

INTRODUCTION

At Mount St Mary's College 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 pupils' 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, farms and Roman remains to support the curriculum in History, Geography, English, Biology and Classics. There are regular theatre trips for pupils of all levels.

Many pupils take part in language exchanges with one of our partnership schools in France, Italy and Spain. Pupils from these schools are accommodated in the homes of host families, whose children make reciprocal visits when they are accommodated by the families of our pupils. And we have a year-round weekend programme of adventure activities, including canoeing, climbing, trekking, horse riding and sailing. We send rugby and hockey teams on tours for example to Dublin, France, South Africa and Hong Kong. We also have regular ski trips.

We have an active Duke of Edinburgh Award programme involving a range of outdoor activities, services and skills. Most pupils take their bronze award, and many of our senior pupils pursue the more advanced gold award which involves a residential project.

Our Combined Cadet Force (CCF) is open to all pupils from usually Grammar upwards, and provides opportunities to take part in activities in the Army and Royal Air Force sections, to take part in weekend exercises, adventurous training and military camps.

You can find more about the trips, visits and activities that are available to each year group from our web site, our prospectus and our notice boards around College.

INFORMATION ON PLANNED TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

The College calendar lists the trips and visits that are due to take place over the coming term, together with a list of planned home and away sports fixtures. Parents will always be notified in advance:

- If a child has been selected for a sports team and will be given a list of fixtures. We very much welcome family and friends at all our matches, both home and away.
- If a child is going to be out of school during the College day in order to visit a local museum, theatre, nature reserve or historic site. We will always seek your permission if the visit involves an extra charge, supplying a packed lunch or late return to College, or collection from another place, such as a theatre.
- We send details of planned trips and activities well in advance to all parents of pupils of the relevant year group or cohort. Parents who opt for these trips are often invited into the school for a full briefing before their son or daughter departs on a trip or visit that involves an overnight stay, either in the UK or overseas.

CONSENT

We require your specific, individual written consent if we are to take pupils on a trip or visit that extends beyond the normal College 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 pupils 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 College at least ten working days before the start of the trip.

Consideration must be given to parents who are separated. Speak to the Deputy Head and Bursar for more guidance in this area.

SAFETY

Safety is top priority for us. We expect parents to support the College in ensuring that pupils follow the instructions given either by a member of staff, or by a qualified instructor and use 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 College behaviour code.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

INTRODUCTION

We have a large number of trips, out-of-school activities and visits at Mount St Mary's College which are an important part of our educational ethos. We expect that every member our staff endorses the educational value of activities outside the classroom. We encourage everyone possible to participate in them and to help with the arrangements. To make this possible, we set reasonable timetables, with plenty of non-contact time, as we do not want this important function to become burdensome. We always welcome suggestions from staff for new trips.

ROLE OF THE EDUCATION VISITS CO-ORDINATOR

The Deputy Head is our Education Visits Coordinator (EVC). He supports the Headmaster in the process of approving visits, ensuring that they are spread through the different age groups, and the school year, (although there is inevitably a concentration during the last part of the summer term, when exams have finished and the weather is at its best). He helps staff involved with organising tours, with checking parental consent forms and keeps records of all previous visits (which can be borrowed). He also keeps reports of any accidents or near misses. All new staff have a session on planning school visits as part of their induction training.

ROLE OF THE GROUP LEADER

Every trip or visit, no matter how short, must be planned in advance by the member of staff who is charge of organising and running it. He or she will always have had experience of accompanying College visits before taking on the role of Group Leader (GL). At Mount St Mary's College we arrange for the EVC to hold a full afternoon's training session with all potential GLs, which covers practical guidance on conducting risk assessments, emergency procedures, the College's insurance cover, budgeting for visits and the circumstances under which a visit might be terminated or curtailed, for instance if weather or sea conditions suddenly deteriorated. With the exception of the very shortest visits, such as to our local library or museum, we expect all GL either to hold a valid First Aid certificate themselves, or ensure that one of the other teachers accompanying the visit holds one. A Deputy Leader is nominated for all trips. S/He may not hold the qualifications of the Group Leader; but is nevertheless capable of taking over that role, if necessary.

No one should drive the College minibus unless s/he has qualified as a minibus driver. For any minibus journey that lasts for longer than three hours, there should be a second member of staff, ideally, who is also a qualified minibus driver. The College will arrange and fund First Aid courses, as well as courses in driving minibuses for all staff who are involved in visits. At Mount St Mary's College we expect every member of staff to complete a "Drivers' Declaration Form" before s/he drives pupils in a College minibus or privately owned vehicle.

PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

The law places the Group Leader "in loco parentis". 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 College may feel concerned about the possibility of being held personally liable if an accident should occur. However, they can be assured that Mount St Mary's College, 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 College guidelines.

Mount St Mary's College has a £10 M of Employers' Liability Insurance and public liability insurance, as well as a group travel policy that covers most visits inside the UK and overseas. Cover includes cancellation or delay, medical expenses, replacement of passports, personal possessions and money. The policy covers most College visits, including skiing holidays; but does not cover all adventurous activities, such as climbing or scuba diving. Any member of staff organising an adventurous or hazardous activity should therefore check, via the Bursar, whether or not the activity is covered by the College's policy. An extension usually can be arranged. The GL should ensure that s/he takes a copy of the College travel insurance with him/her on all but the shortest of visits.

Mount St Mary's College's policy is to discourage staff from transporting pupils in their private cars and never to allow them to be transported in cars belonging to parent helpers (unless the parents make a private arrangement that does not involve the College). Where a member of staff transports a pupil in his/her car, insurance cover is automatically provided through the College's "occasional business use" motor policy. That ensures that motor insurance claims arising whilst a member of staff is using their own car for College business purposes can be settled without involving their own motor insurer.

PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS

The amount of advance preparatory work needed will obviously vary considerably with the type of activity. Very little preparation may be needed for walking with a group of pupils to a local museum, spending an hour there and walking back in time for school lunch. By contrast, a visit lasting a week or more to a country outside the EU, requires considerable research and preparation. Repeat visits and shorter visits will need less planning, and can be arranged at shorter notice, though it is always desirable to give parents as much notice as possible when planning visits for College holidays and half-terms. (GLs may draw upon the EVC's stock of existing background material when planning regular repeat visits to familiar destinations, such as language exchanges).

The list that follows is designed to cover all the planning that a GL needs to undertake for a longer type of visit. It is designed to be as comprehensive as possible. Text in *italics* indicates that the action may not be required (or the timescale may be shortened) for: trips within the school day, theatre and museum visits, sports fixtures, or day visits using College transport.

WHEN PLANNING A TRIP

Twelve Months in Advance

It is recommended that assurance should be sought that suitability checks have been carried out for any staff of another organisation taking responsibility for the College's pupils on a site other than the College.

- Obtain advice from the EVC, on suitable dates, precedents etc.
- Discuss preliminary plan, including purpose, location, transport, hotels, activities, itinerary, number and age of participants with EVC
- Calculate the staff to pupil ratio (see below)
- Prepare a draft itinerary
- Decide mode of transport for all legs of the journey.
- Prepare fully inclusive costs for the visit, including an appropriate contingency for delays and emergencies (the costs of the accompanying staff must be included).
- Check that the provider of adventurous activities is licensed and the individual instructors possess a recognised qualification from a national body, such as the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority.
- Obtain a clear statement from the centre about their responsibilities for the safety of the pupils before making any commitment. Ask for copies of their risk assessments
- Prepare the risk assessment(s), (see below)
- *Check the College's insurance cover, (see above) if the visit involves hazardous activities*
- Find other members of staff who are willing to participate in the trip, bearing in mind the need to have both male and female teaching staff when both sexes participate in a visit. It is desirable to have at least one member of staff who speaks the language of the country to be visited. We are always happy to include volunteers from the medical team amongst the supervising staff. We hope that Sports Coaches and Visiting Music Staff will participate in sports and music tours. They are also welcome to help with other visits. Office staff may assist with day trips and theatre visits]. We do not usually encourage parents to accompany College visits, although we welcome them at all sports fixtures.
- *Check that the tour company/airline is ATOL/ABTA bonded to provide cover in the event of the bankruptcy of the provider.*
- *Carry out a reconnaissance visit if the location is not one that the school has visited before. (If a reconnaissance visit is impossible, a reference from another school that has visited the site may suffice).*
- *Establish the minimum and maximum numbers for the visit to be viable (bearing in mind that the costs of the accompanying staff will be divided amongst the participants).*
- *Ascertain the medical and visa requirements*
- *Establish when the deposits are required by tour operators/airlines/activity centre etc., and ensure that the size of the deposit requested from parents is sufficient to cover these costs (including the costs of deposits for accompanying staff).*
- *Depending upon the destination: check with the Travel Advice Unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.*
- Prepare a written case, to be counter-signed by the EVC, seeking the Headmaster's approval.
- *If necessary, attend a First Aid and/or minibus driving course beforehand.*

