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| **WOODSIDE SCHOOL** | |
| **Risk assessment policy for Woodside School** | |
| **Independent School Standards: paragraphs 16 and 34.** | |
| Policy content includes:   * when and how we assess risks * our procedures for trips, off-site activities, work   experience placements and alternative provision   * emergency procedures. | |
| **Last external review** | September 2024 |
| **Next external review** | September 2025 |
| **Latest update** | January 2025 |

# INTRODUCTION

At Woodside School we formally risk assess the following:

* **individual pupils, particularly in light of their EHCP needs**
* **pupils’ behaviour generally**
* **trips and activities**
* **use of the buildings and facilities in general**

All risk assessments are stored electronically on our shared drive. Each risk assessment considers the following:

* **Risk or hazard**
* Who is at Risk
* **Control Measures**
* **Additional Requirements**
* **Likelihood of Risk (low**, medium or high)

A **common-sense approach** to risk assessments is adopted and we do not ask staff to list every possible danger; only those that are significant or likely. We organise and develop appropriate preventative and protective measures in order to keep pupils and staff safe from harm, and we monitor and review arrangements to ensure required standards are achieved.

We recognise the intrinsic value of all pupils learning outside the classroom. Regular local walks and educational visits form an intrinsic part of the educational provision we offer and help to support the curriculum whilst also enhancing the social, emotional and behavioural development of our pupils.

# INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

Pupils all have an Individual Risk Assessment (IRA) which highlights known behaviours and associated risks, this information is obtained from pupil documents like the ECHP, information shared via the residential care home and pupil observation. Staff also make dynamic risk assessments. The IRA is kept as a live document with any new or unknown triggers, behaviours and risks being added as and when they are displayed to ensure that the staff team are aware of current risks and how to support the behaviours.

# TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL VISITS

**Regular and routine (Level 1)**

These include regular visits undertaken as part of the normal school timetable, for example:

* trips to local parks for break time
* trips to local sports facilities
* local walks
* trips to local shops and supermarkets
* Sessions at Community Focus

**Single event, specific activities (Level 2)**

These are one-off activities that are, by nature, more complex than regular and routine off-site trips. They may involve travelling further afield, or by public or hired transport. For example:

* trips to visitor attractions, museums or galleries
* trips to forests or parks further away than the vicinity of our schools
* trips to sports facilities outside of the local area
* any trips involving access to bodies of water
* any trips which require travel on public or hired transport.

**Adventurous or residential activities (Level 3)**

These are activities that involve or require delivery by accredited or qualified instructors, or are visits that include at least one overnight stay. For example:

* visits to the local climbing wall
* outdoor adventure activities such as canoeing, abseiling, archery or similar
* activities which are more complex or present a higher level of risk, e.g. go- karting
* residential trips in the UK or abroad, including those delivered by an approved provider.

# TRIPS & ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF THE SCHOOL PREMISES

As per guidance, the Head of School takes ultimate responsibility for school trips and external-school activities. Risk assessments must be carried out well in advance of any visit (**at least two weeks prior to the date of the event**) and must be approved by the Head of School. The person who signs the risk assessment off needs to be someone other than the person who completed the risk assessment.

It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure staff and pupils are well prepared for the activity and that it is thoroughly discussed well in advance of the trip/activity. Risk assessment forms are available to all staff on the shared drive.

Outline approval from the Head of School should be requested before any other planning takes place. A full risk assessment for the whole visit, including each significant activity, must be made, and appropriate planning undertaken, as a result of this. The risk assessment must include first aid arrangements.

An exploratory visit should, as appropriate, be considered and carried out prior to the event, to better assess risks.

The aim of a risk assessment is to prevent risks or significantly reduce them. Pupils must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be mitigated, then the visit must not take place and all risk assessments should be based on the following considerations:

* What are the hazards?
* Who might be affected by them?
* What are the existing controls and where is the information kept?
* Does the venue have its own health and safety policy?
* Are there suitability (such as DBS) checks on all staff who have

direct contact with the group?

* What steps will be taken in an emergency?

**Types of risk assessment required for different levels of activity Level 1 activities**

These are covered by blanket consent forms and follow generic risk

assessments for that activity*.*

Every time a group leader takes a pupil/group of pupils off site for a level 1 activity, they must follow the following safety procedures:

* the relevant leader needs to be informed that the trip is taking place
* at least one first aid kit is to be taken
* mobile phones taken containing telephone numbers for the school, at least two members of the leadership team
* all pupils and staff to be signed out of the building
* group leader to inform the Head of School of their estimated time of return to school.

Generic risk assessments are reviewed and updated regularly by Head of School and class teachers to ensure that they reflect the current needs of pupils.

**Level 2 activities**

These are covered by blanket consent forms but **must** be separately risk assessed. The risk assessment must include:

* details of the group leader in charge of the trip and other staff

members involved

* ratio of staff to pupils which must reflect the specific needs of pupils in the group (for example, 1:1 support for children if

required)

* an assessment of any **significant** risks
* an assessment of the **specific risks relating to each pupil** in the

group (or reference to existing individual pupil risk assessments)

All risk assessments must be signed off by the Head of School before the trip can take place.

**Level 3 activities**

These require additional consent from parents/carers/social workers and must be carefully risk assessed.

In particular, the following need to be considered when risk assessing these activities:

* the programme of activities and their suitability for the group
* the level of supervision required
* the suitability and/or competency of staff to lead the activity/ies
* the suitability of providers

The planning documentation and risk assessments for any off-site adventurous activities or residential trips must be submitted to the DSL at least 4 weeks before the date of the activity and approval must be given before the trip can take place.

