with the family concerned, the nominated contact, the Headmistress or, in her absence, the Deputy Head. **It is essential that the nominated contact and the Headmistress be given the full details and be made fully aware of the situation immediately.** Medical consent should form part of the parental consent form and parents should be asked to agree to the pupils receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion. If parents do not agree to this the child should be withdrawn from the party. The group leader should carry the consent forms and the school should also keep a copy of the consent forms in case emergency treatment has to be authorized without being able to contact parents.

## ***TRAVEL GUIDELINES***

44. In advance of any trip, pupils accompanying staff should be given clear instructions on safety. These will vary according to the nature of the transport used, but pupils should not attempt to board or alight from a moving vehicle or open doors whilst a vehicle is moving. They should not lean out of windows or throw anything from a window or door. On boats, they should walk, not run. They should not run about on trains or coaches or climb or stand on seats. On coaches they should always remain seated facing the front and there should be a seat for each child. Where seatbelts are fitted, they must be worn. In countries which drive on the right hand side of the road, pupils should be reminded to be particularly careful when alighting from a coach or crossing the road. According to circumstances, the Party Leader will decide whether eating in the vehicle may be permitted. In all cases, the Party Leader should be provided with a litterbag in which to collect rubbish at the end of the trip. Suitable toilet and refreshment stops should be arranged. Personal radios / electronic equipment may only be taken on a school visit at the discretion of the accompanying staff and the decision should be communicated to pupils before the trip commences.

45. Rush hour travel should be avoided and reservations made in advance, where possible.
46. If a large group of pupils is involved in walking any distance, there should be an adult at the front and at the rear of the group. The group should stop at all road crossings. Generally, it is best to walk 'in crocodile' unless older pupils and small numbers are involved. Groups should regularly be checked and a roll taken before transport departs.

### ***ACTION ON RETURNING TO SCHOOL AT THE END OF A VISIT***

47. All parents should previously have been made aware of the entrance / location in the School to which their children will return and the estimated time of return. Any changes should be notified to the nominated contact by the Party Leader.
48. On return, the Party Leader is to confirm, by carrying out a head count, that all pupils expected to return have returned and take steps to ensure that parents take safe delivery of their children.
49. The Party Leader should not leave the school until satisfactory arrangements have been made for the dispersal of all pupils.

### ***PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF A SERIOUS ACCIDENT OR FATALITY***

50. If a serious accident or a fatality should occur, it is highly likely that the media will know of it before the Headmistress. The police have the responsibility for all serious accidents or fatalities, whether they occur on the highway or in open countryside. If the serious accident or fatality occurs in the UK or Northern Ireland, the police will endeavour to withhold the name(s) of the victim(s) until the parents have been informed, but if the incident occurs abroad then it is unlikely that this will happen. Parents may well learn of the occurrence through the media. This is the 'worst case' situation but is one that has to be faced and the School's procedures must be designed to cope with it and to ensure that, in such circumstances, maximum support is given to parents whose children may be involved.
51. The Party Leader, the Headmistress, Governors and staff may be subjected to extreme pressure by the media to comment or make a statement and give the causes of the accident and apportion blame. **The School's advice is that the Party Leader should not make any comment to the media without the approval of the Headmistress who herself may wish to seek legal advice before making any comment.**
52. Up to date information, accurate lists of names and addresses, effective lines of communication between all concerned are essential to deal with accidents and emergencies.
53. All the teachers supervising the visit must have lists of names, telephone numbers and addresses. They should always carry mobile phones and/or coins for the phone. It may be possible to reverse charges but this is usually time consuming and unsatisfactory. Similar lists, along with any relevant consent forms must be readily available in school. These lists must include any last-minute amendments. The list must also be with the nominated emergency contact. In this worst-case scenario, s/he should contact the Headmistress and

the Deputy Head as soon as possible. **The Party Leader must ensure that these contact numbers are available before the trip starts.**

54. A contact system also needs to be in place to ensure that details of any emergency at home (e.g. serious illness of a parent) can be conveyed to a pupil or member of staff concerned.
55. A checklist of the action to be taken in the event of a serious accident or fatality is included at Annex D.

## ***RISK ASSESSMENT***

56. The guidance given in this section is based on that contained in the DFE publication *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visit* and the HSE guidance '5 Steps to Risk Assessment'
57. It is the duty of the teacher organising the visit to carry out a written risk assessment. This will need to be completed well before the visit and should be submitted together with the request for approval. Approval will not be given until a suitable risk assessment has been produced.
58. A risk assessment need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. It does not generally require technical formulae or professional health and safety expertise. Specialised information, however, may be required for some visits and the Headmistress will need to ensure that the Party Leader is competent to assess the risk.
59. The concept of a formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit is to ensure that risks can be prevented or reduced to an acceptable level. Pupils must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. As already stated, if the risks cannot be contained then the visit, or proposed activity within the visit, must not take place.
60. **The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:**
  - What are the hazards?
  - Who might be affected by them?
  - What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
  - Can the Party Leader put the safety measures in place?
  - What steps will be taken in an emergency?
  - What staff: pupil ratios apply for the trip?
  - What children have allergies or health needs which might require specific medication to be administered.