STAFF/PUPIL RATIOS

The recommended staff to pupil ratios for visits and off-site activities is:

| Ratio | Pupils' Year Group |
|------------|---|
| 1:15 to 25 | Upper Elements upwards (with a larger ratio permitted for over 16s) |
| 1:13 | All visits abroad |

THE RISK ASSESSMENT

All GLs at Mount St Mary's College are trained in conducting risk assessments on the potential hazards involved in a visit, trip or activity that they are planning to:

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

Professionally operated licensed activity centres and tour operators specialising in school visits will conduct their own risk assessments. The Group Leader should ask for copies at the planning stage. Provided that he/she is satisfied, it will meet the requirements of Mount St Mary's College for the activity part of the visit. Additional risk assessments will probably be needed to ensure complete coverage of all aspects 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. At Mount St Mary's College, the EVC maintains a dossier of generic risk assessments that cover sports fixtures, theatre and museum visits and most of our regular visits.

At Least Ten Months in Advance and After Permission is Granted

- Write a *preliminary* letter to send to parents and guardians of the target age group, outlining the purpose of the trip, *the programme and the expected maximum cost*. Ask for *expressions of interest / acceptance, together with a deposit by a specific date / payment*. *Mention that parents will be invited to a briefing meeting within six weeks of departure*. Explain any restrictions on numbers. At Mount St Mary's College we expect that these letters should always be cleared in advance with the EVC.
- Brief the pupils about the visit, its dates and purpose.
- Check names of all pupils wishing to participate with Medical Centre. Discuss with EVC concerns about special arrangements that may be required for handling any specific medical or SEN issues.
- Collect payment/deposits and arrange with the Bursary to set up a unique cost centre in the school accounts for the trip.
- Arrange for the Bursary to pay *deposits on hotels, flights, activity centre etc.* /the costs of tickets.
- On exchanges: assign pupils to host families. Encourage an exchange of letters/emails/photographs etc.

At least Three Months in Advance

- *Finalise the costs with the travel company etc.*
- *Insist that all coaches are fitted with seat belts. (This may not be possible in every country).*
- *Work out the cost for parents (including contingency to cover delays etc.).*
- *Inform parents of the medical and visa requirements. Advise parents of non-British passport holders that they are responsible for ascertaining the visa requirements of the country to be visited.*

- *Arrange for the Bursary to bill parents for the balance of the cost of the trip/Collect the balance directly from the pupils and hand to Bursary for crediting to the trip account.*
- *Arrange for the Bursary to pay the balance to the airline, hotel, the travel company etc.*
- *Arrange for a College credit card to be issued for the duration of the visit.*

- *Arrange with the IT Manager for loan of College mobile with pre-paid SIM card valid for the country to be visited to be available on a specific date.*
- *Brief and prepare the pupils in advance.*
- *Ensure that they are given plenty of advance notice if they need special equipment (e.g. for skiing).*

Six Weeks in Advance

- *Give the Bursary details of requirements for foreign currency/travellers' cheques/pre-paid foreign currency card. Agree collection arrangements. (GLs will normally be required to collect and counter-sign their own travellers' cheques from the bank or airport terminal and will be required to produce their passport details for a pre-paid foreign currency card).*
- *Arrange meeting with parents to brief them on all aspects of the trip, including:*
 - *The itinerary, including the meeting and collection points.*
 - *Contact details for the hotels/hostels/ names and addresses of the host families.*

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- *The number of the College mobile phone issued to the Group Leader.*
- *The money, kit and equipment that the pupils need. The dress code of the country.*
- *The medical and visa requirements.*
- *The expected standards of behaviour, and the potential risks of irresponsible behaviour and the ground rules for behaviour in host families' houses.*
- *The ground rules on consumption of alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances.*
- *Remind parents those pupils who ignore or flout the behaviour code risk being sent home at their parents' expense. Pupils remain subject to school rules throughout the visit.*
- *Arrangements for handling illness and accidents, and arrangements for informing parents in such circumstances.*
- *Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event that the return is delayed.*
- *The need to notify the school in the event of contact with an infectious disease within four weeks of traveling.*
- *The reasons why a completed consent form is essential.*
- *The need for a copy of each pupil's passport.*
- Send all parents a copy of the consent form (see appendices) with specified return date.
- (If appropriate) book picnic lunch from Catering Department.
- Brief pupils on expectations of standards of behaviour and cultural differences.
- Book traveling first aid kit from the Medical Centre.

