

<b>Last review: October 2024</b>
<b>Review date: November 2025</b>
<b>Signed By:</b>
<b>Approval Committee: Governing Body</b>



# **GILLINGHAM SCHOOL**

**Hardings Lane, Gillingham**

**Dorset SP8 4QP**

## **EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY**

## Policy into Practice for School Trips

School Trips should be carefully planned to take account of the health, safety and security of staff and students, to ensure sufficient appropriate information is available to all parties and that students are properly prepared.

This policy ensures that school trips are planned as part of the school's annual calendar of events and that parents have information about the number and costs of the school trips their child may be invited to join. Although this plan may be adjusted and amended it is reasonable that parents have some indication of likely costs they may face.

The policy requires that all school trips receive prior approval from the Headteacher and are properly planned so that there is an appropriate level of suitably qualified and experienced staff, that risk assessments are made and appropriate health, safety and security measures put in place, that financial and logistical planning is complete, that parents are fully informed of **key** aspects of the visit and that arrangements are in place for emergencies and contingencies. It requires that sufficient information is made available by parents about their children.

## Sources of Guidance

Guidance is available for all school trips, and can be accessed through the School Finance Office, [www.dorsetforyou.com/schoolsafety](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/schoolsafety) , [www.oeapeg.info](http://www.oeapeg.info) , [www.hse.gov.uk/education](http://www.hse.gov.uk/education) and [www.lotc.org.uk](http://www.lotc.org.uk).

If guidance on the planned activity cannot be found advice should be sought from the LA Outdoor Education Adviser, via the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

Copies of current policy documents and details of sources for further guidance can be accessed via the school finance office and Nick Custard (Health & Safety, Site Team).

## Implementation & Legal Requirements

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and of anyone else on their premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. This includes participants in off-site trips.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, require employers to:

- Assess the risk of activities
- Introduce measures to control these risks
- Tell their employees about these measures
- And require employees to
- Take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety
- Cooperate with their employers over safety matters
- Carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
- Inform the employer of any serious risks
- Teachers and other staff in charge of students also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

This school policy into practice is based on the experience and good practice of staff at school who have organised trips and acts as a supplement to advice from the DfES and Dorset LA.

Although the employer, Gillingham School, is responsible for health and safety, decisions about school trips are usually delegated to the Headteacher. The Headteacher's agreement must be obtained before a visit takes place, the Headteacher may choose to delegate this responsibility to the school's EVCs, Mark Lavis and Sarah Turnbull (Deputy Headteachers).

## 1 RESPONSIBILITIES

Gillingham School has contracted with the LA to:

- Provide written guidelines for governors, headteachers and teachers, including advice on risk
- Help assess proposals for certain types of visit.
- Provide access to named staff for advice.
- Provide emergency telephone contact for the duration of school trips.
- Have in place procedures to help schools to monitor and review safety.

### Governors

The Governing Body must ensure that the school trip has a specific and stated objective and that the Headteacher/group leader shows how the plans comply with regulations and guidelines and that staff report back after the visit. It should ensure that it is informed about less routine trips well in advance and assess proposals for certain types of visit, which should include trips involving an overnight stay or travel outside the UK. Maintain appropriate third party insurance cover for the school.

### Headteacher

The headteacher should inform the governors of planned school trips and ensure that they comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the LEA or governing body and the school's health and safety policy. The headteacher will delegate the detailed planning to the organiser or the group leader. The headteacher should ensure that the group leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

### Educational Trips Co-ordinator (EVC)

The functions of the EVC are to:

- liaise with the employer to ensure that school trips meet the employer's requirements including those of risk assessment;
- support the Head and governors with approval and other decisions;
- assign competent people to lead or otherwise supervise a visit;
- assess the competence of leaders and other adults proposed for a school trip visit. This will commonly be done with reference to accreditations from an awarding body.  
It may include:
  - practical observation or verification of experience;
  - organise the training of leaders and other adults going on a school trip. This will commonly involve training such as first aid, hazard awareness etc. where required;
  - organise thorough induction of leaders and other adults taking students on a specific school trip;
  - make sure that DBS disclosures are in place as necessary
  - work with the group leader to obtain the consent or refusal of parents and to provide full details of the school trip beforehand so that parents can consent or refuse consent on a fully informed basis;
  - organise the emergency arrangements and ensure there is an emergency contact for each school trip;
  - keep records of individual school trips including reports of accidents and 'near-accidents' (sometimes known as 'near misses');
  - review systems and, on occasion, monitor practice.

### Group leader

The group leader has overall responsibility for the conduct of the school trip and the supervision of students and should have regard for the health and safety of the group. The group leader should be appointed or approved by the headteacher or the governing body.

