

VISITS, EXPEDITIONS AND TOURS ABROAD

Updated September 2021.

Also available on School website for parents.

A. Introduction

We are very grateful to staff at Sevenoaks for organising an exceptionally large and varied number of visits in the UK and overseas during the course of each year. We regard these as an important part of the students' educational experience. We also recognise that such activities depend upon the enthusiastic commitment, energy and professional skill of members of staff.

This policy is intended to act as guidance for all staff organising and assisting educational visits. It is vitally important that staff are aware of and adhere to this guidance. It has regard to DfE Guidance *Health and Safety Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies*. Consideration has also been given to HSE policy statement *School trips and outdoor learning activities: Tackling the health and safety myths*.

With the exception of trips organised and run by boarding houses, all routine sports fixtures (normally in the School Calendar on iSAMS) and Service afternoon placements, permission is necessary to take any student off-campus, whether it is during the school day or in the evening. All visits must be authorised by the Head through the Deputy Head Co-curriculum, to whom Trip Request forms must be submitted by electronic means well in advance of the event and before any commitment to parents and students that the trip will go ahead is made.

It is vital for students, parents and staff themselves that all such activities are planned with great care and that all documentation is meticulously kept. Parents must receive full information about the trip. Parents now sign a one-off consent form for all school trips during their child's time at the school. A Code of Conduct (signed by parents and students) and a Medical Form are also filled in on joining the school and cover all school trips. It is the parents' responsibility to update the school of any new medical requirements. For all day/evening trips parents must give written permission for any amount over £10 to go on the school bill. Boarding housemasters or mistresses may sign in proxy for day/evening trips only.

B. Employer's policies and OEAP National Guidance

This policy has been written using the OEAP National Guidance as a guideline. Further useful information can be found at <http://oeapng.info>.

This policy has been written with the needs of Sevenoaks School in mind and therefore does not adhere precisely to the OEAP guidelines. Where there are differences between the OEAP information and the school policy then the guidance in the school policy must be followed.

C. Clarification of roles

The Head and Governors have overall responsibility for ensuring robust procedures are in place and that employees follow the procedures.

In practice day-to-day responsibility for ensuring the safe and effective organisation of out-of-school visits has been delegated by the Head to the Deputy Head Co-curriculum. They

will be assisted in monitoring risk assessments by the Health & Safety Officer. They will also be assisted by the Bursar when problems arise or where there are areas of legal uncertainty. The Visit Leaders have responsibility to familiarise themselves with the school policy and follow it carefully. If uncertain about the advice, they should discuss this with the Deputy Head Co-curriculum.

D. Procedural requirements

Residential Trips

If you are planning a school journey involving at least one night away, you must take the following steps.

Step 1: Trip Approval

- (i) This must be obtained by half-term of the Summer Term during the school year before the trip is due to go (exceptions may be made in exceptional circumstances).
- (ii) Before contacting the Deputy Head Co-curriculum, please check the following: the forecast calendar (available on iSAMS); flight/accommodation availability; the cost and capacity of the trip; you have sufficient staffing (including male and female reserve staff). Please note the following:
 - The recommended ratio of staff is 1:10 for residential trips with a minimum of two members of staff. However, more hazardous activities may require a much higher staff ratio than this.
 - Members of staff taking their own children cannot usually count as part of this ratio.
 - There must be at least one male and one female member of staff if a mixed group of girls and boys is being taken. If there are circumstances where this is not possible, this should be approved by the Deputy Head Co-Curriculum, and noted in both the risk assessment and the information that is sent to parents.
 - The Visit Leader must assess whether staff are sufficiently experienced/trained to lead or assist a particular activity. (A reserve trip leader of equivalent experience may also be needed at times.)
 - All adults accompanying a trip need to have been checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) by the school before departure.
 - There must be at least one member of staff on the trip, and one in reserve, who is first aid trained.
- (iii) Save *Trips Form Overseas/Residential* to your N: drive (My Documents). Fill in the **first page** of the Trip Request form and e-mail to the Deputy Head Co-curriculum and Trip Admin.
- (iv) Consider whether you may need to make a site visit in advance. Do you feel comfortable writing a risk assessment with your current knowledge? The generic risk assessment found on Firefly can be used as a starting point, but will need to be tailored for each trip.
- (v) The Deputy Head Co-curriculum will then decide whether to approve the trip. Considerations will be:
 - Educational benefit.
 - COVID restrictions on travelling to that location.
 - Cancellation or refund terms provided in case of COVID-related cancellation.
 - Distance.
 - Cost (both overall and cost per student).
 - Other trips taking place during that time.

- Whether the trip involves students missing school. (see F)
- (vi) If approved, the Deputy Head Co-curriculum will ask you to complete the rest of the Trip Form and enter the trip in the iSAMS calendar. After all proposed residential trips for the year have been reviewed, following the summer half term submission deadline, a full list of approved residential trips will be published in advance to parents and any changes to this will only be made in unusual circumstances.

