

**THE THOMAS AVELING SCHOOL**

**POLICY**

**for**

**EDUCATIONAL TRIPS AND VISITS**

Reviewed December 2011 – MBA  
Ratified by Governors March 2012  
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## **Aims:**

The Thomas Aveling School's *Educational Trips and Visits* staff team aim for all students to enjoy their school experiences, achieve highly and have fun, to be safe, happy, healthy and create a promising future. All planned trips should try to meet these aims, and careful consideration should be given in the planning stages to look at the educational aims and desired outcomes of the trip. This policy aims to guide those planning a trip at Thomas Aveling and should be read in conjunction with the Medway Council requirements and DFCS health and safety handbook and HASPEV guidance.

## **Introduction**

*Educational Trips and Visits* form an important, integral part of the education that we provide to our students at Thomas Aveling School. Trips are complementary to the good work we do in the classroom and provide an enriched, broader experience beyond the school gates that are an essential part of learning and personal development. The powerful approach to learning that direct experience can provide can awaken motivation in all learners and allow them an opportunity to blossom. Education is not just about what we learn but *where* and how we learn it, be it in the school grounds, a local nature reserve or museum, or on a cultural visit overseas. Learning outside of the classroom helps to make connections between theory and reality, and has the capacity to raise achievement as well as improve students' personal skills and build rapport between students and staff. Trips can develop skills and independence in a wider environment, make learning more engaging and relevant and stimulate the under-motivated. All these elements can contribute to students fostering a more positive view of their own learning and school experience while at Thomas Aveling.

Trips and Visits can also be rewarding for staff and improve staff motivation and aspiration. They do take a lot of time and effort to organise though, and the school is very grateful to those departments and individuals who go that extra mile to put on exciting experiences for our students. Staff leading a visit have a responsibility for all aspects of the trip, from the planning and preparation, the health and safety, the organisation and the behaviour and welfare of students while on the trip. Therefore, the choice of leader for a trip and the accompanying staff is an important decision to be taken in the planning stage.

## **Role of the EVC**

All schools must by law have a designated Educational Visits Coordinator EVC whose role it is to oversee and coordinate the ET&V provision that the school offers to its students in terms of meeting all legislation and guidelines. The EVC should make relevant policy available to staff planning trips and keep records of all trips. The EVC should attend training and regularly update INSET on trips and have a general, practical experience of leading and managing the type of trips frequently run at Thomas Aveling.

## **EVOLVE**

EVOLVE is the Local Authority's online virtual learning environment for educational visits. As a new academy, the school has bought into the advice and support service offered by EVOLVE. The EVC and Head Teacher are registered and approved on the EVOLVE system and the LA Health and Safety team have access to a copy of the school's T&V Policy and details of all planned overseas, residential and hazardous visits on this VLE.

## **Planning a Visit**

Planning a visit is a great way to enrich the curriculum and to develop professionally as a teacher. In the preliminary stage trip leaders should please discuss their ideas with their line manager and look at the logistics of the trip – cost, student numbers, cover, staff affected and suitable available dates. Then complete a Trip Proposal form and arrange a short meeting with the EVC to discuss the trip details

## **Approval of Trips**

All proposed trips should be presented to the EVC on an up to date Trip Proposal Form and assessed as part of a short meeting. Trips generally fall into one of three categories:

- those which pose no significant risk and do not require the trip leader to have undergone further training or accreditation
- those which require the trip leader to have undergone a familiarisation/reconnaissance process or induction specific to the particular location or visit
- high risk activities or residential/overseas trips that require approval by the Governors and the LA and leading by a specially trained adult

Trips of the first two types can be assessed and approved by the EVC and the leaders Competence-to-Lead assessed on site at the school via a short meeting (see below). Visits of the last type require a Trip Proposal to be put before the SLT and Governors by the EVC and for the trip details and leader details to be uploaded to EVOLVE for online LEA assessment and authorisation.

## **Notice to Parents**

Once a trip has been approved and a date set in the calendar, the trip leader should use the trip letter template in the shared area to write a letter to parents advertising the trip in plenty of time for parents to decide, reply and pay for their child's place. For most day trips the letters should go out to parents no less than 6 weeks before the trip date and money/reply slips should all be collected in no less than 3 weeks before the trip date. In the case of expensive/overseas/residential trips such as Skiing that involve an instalment payment plan, the information should be sent out no less than 9 months in advance. Receipts will always be issued for any moneys collected by Finance.

