

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE FOR SPORTS, TRIPS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

d'Overbroeck's provides a wide range of sporting and non-sporting activities for its students beyond the classroom teaching which inevitably takes up the majority of their working day. These activities range from team and individual sports to clubs and debating societies, and from art gallery and museum visits and trips to the theatre as well as go-karting expeditions and paintballing. Some of these activities will be part of the curriculum for some students but a voluntary, extra-curricular activity for others. Physical education is a formal part of the curriculum for students at Years 7-11, for instance, but an optional pursuit for Sixth Formers. Again, a theatre visit may be an essential part of the teaching of English Literature, but a recreational evening activity for students who simply choose to go.

These disparate activities are grouped together in this guide for the reason that the management and arrangements for their health and safety have much in common. Most of our sporting activities, for example, involve taking students to venues away from our premises. Sporting activities are thus in a sense 'trips', and raise some of the same health and safety issues – transport and supervision, for instance – as would a trip to a local business arranged for a GCSE Business Studies class. By setting out health and safety policies and practical arrangements for all these activities in one document, we hope to provide staff with comprehensive and practical guidance which will alert them to the issues which must be dealt with. At the same time, we are very keen to reassure members of staff that they need have no fear of exposing themselves or their students to unwarranted risk. Indeed, the purpose of this guide is positively to encourage members of staff to look for ways of providing new and exciting activities for their students, reassured by the knowledge that following the procedures set out in the guide will provide a proper level of protection for all concerned.

The Educational Visits proposal form required to be completed for any trip or outing can be found on Firefly (staff / documents & guides / admin forms).

This guide simply seeks to prompt the organiser into thinking about the trip, sporting activity or event that they will be responsible for and for them to ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate planning so that it can occur safely.

Sports and physical education

The school regards physical education as a valuable opportunity for students to acquire skills and confidence. Physical education is part of the curriculum for students at Years 7-11, and the school seeks to encourage all its students to take part in recreational sports in some form.

Many of the activities included in sports and physical education involve an element of risk. The school's policy is, however, to assess such risk in advance of the activity, to take all reasonable measures to minimise the probability and seriousness of harm which may result, and to ensure that proper measures are in place to deal with any incidents or emergencies, should they occur.

Responsibility for managing the health and safety of sports and physical education is held jointly by the Head (here and throughout this document, 'the Head' refers, as appropriate, to the school

Principal, the Head of Years 7-11 or the Director of the International School), the Sports and Activities Co-ordinators and the Health & Safety Director. Responsibility for organising and running a particular sporting activity is held by the Group Leader.

Out-of-school trips

The school regards out-of-school trips as a valuable way to broaden the education of its students by providing experiences not available in the classroom. In some subjects, such trips are essential to teaching the curriculum. However, the school encourages all members of staff to consider taking their students on visits which may stimulate their interest and enthusiasm for the subject and provide variety in their educational experience. See the statement from HSE that encourages staff to take children on school trips - [school trips and outdoor learning activities – Tackling the health and safety myths](#)

Taking students on trips inevitably presents risks which do not occur in the more controlled environment of the school's premises. The school's policy is to assess such risks in advance of the trip, to take all reasonable measures to ensure that no harm occurs to staff or students and to ensure that proper measures are in place to deal with any incidents or emergencies should they occur.

Responsibility for overseeing the health and safety of trips is held by the Head and the Health & Safety Director. Responsibility for organising and running a particular trip is held by the Group Leader.

Extra-curricular activities

The school invests considerable resources in encouraging a programme of extra-curricular visits and activities. Some of these – such as Chess or Cookery Clubs run by a member of staff on school premises – present health and safety challenges no different from ordinary classroom teaching. Others – such as go-karting or a skiing expedition – require careful assessment and preparation. The school's policy is to assess in advance the risks posed by an extra-curricular activity, to take all reasonable measures to prevent harm occurring to staff or students and to ensure that proper measures are in place to deal with any incidents or emergencies should they occur.

Responsibility for overseeing the health and safety of extra-curricular activities is held by the Head and the Health & Safety Director. Responsibility for organising and running a particular extra-curricular activity is held by the Group Leader.

Liability

No member of staff should be put off from running an activity or organising a trip. However it is important that they appreciate their professional and personal liabilities. The following remarks are all equally true of everyday classroom teaching and all other regular school activities.

As your employer, d'Overbroeck's is responsible for your health, safety and welfare at work. The school is also responsible for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of anyone on its premises and anyone affected by its activities. Clearly, this includes students at the school, whether on school premises or not. The school must assess the risks which its activities might pose, introduce measures to control those risks and inform the staff about those measures.

