

Laxman Public School

Policy and Procedures for Off-Site, Trips, Visits and Activities

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Date of issue: March 2014

Policy and Procedures for Off-Site Visits and Activities

1. Introduction

This policy sets out our aims for conducting visits off the school site for the purposes of enhancing the children's education. It also identifies the procedures to be followed for the conduct of such visits. It has been written with inspiration from international best practices and sources . The text is therefore borrowed from those sources.

2. Aims

At Laxman Public School we value the opportunity to take children off the school site as an aspect of developing their knowledge and understanding. In particular we believe that off site visits provide:

- ***Access to primary resources, either natural or manmade. We are particularly fortunate to live close to Delhi, which provides unrivalled access to a wealth of material through its museums and art galleries.***
- ***Experiences of a range of different environments, from a modern complex capital city to the tranquillity of rural locations.***
- ***The possibility to set learning in a more meaningful context than can be provided within a classroom.***

- **Access to specialist resources beyond the scope of the school to provide.**

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Managing Committee**

The School's Managing Committee have a responsibility to ensure that in organising visits out of school trips serve a purpose related to the school's aims, are well organised and led, and are conducted with due regard to Health and Safety. They may do this in a variety of ways including participating in such visits and periodically reviewing the school's policy and procedures.

- **The Principal**

The ultimate responsibility for all trips out of school lies with the Principal or, in his/her absence, the Headmistresses. To demonstrate this responsibility, before any trip can take place both a comprehensive Risk Assessment and an Insurance form need to be signed by the Principal. The **Headmistress/es** fulfil the role of **Visits Co-ordinator of the classes under them**, and are the first point of contact when a visit is being considered, ensuring the **Visit Leader** is competent to plan and lead the visit, checking that appropriate preparations have been made and that suitable adults are selected to accompany the group making the visit. He will also be responsible for checking the visit went successfully and if any changes need to be made on repeat visits. The Visit Co-ordinator will also either personally lead or accompany the first visit being conducted by a teacher or ensure this is supported by another experienced member of staff

- **The Visit Leader**

The organisation and conduct of any trip off site is the responsibility of a single named individual who must take 'operational' responsibility - the Visit Leader. It is this person who should complete and sign the Risk Assessment (where required). This 'operational' responsibility for the planning and carrying out of the trip lies with either the class teacher or another teacher (if subject specific).

- **Accompanying Adults**

Nearly all visits off the school premises require the participation of other adults - school staff, parents, students, others deemed appropriate. All accompanying adults take a responsibility for the success of the visit. The Visit Leader and the Visits Co-ordinator need to ensure that all accompanying adults are aware both that they are required to share in that responsibility and that the responsibility is to the whole group, not just the group to which they may have been assigned.

4. Planning

- **Outline Planning**

If the trip is new to the school the Visit Leader needs to identify for the Visits Co-ordinator before the trip is agreed in principle:

- the educational value of the trip
- the likely cost of the trip and how this will be covered
- the 'operational' features of the trip
- any health and safety issues
- any staff training implications

Where visits are repeat visits it is likely that the school has all the information to hand for the Visits Co-ordinator to give agreement in principle to the visit going ahead.

- **Pre-Visits**

If a trip / visit is new to the school or to the Visit Leader some form of exploratory visit will be undertaken in almost all cases. Such exploratory visits are required to ensure the following aspects of the visit are clearly understood:

- routes (particularly if public transport is to be taken)

- the layout of the location (particularly what is to be studied, toilets, eating facilities, etc.)
- the educational activities to be undertaken
- any significant factors that may affect health or safety
- any specific equipment the school may need to take
- for overnight visits, accommodation facilities

Where visits are repeat visits, unless there is to be a significant change to an aspect of the visit, the exploratory visit is not required, though the possibility that local conditions may have changed needs to be understood and the Visit Leader prepared to make adaptations at short notice. Where visits are repeat visits and significant changes to the structure of the trip are envisaged (i.e. different route between two venues to be visited on the same day) then an exploratory visit should be undertaken by the Visit Leader.