## **Passport management**

Overseas trips require that students have a valid passport for the duration of their trip. Most travel agents recommend that passports should have 6 months' worth of validity on them when travelling. Parents and trip organisers can check the validity entry requirements for the destination country. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to check that their son/daughter's passport is valid before entering into a trip agreement by signing paperwork and paying a deposit. Trip letters for overseas trip should include a section where parents/carers put the student's name as on the passport, the passport number and expiration date. One month prior to the trip there should be a trip information meeting for parents, where detailed information about the trip arrangements are given out. At this meeting parents/carers should present their son/daughters passport for checking. In the event of staff taking responsibility for students' passports while away on the trip, passports should be brought into school the week preceding the trip and checked. Staff should issue a

## **Passport management (continued)**

signed dated receipt for the passport. All passports should be kept together in a locked steel draw, secure cash tin or safe. If at any time passports are given back to students this should be recorded. When passports are handled by students their safety remains the responsibility of the student. Passports and European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC) should be brought into school at least a month before the trip, the trip leader will need to request this with parents. These can always be brought along to the pre-trip meeting by parents. Copies should be taken and the passports checked and logged for validity.

## **Competence to Lead**

The single most important factor in ensuring the safety of participants involved in an Educational Visit or activity is the competence of the Visit Leader. The EVC should therefore consider the following when assessing the competence of a member of staff to lead a visit:

- What is the leader's reasons for undertaking the visit
- Is the leader an employee of the school or local authority
- Has the leader got a real sense of responsibility, extending beyond the teaching of the subject to concern for the participants' well-being
- Does the leader possess the necessary organisation skills
- Is the leader competent in risk-assessment and risk management
- What experience has the leader got of the participating students he/she intends to take on the visit
- What experience has the leader in leading, or assisting in the leading of similar visits
- What experience has the leader of the location of the visit
- Does the leader possess appropriate qualifications?
- If appropriate, what is the leader's personal level of skill in the activity, and fitness level?
- If leading adventurous activities, has the leader been 'approved' by Medway Council on EVOLVE
- Is the leader aware of, and able to comply with all relevant guideline

## **Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the visit leader to ensure that all information contained in the proposal and subsequent paperwork e.g. risk assessment and groups list etc, is clear and accurate and given to the EVC in good time. It is the responsibility of the trip leader to ensure all elements in the pre-visit checklist have been covered and fully carried out where required. It is a requirement for trips to meet with Medway approval standards that all aspects of their Education Visits Checklist have been complied with.

## **Staffing Ratios**

When planning a trip or visit, please be aware of the required staffing ratios and ensure that there are sufficient staff on the trip. The makeup of accompanying staff will need to be discussed and agreed with your line manager and cover arranged. There needs to be appropriate numbers of male/female staff and preferably a member who is first aid trained. For local and day trips the ratio should be between 1:15 – 1:20. For overseas and residential trips the ratio should be 1:10. For activities on the water margin then the ratio should be 1:10.

## **Budget & Payments**

The trip leader should initially cost out the trip, ensuring it offers good value for money for students and parents. Group discounts are often available and quotes should be obtained for transport and accommodation. The rough costings should be presented on the Proposal form. Once the trip is agreed in principle the full and exact cost should be calculated with the Head of Finance, and the precise cost to parents and a payment schedule agreed. This should be communicated to parents in the trip letter. All trips must be properly budgeted for in advance and the Finance Office should be aware of the trip to create an account to make payments into. No trip should seek to make a profit, but the budget should cover all costs.. For overseas and residential trips that involve coach, plane and accommodation costs a non-refundable deposit should be asked for in the trip letter. The trip leader should make it clear in the letter that the deposit is non-refundable.

## **Credits & Refunds**

In all trip letters to parents it should be made clear that deposits are non-refundable. All trip letters will be checked by the Finance Team before being issued to parents.. If the school can recover the loss for example for activities where the number involved can be reduced without financial penalty, or if another student 'buys' the place off the original participant then some refund may be possible. If the trip ends up making an unplanned overall profit of more than £15 per head then this will be refunded to parents. If for what ever reason the school has to cancel a planned trip then deposits will be returned. In circumstances where the school decides to withdraw a student from a trip follow a risk assessment then the deposit money will be returned.

## **Insurance**

The Thomas Aveling School's insurance covers most trips in the UK but a check should be made with the EVC if the trip involves activities with a higher than normal level of risk e.g. skiing. If the trip takes out separate insurance with a tour operator to cover these activities then this cost should be factored into the individual trip cost. The travel insurance contact details and policy details should be passed to the office and taken on the trip. In the event of an insurance claim where the student is unable to take part due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. medical family bereavement etc) then the school will need to claim the funds back from the insurers before it is able to make a refund to the withdrawn student's parents.

## **Pupils Receiving FSM**

Pupils who qualify to receive free school meals may be entitled to a grant to cover some school journeys. The school may also be able to help here, to prevent any child being excluded from taking part in enrichment activities for financial reasons. Parents can apply to the local authority for school journey grants.

## **Informing and Consent**

Parents should usually be informed in writing of any off- site activity or trip. However, the PE department gains general consent for this at the start of the year and there is no need for scheduled after-hours inter-school sports fixtures to be treated as 'trips' in this way. Recent guidance from the DfE also gives exceptions to this.