The group leader should outline to all accompanying staff (teachers and non-teachers) their specific roles and responsibilities **having carefully risk assessed all aspects of the trip.**

The group leader should ascertain that all students understand their responsibilities and are sufficiently responsible to take part.

Ensure there is adequate first aid cover and that any medication is well managed and supervised throughout the trip.

Ensure risk assessments are in place for any children with complex or severe medical conditions which might be life threatening (these students will generally have a healthcare plan in place).

The group leader should consider cancelling the school trip or an activity within it if s/he thinks, or is advised, that there is a risk to the health and safety of the students.

## **Teachers**

Teachers must do their best to ensure the health and safety of the group acting as any reasonable parent would in the same circumstances. Following the directions of the group leader they should help with managing the behaviour of the group and consider stopping the school trip or the activity, notifying the group leader, if they think the risk to the health or safety of the students in their charge is unacceptable

## **Non-teaching adults**

Support staff, parents, governors, friends are examples of non-teaching adults who could be helping to organise and supervise a school trip. Non-teaching adults on the visit should have their roles and responsibilities during the visit clearly explained by the group leader.

Non-teaching adults should only be left in sole charge of students where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment, only those with a current DBS check may take on this responsibility.

Non-teaching adults must do their best to ensure the health and safety of the group acting as any reasonable parent would in the same circumstances. Following the directions of the group leader they should help with managing the behaviour of the group and consider stopping the school trip or the activity, notifying the group leader or teacher supervisors without delay, if they think the risk to the health or safety of the students in their charge is unacceptable.

## **Students**

Students should be explicitly reminded of the importance of adhering to the Gillingham School Values and of their responsibility for their behaviour during the school trip, the necessity of following instructions and not doing anything that might endanger themselves or others in the group.

Students whose behaviour may be considered a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from participating in the visit. (The curricular aims of the visit for these students should be fulfilled in other ways wherever possible.)

## **Parents**

To enable consistency all trip letters must be typed by the school office they will then be returned to the trip leader for approval and signature before photocopying.

Parents should be able to make an informed decision as to whether their child should go on the school trip. The group leader should ensure that parents are given sufficient information in writing and are invited to any briefing sessions. Parents need guidance on how they can help prepare their child for the school trip by reinforcing the school trip's Code of Conduct. Parents should agree arrangements for sending a child home early and for meeting the costs involved.

Parents will need to provide the group leader with an emergency contact number, sign the appropriate consent form and give the group leader all relevant information about their child's physical, emotional and psychological health.

## 2 PLANNING A TRIP at GILLINGHAM SCHOOL

- **Check Calendar and gain permission from SLT-**

(Nat Cross to add dates to school calendar)

- **School Trips planning request form:**

Please fill out the Microsoft form (on trips teams page) to enable finance to obtain quotes for transport and aid in the costing of trips. This also gives a timeframe for allowing for payments plan to be set up for more expensive trips. Please endeavour to give sufficient time to close the trip so that you can have a final student list attached to the paperwork **4 weeks before departure**. Checks can then be made for any medical/ SEND issues and these can be taken into account and thoroughly risk assessed.

**Pupils with SEND issues may require a TA or support staff to be added into numbers (please liaise with Karen Seldon). Any pupil with a medical care plan will require individual Risk Assessment.** (details of these students are on the trips teams page.)

**Appropriate provision for access issues of pupils in wheelchairs will need to be made for their transport and access/egress to venues.**

**Please remember to arrange cover directly with Sue (reception)**

- **Preliminary EVOLVE form:**

You do not need final numbers or exact list to get the information onto the EVOLVE system **so please get this started as soon as possible**, this gives us a chance to keep up to date with what trips are happening over the coming months.

**All trips will require a first aider (all trained staff listed on teams page- to be recorded on evolve form)**

- **4 weeks before departure: Final EVOLVE paperwork submitted.**

**(2 weeks if the trip is a day trip/non adventurous-- not needing LA sign off)**

**All paperwork needs to be attached to the EVOLVE form:**

Staff and class lists, SLT emergency contact, risk assessments for trip and venue (including roles and responsibilities of staff that are supervising), Individual risk assessment (if required), **Form 4 found on Evolve (if the company/venue doesn't hold a LOTC accreditation.)**- Any medication being held on student's behalf will need recording (and lock box for transport).

**Please Email Suze (medical) to arrange any care plans which require printing off and any specific extras needed in the first aid provision. (Inhalors, Epi pens etc.)**

**Ensure Sue Jesson is aware of any cover requirements for the trip.**

- **Before Departure:**

Pick up school mobile phone, final lists and any money required from Marie (finance). **Final lists will contain minor medical information/allergies you will need to be aware of** (please share info with all staff on trip) these will not need individually risk assessing but may have a bearing on what you will want to take in your first aid provision.