Trips without any exploratory visit should be exceptional. An example would be a package trip organised by a third party (a private supplier) who has legal liability for the conduct of the trip. Trips of this type would usually be outside India. Other such trips are those to sporting events. The Risk Assessment should be completed in writing on the school's standard form. Its completion will be informed by the Visit Leader's planning and a knowledge of the pupils taking part. If there are specific aspects relating to the trip that are not allowed for by the form, these should be written up independently and submitted to the Visits Co-ordinator as part of the Risk Assessment. The Visit Leader is required to sign the form. The Visits Co-ordinator has the responsibility for ensuring appropriate planning has taken place and counter signing the Risk Assessment.

5. Supervision

To minimise the levels of risk that are attached to all visits, an appropriate level of supervision of children is vital. There are two components to the supervision: an appropriate number of adults, and that those adults accompanying the party are deemed suitable to assist with the supervision of the pupils.

- **Adult to Child Ratio**

At Laxman Public School the following minimum adult to child ratios are observed

Day trips:

1 adult to 15 pupils

Where public transport is employed this should be reduced to 1 adult to 8 pupils maximum with

1 adult to 6 being preferred.

Overnight Stay:

1 adult to 10 pupils

Suitability

- **Day trips**

Wherever possible there should be more than one member of staff accompanying a trip off the school site. However, it is also educationally valuable for the group to be relatively small, a class size of 30 often being very effective. Such a small size often does not always give the opportunity to arrange for a second member of staff to accompany the party. This places even more responsibility on the selection of accompanying adults. It will be the responsibility of the Visits Co-ordinator to ensure that the number of school staff included in the adult - pupil ratio is appropriate. It is expected that all adults accompanying school trips will have completed and submitted a request for clearance from the Principal. All adults accompanying a visit should be informed of their responsibilities as part of the group and be given appropriate support to carry out those responsibilities. As part of this briefing they should receive a copy of the Laxman Duty of Care in advance of the trip itself.

- **Overnight trips**

There should be at least two members of staff on any overnight trip. All accompanying adults must hold a certificate of Principal clearance that is no more than three years old by two weeks before the date of the trip. For any overnight trip there should be a meeting for all supervising adults to outline roles and responsibilities (including a reference to the Laxman Duty of Care). The Visit Leader must be happy that all the adults are aware that their responsibility is to the entire group throughout the length of the visit and, in the allocation of roles and responsibilities, care is taken to ensure that personal responsibility to a son or daughter in the group does not run into conflict with the responsibility to the group as a whole. Wherever possible accompanying adults and pupils should have separate sleeping accommodation. However, currently the Year 5 single overnight stay in a Youth Hostel does not lend itself to effective supervision if this rule is followed. Since children are only away for one or two nights a sleeping routine is not established and the children are also accommodated in quite large groupings. The risk to Health and Safety in this context is higher than the potential risk from child abuse. To minimise the latter, the following points must be observed:

- Parents are clearly informed of the sleeping arrangements, why, and that the necessary Checks have been put in place.
- To the best of their ability, both the Visit Co-ordinator and the Visit Leader are satisfied that the supervising adults do not pose a threat.
- No adult may sleep in a room that has less than three children, if possible more.

6. Preparing Pupils

The object of the visit should be an extension of the school's curriculum. In most cases, therefore, the children will be partially prepared for the trip through the work they are doing in school. However, the children also need to be made aware of how the visit will be organised, of any particular occasions that will need especial care (for example, changing trains on the Metro) and of the overall expectation of how they will behave. It will also be important to identify the action they should take if they become parted from the group, and if they are approached by anyone from outside the group. Care should be taken when preparing first aid materials that children with allergies, etc. have all their appropriate medication and, for older children, they take personal responsibility for these (with one of the adults having a back-up supply.) On Overnight visits, there will also be ongoing preparation for the next day's events as the trip progresses.