Step 2 - Publicise the trip

- (i) Check that flights and accommodation are still available and make a provisional booking. Do not hand over any money at this stage. If you need to pay a small token as a booking deposit, please check with the Deputy Head Co-Curriculum first.
- (ii) Publicise the trip to students.
- (iii) A deposit should be requested from parents, which will be added to the next term's bill. The deposit should be sufficiently large to cover the initial deposit and any early stage payments to the Agent. The final balance payment may be added to student bills, provided the charge is emailed to the Fees Secretary (fees@sevenoaksschool.org) before the trip takes place, bearing in mind that parents pay their bills at the beginning of the term and the parents must have paid the trip costs in full before the trip departs. Contact the Finance Bursar for advice if required.
- (iv) Write to parents giving details of the trip. There is a sample letter on Firefly. Please use this checklist to ensure the following details are covered in your letter:
 - ☐ Nature of the trip
 - ☐ Staffing
 - ☐ Provisional itinerary (although indicate details may change)
 - ☐ Departure date/time and location
 - ☐ Return date/time and location
 - ☐ COVID POLICY – Parents must be told about the risk of cancellation and it must be explained that they will have to cover any financial loss due to COVID-related cancellation, if the school cannot obtain a full refund.
 - ☐ Any elements of the trip which could present a particular hazard to the group, such as any form of strenuous activity, orienteering, swimming, rock climbing etc must be fully disclosed to parents in advance.
 - ☐ If appropriate, the need for: EHIC for EU countries, Visas, GP's advice re inoculations.
 - ☐ Passport requirements, e.g. passport must not be within six months of expiry
 - ☐ If appropriate, dress details
 - ☐ Meals - whether they are included or money needed for restaurant meals
 - ☐ Flights/trains - ask parents to provide written confirmation if students are to be dropped off/collected from the venue so will not use organised transport
 - ☐ How boarders will be returned to houses if late return
 - ☐ Costs and payment schedule
 - ☐ That a risk assessment has been completed and is available on request
 - ☐ Invitation to contact trip organiser with specific questions
 - ☐ Reminder that school rules apply on trips.
 - ☐ School insurance details (available from Firefly) (see caveat above about COVID)
 - ☐ A reminder that parents should ensure they have notified the Main Office of any changes to details provided on the annual medical consent form for trips.
 - ☐ Any details about an information evening to give further details of the trip (if applicable)

- (v) Submit the letter and consent form to the Deputy Head Co-curriculum for approval before sending via ParentPost.

Step 3 – Obtain deposits and confirmations, and book the trip

- (i) You may choose to run an assembly for students and/or an information evening for parents and students at this stage. Please discuss with the Deputy Head Co-curriculum if it is the first time you have organised such an event. Make sure to book a large venue and ensure you have a sufficient number of handouts to allow for higher than anticipated turnout.
- (ii) A deposit should be requested from parents, which will be added to the next term's bill. The deposit should be sufficiently large to cover the initial deposit and any early stage payments to the Agent.
- (iii) A COVID Policy Confirmation must be obtained from the person paying the school bill, in relation to any loss incurred due to COVID.
- (iv) Submit the deposit and confirmation letter and consent form to the Deputy Head Co-Curriculum for approval before sending to parents via ParentPost.
- (v) Obtain a trip code from Accounts (accounts@sevenoaksschool.org).
- (vi) The final balance payment may be added to student bills, provided the charge is emailed to the Fees Secretary (fees@sevenoaksschool.org) before the trip takes place, bearing in mind that parents pay their bills at the beginning of the term and the parents must have paid the trip costs in full before the trip departs. Contact the Finance Bursar for advice if required.
- (vii) Once you have finalized numbers, and deposits and confirmations, book the trip and inform parents that their son/daughter has a place. If a selection process is necessary, please speak to the Deputy Head Co-Curriculum in advance.
- (viii) Contact Facilities and Transport Coordinator about booking mobile phones and a coach (if necessary).
- (ix) Inform the Health Centre if vaccinations might be necessary.

Step 3 - Risk Assessment

- (i) This is a vital legal document and must be done carefully well in advance of the trip. It is a public document and parents can request to see it. If there were to be a serious incident on the trip, it would be a vital piece of evidence in showing that the trip was well planned and risks were considered.
- (ii) Please read the risk assessment guide and the example risk assessment on Firefly before completing the form. If you are unsure as to how to complete it, please speak to the Trips Administrator or Deputy Head Co-curriculum.
- (iii) Submit the risk assessment form to the Deputy Head Co-curriculum and Trip Admin for approval, at least three term-time weeks before the trip is due to depart.
- (iv) Please note that a risk assessment is necessary for every trip, regardless of the nature of the trip.

Step 4 - Final Details

- (i) Confirm the Trip Details Form and send electronic copies to the Deputy Head Co-curriculum and Trip Admin. Please be sure to provide a full list of students and contact numbers while you are on the trip.
- (ii) Book a Medical kit (from the Health Centre).