For residential trips, the Head of School must also have sight of the approved risk assessment and give final approval for the trip’s go-ahead.

# DESIGNATED GROUP LEADER

For every educational visit, a group leader will be appointed and the composition of accompanying staff group planned to ensure an appropriate level of supervision and expertise. The group leader will be responsible for all aspects of the educational visit, although the group leader may delegate tasks to other members of staff accompanying the trip.

The staff-to-pupil ratio should not only reflect the nature of the trip but also the gender balance and ages of those pupils.

Before booking a visit, the group leader should obtain written or documented assurance that providers, such as tour operators, can provide copies of their own risk assessments and have appropriate safety measures in place. The following factors should also be taken into consideration:

* type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken
* location, routes and modes of transport
* competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff
* ratios of supervisory staff to pupils.

A school contact must be organised and all the accompanying staff must have their details. All those who need to, have names and contact details of everyone in the group, as well as full details of the arrangement. All the staff on the visit, the school contact and the relevant leader have a copy of the following details:

* the address and phone number of the visit’s venue and a contact name
* the names of all the adults and pupils travelling in the group
* the contact details of parents/carers/social workers and the staff’s next of kin
* risk assessment documents
* a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home.

Dates, times, costings and staffing arrangements of the proposed trip should be checked with the Head of School. Transport and other arrangements should then be made and confirmed in writing.

An assessment of individual pupils should also be made, taking into consideration the pupil’s age, maturity, level of fitness, temperament and the suitability of the activity.

Whether the visit is to the local park, museum or swimming pool, or includes a residential stay in the UK or abroad, **it is essential that detailed, formal planning** takes place before setting off. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them. The planning of the visit will be led by the group leader in consultation with the accompanying staff team.

The person planning the visit is advised to keep the relevant leader updated once all stages of the assessment have been undertaken. For residential visits at home or abroad, or for potentially hazardous activities, the Head of School must be satisfied that the visit has been planned effectively and that risks are minimised.

For some visits, especially residential trips, a parents/carers’ meetings may be held as the planning of the trip progresses. Regardless of whether a meeting is held, families/carers should be sent details of the proposed trip, which should include the following:

* dates, times and the proposed itinerary
* transport arrangements
* information to prepare pupils, including those with particular

learning, behaviour and medical needs

* cost and payment arrangements, including the payment of refundable or non- refundable deposits and details of extra costs,

guidance on pocket money etc.

* details of staffing and supervision ratios
* details of the code of conduct for pupils going on the trip
* details of any equipment, clothing etc. the pupils need to take
* emergency procedures including contact details and permission for

emergency medical treatment if the parents/carers cannot be

contacted

* a consent form which must be signed for the child to be allowed to go on the trip/partake in the activity.

Whilst we already have them, we will again ask parents/carers to provide their latest emergency contact numbers and any medical information detailing any known medical conditions or allergies their children have. Once these are known, if the group leader has any doubts as to whether or not a given pupil should attend, they should discuss this with the relevant leader.

A full list of members of the party along with the detailed arrangements, to include consent forms and risk assessments, must be provided to the relevant leader and an electronic copy kept on the schools’ shared drive under TRIPS & ACTIVITIES.

During the school visit/activity it is essential that all pupils are supervised with the degree of care that would be expected from a responsible parent/carer in similar circumstances. The organiser should be prepared to modify plans in the light of circumstances and in the interests of the

party’s welfare. It is the responsibility of the group leader to see that all staff accompanying the visit have copies of relevant documentation on pupils’ medical conditions and emergency contact numbers. The group leader should ensure that all the staff are aware of the emergency procedures.

**The group leader must ensure that:**

* risks are monitored throughout the visit and take appropriate action as and when necessary
* appropriate child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place
* appropriate risk assessments have been carried out
* pupils and staff understand the expectations of acceptable pupil behaviour
* all necessary actions have been completed **before** the visit begins
* training needs have been assessed and met and the needs of staff

and pupils considered

* at least one member of staff is suitably competent to instruct the activity
* non-teaching supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children
* ratio of staff/adults to pupils is appropriate
* parents/carers have signed the consent forms
* arrangements have been made for the medical and educational

needs of all pupils on the educational visit

* adequate first-aid provision will be available
* travel has been well organised and the plan is clear.

# SUITABILITY OF STAFF

* All staff who lead trips are competent and understand their responsibilities to assess and manage risk.
* We provide appropriate training and information for staff responsible for educational visits.
  + All staff who lead or accompany educational visits have been subject to Enhanced DBS checks.ALTERNATIVE PROVISION (‘AP’)
  + Whilst we make no use of any alternative provision (AP), we know that if this were to ever change, the schools remain responsible for

the safeguarding of pupils attending any AP. This would include responsibility for risk assessment, site visits and securing written confirmation from the AP that they have completed all the required vetting and barring checks on their staff.

# EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

* + Risk assessment proformas contain clear guidance on emergency procedures for off-site activities/trips.
  + The schools have an emergency response plan detailing the actions to be taken by senior leaders in the event of a major

incident or emergency concerning an off-site activity or trip.

* + All accidents are reported and recorded via our accident procedure.

# REPORTING TO THE HEALTH & SAFETY EXECUTIVE (HSE)

* Woodside Schools are legally required under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (SI 1995/3163) (RIDDOR) to report certain accidents, injuries and fatalities

involving pupils, staff and visitors. Full details are available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>.