7. Communication with Parents

We recognise that, in allowing us to take their children out of school, parents are placing a great deal of trust in the school. We must honour that trust by ensuring that parents are well informed about the visits. Below we identify a range of visits and how we communicate with parents in relation to these.

- **Short visits off the premises**

When pupils first join the school parents sign a form giving permission for their child to leave the school premises during the school day for a variety of short visits. Often a brief note is put on the Newsletter the week before such a trip.

- **Sporting events**

Children are taken to events by parents (their own or those of other parents) by car. Parents are informed in writing of a sporting event and that they need to make their own arrangements for getting

their child to and from the event. Parents are asked to confirm their acceptance of this arrangement in writing. Once at the venue there will be a member of staff present who will take responsibility for the children.

- **Half Day / Day Visits**

Parents are informed of these visits in advance and their permission for their child to participate is requested in writing. Children are not taken off site if this written permission is not given. In writing to parents we will seek to outline the educational value of the visit and the organisational arrangements.

- **Overnight Trips**

Parents are asked to give permission for their children to participate when the trip is first planned. Their willingness to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the visit is made at the same time. Closer to the visit itself an information evening is held that will outline:

- the activities the children will be involved in,
- the accommodation arrangements,
- the travel arrangements,
- clothing list
- the names of those leading and supervising the children,
- and emergency contact details
- any other relevant information for the effective running of the visit

They will also receive insurance details, be asked to complete forms identifying contact and medical details and giving written permission for appropriate health care in the event of an emergency.

8. Transport

The school currently uses four means of transport:

- on foot
- by public transport
- by coach
- by private car

Most local visits within Hauz Khas are conducted on foot. All road crossings are appropriately supervised and, wherever possible, involve the use of recognised marked crossings, even if this significantly extends the length of a journey.

Increasingly we shall use the Delhi Transport Metro system for journeys in and out of Delhi. When this form of transport is used we seek to increase the ratio of adults to 1 to 6 and divide the children into groups with a supervising adult from the moment they leave school. This supervising adult is responsible for checking the children in their group on and off the train and, on each occasion identifying to the Visit Leader that all the children are accounted for. They should also sit with their group on the train. Travel by coach is used for visits to locations on the periphery or external to Delhi. Children should sit one to a seat (i.e. avoiding three children to two seats). They should use the seatbelts provided. They should not sit on the front seats unless this is unavoidable. On long distance trips, adult supervisors should be distributed evenly through the coach.

Private Car

This is the common form of transport for local sporting events. The responsibility for arranging this and ensuring the suitability of the driver lies with individual parents

9. Insurance (If policy available)

- **Day Trips**

The school should take out insurance on all visits off the school premises, if such insurance is available. Before each visit (with the exception identified below) a form is completed by the Visit Leader (or the Administrative Officer on his/ her behalf), and signed by the Principal. No visit may take place before the insurance form is completed and signed, and the Principal will not sign the insurance form if the Risk Assessment has not previously been counter signed.

- **Overnight Visits**

The same insurance arrangements apply as to Day Trip. However, when arranging an overnight stay the parent must receive both the terms of the insurance cover and an individual form for completion.

- **Exception**

An exception to the above arrangements applies to sporting events and other similar events (as so identified by the Visits Co-ordinator.) We consider that the children have been dismissed from school and have left under the care of an adult arranged by their parent. They therefore fall under the insurance cover of the driver. Once at the venue, the child is under the supervision of a member of the school staff. On arrival children should be marked on a register. Insurance is that for a normal school day trip and the register forms the record that the child was present at the venue.

10. Emergency

By their very nature emergencies are both unpredictable and difficult to plan for. However there are certain basic precautions that need to be taken as preparation for a trip and a number of procedures that should be followed in the event of an emergency occurrence.

- **Preparation Planning, Pre-visit and Risk Assessment**

Obviously the likelihood of an emergency arising is greatly reduced if the journey route and the venue are known. Good planning will ensure that all foreseeable difficulties are identified and legislated for in the risk assessment.