## **Parental Permission & Letters**

Parents should be made aware of a proposed trip well in advance to allow them to consider if they want their child to take part and to prepare financially. They should be aware of the details – times, dates, costs and activities involved in the trip, and any likely risks and how they will be managed. Parents can then accept or refuse the trip letter on a fully informed basis and make a full *Acknowledgement of Risk*. The letter to parents should therefore always include full details of the trip, group leader, date and educational aims, location, collection point, transport and supervision arrangements, group size, activity details and departure/return times, clothing and equipment, money needed, Plan B arrangements should be detailed and the parent should know what the total cost is, and what is/isn't included for the cost. Therefore when giving permission they agree to their son/daughter taking part in the trip as described. There should be a reply slip and parent consent form attached. For trips that are over-subscribed, the visit leader should collect in all reply slips and conduct a fair draw to decide upon the successful applicants. It is the responsibility of the visit leader to inform all successful and non-successful applicants promptly by letter and arrange payment.

The group leader must obtain parental consent prior to all visits. If the parents withhold or fail to give absolute consent the student should not be taken on the visit. On the consent form parents are asked to give their consent to their child being given emergency treatment. This may include a crucial operation, anaesthetic or blood transfusion as considered necessary by the medical authorities.

## **Risk Assessment**

A copy of the ESRA risk assessment template and an example of a residential risk assessment are held in the staff shared area Visits folder. Risk Assessments are a legal requirement on trips. Conducting a risk assessment involves the trip leader in a careful, thorough examination of potential risks to staff and students and introducing control measures and pre-planned strategies to keep risk levels low, and steps to take in an emergency. The school's Health and Safety Officer should see copies of all completed risk assessments prior to the trip. These are to be passed to the EVC, all other supervising staff involved, and taken on the trip by the group leader.

## **Plan B**

Good forward planning should always include alternative plans in case the itinerary needs to be changed. A flexible itinerary can allow activities from later in the visit to be substituted for earlier activities if those are prevented by unexpected circumstances.

## **Exclusions**

When planning a trip the visit leader should check the exclusions list available from the Head Teacher's PA. Students who have been excluded from Thomas Aveling on a fixed term basis are automatically debarred from all trips for a period of 15 weeks following the exclusion.

## **First Aid**

The level of first aid provision should be considered in the risk assessment and staffing ratios. The group leader should assess what level of first aid might be required. On all educational trips and visits there should be at least one member of supervising staff with a sound knowledge of first aid procedures. For residential/overseas trips there should be a member of staff trained to Appointed Person First Aid Certificate standard. It is the responsibility of the trip leader to take adequate first aid kit.

## **Travel**

When a trip involves travelling away from the school area this should always be arranged with a reputable approved coach company. Travel arrangements should be included in the risk assessment. Travelling by coach or minibus, staff and pupils must wear a seatbelt at all times. It is the responsibility of the trip leader and supervising staff to ensure that seatbelts are worn. Thomas Aveling School has clear guidelines for staff qualified to drive the school mini-bus.

## **Pupils with Additional Needs**

Every effort should be made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to everyone in the school community. All young people should be encouraged to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible. When choosing a venue, this should be taken into consideration, whilst maintaining the safety of and enjoyment of everyone in the group. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios, and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage, to include students with AEN fully in the visit.

## **Medicine**

If a student has prescribed or non prescription medicine e.g. insulin, asthma inhaler, antibiotics, paracetamol etc these need to be passed to the trip leader and parents sign to say that the medication has been handed to staff. It should remain in its original box where possible with student's name and prescribed dosage clearly labelled. When the trip leader administers any of these medications they should make a record of the time, date and details.

## **Emergency Procedure and Critical Incident**

Details of the Emergency Procedures are included in the trip leaders Handbook available on the shared area. Leaders and supervising staff should familiarise themselves with this before hand and collect a completed copy of form EV7 from Student Services along with the school first aid kit and mobile phone before all trips. Form EV7 details the correct procedure for responding to emergency incidents and critical incidents while on a trip and provides guidelines for trip leaders and contact details for EVC and Senior Management at the school and Medway Council Emergency Response.

## **Pre-Trip Meetings**

Before any residential trip or when students are being taken abroad or engage in adventurous activities e.g. skiing then it is a requirement to offer a pre-trip meeting for parents to attend for a briefing. Parents should be positively encouraged to attend and this may mean putting the trip on after working hours e.g. 5.30pm. Parents should be provided with complete written and spoken details of the trip and have an opportunity to ask questions. Consent form

## **Code of Conduct and Sanctions**

Throughout the trip the behaviour and welfare of the students remains the full responsibility of the trip leader. It is good practice to establish clear codes of conduct, regulations and routines at the start of the trip to allow easy, safe management of the students while on the journey.

## **Water Margin Activities**

Where an activity is planned on a visit that will involve students in being near to the water's edge, then the trip leader should read the special guidance on Group Safety at Water Margins (pdf in the shared area).

## **Reporting Back and Evaluation**

It is important that the visit leader feeds back to the EVC shortly after the trip. A short evaluation to look at what went well and what can be improved for the further trips, will help to ensure the ongoing future success of our Educational Trips and Visits.