

ST. AMBROSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL



POLICY ON OFF-SITE VISITS

November 2022

Reviewed: July 2023

This policy has been written in consultation with staff and governors of St. Ambrose Preparatory School and with due regard to the school's mission statement:

At St Ambrose we aim to provide an independent Catholic education for boys and girls of all faiths aged 3 to 11; St Ambrose is an inclusive school where the Gospel teachings and our school values are at the centre of everything that happens in our school family. At St Ambrose we strive to develop happy, fulfilled, well educated, confident and caring children who know and understand the love, joy and peace of Jesus; and to show our Faith by the way we live, showing care and consideration for each other, those around us and the environment.

Our Vision

Our Vision is to be an exemplar Edmund Rice School, with an enviable reputation amongst our peers, both as an organisation and for the services and facilities we provide, making us first choice for parents and pupils in our geographic area.

Our Ethos & Values

At St Ambrose we provide a Catholic school community in which pupils feel welcome, safe, recognised for their individuality – supported by a community of love, and affection. We strive to live the Gospel in all aspects of school life and policy, following Blessed Edmund's footsteps.

Off-site visits policy (Inc EYFS, KS1 & KS2)
(staff are notified of regular ISI updates)

The Governing Body of St. Ambrose Prep School understands its regulatory responsibilities and will maintain an effective oversight of this policy, by evaluating its effectiveness, and reviewing and implementing change.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.
- 1.2 In this policy, we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits, we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 The aims of our off-site visits are to:
- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
 - provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;
 - promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

These visits begin with short excursions into the local area in the Early Years, and progress to a residential experience towards the end of Key Stage 2.

3 Curriculum links

- 3.1 The off-site visits we arrange support many areas of the curriculum and include:
- Theatre visits – Home theatre 'Inkheart', Lowry 'Mr Poppers Penguins'
 - Country Parks – Tatton Park (Tudors), Stockley Farm
 - Museums – Manchester Museum (Ancient Egyptians), Stockport air raid shelters (WWII evacuees), Styal Mill
 - Stately homes – Bramhall Hall, Dunham Massey (Victorians)
 - Art Galleries – Lowry art gallery
 - Zoos – Chester Zoo (Rainforest studies)
 - Train Station – Piccadilly rail station
 - Space Centre – Rossall Astronomy centre
 - Huge range of sporting fixtures (Greater Manchester, N.W.)
 - Local Church (Holy Angels)
 - Local Synagogue (Shay Lane)
 - Music Festivals (C.B., A.J.I.S)
 - Hidden Gem (St. Mary's – Manchester)

Visitors to the school also enrich the children's educational experience and include:

- Musicians – Key strings, Travelling Tuba, Samba Band
- Sports coaches
- Representative from the NSPCC
- Christian Brothers from England and abroad
- St Ambrose College Advocacy group
- Zoo lab
- Mad science

4 Residential activities

- 4.1 Children in Prep. 4 (Year 6) have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is in school time. We make a charge to cover the cost.
- 4.2 The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work, and is at the Robinwood Centre, Todmorden. We provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.
- 4.3 Children in Prep. 3 (Year 5) have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. The visit is based in Grasmere and it comprises of 4 educational elements; Poetry (William Wordsworth Cottage/Museum/workshop), River studies (Edale Beck), Contrasting localities (Grasmere village) and outdoor pursuits (Brockholes visitor centre)
- 4.4 Junior pupils have the opportunity to go on a musical trip to London, which includes performances, Workshops and shows over three nights.

5 How visits may be authorised

- 5.1 The Head will approve a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school.
- 5.2 The school's educational visits coordinator, who is the Head, will approve the planning and management of off-site visits.

He will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- hold the letter from our coach company (see 6.5) which assures us that their drivers, too, have had police checks;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure that there are regular generic assessments of the risks (e.g. road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues.

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LA (and available from the school office). All off-site activities must take account of L.A. advice.

- 5.3 Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the Head before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.
- 5.4 Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours and an overnight stay, the Head will seek the approval of the governing body before permitting the activity to take place.
- 5.5 It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents or carers to help us to adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

6 Risk assessment

- 6.1 A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:
 - What are the hazards?

- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

6.2 Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. S/he should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. S/he will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

6.3 It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the Visit Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

6.4 An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

- 1 adult to between 10 and 15 pupils in Years 4 to 6;
- 1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 2;
- 1 adult to 5 pupils in Early Years.

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

6.5 A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use on a regular basis has provided us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures.

6.6 In Early Years a paediatric first aider goes on all trips.

6.7 A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the Head, the governing body (on request) and all adults supervising the trip.

7 Transport

7.1 The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments that the school has opted to pay for.

- 7.2 Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.
- 7.3 Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks.
- 7.4 Our minibus meets LA guidelines, and each seat has a belt. We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts.

8 Communication with parents and carers

- 8.1 The parents/carers of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents or carers must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.
- 8.2 Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions. This must be made clear to parents and carers in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.
- 8.3 No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution.
- 8.4 The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Head to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.
- 8.5 If pupils are travelling in a staff members car, permission is sought from parents, and a booster seat is provided if required, and their car insurance is correct.

9 Further health and safety considerations

- 9.1 All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day, the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.
- 9.2 Before a party leaves school, the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity.
- 9.3 The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity, the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.
- 9.4 Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the Head the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.
- 9.5 More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements can be obtained from the L.E.A.'s Off-Site Activities on Trafford Services Education Website.

10 Training

- 10.1 3 yearly training of Education Visitor Co-ordinator.

11 Group leaders' planning

- 11.1 Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:

- 'Health and Safety: Advice on legal duties and powers (DFe Feb. 2014) and its supplements;
- 'A Handbook for Group Leaders' (Dfe publication)
- 'Group Safety at Water Margins' (Dfe publication)
- Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP) national guidance

12 Visit Plan

12.1 The Visit Plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

- risk assessment;
- report on preliminary visit;
- applications for approval of visit;
- general information;
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- travel schedule;
- accommodation plan (if applicable);
- full plan of activities;
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;
- guidance for party leaders/helpers;
- guidance for the emergency contact and Head;
- medical questionnaire returns;
- first-aid boxes.

13 Monitoring and review

13.1 This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.