Two Weeks in Advance

- Chase parents who have not returned their consent forms. Remind them that their child cannot participate unless the form is received within ten working days of departure.
- *Obtain photocopies of each pupil's passport*
- *Check all tickets for accuracy. Store them in the school safe until collection*
- *Collect travellers' cheques from bank (if not collecting from airport terminal). Note their serial numbers before storing in safe until collection, with the foreign currency ordered by the Bursary/Store pre-paid foreign currency card in safe. Give copy to Bursary.*
- *Sign for College credit card. Store in safe. Give copy to Bursary*
- Meet with the other members of staff to discuss the itinerary, the risk assessment, the respective roles of the GL and other accompanying staff, and emergency procedures.
- Prepare packs for Reception and for each member of staff, that contain the following information:
 - *The itinerary (including address, phone numbers etc. of all locations where the party is staying).*
 - *The GL's mobile number/the school mobile,*
 - *Mobile numbers of all participating staff,*
 - *A list of pupils, together with copies of their parental contact forms (which includes details of each pupils' medical conditions)*
 - *Copies of all passports and travel documents*
 - *Emergency contact numbers for the Headmaster/Deputy Head/, Member of the SLT designated to be on-call, the EVC.*
 - *The address and contact details of the nearest British Consul.*
 - *On exchanges, the names and contact details of the exchange school and the host families that are accommodating each pupil.*
 - *A copy of the tickets, travel insurance document (including emergency contact details).*

- A copy of the risk assessment.
- Location of local hospital
- *Copies of the serial numbers of travellers' cheques.*

The Day Prior to Departure or Day of Departure

- Collect tickets, credit card, *travellers' cheques/pre-paid foreign currency card and foreign currency from the safe.*
- Give trip information packs to designated school recipients and to other staff participants
- *Give each pupil the names, addresses and phone numbers of their accommodation*
- Remind pupils about the meeting point, dress code, standards of behaviour etc.
- Remind pupils of the potential risks of irresponsible behaviour
- *Remind pupils to bring passports. Ask to see each passport.*
- Collect traveling first aid kit(s). Check contents.
- Collect packed lunch
- Collect School Mobile and charger.

DURING THE VISIT OR ACTIVITY

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with GL. He or she has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. He or she will liaise with the partner school in the event of difficulties between a pupil and their host family. 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 a museum, restaurant, activity centre, hotel etc.
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts.
- Checking the fire exits and escape routes at each hotel or hostel. Ensuring that every pupil walks through the emergency escape route at each hotel.
- 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).
- Ask all pupils to write their mobile numbers on a sheet of paper. Give all pupils the number of the College mobile if they are going to be allowed out in small, unsupervised groups
- Setting agreed times and locations for checking pupils when they work or are allowed out unsupervised in small groups.
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour.
- Looking after - or reminding pupils to look after - passports and valuables
- Storing cash, travellers' cheques and tickets in the hotel safe.
- 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 GL, or another member of staff will take him/her to the local hospital or clinic. If the trip is outside the UK, s/he will notify the insurers on their

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helpline to arrange (where possible) for the medical bill to be sent directly to the insurance company for settlement. If the accident is more serious (such as a broken leg when skiing), the College's medical insurers may arrange for the pupil, accompanied by a member of staff to be repatriated to the UK. At Mount St Mary's College we expect the GL to phone the pupil's parents if their child has suffered an accident or injury that is serious enough to require medical treatment - as opposed to minor cuts and bruises.

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 GL'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, and informing the Headmaster or on-call member of the SLT of what had happened would be the next tasks for the GL, who would need to 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 Headmaster are maintained. He/she would also need to arrange (perhaps using the Deputy Leader or another member of staff) for the school's insurers to be contacted as quickly as possible, together with the British Consul, if the accident happened overseas. A full record should be kept of the incident, the injuries and of the actions taken.

At Mount St Mary's College, depending on the nature of the incident, we may implement our own model communications plan for informing as swiftly as possible both the families of the injured, and the families of those who are unhurt. We recognise that in an era of instant communications, it may not be possible for us to be the first to break the news. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that we have an important duty to speak personally to the parents of any pupil who has suffered some injury or mishap. We will use mass communication methods (SMS, email, messages on our website, local radio) for communicating with those whose children are not affected.

