



TAUNTON
— SCHOOL —
SENIOR

SNR.030 Trips, Tours and Educational Visits Policy

Policy Lead	Deputy Head Co-Curricular
Committee	
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Review schedule	Annual

GUIDANCE ON OFF-SITE VISITS

The following guidance will be regularly reviewed and adapted to meet the needs of TSI, TPS and TS.

Rationale

School visits and associated field work, along with out of classroom activities, are an essential part of the Taunton School student's education because they:

1. Are concerned with real people, situations and issues.
2. Develop the enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the environment.
3. Provide opportunities for students to experience and learn about new cultures, respecting and celebrating societal diversity.
4. Provide opportunities for character education, enabling students to learn about how they can positively impact society.
5. Work beyond the normal framework of the timetable, engaging students more deeply with learning opportunities.
6. Develop organisation, leadership, and critical thinking skills.
7. Build relationships within groups and teams, developing student agency and co-agency with peers, teachers and communities.
8. Provide opportunities to practise exploration and practical investigation skills.

Aim

To give our students the opportunity to learn at first hand about the world around them.

Teachers at Taunton School recognise that there are unlimited opportunities outside the classroom that must be used as resources by the children. The effectiveness and immediacy of real-world situations cannot be matched in the classroom; learning is more rewarding and enjoyable out of doors. Off-site activities range from applications within walking distance from School, through visits for part or all of the day involving transport, to residential experiences. [The visits are often cross-curricular and require careful planning, and in many cases pre-visits are carried out.]

“One lesson outdoors is worth seven inside”

Tim Brighouse, Chief Education Officer, Birmingham

Objectives

1. To enhance topics covered in the classroom.
2. To act as a stimulus for a unit of work.
3. To develop an understanding and awareness of the environment.
4. To make comparisons with materials already studied.
5. To encourage continuity and progression in:

- Knowledge
- Understanding and application of skills
- Personal and social education

6. To cover the requirements of the curriculum.
7. For variety and enjoyment.
8. To develop the autonomy and self-esteem of students
9. To gain confidence to act as an agent of change in the environment.
10. To give equal learning opportunities to all children despite their backgrounds.
11. To prepare children for the out of education pursuits they may well experience or can expect in the future.

Off site visits comprise:

- Day trips which do not miss lessons.
- Day trips which miss lessons.
- Overnight trips within UK.
- Overnight trips outside UK.

Safe practice for these trips depend on:

- Careful planning (see notes at the end)
- An awareness and investigation of the potential dangers and hazards when you are there: dynamic risk assessment
- Preventing access to those dangers by those ill-equipped to cope.
- Adequate supervision.
- Being prepared to review plans in the course of the trip and make proper changes as required.
- Knowledge of how to help oneself and others in danger.

Check list (detailed notes follow this summary)

1. Before you advertise the trip to students or parents:

The School Policy can be found here:

[Senior Staff Policies 2023-24](#)

The forms can be found here:

[Senior School Off Site Visits 2023-24](#)

Check the school calendar (through SOCS) to ensure no significant clashes. If date(s) are appropriate, complete the following forms to agree trip/visit with relevant member of SMT:

- i. For a co-curricular trip: 'Outline Proposal' – DH Co-Curricular to approve
- ii. For an academic trip or event: 'Academic trip proposal form' – DH Academic to approve

2. Detailed planning (before trip departs):

Once it has been agreed you will need to assess the level of risk using the forms here: [I:\SENIOR\Risk Assessment Forms.](#)

For any support with trip planning, particularly with regards to assessing risk, you can speak with the Deputy Head Co-Curricular (also school EVC) or the Health and Safety Advisor.

- i. If it is a low-risk trip – such as taking a minibus to King’s College for a school debate – then complete the form ‘[Off Site Visits 1](#)’ and make reference to (or use) ‘[Generic Risk Assessment - Travel](#)’
- ii. If it is a trip with a higher level of risk then you will need to complete ‘off site visits 2’ and supplement this with evidence of letters to parents (exemplars available in [Off Site Visits](#)) + supplementary evidence from the partner/centre or tour company you are using e.g. Public Liability Insurance and additional specific Risk Assessments. You will need to complete your own assessment of hazards, making reference to (or using) ‘[Generic Risk Assessment - Travel](#)’. You will also need to assess risk associated with other aspects of the trip, including (but not limited to) accommodation, activities, excursions, ‘free time’ during the visit etc. Please do see DH Co-Curricular for guidance on assessing risk should you need further support. Some example Risk Assessments can be found [here](#). Please refer to the end of the document for support with [identifying specific hazards](#).

