

FALKNER HOUSE EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY: NURSERY to YEAR 6

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

At Falkner House School, we believe that learning outside the classroom is an essential component of our curriculum. It gives our pupils unique opportunities to develop their resourcefulness and initiative and to spend time together in an informal environment. Each trip is different. Some are directly related to the curriculum, some are designed to promote social awareness, or to enhance physical skills, self-reliance and team-working. Others will extend their knowledge of the world. The common factor is that they all make an essential contribution to your daughter's development and education in the broadest sense of the word.

OUR TRIPS AND VISITS

We regularly take pupils on day trips to: historic sites, museums, galleries, natural features and farms to support the curriculum in History, Art History, Geography, English Biology and Classics. There are regular theatre trips for year five and six pupils and we run a post-Common Entrance trip to France every Summer term.

INFORMATION ON PLANNED TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Details of trips and visits that are due to take place over the coming term, together with a list of planned home and away sporting fixtures, are published at the start of each term. You will always be notified in advance:

- If your child has been selected for a sports team. We very much welcome family and friends at all our matches.
- If your child is going to be out of school during the school day in order to visit a local museum, theatre, nature reserve or historic site. We will always seek your permission if the visit involves supplying a packed lunch or late return to school or collection from another place, such as a theatre.
- If your child is going on the Year 6 french trip, you will be invited to school to receive a full briefing prior to their departure.

CONSENT

We require your specific, individual written consent if we are to take your daughter on a trip or visit that extends beyond the normal school day, involves an overnight stay, collection from a different venue, an overseas visit or extra cost to you. Please note that we are unable to take your daughter without a completed and signed consent form, which includes details of where you may be contacted in an emergency. This form will be sent to you well in advance and must reach the school at least 5 working days before the start of the trip.

SAFETY

Safety is top priority for us. We expect you to support the school in ensuring that your daughter follows the instructions given either by a member of staff, or by a qualified instructor, and uses the proper equipment. We reserve the right to send any pupil home early at their parents' expense, if they decline to follow reasonable instructions given for their own safety, or do not follow the school's behavioral code.

PART 2: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF INVOLVED WITH SCHOOL VISITS

INTRODUCTION

We have a large number of trips, out of school activities and visits at Falkner House, which are an important part of our educational ethos. Every member of our staff endorses the educational value of activities outside the classroom and are encouraged to participate in them, and to help with the arrangements. We always welcome suggestions from staff for new trips.

ORGANISATION AND PLANNING

Any member of staff wishing to organise an off-site visit should seek written permission from the Headteacher before any arrangements are made. The senior teacher accompanying the visit will be designated the Group Leader.

Wherever possible, prior knowledge of the location or a preliminary reconnaissance by the organiser is highly desirable – and essential if a visit is being made to areas of a more hazardous nature.

Once permission for the trip has been given, the organiser should inform the school secretary of the following information as appropriate for inclusion in the bulletin:

- Dates and venue(s)
- Purpose of the visit, suggested activities etc.
- Year group for whom the visit is planned.
- Transport arrangements.
- Details of supervision.
- Suitable clothing or equipment.

Permission for visit forms are issued at the beginning of the academic year and collated by the office. This covers all trips that take place within the School day. If a trip is to be later than the normal School day, a further permission slip will be required. Parents do not need to be informed if the trip is in the local community as long as annual permission slip is completed.

Teacher/Student Ratios

Minimum ratios for visits:

- 1 adult to 4 students (Nursery and Reception)
- 1 adult to 6 students (Years 1 to 3)
- 1 adult to 10 students (Years 4 to 6)
- 1 adult to 10 students (All trips abroad)

These are minimum ratios; the visit organiser, in consultation with the Headteacher, is responsible for ensuring that there is adequate supervision for the particular group and the particular activity.

The term 'adult' will normally refer to teachers currently employed by the school. However parents are asked on occasions to accompany school trips, in which case the organiser is to ensure that they are fully acquainted with the terms of this policy and any duties of supervision which they may be asked to bear.

A mobile phone, first aid kit and class contact details must be taken by teachers on all off-site visits and a paediatric first aider must accompany all Nursery and Reception trips outside school. Additionally it is essential that medication (epipens, puffers etc) is taken by staff if used by any pupil going off site. In all cases organising staff should inform the office when students leave and return to the premises.

PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

The law places the Group Leader "in loco parentis". The DCSF Guidance "The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide," (www.teachernet.gov.uk), should be read by all Group Leaders. It explains that their responsibility is to "act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances." Staff who take part in visits and activities outside school may feel concerned about the possibility of being held personally liable if an accident should occur. However, they can be assured that Falkner House School, as their employer will always stand behind them in the unlikely event of an accident occurring, provided they have exercised reasonable care and followed the school's guidelines.

Falkner House School has £5M of Employers' Liability Insurance and £10M of public liability insurance, as well as a group travel policy that covers visits inside the UK and overseas. Cover includes cancellation or delay, medical expenses, replacement of passports, personal possessions and money. The Group Leader should ensure that they take a copy of the school's travel insurance with them on all but the shortest of visits.

The school does not have motor vehicle insurance, therefore all journeys are made by hired coach, London Underground or on foot.

THE RISK ASSESSMENT

All Group Leaders are to conduct a risk assessment on the potential hazards involved in a visit, trip or activity that they are planning. They should use the template held in the school office and consider the following when completing the risk assessment:

- Identify the potential hazards of the place being visited.
- List the groups of people that are especially at risk from the significant hazards.
- List existing controls or notifying where the information may be found.
- Consider how he/she would cope with the hazards which are not currently identified or fully controlled.
- Carry out continual monitoring of hazards throughout the visit.

Professionally operated establishments will conduct their own risk assessments and the Group Leader should ask for copies prior to trip. Provided that he/she is satisfied, this will meet the requirements of school for the activity part of the visit. Risk assessments carried out by the school for previous visits can generally be updated and re-used, unless there has been a change of circumstances. The Bursar maintains a file of generic risk assessments that cover sports fixtures, travel by hired coach and public transport, museum visits and most of our regular outings.

DURING THE VISIT OR ACTIVITY

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with Group Leader. He or she has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. S/He may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out a head count on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving the venue.
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts.
- Ensuring that sleeping accommodation is suitable and located together (preferably not on the ground floor).
- Setting times for pupils to be in their rooms at night. Conducting checks (using the other staff).
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour.
- Looking after – or reminding pupils to look after – passports and valuables
- Keeping an account of all expenditure.
- Recording all accidents and near misses.

ILLNESS OR MINOR ACCIDENTS

If a Pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill, the Group leader will contact the school immediately and a decision will be taken whether the child should return early or be collected by their parents. All contact with the parents will be made by the Headteacher or in her absence a member of the Senior Management Team.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of a serious accident resulting in the death or injury of one or more of the pupils and staff, the Group Leader's first priority would be to summon the emergency services, and to arrange for medical attention for the injured. One of the accompanying members of staff should accompany the injured pupil(s) to hospital. Ensuring that the rest of the group were safe and looked after, the Group Leader should contact the Headteacher and give as full, calm and factual account as the circumstances permitted. Where the full facts had not yet emerged, he or she should say so, and ensure that follow-up communications with the Headteacher are maintained. A full record should be kept of the incident, the injuries and of the actions taken.

DELAYED RETURN

If a visit is delayed, the Group Leader should phone the school office who will in turn phone all the parents on their contact numbers to alert them to the delay and the revised time of arrival.