- **Contact Information**

If an emergency does occur the Visit Leader or some other competent adult with the group will need to ensure that emergency services are summoned if required, that school is informed and possibly parents are contacted directly. Therefore before leaving the site as a minimum the Visit Leader should have at least two contact numbers for school personnel. It may also be appropriate to have parental contact details and this should certainly be the case for residential trips and those that, for part or all of the trip, are conducted out of school hours.

- **Medical Kit**

Every trip off the school site should include a basic medical kit. For local venues on foot a simple box of sterile wipes and plasters are probably sufficient. However, for more extended trips there should be at least one Basic First Aid kit and possibly several small boxes of wipes and plasters for minor abrasions. It may be necessary to take prescribed medication for children with specific medical conditions. In some cases back-up supplies may be needed, especially on residential trips. Clear instructions for the administration of such medication must be supplied by the parent. For chronic cases, individual Care Plans should be taken.

- **First Aid Trained Staff**

There is no requirement for an off site visit to have staff trained in First Aid. However, it is clearly an

advantage. All staff may seek to complete a one-day course in basic First Aid and the school will encourage this. A number of staff are trained to the Health & Safety at Work standard. It is the responsibility of both the Visit Leader and the Visit Co-ordinator to ensure there is adequate and appropriate support for Health and Safety available throughout the duration of a visit.

- **In the event of an Incident**

Should an incident occur (and this can range from a train being late, delaying the return time of a group, to a fatality) the basic procedure should be the same:

- ensure the group is safe and looked after
- establish the nature and extent of the emergency
- if there are casualties, establish their names and get immediate medical attention for them
- ensure all in the group who need to be aware that there is an incident are aware of it and that they follow emergency procedures; begin to make arrangements for the return of the group to base
- if relevant, call the appropriate emergency service (minimum information required will be precise locations, description of the incident, number of casualties, nature of injuries, total number in the party, your telephone number)
- ensure that if a casualty has been hospitalised a responsible adult accompanies the casualty, though not to the detriment of the main group

- if necessary, notify the police
- inform the school contact, including a description of the incident, action taken so far, and any necessary action school may need to carry out on behalf the group; also provide a contact number (a mobile and an alternative contact number are especially useful) Later action should include:
 - making detailed notes of the incident and the aftermath while it is still fresh in the memory,
 - liaising with the school contact until the incident is resolved
 - the school contact liaising with parents as appropriate and as promptly as possible,
 - if appropriate, the school contacting the Local Authority:
 - if relevant, completing the necessary paperwork, including an accident report form

- **Warning**

If the media become involved, all enquiries should be referred to the Principal. No direct contact with the media should be made by anyone in the group or on the staff of the school. Under no circumstances, if there is a casualty, should the casualty's name be given to the media.

Appendix 1

- **The Visit Leader**

Competent leadership is the most important safety factor of all. The Head will need to ensure therefore that a person has the competency to carry out the role effectively. The following notes are designed to assist the head evaluate a person's suitability.

The Leader must:

- be a regular teacher on the staff of the school (unless the particular skills or experience required make it more appropriate for the party to be led by someone else.)
- **have sufficient previous experience of visits to be able to undertake the leadership role.**
- have experience of the age range and particular special needs of the children taking part, and have the ability to control them in a different environment, which they may find either

disturbing or exciting.

- be sufficiently skilled in any activity in the programme, which is not to be led by an expert in that activity.
- have experience of the type of area to be visited and the hazards likely to be encountered unless an expert has been appointed who has the necessary experience.
- have the personal qualities required, including a sense of responsibility, sound judgement, good organising ability, confidence and fitness.