Please see the handy ‘[List of Things to Consider](#)’

- iii. Regardless of the level of risk you need to have up to date medical information for students attending the trip/visit: [Senior Reports — TS & TPS Intranet \(tauntonschool.co.uk\)](#)
- iv. If you are leading a residential trip (UK-based or overseas), you must book a meeting with the Deputy Head Co-Curricular so to go through all trip paperwork, including the Risk Assessment(s), at least two weeks prior to departure. Once signed off, paperwork will be scanned and uploaded to the [centrally-located folder](#).

3. When you go on the trip:

- a. You have a copy of the risk assessment and other copies are distributed to your colleagues
- b. A verbal briefing occurs between you and your colleagues to ensure dynamic risk assessment occurs i.e. here is our current risk assessment are there any new risks and what control measures should we put in?
- c. Engage actively in ongoing risk assessment.
- d. Take advice if needed (emergency SMT contacts)

4. After the trip:

- a. Report any accidents.
- b. Complete Form ‘Post Trip Evaluation Form’ within 7 days of your return
- c. Celebrate the trip and student/staff achievement with Marketing (Social Media/Courier etc.)
- d. A copy of the [Emergency Plan](#) is available for all members of staff and emergency contacts numbers are shared with the students (Trip Lead’s mobile).

Summary of Trip Forms

Off Site Visits 1	A low risk trip (see 'Examples of Specific Hazards' on page 2 of this doc)
Off Site Visits 2	A higher risk trip (see 'Examples of Specific Hazards' on page 2 of this doc)
Off Site Visits 3 GRA - Travel	Generic Hazards and risk reduction measures for Travel on Educational Visits
Off Site Visits 4 Post Trip Evaluation	Post trip evaluation

Things to consider:

- 1) Risk assessment; site visit.
- 2) Assess competence, experience, qualifications of staff.
- 3) Letter to parents including Parental Consent Form.
- 4) Clarity on who is leading the trip and deputy if appropriate.
- 5) Student list and medical issues: are we trained to support these issues?
- 6) Check insurance and finance.
- 7) Check travel details.
- 8) If you are using a **Centre** request copies of documentation (their RA) and their Liability of Insurance documentation (Public Liability Insurance). When planning an activity involving caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports, staff must check that the provider holds a license as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004.
- 9) We strongly recommend that staff use experienced and specialised school **Tour Companies** when organising trips. Please look out for the companies who are accredited members of the **School Travel Forum**, and those who hold the **Learning Outside the Classroom** Quality Badge.
- 10) Emergency action plan; circulate details more widely for trips during holidays.
- 11) Code of conduct for students, copied to parents if appropriate.
- 12) Food.
- 13) Money and security.
- 14) Specialist equipment and kit.
- 15) Accommodation.
- 16) Information **from** parents and staff.
- 17) Further guidelines for staff organising school trips abroad.
- 18) Have I read the emergency plan? Do I know how to access medical support in the location?

Detailed Notes:

Identifying the level of supervision required:

Guidance from the [Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel](#) (OEAP) says that “ratios are a risk management issue, and should be determined through the process of risk assessment”. The OEAP goes on to say that “it is not possible to set down definitive staff/student ratios for a particular age group or activity, although the law does specify minimum ratios for early years”.

However, based on the findings of your risk assessment, you should be able to establish the staff to student ratio required by taking into account the following factors:

- The nature and location of activities to be undertaken;
- The age and ability of the group;
- Students with special educational and/or medical needs;
- Whether it is a day visit or overnight stay;
- Whether it is a mixed or single-gender group;
- The experience of supervisory staff in providing off-site supervision;
- The duration and nature of the journey;
- The type of any accommodation;
- The competence of supervisory staff, both general and in relation to specific learning activities;
- The requirements of the organisation/ location to be visited;
- The competence and behaviour of the students;
- The likely weather conditions and time of year;
- The duration and location of planned activities; and
- First aid cover.