- (iii) Give a list of all those going to Trip Admin who will provide contact and medical details. Trip leaders should consult with the Health Centre and parents where any students on the trip have particular medical issues.
- (iv) Order foreign currency (if required) from Accounts at least 2 weeks prior to departure. Alternatively, an advance may be paid into your bank account if needed, if you prefer to use a personal credit card on the trip.
- (v) Send final detail letter to parents.
- (vi) Ask REPRO to produce emergency contact cards.
- (vii) For departures during anti-social hours, ensure that arrangements are in place for picking up boarders from houses. Also check with Marshals to ensure that Solefields car park is left unlocked and buses have access.
- (viii) Check that arrangements are in place for boarders' luggage.

Step 5 - Just before you go

Meet the Deputy Head Co-curriculum to go through the following checklist:

Please make sure you bring/can confirm:

- ☐ Insurance details including emergency assistance helpline number.
- ☐ European Health Insurance cards (where appropriate).
- ☐ List of students' contact details and medical conditions (this can be obtained from Trip Admin). Copy for each adult helper.
- ☐ You have discussed any potential medical problems with Health Centre/parents/BHMs and you have any necessary medication.
- ☐ Mobile phones. For countries outside Europe, ensure that you are carrying a phone that will allow you to make calls on the local network. For visits to remote areas, consider requirement for satellite phones and/or distress beacons as well as solar chargers.
- ☐ SMT emergency contact details. Copy with each adult helper.
- ☐ Risk Assessment. Copy for each adult helper.
- ☐ First aid kit.
- ☐ Travel tickets, passports and visas.
- ☐ A separate list of travel document numbers, and photocopies of documents wherever possible to be carried by another adult, ideally in a sealed waterproof bag.
- ☐ Emergency contact numbers for the country in which you are staying and staff contacts. Emergency contact cards to be given to all students.
- ☐ Location maps/addresses of all accommodation. Details provided to all students.
- ☐ Phone number of British Embassy/Consulate in country being visited.
- ☐ Location of hospital/medical services.
- ☐ Copy of the emergency procedures checklist (Firefly)
- ☐ Where practicable, ensure that third parties in receipt of student data have signed a Data Protection Compliance Agreement. Ensure that you have collected any copying/resources that you have requested from Repro.
- ☐ Copy of accident report form and expectation of host families if relevant.

Step 6 – During the Visit

- Continual monitoring of hazards throughout the visit and ongoing risk assessments must be undertaken. Adapt plans and then assess risks as necessary (behaviour, weather etc.).
- Be aware of exit strategies/options in case of a terrorist threat, and follow governmental advice of *Run, Hide, Tell* should a terrorist incident occur.

- Ensure the students know a second meeting point in advance should any terrorist event occur.
- Please make sure that adults, other than those DBS checked by the school, do not have unsupervised access to students.
- Make sure students are aware of procedures re traffic, road crossings
- Ensure that students know what action to take if they become separated from the group.
- Stop the visit or activity at any time if the risk to the health & safety of participants is unacceptable.
- Students are not allowed to consume alcohol. There is a 100% ban on student alcohol consumption.
- At least one member of staff must not consume any alcohol each evening. Other staff members may consume a limited amount of alcohol, such as a glass of wine or glass of beer with dinner. All staff must be in a condition whereby they can react effectively to any emergency. All staff are strongly advised to abstain from any alcohol consumption.
- If you deem it is safe to give students limited 'free time', they must be in groups of three and they must know where a member of staff is.
- Students must be given very limited unsupervised time in the evening and staff should regularly monitor their movements and behavior.
- Check student numbers at appropriate and regular intervals.
- Make sure bedtimes are clearly established and adhered to.
- One member of staff should be on each corridor where possible.
- Regular checks should be made of corridors and last thing at night. This should include knocking on bedroom doors and checking students are in their room.
- There should be a very clear rule about consorting in bedrooms so that students do not visit others' bedrooms after the specified time for lights out has been made clear.
- Ensure students know the emergency evacuation procedure of their accommodation and where to meet.
- Ensure hosts/hotel staff are informed of any allergies/dietary requirements.
- Students should be informed of the location and room number of staff bedrooms.
- Ensure that any losses are reported to the Police within 24 hours of discovery of the loss and that a copy of the police report is kept.
- Keep receipts for all expenses incurred in the case of accident or injury e.g. doctor's call out charge, drugs from a pharmacy, hospital bill, x-rays, extra transport.
- As far as is practicable, staff expenses must be limited to £5, £10 or £15 for breakfast, lunch and dinner respectively. Staff may not claim for any other non-essential items or activities.
- Please keep receipts for expenses to be presented with summary of accounts to the Accounts Department within a week of your return, together with any unused foreign currency.

Step 7 - After the visit

- Complete the Evaluation Form on Firefly if any incidents occurred.
- All incidents including poor behaviour, accidents and near-misses must be reported in writing to the Deputy Head Co-curriculum within 24 hours of return.
- Send a report to marketing and provide selected photos of the trip via the drop-box facility.
- Shred all confidential information such as copies of passports and contact details.