Collect first aid kit from Suze in medical room. Please email her with any specifics and any care plans you need to take with you in advance so she can have this ready.

**If there has been any last minute changes or swapping of students please make sure the paperwork you have submitted 4 weeks ago reflects this. Nick Custard can change the evolve form after it has been submitted.**

### 3 FURTHER ASPECTS OF PLANNING

#### 3.1 Risk assessments

A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit has the aim of preventing the risks or minimizing them. Students must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. If the risks cannot be contained the visit cannot take place. The risk assessment need not be complex and does not generally require technical or professional expertise; where specialised information is necessary it must be obtained from a competent person. The risk assessment must be comprehensive, that is covering all aspects of the visit not just the adventurous aspects. Transport arrangements, coach stops, walks through towns, crossing roads, arrangements for hygiene and comfort stops, etc, are all included.

Frequent school trips to local venues may not need a risk assessment every time but a generic assessment of the risks of such trips should be made at regular intervals and careful monitoring should take place. When school trips are repeated a new risk assessment does not need to be made but there must be a review to accommodate likely changes in environmental conditions, students, staffing.

Before booking a visit written or documentary evidence should be obtained that providers such as tour operators have themselves assessed the risks and have appropriate safety measures in place. However this is not required if the tour operator has other verifications of safety and quality as checking venue above.

Risk assessment is about identifying, evaluating and controlling risks before and during the event.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What the hazards are
- Whom they might affect
- What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place
- What steps can be taken in an emergency

The following factors should be taken into consideration when assessing the risks:

- Objectives of the school trip.
- Type of trip/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken
- Location **including distance from base**, route and modes of transport including collection and return arrangements
- Competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff
- Ratio of teachers and supervisory staff to students
- Group members age, competence, fitness, temperament and suitability of the activity
- SEN or medical needs of students
- Quality and suitability of available equipment
- Seasonal conditions, weather and timing, environment.
- Emergency procedures
- How to cope when a student becomes unwell or unwilling to continue
- The need to monitor the risks throughout the trip

Once the risks involved have been identified, control measures to reduce the risks should be identified and put in place, e.g., staff ratios, staff skills, experience and expertise, qualifications, pre-trips, instructions for students, clothing, equipment, etc. Assess whether the risks are acceptable with the control measures in place.

Guidance for outdoor and adventure activities, coastal trips, swimming, farm trips and field study trips is available in the DfE guidance “Health and Safety of Students on Educational Trips”.

### **3.2 Plan transport arrangements**

Planning needs to consider the following factors:

- Passenger safety
- The competence and training of the driver to drive the proposed vehicle and whether the driver
- holds the appropriate valid licence
- Length of the journey, time and distance, and the length of the driver’s day
- Number of drivers required
- Type of journey, e.g., local motorway, foreign
- Traffic conditions
- Weather
- Stopping points for toilet, refreshments, rest
- Appropriate insurance cover
- Contingency funds and arrangements in case of emergencies and breakdowns
- Supervision
- Any special needs such as disabled access can be accommodated.

Legislation requires that the Governors, in practice through the Headteacher, should be satisfied that all travel arrangements, including hire of coaches and buses, are suitable for the nature of the visit. The driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit. Drivers of buses and coaches must comply with legislation governing maximum periods of driving and minimum rest periods. These rest periods should be planned with the driver/s to ensure the safety of all group members including the driver/s.

Seats must face forwards and seat belts must be fitted on all minibuses and coaches that carry three or more children aged between 3 and 15 years inclusive. Recent legislation with regard to seat restraints / boosters seats must be adhered to.

#### **Hiring coaches and buses**

A reputable company with the appropriate licence should be used. Where a travel company is responsible for hiring coaches the name of the coach company should be known at least 48 hours before travel. The group leader should contact the coach company to confirm travel details.

#### **Minibuses**

The driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit. The driver must be qualified to drive a minibus and have a valid and clean driving licence. All drivers of the school’s minibuses should have received training in minibus driving and the management of passengers. “Notes and Guidance on the use of Minibuses” is available on the Dorset CC website.

#### **Private cars**

Teachers and others who drive students in their own car must ensure their passengers’ safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy, and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying students. Volunteers should be carefully vetted by the school before they are permitted to drive students in their car.

The driver is responsible for making sure that students have a seat belt and use it at all times.

Headteachers or group leaders must ensure that parents, volunteers and other students who transport students in their cars are aware of their legal responsibility for the safety of the students in their cars.