Further considerations also include whether the students require close (direct) supervision for the duration of the visit, in which case the staff to student ratio will be greater.

Alternatively, if you don't intend for students to be directly in your line of vision for the duration of the trip, then less supervision will be required. However, trip leaders will still need to remain in the area in which the activity is taking place at all times.

In the event of a student or trip leader needing to vacate the trip early, the appropriate ratios will still need to be maintained. For example, a trip leader may need to accompany a student to hospital or attend a personal emergency. This should be taken into consideration when planning your visit.

Planning the trip:

Plan a date which avoids known difficulties, such as established School events, exams etc. Use the current year's calendar (see SOC's and/or the 2023-24 Year Plan). Your trip can only be agreed and verified by SMT (Deputy Head Academic – Academic Day Trips in term time; Deputy Head Co-Curricular, all other trips) – it is not sufficient to say 'we have always done it'.

Check the guidelines for staff driving school vehicles in Senior School handbook and book the vehicle well in advance. Specific parental consent should be sought if a private vehicle is to be used; please also speak with Graeme Barclay with regards to using private vehicles for Business use as appropriate insurance needs to be in place. Do you have enough drivers?

The purposes and objectives of the visit must be clearly identified and appropriate to the age and ability of the group. Think about any additional education needs, including students for whom English is a second language.

Ensure safety procedures are understood; check existing measures; identify necessary additional measures. Keep it going through the trip! Think about risks to **staff** as well as students. Check students' medical

information on Firefly ([see above](#), part iii). In addition check any medical information supplied on the parental consent form. You will need this information to complete the Off Site Visits Form 1 or 2. If you are using a Centre or company, get their Public Liability Insurance and risk assessment in writing. Seek advice on a 'site visit' from the Deputy Head Co-Curricular. Prepare an alternative programme in case of a change of plan, including a contingency plan for a late return. In case of late return, it is important that you speak with parents of students on the trip and Boarding Houseparents.

- You may find www.education.gov.uk to be a useful source of guidance.
- It is very tempting to include a generic risk assessment in this policy, but we need to think afresh about each trip and check our risk assessment against a previous trip; consult a specific checklist for the particular activity; discuss with a colleague / Deputy Head Co-Curricular.
- [HSE: Information about health and safety at work](#) is also useful for guidance on assessing risk

Check training and experience of staff. Some trips will require particular qualifications. Check on First Aid training. If you are using volunteer helpers, DBS checks will be required (speak to HR for further information on this). This includes any spouse, girlfriend or boyfriend on the trip who may have "access to children". Think about effects of teaching and the working day when assessing your needs. Foreign exchanges pose particular problems: the way ahead for the moment is to warn parents if, as is likely, students will be staying with families in which there are adults we have been unable to "check". Parental consent for students to stay with these families can then be sought – for further advice on trips that may include 'host stays', please speak with the Deputy Head Co-Curricular for guidance and support. The school recommends that students stay in privately-hired accommodation (hotels, for example) under the supervision of school staff – for further guidance on appropriate accommodation on residential trips, please see the Deputy Head Co-Curricular.

You **must** get parental consent* and an update on medical details previously provided (if any) - a medical questionnaire is sent out to parents by the Health Centre when students join the school, but the consent form should contain a line asking for details of any medical issues that may have occurred since the questionnaire was completed. A specimen introductory letter and a specimen "off-site" consent form are supplied later in this section. Parents must be informed in advance if any remote supervision is involved. Make it clear what activities are involved; clarify options. Reinforce school policies, behavioural expectations, and beware of conflicting with published documents (eg school behaviour policy). Ensure that parents have a copy of what is said to students (eg a code of conduct, arrangements for supervision etc). They will also need contact details and emergency numbers.

*sometimes it is difficult to get parental permission for boarders. If the (low risk) trip runs during the formal school day (i.e. lesson time) then 'parental permission' may be obtained from house staff. If the trip has higher risk attached to it then full parental permission must be obtained.