Non-residential trips

Step 1 - Trip Approval

- (i) This must be submitted to the Deputy Head Co-Curriculum and copied to Trip Admin one week before the calendar deadline during the school term before the trip is planned.
- (ii) Before contacting the Deputy Head Co-curriculum, please check the following: the forecast calendar on iSAMS; ticket availability; the cost of the trip; make sure you have sufficient staffing.
 - The recommended ratio of staff is 1:15 for day trips but more hazardous activities (see G and H) may require a much higher ratio than this.
 - Members of staff taking their own children cannot usually count as part of this ratio. You must assess whether staff are sufficiently experienced/trained to lead or assist a particular activity.
 - Save the relevant form from the portal to your documents. Fill in the first page of the trip request form and e-mail to the Deputy Head Co-curriculum and Trip Admin.

The Deputy Head Co-curriculum will then decide whether to approve the trip. Considerations will be:

- Educational benefit.
- Other trips taking place during that time.
- Whether school is missed or not.

Once a trip has been approved, the trip organiser should enter it in the iSAMS calendar.

Step 2 - Publicise and book the trip

- (i) Publicise the trip to students.
- (ii) Write to parents giving details of the trip. Please see sample letter on Firefly. Submit to the Deputy Head Co-Curriculum for approval before sending via ParentPost. The following details should be included:
 - ☐ Nature of the trip
 - ☐ Staffing
 - ☐ Provisional itinerary (although details may change)
 - ☐ COVID POLICY – Parents must be told about the risk of cancellation and it must be explained that they will have to cover any financial loss due to COVID-related cancellation, if the school cannot obtain a full refund. (If the trip is paid for by the parents. If the school pays for the trip, it will incur the loss.)
 - ☐ Departure date/time and location
 - ☐ Return date/time and location
 - ☐ Any elements of the trip which could present a particular hazard to the group, such as any form of strenuous activity, orienteering, swimming, rock climbing etc must be fully disclosed to parents in advance.
 - ☐ Dress details
 - ☐ Meals - whether they are included, packed lunches or money needed for restaurant meals
 - ☐ For day trips, parents of students in all year groups may request individual travel arrangements during the daytime, provided this is practical for the trip schedule and does

not cause a delay to the activity of the group. For such cases, parents must take full responsibility in writing for their children while not in the care of school staff. For evening trips, only Year 11 and upwards may travel home independently and then only once specific written parental consent given. All other students will typically be expected to be collected by parents from an agreed location.

- ☐ How boarders will be returned to houses if late return
- ☐ Costs and whether it will be added to the bill
- ☐ Invitation to contact trip organiser with specific questions
- ☐ Reminder that school rules apply on trips
- ☐ School insurance details (available on Firefly)
- ☐ That a risk assessment has been completed and is available on request.
- ☐ A reminder that parents should ensure they have notified the Main Office of any changes to details provided on the annual medical consent form for trips.

- (iii) If the charge for the trip is more than £10 you must have written parental approval in order to add this to the school bill.
- (iv) Contact the Facilities and Transport Coordinator about booking mobile phones and a coach (if necessary).

Step 3 - Risk Assessment

- (i) You need to complete a risk assessment for all trips as they have to be very carefully managed and risks have to be considered and minimised. The government guidance states that the person running a trip should act like a '*prudent parent*'. This is a vital legal document and must be completed carefully well in advance of the trip. It is a public document and parents may request to see it. If there were to be a serious incident on the trip, it would be a vital piece of evidence in showing that the trip was well planned and that risks were considered.
- (ii) Please read the risk assessment guide and the example generic risk assessment on Firefly before completing the form. If you are unsure how to complete it, please speak to the Trips Administrator or Deputy Head Co-Curriculum.
- (iii) Submit the risk assessment to the Deputy Head Co-Curriculum and Trip Admin for approval, at least 2 term-time weeks before the trip is due to depart.
- (iv) Please note that a risk assessment is necessary for every trip, however short the trip.

Step 4 - Final Details

- (i) Fill in the rest of the Trip Details Form and send electronic copies to the Deputy Head Co-curriculum and Trip Admin. Please be sure to provide a full list of students and contact numbers while you are on the trip.
- (ii) Please make sure you take with you on the trip:
 - ☐ List of students contact details and medical conditions (this can be obtained from Trip Admin). Copy for each adult helper.
 - ☐ Make sure you have discussed any potential medical problems with Health Centre/parents/BHMs and that you have any necessary medication with you.
 - ☐ School mobile phone(s) – from Facilities and Transport Coordinator.
 - ☐ School emergency contact details.
 - ☐ Risk Assessment. Copy for each adult helper.
 - ☐ First aid kit (from Health Centre).
 - ☐ List of staff contact numbers which should be given to all staff and students.

