

109. Parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or visit unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum which parents have already been informed about through the school prospectus or a letter. Seeking annual consent for such routine visits may be appropriate.

Information to Parents

110. Before residential visits, or when the pupils are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities, parents should be encouraged to attend a briefing meeting where written details of the proposed visit should also be provided. There should be alternative arrangements for parents who cannot attend or who have difficulty with communication in English.

111. Parents need to be aware that the teachers and other adult supervisors on the visit will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupil health and safety should be given to parents:

- ▼ dates of the visit;
- ▼ visit s objectives;
- ▼ times of departure and return - parents must have agreed to meet their child on return;
- ▼ the location where the pupils will be collected and returned;
- ▼ mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;
- ▼ the size of the group and the level of supervision including any times when remote supervision may take place;
- ▼ details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- ▼ details of provision for special educational or medical needs;
- ▼ procedures for pupils who become ill;
- ▼ names of leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- ▼ details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- ▼ standards of behaviour expected in respect of, for example, alcohol, sexual behaviour, smoking and general group discipline including prohibited items. This information may take the form of a code of conduct which parents should sign;
- ▼ what pupils should not take on the visit or bring back;
- ▼ details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation, medical cover, any exceptions in the policy and whether parents need to arrange additional cover;
- ▼ clothing and equipment to be taken;
- ▼ money to be taken;
- ▼ the information to be given by parents and what

5

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

they will be asked to consent to:

- ▼ on exchange visits, the details of the host families. For example, whether they have hosted any of the school's pupils before;
- ▼ details on the cost of the visit. See Financial planning paragraphs 54 - 56 and Charging for visits paragraphs 57 - 63 in Chapter 2.

Parental consent

112. Head teachers or group leaders should seek consent for:

- ▼ non-routine visits involving pupils in school years 1 to 3 (no matter how short the visit);
- ▼ adventure activities;
- ▼ visits abroad;
- ▼ other residential visits;
- ▼ remote supervision.

113. If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should not be taken on the visit but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent the head teacher will need to consider whether the pupil may be taken on the visit or not.

114. A parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group. Besides conveying the parents' consent it could also form the basis for obtaining details required. If a tour operator is used it may be sensible to ask them what information to

obtain. General issues to consider include:

- ▼ any allergies/phobias the pupil may have;
- ▼ any medication the pupil is taking (if so what the dosage is and who is to administer it);
- ▼ whether the pupil administers their own medication;
- ▼ any contagious or infectious diseases suffered within the family during the preceding 4 weeks, and any other recent illnesses suffered by the pupil;
- ▼ the name, address and phone number of the pupil's GP;
- ▼ any special/medical dietary requirements;
- ▼ whether the pupil suffers from travel sickness;
- ▼ information on any toileting difficulties;
- ▼ whether the pupil has any night time tendencies such as sleepwalking (for residential visits);
- ▼ the pupil's ability to swim in the pool or sea and their level of safety awareness;
- ▼ any other information which the parent thinks should be known;
- ▼ the parental home and daytime phone numbers and addresses;
- ▼ an alternative contact, with their phone number and address.

115. The contents of a consent form for a parent to sign will vary according to the type of visit. See

Model Form 7 Parental consent for a school visit and Model Form 11 Consent for swimming activities in Chapter 11.

Medical consent

116. This should form part of the parental consent form. Parents should be asked to agree to the pupil s receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If parents do not agree to this, head teachers may decide to withdraw the child from the visit - given the additional responsibility this would entail for the group leader.

117. Doctors can be expected to carry out necessary emergency treatment without parental consent but it is possible that a surgeon in another country might be reluctant to operate on a pupil unless assured that the group leader had parental authorisation to agree to such treatment. It is sensible to include a translation of the medical consent, as signed by the parent, in the relevant foreign language.

Other consent

118. Parental consent should be obtained specifically for the transporting of pupils in the private vehicle of a non-teacher adult or another pupil on the visit. Head teachers should consider whether consent should be obtained before pupils can be carried in a teacher s private vehicle.

Early return

119. The group leader should tell parents if they will be expected to fund the early return of a pupil whose conduct gives cause for concern on a visit. A written agreement may be necessary.

Contact with parents during the visit

120. Head teachers should ensure that parents can

contact their child via the school contact and the group leader in the event of a home emergency, and that they have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the visit or a late arrival home. Parents should therefore:

- ▼ know the destination details;
- ▼ be aware of the emergency contact arrangements at home (particularly important during holiday periods when the school may be closed) and at all the venues the group will visit;
- ▼ provide contact numbers for day and night use in an emergency.

121. This is best done by means of the consent form.

Pupils contact with parents

122. Group leaders should arrange for parents to be told by the school of the group s safe arrival. One way of doing this is by a telephone tree whereby one parent contacts an agreed group of parents who then contact a further group. But pupils may wish to speak to their parents individually. Such arrangements should be agreed with parents and pupils before the visit takes place. Parents concerned after a phone call should contact the school contact.