Appendix 2

• Equipment to be taken on all trips

- First aid in the ratio of one full basic kit per 30 pupils and, for each group over 10, one small box of materials for each additional group of 10
- Any relevant individual medication
- A mobile telephone and school contact details
- A list of all party members, including home address and contact telephone number(s)
- For an overnight trip a more extensive list of contact details for parents / guardians, school contact staff and the LEA
- o Medical details completed by the parents including a consent to emergency treatment

Appendix 3

Risk Assessment Form

Basic Factual Data:

- Proposed Date(s):
- Year Group/Class:
- Teacher in Charge:
- Total Number of pupils:
- Total Number of adults:
- Destination:
- Mode of Transport:
- Pre-visit (yes/no, date, by whom)

Check list:

1. Accompanying Adults

Identify how the adult in charge has the appropriate knowledge and experience to lead the group: Is the adult/ pupil ratio appropriate?

Identify how appropriate steps have been taken to ensure the accompanying adults will be suitable?

2. Pupils

Have any pupils behaviour difficulties that could affect the proper conduct of the trip?

Have any pupils physical or sensory impairments that require special arrangements?

Have any pupils specific medical conditions that require special arrangements?

3. Journeys

Are there any known hazards involved with the route being taken to the destination?

Will the group be 'self contained' or travelling amongst the public?

Given the mode of transport, are the adults able to supervise the pupils appropriately during the journey?

Are there any changes of transport during the journey?

When walking during the journey, are there any hazards?

Is there any opportunity during the journey for children to become separated from the main group?

4. Destination

Are any activities at the destination considered to have an element of hazard to health and safety?

Will the group be 'self contained' or visiting the venue with members of the general public?

Is there any opportunity during the time at the destination for children to become separated from the main group?

5. Lunch/ 'play time'

Have appropriate facilities been identified?

Are these considered to pose any risk?

Will the group be 'self contained' or may they be with members of the general public?

Is there any opportunity for children to become separated from the main group?

6. Incidents

Have appropriate means been identified for making emergency contact with school or summoning support?

If you are taking a mobile telephone, please give a contact number here:

Have appropriate means of dealing with ill health or injury been identified?

Are there any other factors that may affect the health, safety or security of the children?

Completed by: _____

Date:

Approved by: _____ Principal/ Headmistresses Head

Appendix 4

Letter to parents about sporting events from Laxman Public School

Dear Parent,

Your child has been selected to represent our school in a event on against at until approximately

In order that the event can run smoothly, we ask that all spectators comply with the following points:

- The competition is being organised and run for the benefit of all pupils involved. We ask that all spectators help to create a supportive atmosphere of healthy competition and enjoyment.
- All the umpires/referees are giving voluntarily of their time. Please help them to concentrate fully on their task by:
 - staying completely off the pitch/court
 - refraining from making adverse comments about their decisions.
 - Please give general encouragement to teams, but do not provide specific coaching advice.
- Should spectators not adhere to these expectations, after an initial warning, their team shall be withdrawn from the event or the match abandoned.

event

Laxman Versus

Child's name: Class:

- I have read and support the above requests.
- I take responsibility insorting out travel arrangements for my child to and from the match

Signed: Date:

Appendix 5

Details of the Insurance provision (If such policy is available)

Appendix 6

The Insurance company form.

Appendix 7

Laxman Duty of Care

Advice for Parents Helpers on Journeys / Trips out of School

1. Responsibility operates from when the school site is left to returning. For overnight stays it is for 24 hours per day.
2. Be friendly but VERY FIRM
3. Establish rules for behaviour in your group - every child MUST obey when told.
4. Note the information given by the Teacher/ Group Leader of needs of specific children in your care.
5. Always know where the children you are responsible for are. Never allow them to leave the party without your permission. When you do so be aware of where they are going, why and any potential dangers and then only in 2's.
6. Road safety drill - must be exercised at all times. Green X Code. NEVER let a child cross a road unsupervised.
7. Ensure the children know how to get back to base if lost or as appropriate to situation. Check you have your whole group before moving to the next place.
8. Toilet - Be aware of need before each outing and where toilets are.
9. In case of an accident enlist public help to ring for emergency help. Stay with your group.
10. Study work materials so that children know you can be involved in their work.