Step 5 - During / after the visit

- Continual monitoring of hazards throughout the visit and ongoing risk assessments must be undertaken. Adapt plans and then assess risks as necessary (behaviour, weather etc.).
- Be aware of exit strategies/options in case of a terrorist threat, and follow governmental advice of *Run, Hide, Tell* should a terrorist incident occur.
- Ensure the students know a second meeting point in advance should any terrorist event occur.
- Make sure students are aware of procedures re traffic, road crossings.
- Ensure students know what action to take if they become separated from the group.
- Stop the visit or activity at any time if the risk to the health & safety of participants is unacceptable.
- Students are not allowed to consume alcohol. There is a 100% ban on student alcohol consumption.
- At least one member of staff must not consume any alcohol each evening. Other staff members may consume a limited amount of alcohol, such as a glass of wine or glass of beer with dinner. All staff must be in a condition whereby they can react effectively to any emergency. All staff are strongly advised to abstain from any alcohol consumption.
- Check student numbers at appropriate and regular intervals. Regular headcounts must be taken.
- If you deem it is safe to give students limited 'free time', they must be in groups of three and they must know where a member of staff is.
- Please keep receipts for any expenses to be claimed.
- Please make sure that adults, other than those DBS checked by the school, do not have unsupervised access to students.
- On your return, please wait until all students have been collected. All boarding students must be taken back to their boarding houses.

E. Language Exchanges

The staff ratio may be relaxed slightly for Modern Languages' exchange trips. The exchange trip may be divided into two parts; the first the journey to and from the exchange school, the second the time spent at the exchange school. The staff/student ratio for the journey to and from the exchange school must be in accordance with our standard regulations for trips abroad, i.e. it must be 1:10. There must be a minimum of two members of staff travelling to and from the exchange school and if one or more girls are in the group a female member of staff must accompany them wherever possible. There should be sufficient staff to cover an emergency. Having arrived at the exchange school it may be acceptable for the staff student ratio to be relaxed. However, there needs to be a clear risk assessment undertaken by the organising member of staff to satisfy him/herself that the students are as fully protected as possible. If it is clear to the organiser of the trip that the teachers in the exchange school are not accepting responsibility for the welfare of our students the ratio must not be relaxed. However, if it is clear to the organiser that the students are subject to the disciplines of the exchange school, and in the evening of the exchange family, a relaxation of 1:15 might be acceptable. Further, if it is apparent to the organiser that the exchange school teachers and the parents of the exchange partners adopt a very caring and supportive attitude, it might be

deemed appropriate to relax the ratio further to 1:20. Exceptions can only be granted by the Head through the Deputy Head Co-curriculum.

For language trips where students stay with a host family, but it is not an exchange, staff need to call host families every evening to make sure the students have arrived home at the agreed time. For exchanges, the host family must be made aware of the policy on alcohol and must inform Sevenoaks staff of any problems.

F. Trips involving missed school

Members of staff planning visits related to subject teaching should initially gain approval from their Head of Department. It needs to be considered that such activities often disrupt normal lessons, games and sports fixtures. Students must gain approval from staff and their Tutors if they will miss lessons or activities.

Students within 6 months of public examinations should not go away for more than 7 days. Trips involving students missing lessons should be avoided for Upper Sixth and Y11 in the term they are sitting their examinations. Trips involving students missing lessons should normally not take place four days after the end of school internal exams to enable staff to go over papers.

Trips on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays requiring a minibus (other than those relevant to the activity afternoons) should be avoided if possible because of a lack of transport.

The following guidelines are to help prevent too much school time being missed.

- Y7 - Y9 Where possible, departments are encouraged to organise cross-curricular trips for students at this level. There should not be more than one trip in an academic year for any subject.
- Y10 and Y11 No more than one school day missed per course (Geography and Modern Languages are allowed two days).
- Sixth Form No more than one school day missed per course (Geography and Modern Languages are allowed two days).

Exceptions to these guidelines must be cleared by the Deputy Head Co-curriculum.

G. Potentially Hazardous Activities Off-Campus

Hazardous activities include: camping, skiing, walking in remote areas, mountain walking, rock climbing, caving, potholing, horse riding, RAF air experience, sailing, sail boarding, canoeing, sub-aqua, swimming in sea, rivers and lakes, field studies. (This list is not an exhaustive one; if in doubt consult the Head through the Deputy Head Co-curriculum). Before approving such activities the Head through the Deputy Head Co-curriculum must satisfy themselves that:

- The leaders and accompanying staff are sufficiently experienced and qualified to undertake such activities.
- The appropriate student-teacher ratio required for the particular activity is observed.
- For certain locations the party leader has knowledge of the area to be visited or has undertaken a reconnaissance visit, or has taken suitable professional advice.

- A full risk assessment of the activity has been conducted.

Please note that during ski trips one member of staff must not be skiing at all times. They should stay in a known location during this time which the students and staff are aware of.

Staff organising hazardous activities must possess the basic qualifications for certain specialist activities. See the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel web site. In addition staff must be aware of, and comply with, the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 (new details awaited).