If the trip is overseas then consent for medical treatment in the event of an emergency must be sought.

The staff leading activities must:

- be suitably experienced or qualified for the activities proposed.
- be aware of hazards.
- be clear that high standards of student behaviour will be expected at all times.
- be aware of their supervision responsibilities.
- process a list of names of students and carry it at all times.
- regularly count the students, and every time students mount or dismount.
- know what action to take if there is a problem (see Emergency Plan).
- know how to contact the emergency services.
- have a mobile phone (which on day visits must be switched on) and check that it can be used overseas if required.

- You can use a personal mobile phone on Trips when only contactable through Teams; the school strongly advises against giving out personal mobile phone details.

Trip paper work, including risk assessments, contact details, the list of students in attendance and all associated medical/emergency information, must be signed by the Deputy Head Co-Curricular (or a member of SMT on their behalf) and posted in the Common Room before you leave – school office staff (reception) will support you with this once paperwork is completed and signed off; they will also upload to the centralised I drive location. The Trip Paperwork should include all other relevant paperwork, including itineraries, insurance documents, proof of public liability (when using third party centres). It is imperative that the date, time, staff contact number, and student list is accurate.

Check with the Finance Office on the School's **insurance**. Alert the office to any unusual or hazardous/adventurous activities. Agree with the Finance Office on arrangements for the receipt of **money** (including acquisition of foreign currency).

Make sure you have checked tickets, times of departure / arrival. Think about risk assessment and supervision for the **journeys** as well as the activities. Are drivers competent and qualified? Are the hours safe?

Check any Centre: get a copy of their Health and Safety Policy, risk assessment, licence, staffing levels, emergency plans; get details of their equipment, public liability insurance, other relevant insurance, accommodation, and First Aid. Clarify any demarcation of responsibility between the School and the Centre. Please note that the school remains responsible for the safety and welfare of its students; if you, at any point during a trip, feel a student's/(s') safety/welfare to be at risk, you have the authority to stop any activity until appropriate safety measures have been implemented. Advice can be sought from SMT / DH Co-Curricular/emergency school contact.

Check what you will do in an emergency. Read the school's [Emergency Plan](#).

Advertise ground rules well in advance. Stay in line with published School policies – for your own protection. Copy code of conduct to parents. Briefing to students **before departure** should include:

- rendezvous procedure for lost students (including the journey).
- recall system and action in an emergency. Provide emergency phone number (trip lead and school emergency contact)
- relevance to prior and future learning.
- grouping for study or supervisory purposes.
- Behavioural expectations
- kit-check: appropriate dress/equipment for the activities proposed.
- Reiteration of key dates and times

An example of trip letters with itineraries for students / parents can be found in the centralised I Drive location. If any doubts, require parents to respond by letter / email, with key consent forms and additional medical information included. It is good practice to ask for a copy of a student's passport page, so to proactively ensure they have a minimum six months remaining after intended trip return date.

Catering department must be advised of anticipated absentees from meals. You need to plan for packed lunches, if required. The kitchens will help provide variety with adequate warning. Warn students if they will need to bring food (or money for food). Think about your estimated time of return and how that fits with meals. Plan for late suppers, if required.

Inform students and parents if they will need to bring money. Plan for its safe-keeping. You may also need to think about passports and their health insurance.

Ask parents to warn you about medical issues. Beware of rejecting students on any grounds such as “disability.” Health and safety considerations may mean that special arrangements are necessary in some cases. If these cannot be put into place or the parents do not wish to meet the additional costs thereof, this could prevent the student from taking part in the trip.

If you are taking equipment (eg tents), check it in advance. Consider whether you need to have extra “base camp” kit to help groups whose kit has given trouble. If students are bringing equipment, have a kit-check. If you are using a centre’s equipment, check their paperwork.

Is the accommodation safe? Check fire procedures (at camp sites as well as accommodation), lock-up, siting of rooms, supervision, hazards, staff location in accommodation, appropriate ratios per floor, balconies, restrictions on window openings, private bathroom facilities etc. For further information regarding minimum standards of accommodation, please seek advice from DH Co-Curricular.