61. The Party Leader must record the risk assessment and ensure that all staff (and other supervising adults) on the visit have copies, with details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the identified risks.
62. Frequent visits to local venues such as Banstead Pool or nearby schools for sports fixtures may not need a risk assessment for every visit. The teacher i/c Games should prepare a general risk assessment relating to each activity / type of game before the start of each season. **Final team lists should be handed in to the School Office before departure, in case reference needs to be made to them.** It is essential not to become complacent and a generic assessment of the risks of such visits should be made at regular intervals, and careful monitoring should take place.
63. Risks should be monitored throughout a visit and appropriate action taken as necessary.
64. **Before contemplating a booking for a visit the Party Leader should obtain a written or documentary assurance that providers such as tour operators and activity centres have themselves assessed the risks and have appropriate safety measures in place.** The Party Leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:
  - The type of visit / activity and the level at which it is being undertaken
  - The location, route and mode(s) of transport
  - The competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff
  - The ratio of teacher and supervisory staff to pupils
  - The pupils' age, competence, fitness and temperament and the suitability of the activity
  - The special educational and/or medical needs of pupils
  - The quality and suitability of available equipment
  - Seasonal conditions, weather and timing
  - Emergency procedures
  - How to cope should a pupil become unable or unwilling to continue
  - The need to monitor risks throughout the visit
65. Each visit will be different and there is no standard form that will suit all trips. Annex B presents a form for guidance only which staff may find useful as a means of commencing the required risk assessment.

**REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every two years.  
Reviewed May 2018

**Judy Evans**  
Chair of Governors

**Debbie Morrison**  
Headmistress

**APPENDIX A**

**SEATON HOUSE SCHOOL**

**Request for Approval of a School Outing**

**PROPOSED OUT OF SCHOOL VISIT**

1. Approval for the following visit is requested:

a. Place(s) to be visited:

b. Purpose of proposed visit:

c. Dates and Times:

Date of departure:

Time:

Date of Return:

Time:

d. Name of Party Leader:

e. Names of other Teachers involved (including Deputy Leader):

f. Size and Composition of Group:

Class(es):

Number of pupils

Age Range

Adult to pupil ratio:

2. Transport/Travel arrangements(include the name of the transport company):

3. Organising company/agency (if any): Include licence reference number if the body is registered with the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority

4.Costs of Trip (All out-of-school visits should be self-financing: approval will only be given to visits that are shown to be financially viable.)

a. Admission costs per person:

b. Ration of free places (if applicable):

c. Transport costs:

d. Estimated cost per pupil:

5. Insurance arrangements for all members of the proposed party: include the name of the insurance company

Insurance Cover:

Policy No:

Address:

Accommodation to be used:

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Name of head of centre (if available)

6. Details of programme of activities:



Please ensure that I have all relevant information including a final list of group members, details on parental consent and a detailed itinerary at least 7 days before the party is due to leave.

**APPENDIX B**

**OUTLINE RISK ASSESSMENT FORM – FOR GUIDANCE ONLY**

**Risk Assessment**

Site location		Date of last assessment		Date of new assessment	
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Activity/Situation					
Leader			Qualification(s)		

**How to use this form**

1. Identify potential hazards e.g. walking on roads, sunburn, getting lost, travel on a ferry.
2. Identify those at risk e.g. young persons, leaders, other adults.
3. Identify potential outcome and its likelihood and give a numerical value. Multiply your two numbers to arrive at your risk rating.
4. Where the risk is medium or high, either identify overleaf the action required to reduce the risk or do not proceed with the activity.

Hazards identified	Person(s) at risk	Potential outcome	Likelihood/Probability	Risk Rating	Risk L/M/H
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

Persons at risk	
L	Leader
OA	Other adults
Y	Young people
I	Instructor
PV	Public/Visitor

Potential outcome	Numeric value
Minor injury	1
Injury needing medical attention	2
Injury - off work/school > 5 days	3
Serious injury/long-term sickness	4
Fatality	5

Risk Rating	
1-5	Low
6-12	Medium
12+	High

Likelihood/Probability	Numeric value
Unlikely	1
Low possibility	2
Possible	3
Probable	4
Near certainty	5

Serial	Hazard	Action taken to reduce risk to an acceptable level
