

Risk Assessment and Off-Site Activities Policy at Hall Grove
(including EYFS and Boarding)

“Sensible risk management is about practical steps to managing real risks, not a process of bureaucratic back covering.”

“Address the real risks, not only to pupils, but also to the health and well-being of your staff. And remember, risk assessment is just good planning – keep it fit for purpose and act on it.”

Sir Bill Callaghan, former Chairman, HSC (Health and Safety Commission).

This policy should be read alongside the Health and Safety Policy, Fire Safety Policy and Supervision of Pupils Policy.

Learning out of the classroom is an important part of our curriculum and is vital in promoting a child’s confidence and sense of well-being. Risks are inherent in every day life. We need to identify them and to adopt systems for minimising their impact, as far as we are able to do so.

Our pupils need to be shown how to cope safely with risk. Hall Grove has a well-developed programme for outdoor learning based in our own school grounds and gardens, our residential centre in Devon (Battisborough House) and on numerous day outings and trips “off-site”. Outdoor education plays a central part of the school. All activities organised through the School are expected to have a clear educational value. It is important that this is identified and understood by everyone concerned.

Educational Visits

On joining the school parents sign permission for their child to go on trips that fall within the school day, except in the EYFS where written permission is asked for each time. Parents must be told in advance of each activity and must be given the opportunity to withdraw their child from any particular school trip. The communication to parents should indicate that the school has considered all risk elements.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity the approval of the Headmaster or his Deputy must be obtained before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities are advised to make themselves familiar with the regulations, advice and procedures as set out in the DfE guidance ‘Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits’.

Whilst safety always has to be considered, Hall Grove staff are encouraged to have confidence in the school’s well established routines and protocols, and where there are uncertainties they should always seek guidance and support.

The Headmaster is ultimately responsible for the supervision of outdoor education and he must be satisfied that an outing has been properly planned.

In *assessing the risks* of a particular school trip, we aim to adopt a “commonsense and proportionate” approach. Guidance is given to staff by the Heads of Section.

- Full written risk assessment for a school trip is only required in "exceptional circumstances", however details of all off-site activities and outings should be passed to the Heads of Section to sanction the trip and ask for more information if it is required. The person leading the activity is responsible for drawing up the risk assessment and ensuring all staff on the trip have a copy, or have been told the expectations and format of the trip.
- Risk assessments for the trip should ideally be completed at least two weeks prior to the trip and as a minimum should outline: the party leader, date, purpose, staffing (with level of supervision for staff: pupil ratios carefully considered), contact information, any individual needs of the staff and pupils (health or otherwise), dress (in general pupils should be dressed uniformly bearing in mind that they are representing the school in public), food and general welfare.
- In general we aim for 1:10 adult supervisors for children in Years 3- 8 1:6 for the Year 1 and 2 and 1:5 for EYFS. Numbers may be made up with Gap students and parent volunteers (though care to be taken that those not on the school's Central Register do not have unsupervised contact with children. Where such staff are used this must be sanctioned by the Headmaster and appropriate safeguards put in place).
- If the trip is residential there should be an appropriate balance of male/female staff according to the gender of the pupils.
- A prior visit is always advisable, and a discussion with the Section Head may well assist with aspects of planning. On the rare occasion where there is any substantial risk this must be carefully documented. This could be related to a hazardous sport or activity.

We try to keep the documentation of outings and activities to what is required and to what is useful. For most routine off-site trips the recording should be no more than a single side of paper.

Staff driving school minibuses must have held a driving licence since 1997, or if obtained later, must have held it for at least two years. Staff must be trained by the school's registered instructor before they are given permission to drive a bus. Use of staff's own cars is limited to what is strictly necessary and must always be sanctioned by the Headmaster. (see minibus policy for more detail).

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided. Staff taking children out should have a mobile phone with them for emergencies.

Before a party leaves school, the school office should be aware of who is going, together with a programme/timetable for the outing. Travel arrangements should be considered (and approved by the Headmaster or his Deputy), and return times planned to reduce as far as possible congestion on the drive and inconvenience to parents. A ClarionCall group may be required to contact parents. The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the outing the Party Leader must take whatever steps are necessary (if proportionate and sensible) to ensure safety.

Trips overseas are only undertaken after the most careful consideration of safety issues, transport arrangements and emergency procedures. The Headmaster will generally insist that a reputable travel company with local area support is used to make the arrangements.

Individual health requirements of pupils and staff must be considered. School Nurses will provide a list of specific medical needs (including allergies and dietary requirements) prior to every outing. Trips within school hours can rely on contact being made with School Nurse to check consents for minor medical treatment. Trips that extend outside school hours will require that the Party Leader carries the laminated sheet with the confidential information of health issues and consents. If the trip is overseas the staff must take individually signed parental consent forms with medical/dietary information and consent for medical treatment. School Nurse will advise on the wording to be used.

Prior to an activity, the Party leader must clearly prepare the group by spelling out the expectations of behaviour required of the children and explaining matters of safety, including procedures in the event of separation from the group. Care should be taken to see that individual needs of children can be met. If it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the Headmaster will consider the possibility of excluding the child from the activity.

The over-riding duty of a staff member accompanying any expedition is to show good judgement and to apply common sense.

Pastoral

Our aim is to ensure that every pupil leaves as a confident, articulate young adult capable of keeping him/herself safe on the streets, in the home and in all situations. Our PSHEE programmes and Assemblies are directed towards promoting an increasing understanding as the pupil develops, of the risks that exist in both the real and the electronic worlds, and on sensible precautions that should be taken. Our Science lessons encourage students to become familiar with and conduct their own safety-related research into the potential hazards of chemicals, gas, electricity and flammable materials.

Specialist Risk Assessments

The Headmaster arranges for specialists to carry out the following risk assessments:

- Fire safety
- Asbestos
- Gas safety
- Electrical safety

Revised August 2018