If parents offer information (eg “John is not a very confident skier”), respond to it in your planning, amending Risk Assessments accordingly. Be prepared to check in advance with House Staff.

For School Trips abroad:

Send copy of **all** correspondence to parents **and** guardians (including initial details).

Include sentence / paragraph in an early letter (info letter or first confirmation letter) stating that *parents / guardians* of foreign nationals are responsible for ascertaining if visas are required by the host country and for assisting the student to obtain the appropriate visa. (State that the school office (PA to CEO/Head) will provide letter confirming student status if requested.) As mentioned, it is best practice for *Photocopies* of passports of **all** students must be submitted by the student to the teacher i/c the trip along with the return consent forms.

For trips within the EU, consider whether to use a ‘List of Travellers’ on school headed paper (with official school stamp, countersigned by CEO/Head) - this may negate the necessity for visas.

For trips within Europe, it is still recommended that students bring a current EHIC. This can make access to medical support easier when abroad.

No refunds will be given if a student is unable to travel owing to sickness or the student’s passport and / or visa being out of date or declined. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If, however, a student is able to find a full fee-paying replacement from within the student body (appropriate to trip), the school will provide a refund (minus any additional costs associated with cancellation/admin/name change etc).

After all the excellent planning, this turns out to be the most important: adapt your plan if necessary in response to weather, behaviour, unforeseen circumstances, illness etc... Ensure that you continue to communicate clearly with your colleagues on the trip. Training before remotely supervised activities should be assessed separately by an instructor with suitable qualifications.

Be aware of your own limitations. Continue to seek and accept advice from the local experts (e.g. “rivers rise really quickly in these parts; that will be a torrent tomorrow!”).

RIDDOR require us to report accidents. Follow the procedures as listed in the Health and Safety Policy.

After a residential trip, you are required to fill in a standard evaluation form which should be passed to the Deputy Head Co-Curricular within a week of your return. This will be held on file. It is good practice to fill in this form, even if the excursion is only a day trip. It will matter when knowledge of disciplinary issues will enable staff taking trips after you to assess the risks posed by disruptive students. Also, if there have been issues with

the specifics of a trip (accommodation/quality of food/safety of activity/quality of tour company etc.), future trip leaders can benefit enormously from your experience.

Examples of Specific Hazards that may require Assessing.

Activity							
<p>This should help with an examination of your activity and what potential hazards could arise from/during your activity.</p> <p>This list is not exhaustive, rather a starting point that can be expanded upon when completing your risk assessment.</p>							
Physical							
Assault / Violence		Defective Equipment		Slips, trips, falls		Falls from height	
Electricity		Impact /Puncture		Crushing		Spillages	
Collisions		Rip /Tears / Jewellery		Entanglement		Water / Rivers/ Canals/ Ditches/	
Kick (i.e. Animals)		Bite (i.e. Animals)		Trampled		Heat stroke	
Hypothermia		Sun burn		Burns		Trapping	
Dehydration		Cuts / Lacerations		Vibration			
Biological							
Virus		Body Waste		Bacteria (e.g. leptospirosis)			
Parasites (Toxicaris)		Zoonosis		Bird faeces (e.g. Pigeon)			

Chemical							
Gas		Fumes		Vapour		Dust, i.e. Wood, Clay	
Asbestos		Petrol		Diesel		Chemicals Irritant / Harmful / burn to body	
Ergonomic / Environmental							
Manual Handling / Lifting		Poor body posture		Confined spaces		Extreme weather conditions	
Fire		Workplace (Ventilation and heating)		Falling trees		Overgrown vegetation	
Mud / Quick sand		Marsh / Boggy		Barbed Wire		Contaminated ground	
Insufficient lighting		Insufficient space		Terrorism		Wind speed	
Fragile roof		Traffic		Cliffs		Vibration	
Noise		Tidal Strength					

Psychological / Individual							
Work related stress		Insufficient / poor Supervision/Briefing		Bullying		Lone Working	
Physical capabilities		Mental health conditions		Safe guarding		Separation during activity	
Cultural (Abroad)		Poor posture					