Parents' agreement should be obtained (on the consent form) for the children to be carried in other parents' or students' cars. It is advisable that parents driving students are not put in a position where they are alone with a student. The group leader should arrange a central dropping point for all students rather than individual home drops.

The Finance Office has further details and guidance with reference to transport hiring and minibus arrangements.

### **Public transport including rail travel**

Where public transport is used tickets should be booked beforehand. Seats should be reserved well in advance to ensure that the party can travel together.

### **Special needs**

When the school visit includes students with physical disabilities there may be a need for specialised transport. This needs to be planned and booked well in advance. The group leader should do this in consultation with the Support for Learning Department.

### **3.3 Supervision**

Supervision must be adequate and appropriate. Discipline should be maintained at all times. The driver should not be responsible for supervision unless the group consists of a small number of older children on a short journey. When travel is to games matches or other short distance trips with one driver/supervisor a mobile phone must be carried with a specified link to a named member of staff should an emergency arise. Adequate staffing should be available for supervision of coaches including double decker buses/coaches. A minimum of one supervisor per deck is considered appropriate but more may be needed depending on the age and type of students and the length of the journey. The group leader should be in charge of seating arrangements and seats should be reserved in advance where possible.

### **Staff student ratios**

Staffing ratios must be set taking into account the sex, age and ability of students, students with SEND or medical needs, nature of activities, experience and competence of adults both general and in specific activities, duration and nature of the journey, type of accommodation, requirements of the organisation/location visited, competence, **age** and behaviour of students, first aid cover.

For local school trips to historical sites and museums or local walks in normal circumstances for students from Year 7 upwards a ratio of 1 adult for 15-20 students is a good guide.

For residential and trips **involving hazardous activities, or** abroad 1 adult for 10 students is a good guide. Fixed ratios cannot be given but need to be determined by the findings of a risk assessment looking at, amongst other things, the detail of the particular group and their chosen activity. Ideally for mixed groups a teacher of each sex should accompany the party.

There should be a minimum of one teacher in charge. There should be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. For remote areas or hazardous activities the ratios may need to be greater. Parents/volunteers may be used to supplement school staffing. They should be well known to the school and students, and for residential school trips or frequent contact, should have been checked using the normal



school's procedures when staff are appointed, that is through DBS checks. This needs planning well in advance because the checks take time to complete.

### **3.4 Medical information**

The group leader must ensure s/he is aware of all special medical requirements of participants and pass this and other relevant information to the appropriate accompanying staff. **This should be added to the trip's risk assessment and a copy of any medical care plans accessible on the trip.**

#### **First Aid**

On any kind of school trip the group leader, deputy or competent other adult should have a good working knowledge of first aid, such as Basic First Aid, and ensure that an adequate first aid box is taken. For adventurous activities, school trips abroad or residential trips at least one of the group's supervising adults should be a fully trained first-aider.

Minibuses are required to carry a first-aid kit.

Guidance on the contents of a first-aid box is available in the DfE guidance.

#### **After the trip**

An evaluation of the school trip should be made. This provides information for future trips and allows the school to amend its procedures where necessary. Return all paperwork including contact/medical details list to the school office for filing or shredding all contact/medical information is confidential. Trip forms must be kept for 3 years.

## **4 PARENTS**

### **4.1 Parental consent**

This must be obtained via Edulink, for the following types of trip:

Non-residential routine school trips - Use standard online permission with an accompanying letter from office.

All residential school trips including trips abroad – use residential consent form

Remote supervision either give details in usual trip letter or a separate letter with consent slip.

It is the responsibility of the school to obtain informed parental consent for trips. Letters to parents must contain full details of the trip including all activities that may be undertaken and transport and supervision arrangements. Good practice would indicate a need to inform parents of the findings of any risk assessment before asking for consent.

If parents withhold consent the students should not be taken on the visit.

### **4.2 Parents' meeting**

Parents should be provided with full written information about the visit. Before all residential trips and adventure activities a meeting to brief parents should be held and written details of the visit should be available. The information given should include:

- Visit's objectives

- dates of visit
- Travel arrangements including travel company/ies, flight numbers and paths, ports, times of journeys
- Times of departure and return
- Pick up and return points
- Insurance details
- Size of group and level of supervision
- Names of all adults accompanying the visit
- Accommodation details including hotel/site name, address, phone number/s
- Details of activities planned
- Expected standards of student behaviour and arrangements for early return of students whose conduct is a concern and the agreed payment in such a case
- Other details –clothing, items to take, and money.
- Procedures for students who become ill
- Contact addresses and phone numbers for parents to contact the group in an emergency
- The school contact number and an emergency contact number in the event of an incident during the visit or the journey.