As an employee, the law requires you to take reasonable care of your own health and safety, and that of others you come into contact with by way of your employment duties. You must co-operate

with the school over health and safety matters and you must carry out your duties in accordance with the training and instructions the school gives you. You are also under an obligation to inform the school of any serious risks which have not, in your view, been properly addressed. In addition, teachers and staff in charge of students have a legal duty to take such care of their students as might be expected of a reasonably prudent parent, although perhaps slightly better informed.

If the school or an individual employee fails to maintain these levels of care, they are guilty of negligence. If something goes wrong, the student or their parents (or another member of staff, if they were the injured party) may sue for negligence. In practice, claims for damages on grounds of negligence are likely to be made against the school as employer, since the school has the insurance cover which would enable a successful claim to be met. Nonetheless, the school can do nothing to prevent a parent from suing an individual member of staff for negligence.

The school and its staff therefore share a legal as well as a moral responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of students and members of staff. The key to meeting this responsibility – to protecting ourselves and our students from harm and to defending ourselves against negligence claims – is to set out and follow procedures which ensure good practice. And the key in turn to this is the process of risk assessment.

Risk Assessment

Assessing the risks posed by an activity begins with no more than applying some common sense and a little imagination. What might go wrong, and what harm might be done? How can the probability and seriousness of the harm be reduced? Many of the issues and solutions which arise are entirely obvious: a student may become separated from the rest of the party during a museum visit, so make sure there is an agreed rendezvous point and time and that the students are aware of this. Some issues may require a little more thought and investigation. If a student suffers a fall and twisted ankle on a field trip, then you would summon help with a mobile phone or send another student for help. But do mobiles work in that location? Where would someone be able to find help, and how far would they have to go?

Occasionally, technical issues will arise which have to be researched. Are we sure that the protective equipment supplied by a paintballing centre is adequate? We may decide to accept the assurance given by staff at the centre, but we might want first to make sure that they are following some recognised guidelines (national association, British Standard?). The actual process of risk assessment must be carried through carefully and thoughtfully; but it is not in itself difficult or technical, though it may raise issues which are both.

What is less interesting but equally important is that proper records of risk assessments must be made and kept. This is vital if we are to be able to defend ourselves against negligence claims. It also provides a means for others to check the work that has been done on risk assessment. Where a risk assessment is judged to be necessary, it must be recorded in writing.

The Educational Visits proposal form required to be completed for any trip or outing can be found on Firefly (staff / documents & guides / admin forms).

Insurance

- The school insures the vehicles it owns. This insurance does not extend to vehicles owned by members of staff. Staff should ensure that their own insurance covers them for any journeys made in their own vehicle in the course of their duties, including transfer between sites.
- The school's Employer's and Public Liability policies provide cover for death, illness or injury suffered by a member of staff or anyone else (including students, visitors and members of the public), to the extent to which the school (or a member of staff, if the claim is made against them) is judged to be negligent and thus legally liable. *The school does not, however, provide automatic compensation for death or personal injury.* If, for instance, a member of staff or student is injured playing a contact sport as a consequence of the normal risks associated with the sport (and thus not as a result of negligence on anyone's part), the school's insurance offers no cover whatsoever.

The school does provide insurance cover for travel (cancellation, delays, baggage, etc.) and cover for medical expenses. Anyone organising a 'recoverable expense' excursion, should build in a (one-off) cost for insurance cover of:

- £1 for national day-trips
- £7 for national, overnight trips, and
- £12 for international trips.

The Bursar can offer further help.

Organising a trip or activity

The first question is whether any special measures are necessary at all. If the activity takes place in normal school hours on one of the school's normal teaching sites, and involves activities which present no risks other than those associated with normal classroom teaching, then very probably no particular preparation or approval will be required. A wide range of extra-curricular activities fall into this category. Many clubs and societies such as debating, film clubs, computer activities, talks and meetings of all sorts are unlikely to present any health and safety issues not already assessed and provided for by the school's existing procedures. Thought may have to be given to the size and suitability of a venue for a debate, say, where more people may attend than some teaching rooms can safely accommodate. 'Out-of-hours' activities on school premises won't raise issues for most sixth formers, who may safely be left to arrange their own transport to and from school; but some special cases may require consideration (e.g. where an activity ends very late at night). If in doubt, follow the procedures below.

In all cases, the first step is to complete an Educational Visits form (available from Firefly (staff / documents & guides / admin forms) and a risk assessment (available from the shared area under Educational Visits). The Risk Assessments provided are a template and all Risk Assessments should be bespoke for your trip. This records some brief and basic information about the trip or activity you are planning – what the trip or activity is, who will be in charge, which students may be involved, when it will take place. To begin with, you must ensure that your head of department has signed it off and then submit this proposal to Jane Cockerill (in the case of any activity involving students in Years 7-11), Alasdair MacPherson (in the case of any curriculum-related activity involving Sixth Formers), to Ted McGrath (in the case of any curriculum-related activity involving students at the International

School) or to Jonathan Cuff (in the case of any sport or extra-curricular activity). It is for these members of the academic staff to look at timetable constraints, exam demands, staff availability and to decide whether they are happy for the activity or trip to go ahead.