Where possible, communication with the media should be left to the Headmaster. The GL should refer the media to the College. If comment is unavoidable, it should be factual, calm and no attempt made to cover gaps in knowledge. Pupils should be discouraged from talking to the media.

DELAYED RETURN

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

ON RETURN

Each Group Leader is asked to provide the EVC with a report on the visit, reports of accidents and near misses on his/her return. Personal observations and lessons learned are always valuable. The Group leader should return all College property, together with a report of any lost or damaged property. *He or she should also:*

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- *Instruct all pupils to delete their records of the College mobile and of any staff mobiles.*
- *Remind all staff to delete any records of pupils' mobile numbers that they may have acquired during the visit*

EXPENDITURE

The GL is responsible for returning any unused cash or travellers' cheques to the Bursary. The pre-paid foreign currency card and the school credit card should be returned, together with all related transaction vouchers. The GL is also responsible for producing a schedule of all expenditure on the trip. Unused balances will be returned to the parents by way of credits shown on the next school bill.

REPORT FOR GOVERNORS

The Headmaster's termly report to the Governors always contains a synopsis of all the College trips and visits that have taken place since the last visit. The EVC, who prepares this report, will invite the Group Leader to draft a short report.

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Medical Information

Pupil Name:

Any allergies or sensitivities to food, medication, pets or to insect stings:

Any chronic or recurring medical conditions needing regular or occasional medication or treatment:

Does he/she suffer from travel sickness? If so, may we have your permission to give him/her a travel sickness tablet?

Do we have your permission to give him/her a prescription pain reliever, such as paracetamol?

To the best of your knowledge, has he/she been in contact with any infectious disease over the past four weeks? If so, please give brief details.

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Does he/she suffer from any phobia which might make it unsafe for him/her to participate in any of the planned activities?

Date of last tetanus injection?

Appendix Two

CONSENT TO EMERGENCY TREATMENT

I/ We authorise the Group Leader, or an authorised deputy acting on his/her behalf to consent on the advice of an appropriately qualified medical specialist to my/our child receiving emergency medical treatment, including general anaesthetic, blood transfusion and surgical procedure under the NHS or under the College travel insurance cover, where appropriate, if he/she is unable to contact me/us time.

Signature of both parents: _____

or Guardian

Contact Details for the period covered by the trip:

NAME:..... Tel .no:..... Mobile:

Email: Work no:.....

NAME:..... Tel .no:..... Mobile:

Email. :..... Work no:

FAMILY DOCTOR:..... Tel .no:.....

Address:

Appendix Three

BEHAVIOUR CODE

I understand that my son/daughter will be subject to the normal school rules of behaviour throughout the visit. I agree to him/her following the guidance on health and safety given either by a member of staff [or by an Instructor at the Activity centre] at all times. I accept that where his or her disregard for the code of behaviour either causes danger to him/herself and to others, or offence to the local customs of the local country, or is a serious breach of College discipline, such as (but not confined to) smoking, drinking alcohol, using illegal drugs or sexual misconduct, that he/she may be sent home forthwith at our expense.

Signed:

Signed.....

Name:

Name:.....

Date:

Date:

Please note that your son/daughter will not be allowed to participate in this visit unless this form is completed and returned to College by

Appendix Four

CONSENT FORM (FOR A SPECIFIC VISIT - COLLEGE TRIP OR OTHER OFF-SITE ACTIVITY)

Please sign and date the form below if you agree that your child's (name):

1. To take part in College trips and other activities that take place off College premises; and
2. To be given first aid or urgent medical treatment during any College trip or activity.

Please note the following important information before signing this form:

- The trips and activities covered by this consent include;
 - all visits (including residential trips) which take place during the holidays or a weekend
 - adventure activities at any time
 - off-site sporting fixtures outside the school day
 - all off-site activities for nursery schools.
- The College will send you information about each trip or activity before it takes place.
- You can, if you wish, tell the school that you do not want your child to take part in any particular school trip or activity.

Written parental consent will not be requested from you for the majority of off-site activities offered by the College - for example, year-group visits to local amenities - as such activities are part of the College's curriculum and usually take place during the normal school day.

Please complete the medical information section below (if applicable) and sign and date this form if you agree to the above.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Details of any medical condition that my child, (name):

Suffers from and any medication my child should take during off-site visits:

Signed.....

Date:.....