The school does not need a licence where the activity is offered only to students currently at the school. However, standards of safety management should be at least equal to those laid down in the regulations. The school does need a licence if the activity is offered to students from other schools or members of the public.

It is important to note that students who complete their leaving procedure during the course of the Summer Term are not members of the school when and if they take part in an activity later in the term or during the school holiday.

If it is intended to organise an activity at a commercial centre it is important to verify that the centre is licensed. The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority website has a list of licensed providers.

H. Use of third party providers or activity centres

From time to time a trip or activity may take place at an adventure centre or other equivalent venue. In such circumstances, the member of staff organising should consider a reconnaissance visit and should certainly have a discussion with the provider about how their facilities can be used to achieve the educational objectives of the trip or activity. Some of the following questions may be relevant to ask as part of this conversation.

- What is the safety provision on site?
- Are there risk assessments in place?
- Is there evidence of strict operating procedures?
- What are the fire evacuation procedures?
- Do all staff hold DBS checks which are up to date?
- What are the training levels of the staff you will be working with?
- What first aid and medical arrangements are in place?
- How does the site record accidents and near misses?
- What does the accident log look like for recent months?
- Request a copy of the venue's Health and Safety Policy. This document can inform your health and safety planning, such as staff to student ratios.
- Does the centre have liability insurance?
- Do they have a full understanding of their responsibilities when under 18s are on site?
- This is also an opportunity to discuss provision and adjustment for any SEND students.
- Does the venue, site or provider comply with all local and national standards for the relevant activities?

- Do they hold a LOtC Quality Badge or are they AALA licensed for example?
- Are they a recognised supplier and do they have testimonials and evidence to this effect?

I. Health Advice

The following guidelines have been put together to offer advice and support for those involved with taking students on overseas trips or residential trips within the UK.

- The most important aspect of any trip is to plan ahead – please discuss your trip with Health Centre staff at least 10 weeks before you go, having previously completed a health profile to enable them to sort out your needs quickly. This form (obtainable from the Health Centre) will help them arrange your immunisation, malarial prophylaxis and first aid requirements.
- Many problems encountered on trips such as sun, traveller's diarrhoea, etc. are not prevented by vaccine and will need specific advice. In certain cases the nurses will be happy to speak directly with students to reinforce safety abroad. This is specifically important when malaria tablets are required – a group taking tablets together will mean greater compliance.
- The Health Centre suggests that Day students not registered with the school GP or one of the other Amherst Medical Practice doctors go to their own GP to receive vaccines. The GP will hold the student's records and have dates of any boosters given. In unusual circumstances the Health Centre is happy to vaccinate Day Students but only as a private patient which will incur a fee which can then be added to the school account. Any Day Student requiring this service must complete a consent form available from the Health Centre.
- When consent forms are returned please discuss with the Health Centre any concerns you might have about students with medical conditions. This also includes students on medication that you are unfamiliar with. It is important that you understand how to deal with any emergencies that might arise from various conditions such as diabetes and asthma.
- All residential trips will have at least one member of staff with first aid training.

J. Alcohol Guidance for School Trips

The guidance below is intended to reflect best practice and to protect staff from problems that can arise due to consumption of alcohol on school trips.

For staff:

- Staff will naturally bear in mind that how they behave sets an example to students. In addition staff need to be in a position to deal with an emergency.
- At least one member of staff (and two for larger trips) should be on duty and not drink during the day or evening.
Other members of staff should only drink in moderation but staff are advised to abstain from any alcohol consumption.

For students:

- Students are not allowed to drink alcohol on a school trip under any circumstances.
- If a student has obviously been drinking (is sick, abusive, unable to speak clearly etc.) then he/she should, where practical, be sent home. This may not be possible for more remote trips

and if in doubt staff should contact the member of SMT on duty. The student might be suspended or expelled from school on their return. The student(s) involved should always be interviewed following normal school practice and written statements made.

- (iii) If a student is sent home, he/she would need to be escorted to the airport/railway station and checked in and parents/educational guardian would have to be available to receive them. The cost will be charged to their parents.
- (iv) If it is a more minor incident then all involved should be interviewed and written statements made.
- (v) In all cases the incident will then be followed up by the Deputy Head Pastoral and Divisional Heads once back at school using notes made by staff present at the incident.
- (vi) Students may be banned from future trips after one offence but a second offence would definitely result in being banned from all school trips, including day trips.

K. Managing the trip

- (i) In general students should remain with the group at all times. If a small amount of unsupervised time is given then students should be in groups of a minimum of three people and they should know where members of staff are. They should be given clear guidance as to where they can and cannot go, and reminded about alcohol misuse.
- (ii) Students below the Sixth Forms should, in general, have very little unsupervised time in the evening. In the Sixth Form students may be given a limited amount of time (perhaps up to 1½ hours) but they should always be met at the end of the period.
- (iii) If any student is found to have been drinking, they should (if not sent home) have the privilege of unsupervised time removed.
- (iv) When checking the rooms at curfew, staff should be vigilant for signs of alcohol.
- (v) For language trips where students stay with a host family, but it is not an exchange, staff need to ensure the students have arrived home at the agreed time by establishing communication with the students.
- (vi) For exchanges, the host family must be made aware of the policy on alcohol and must inform Sevenoaks staff of any problems.