Your proposal form will then be passed to the Principal, who is responsible for approving the health and safety measures. If a more detailed risk assessment is necessary, you will be asked to discuss the issues with the Principal. Once all this is done, the Principal will sign your proposal form. Together with the signature from a senior member of the academic staff, this is your confirmation that you have the school's permission to take students on the trip and that you have carried out the health and safety planning required by the school. You should not undertake the activity unless the Educational Visit is signed and the trip is authorised.

Residential trips undergo a further step and must be agreed and authorised by Headsforum.

Except where there has been a prior decision to offer the trip at no additional charge, then at an early stage in your planning you should check and go through your costings and proposed charging with the Bursar BEFORE you announce the trip and its costs to students or parents.

In the case of recurring activities – where the assessment and management of risks is essentially unaltered from week to week and the transport and staffing arrangements do not change – you may seek approval on a termly basis. The same might be true if you take classes each week to a local drama studio or museum. But a programme of evening theatre visits – some to London, say, and some to Stratford – involving different groups of students, different supervising staff and *ad hoc* transport arrangements, would have to be assessed and authorised individually.

You should send in your Educational Visits form no less than two working weeks before the date of the activity you are planning (and at least four working weeks in the case of a proposal involving residential visits or any potentially high-risk activities or overseas trips). Where proposals have been unavoidably submitted later than this, the signatories will try their best to 'fast-track' the signing of the form. However, if they raise substantial problems, there is a real chance that it will not be possible to resolve everything in time and in this case the activity will not be able to go ahead.

Contact with Parents

(i) When do you need to obtain parental consent?

Parents may be deemed to have consented to their child taking part in anything which is clearly publicized as one of the school's standard activities, and which the parent could and should have known about when registering their child at the school. However, a change, for example in a student's medical condition, might mean that an activity (perhaps one unforeseen at the time of registration) would be unacceptably risky for the student by the time they came to undertake it. As a rule of thumb, therefore, parental consent is required before a student takes part in an activity which is not a regular part of the published programme. The Sports and Activities Co-ordinator can advise on this, as can the Health & Safety Director and the Head.

In summary, parental consent will be required in any of these cases:

- if a trip or activity is not part of the published programme
- if a trip involves an overnight stay
- if a trip involves travel abroad
- if a trip or activity will result in a charge to the parents in excess of £25

If parental consent is judged necessary, parents must be given some basic information about the activity (see below). Their consent must be given in writing, and some sort of form should be provided which they can sign and return. Where parental consent has been sought, a student must not be allowed to participate in the activity unless the consent form has been signed by the parent and returned to the school.

Gaining parental consent in this way does not, incidentally, reduce in any way the health and safety responsibilities of the school and its staff; nor is it likely to provide any defence against negligence claims.

(ii) What information should you be sending to parents?

If a trip or activity meets all the following conditions, parents do not need to be informed:

- takes place in or near Oxford (i.e. within roughly 5 miles of Carfax)
- starts and finishes at times within the normal school day
- does not require parents' consent (see previous section)

Otherwise, you must write to parents, telling them:

- some brief details of the trip or activity (making clear whether it is curricular or extra-curricular)
- when and where the trip is going (including departure and arrival times) and/or what the activity involves, and where it will be held
- transport arrangements
- the amount the parents will be expected to pay
- the name and contact details of the member of staff organising the activity, so that parents who require additional information can contact them

For residential trips, you will also need to collect up-to-date information on medical conditions, dietary requirements etc. In general, it is recommended that parents be invited to a meeting before a residential trip.

Outside Venues

If you are taking students to an outside venue, you need to consider whether the venue is likely to be safe for your charges. Large, professionally run venues such as museums or activity parks or centres usually have 'off the shelf' risk assessments for school trips. Apply to them directly or look on their web-site for these.

With regards to smaller venues, an early visit by the organiser might be informative as to just how much of a risk assessment is required. Again, a well-run smaller venue might already have a prepared risk assessment you can have. Other, less well-run venues might need you to consider more carefully where the risks lie and how you can minimise them.

If you are in any doubt, talk to the Bursar.

'Outside Providers'

As well as using outside venues, it is possible to hand over the running of the activities themselves to an outside organisation. As with outside venues, it may in some cases be reasonable to assume that the health and safety arrangements made by the provider will be adequate (e.g. a university open day), but in other cases (e.g. a local squash club) further checks will be necessary. Again, refer to the Bursar if you are in any doubt.