A copy of written information provided to parents must be given to the School Office.

For emergencies there is an additional LA contact number which is held by the School Office.

Parents must give the school their own day and night contact numbers for emergencies.

## **5 Insurance**

This may be provided by the School, a travel firm, the organisation to be visited or an insurance company. The Finance Office has details of the insurance provided through the School. For travel abroad there must be comprehensive travel insurance. Parents should be given the details of insurance available and what it covers and should be made aware of additional insurance available. Clear information about insurance provided by an external provider should be obtained.

## **6 Emergency arrangements**

A school contact with a phone number/s must be identified for all trips that take place wholly or partly outside normal school hours. This school contact will be the link between the group and the school and parents. Dorset backs up the school's emergency arrangements with an extra emergency contact system through the LA.

Please check that these numbers are the current ones held in the school office. These should be taken by all groups going away from school out of school hours.

In an emergency the group leader should take charge and should ensure that emergency procedures are in place. Clear arrangements must be in place for contacting the school or Headteacher or the school contact out of hours should it become necessary. Form 4b, which includes all emergency numbers should be completed and copies given to all teachers and supervisors on the visit, to the school contact and a copy kept in the school Office. Clarity and legibility are important when completing this form.

A contingency plan should be in place in the event of delays or changes to timing of the return journey.

Every teacher on the school trip should have a copy of

- Emergency contact information – Form 4b
- List of all adults and students on the visit with contact/medical information

If an emergency occurs the main factors to consider are:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency
- Ensure that all the group are safe and looked after
- Get the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them
- Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident
- Ensure that all group members are following correct procedures
- Ensure a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together
- Notify the police if necessary
- Notify the British Embassy/consulate if an emergency happens abroad
- Inform the school contact
- Provide details of the incident to pass onto the school
- Notify insurers – the school contact can do this
- Notify the provider/tour operator
- Get telephone numbers for future calls
- Write down accurately as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness statements and preserve any vital evidence, including photographic evidence.
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident
- Complete an accident form as soon as possible
- No one in the group should talk to the media. No names of those involved should be given to the media. This should be dealt with by a contact at school.
- No one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties

The emergency contact should:

- Ensure that the group leader is in charge and establish if any assistance is required from the school
- Contact parents and keep them informed
- Liaise with the LA and Headteacher
- Liaise with the media contact
- Report the incident using appropriate forms

## **7 Final preparation**

### **7.1 Preparation of the students**

Students should know about and follow safety rules and standards of behaviour when crossing roads and when waiting at pick-up and drop-off points and on rests during the journey. Clear rules should be set for behaviour including freedom to “roam” on buses, trains, ferries and boats. Students should be made aware of emergency procedures and where they are displayed.

Final preparation should include a thorough briefing of the students.

## **8 During the school trip**

The journey

The group leader should take the parental consent forms on the visit or the summary of details provided by the school office.

All adult supervisors should be given a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, possibly in writing. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times. All supervisors should carry a list of students and adults involved in the visit at all times.

Appropriate supervision and discipline should be maintained at all times. Younger students should be easily identifiable. Regular head counts should be taken. Clear instructions should be given about safety rules and standards of behaviour whilst waiting at pick-up and drop-off points and when getting on and off transport. The group leader or another delegated teacher should do head counts when getting on or off transport. Checks should be made that seat belts are fastened. Rest periods should be planned with the driver/s. When travelling on trains, ferries and boats the group leader should make clear to students how much, or little, freedom they have to 'roam'.

Rendezvous times and points should be identified and students should know what to do if they become separated from the group. Students should be told what to do if they miss a scheduled departure time. **There should also be consideration given to potential critical incidents, such as terrorist attacks, which should be added to the risk assessment.**

On all transport students should know what to do in case of an emergency and where emergency procedures are displayed. In the event of an accident or breakdown the group should remain under the direct supervision of the group leader or other teachers wherever possible.

### **The venue**

The group should be familiarised on arrival with the layout of residential premises and the location of fire alarms, escape routes and evacuation points. Group leaders must ensure that the students sleep in rooms that are assigned to them. Positive arrangements must be in place to prevent unauthorised access to living and sleeping quarters and these should be explained and adhered to by the group.

If a student misbehaves in such a way as to endanger others or bring the school into disrepute there will be serious consequences, which may include being sent home early. Parents will be expected to pay the costs involved. Students involved in taking or handling illegal substances will be sent home with subsequent exclusion from school.

Under these circumstances the group leader should inform the Headteacher and agree the action and procedures for sending the student home. This may need an accompanying member of staff or parent.