L. Additional Safety Considerations

Any accommodation arranged by the School for students, be it field study centres, hotels, youth hostels or boarding accommodation in overseas schools, should be satisfactory and, as far as possible, checked before use, as part of the risk assessment procedure.

Care should be taken to minimise the unsupervised access to students by 'unchecked' adults, who should never be allowed unsupervised access to the children at any time.

Satisfactory arrangements must be in place for students to contact accompanying staff at all times in case of difficulty or concern. Staff should regularly ask students during their stay whether they have any concerns about their accommodation, particularly regarding security and intrusion.

In addition to the Health and Safety risk assessments, the following checks should be undertaken to verify that:

- (i) there is sufficient and suitable bed and bedding for each student.

- (ii) there is separate sleeping provision for each gender.
- (iii) there is sufficient access to toilet and washing facilities, separate for each gender if possible.
- (iv) there is adequate provision for sufficient and appropriate food and drink and that in youth hostels or field centres it is stored and prepared under sufficiently hygienic conditions.
- (v) students have the ability to contact medical services and provision is in place for students to return to school or home in the case of accident or illness.
- (vi) there are emergency evacuation procedures in place and known.

M. Additional Regulations for Boarders

Regular School Trips:

- (i) Details of visits (including travel arrangements and return times) must be given to the boarding house staff in advance.
- (ii) In the event of a mishap which causes delay, staff must ensure that the Boarding House is telephoned as soon as possible.
- (iii) Staff organising visits must take all reasonable care to ensure that boarders return promptly and safely to their houses.
- (iv) Boarders returning to Sevenoaks Railway Station after dark or 6 p.m. (whichever is earlier) must arrange for a taxi to return them to their boarding houses or for a member of staff to accompany them.
- (v) Wherever possible, boarders returning from a visit by coach or minibus should be delivered to their houses. When this is not possible it may be prudent, particularly when Junior or Middle School students are involved, for them to be taken to their houses by the staff organising the trip.

Boarding House Trips:

- (i) Routine visits organised by House Staff (but not those which could be regarded as hazardous) do not need permission to take place from the Deputy Head Co-curriculum.
- (ii) Instead, these trips may be authorised by the Head of Boarding. For each visit, the simplified Boarding Activity Form must be completed, and then forwarded to the Head of Boarding. Examples of routine activities that require the use of this form include tutor dinners in Sevenoaks, weekend trips and house balls. They do not include on-site activities where there is already a risk assessment in place, for example climbing or swimming at the Sennocke Centre.
- (iii) In all cases, the Head of Boarding must know how to access details of visit and a full list of names of students and staff attending in case of an emergency. This can either be submitted as part of the boarding activity form, or left with house staff on the day.
- (iv) For all other activities, permission is required from the Head through the Deputy Head Co-curriculum.

N. Monitoring

The Deputy Head Co-curriculum will examine the details for all trips and speak to members of staff where there may be concerns. The Health & Safety Officer will examine approximately one in five of the risk assessments for the residential trips.

The Deputy Head Co-curriculum (or Trips Administrator or a nominated senior member of staff) will assist with at least one residential and three non-residential trips every year in order to monitor whether the guidelines are being implemented.

O. Accompanying staff

Visit and Activity Leaders

The Visit Leader has the overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of the visit. To ensure accountability and to avoid potential confusion, a single Leader should be appointed. If this role changes during a visit, a clear handover should be made. The key requirements for Visit Leaders are that they must be accountable, competent and confident to lead the visit/activity, not that they hold a particular post, title or job description.

Being **accountable** means that the Leader has been engaged through an appropriate recruitment process, which includes vetting and induction into the establishment's policies and procedures. The details of this process may depend upon whether the Leader is employed, contracted or acts as a volunteer, but in all cases should be thorough. The vetting process should be managed by the Personnel team and no-one will be allowed to take part in any activity until their checks are completed to the satisfaction of the Personnel Director. This means that any trips / activities need to be fully planned in advance to allow time for any required checks to be completed (see below).

Being **competent** means that the Leader has demonstrated the ability to operate to recognised standards of good practice, and has sufficient relevant experience and knowledge regarding the group, the activity and the venue. This can be demonstrated through experience and or qualifications.

Effective Leaders are **confident** but fully aware of their own limitations.

- A Visit/Activity Leader **must** follow the employer's guidance and establishment policy and procedures.
- A Visit /Activity Leader **must** ensure that the activity is properly planned and that the plan includes appropriate risk management procedures based on a risk-benefit analysis.
- A Visit/Activity Leader **must** ensure that the roles and responsibilities of other staff (and young people) are properly defined and communicated, ensuring effective supervision.