There are two other important notes about using outside providers. First, you must not suppose that, once the students are 'handed over' to the staff of the outside organisation, responsibility passes with it. On the contrary, both the school and you *retain* responsibility for the students even though their activities are being organised and led by a third party. So, you must continue to supervise the students and be prepared to intervene if you feel they are at risk. Furthermore, you must make sure that the students and the provider's staff are absolutely clear who is in charge of the students at any time. If you are going to 'step in' for ten minutes while the provider's staff take a break, for instance, then this must be clearly understood by everyone present.

Second, there are now by law certain activities which, when undertaken by young people under the age of 18, may be organised **only** by licensed providers. These include caving, climbing (including abseiling), trekking (which includes hiking in high-level and remote areas) and all water-sports except swimming and rowing. This licence is required whether or not the organiser is a commercial organisation. If you are contemplating taking students to an outside provider of activities such as these, the very first step is to ascertain that they are properly licensed.

Staff supervision and travel

The level of staff supervision required to ensure safety on a journey or during an activity varies with the circumstances. Shepherding fifty students to and round London on the public transport system clearly requires more staff per student than a private coach trip taking fifty students to a university open day.

The level of staff supervision required will be considered with each proposal. The Health & Safety Director will look at the information on the proposal form and, if necessary, discuss and agree supervision measures with the staff concerned. The following are *guidelines*, which may be varied in particular circumstances:

- In general, groups of students travelling outside Oxford (i.e. beyond a 5 mile radius of Carfax) should be accompanied by at least one member of staff per ten students (and never fewer than two members of staff in total – see below).
- However, where students travel in large groups on privately hired coaches which deliver them to and collect them from a venue (e.g. university open days, museum and theatre visits) three members of staff per coach is the minimum required. Even in this case, more staff may be required if coaches are very full, or if further supervision will be needed at the venue.

The following are *rules*, and no trip may be arranged which does not meet them:

- Every trip outside Oxford (i.e. one involving travel beyond a 5 mile radius of Carfax) must be accompanied by no fewer than two members of staff.

- **When using public transport**, groups of students travelling outside Oxford must be accompanied by at least one member of staff per ten students (and, again, no fewer than two members of staff in total).
- Every student must travel to and return from destinations outside Oxford with the main party under the supervision of the Group Leader, unless there is written parental consent for them to travel independently.
- Even where there is written parental consent, students must never be permitted to give lifts in their own vehicles to other students or to staff.

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The following is an extract from the school's Critical Incident Plan

Actions in the event of an emergency on a school trip – guidance for trip leaders

Immediate response and action plan

A copy of the following guidelines must be taken by all trip leaders. This plan is included in the Health and Safety Guide for Sports, Trips and Extra-Curricular Activities.

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency;
- Make sure that all other members of the party are accounted for and safe;
- If there are injuries, establish their extent and administer first aid (if you have been trained or feel capable – but be aware of consequences that might follow were you to give incorrect treatment);
- Establish names of the injured and call relevant emergency services;
- Advise other party staff of the incident and that emergency procedures are in operation;
- Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies casualties to hospital – or, if on your own at that particular moment in time, that you go with the injured student(s); the Emergency Services will look after the rest of the party until another member of staff arrives;
- Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout and arrange for their early return to base;
- At the earliest possible opportunity, and as soon as you have made sure that all immediate emergency action that can be taken has been taken, contact the Principal and/or the Bursar to inform them of the incident and of the action already taken and to discuss and agree on next steps;
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all students are accounted for;
- Control access to telephones until contact is made with the Principal and/or Bursar and until they have had time to contact those directly involved. Pass full details of the incident (name, nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, details of injuries, names and telephone numbers of those involved, action taken so far);

- Telephone numbers for future communication; identify alternate telephone numbers in case telephone lines become jammed);
- The school will arrange to contact the parents of those involved. In serious incidents the parents of all party members should be informed;
- The trip leader should write down as soon as practicable all relevant details. A record should be made of any witnesses. Any associated equipment should be kept in its original condition;
- Legal liability should not, under any circumstances, be discussed or admitted;
- All accident forms should be completed and insurers and other relevant authorities informed;
- Keep parents informed of any delays that will be necessitated or any other changes to the pre-established schedule.

Communications with the press

- Do not, and do not allow any of the students or the other staff in the group to, give any information to the press or any other external parties (other than the Police and authorised medical personnel).
- All communications with the press or with any other external parties or agencies should come from the Principal.
- In the unlikely event that the Principal is unavailable to respond, such communications may only come from the Bursar or, in their absence, the Senior Vice Principal or the head of the relevant section of the school.
- Representatives of the press or any other external parties (other than the Police and authorised medical personnel) seeking information should simply be told that the school Principal will make an official statement in due course. Their contact details, and the name of the organisation they represent, should be noted by the staff member receiving the request for information and these passed to the Principal or the Principal's PA asap.
- In every respect, communications with the press following an incident on a school trip must strictly follow the guidelines given in the School's Critical Incident Plan of which 'Actions in the event of an emergency on a school trip' forms a part.

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