Assistant Leaders

Those appointing Assistant Leaders should ensure that those appointed are:

- suitably competent and knowledgeable about establishment and employer policies/procedures, insofar as they affect the responsibilities they have been assigned.
- specifically competent to carry out such tasks as they are assigned.
- fully briefed to ensure that they understand the role and responsibilities expected of them.

Volunteer Helpers

The school trip organiser must verify with the Director of Personnel that all accompanying staff and voluntary helpers have been positively vetted in accordance with all relevant current legislation before they take part on the trip. A minimum of two months' notice must be given to the Director of Personnel to complete this procedure. The only exception to this rule can be made on the condition that sufficient, but not all, checks are completed and the organiser of the trip gives a signed personal undertaking never to allow the individual unsupervised

access to the children at any time. This could mean making changes such as the partially checked helper sleeping at a different location over-night.

Staff Children / Family members

In general staff whose own children are going on a trip should not be counted as part of the staff ratio because of the potential conflict of interest. It should also be made clear that staff children will not be covered by the school insurance policy, unless they are going as a school student. If approval is given for staff children, who are not students, and/or partner to accompany a trip, then the family members must pay the full cost of the trip and source their own insurance.

Training and competence of staff

All staff should receive training in the basic requirements for managing educational visits successfully. This will consist of:

- (i) Training session for all new staff.
- (ii) Clear information and guidance on Firefly.
- (iii) Reminders to staff by e-mail or at staff meetings.
- (iv) Meeting with the Deputy Head Co-curriculum for all staff running a residential trip for the first time.

The Deputy Head Co-curriculum and Trips Administrator maintain a record of recent trips that staff participate in. This means that those who are new to leading trips can be identified and given appropriate support and advice from experienced trip leaders.

P. Visas

Students should be advised of any visa requirements well in advance. For trips within the EU students who are not nationals of any EU member state may need a visa to travel from the UK to another member state. For assistance, speak to the Trips Administrator about your particular requirements.

Q. Emergency procedures and incident reporting

In the event of an emergency, please follow the guidance on the Actions in the Event of an Emergency on a School Trip supplied to trip leaders and available on Firefly.

R. Inclusion

We endorse these principles:

- a presumption of entitlement to participate.
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services.
- integration through participation with peers.

It is unlawful to:

- treat a disabled young person less favourably.
- fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification. A decision to exclude a young person should not be taken lightly, and only after consultation.

S. Insurance

School journeys are covered by the school's travel insurance. Insurance provided by tour operators is therefore not needed.

Full detail of the school insurance policy can be found on Firefly on the Trips Page under the co-curricular tab. Staff are reminded that if a visit involves hazardous activities, the Deputy Head Co-curriculum must be alerted and details given to the Bursar well in advance, in order that cover can be confirmed by the insurers.

At the current time, insurance is not available for COVID-19 related cancellation from the school's insurers. Whilst the school will do all it can to mitigate any losses due to COVID related cancellation, it currently requires parents to obtain their own personal travel insurance, or to accept the risk of financial loss, should:

- the trip not run; or
- their child not be able to go on the trip; or
- their child be required to incur costs due to change of plans resulting from COVID (i.e. quarantine or self-isolation).

A written confirmation of the acceptance of this financial liability must be received in writing by the bill-payer before a child can be offered a place on a trip.

T. Finance

Competitive quotations from travel companies should be obtained wherever possible and made available for inspection. Make sure all companies used are members of ABTA or ATOL.

Payments will only be made on presentation of an official invoice, or an expense claim accompanied by official receipts.

Members of staff are advised to consider carefully expenses they may personally incur during a school trip. They must be proportionate to the overall cost of the trip. Whether the costs of meals are absorbed by the parents of the students going on the trip or the school, staff should spend no more than £5, £10 and £15 for breakfast, lunch and dinner respectively. Any expenses above these amounts are to be paid for personally.

It is fundamental to all expeditions, tours or activities that staff or their families may not benefit financially through organising these events, or by the provision of goods or services.

On-tour or expedition expenses should be fully documented and receipts obtained for all monies expended. Two weeks' notice is usually needed for foreign currency, which should be obtained through the Accounts department. It is the Trip Organiser's responsibility to actively ensure that suppliers/service providers have invoiced them for all elements of their trip in a timely manner. A final detailed statement of account covering all income and expenditure should be completed as soon as possible, and not later than one week after returning. A copy of this, together with all supporting documentation, should be sent to the Accounts Department for audit purposes. If there is a refund due to the parents, the expedition organiser should also instruct Accounts to refund parents to their bill. No surplus funds must be kept.

Financial support may be available for parents who are unable to afford a particular trip. Available funding is normally targeted at bursary students. If you are approached by a parent or student who is struggling to afford an important trip, please approach the Finance Bursar for guidance and potential funding.

SAW

Deputy Head Co-Curriculum