

# Overseas Residential & Adventurous Activities Policy

---

## Introduction

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows the DfE regulations and those issued by the Health and Safety Executive. All members of staff are affected by and expected to adhere to this policy.

In line with the college's Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs policies, we aim to give all students equal opportunities to take part in all aspects of college life, as far as is appropriate, practicable and compatible with giving regard to health and safety and the efficient education of other students.

This policy takes account of the Government's aim for children to have the support they need under Every Child Matters:

- to be healthy
- to stay safe
- to enjoy and achieve
- to make a positive contribution
- to achieve economic well-being.

The policy will follow the five principles of the Children's Plan:

- to support parents and families
- to allow children to reach their full potential
- to enable children to enjoy their childhood whilst preparing for adult life
- to provide services in response to children and family needs
- to use preventative measures to help students avoid the possibility of failure.

This policy is founded in the College's commitment to the development and maintenance of good behaviour and a positive and inclusive ethos for all members of the College community. It reflects the College's commitment to encourage and reflect diversity in all aspects of college life.

## Foreword

Rooks Heath College is a mixed 11 to 18 multicultural comprehensive in the London Borough of Harrow. This policy is formulated by the Associate Headteacher and is monitored by other members of the college's Leadership and Management Group. The policy is subject to a bi-annual review by the college's Leadership and Management Group and is subject to approval by the governors of the college.

**For any activities that are not classified as residential, overseas or adventurous, please refer to the Ordinary Offsite Activities Policy.**

An activity is covered by this policy if it:

- Is OVERSEAS
- Involves an overnight stay (RESIDENTIAL)
- Is in 'Open country' (ADVENTUROUS)
- Involves camping, rafting, water, rock climbing, horses, motor or air sport, shooting, caving, rope courses, snow sports (ADVENTUROUS)

Those going to a farm also involve extra precautions and staff will need to attend the ORA training in order to run any of these OSAs.

## Aims

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows the Health and Safety Advice given in the 'Department for Education Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies'.

College visits have clear benefits for students and large numbers of successful visits and outdoor learning activities take place every year. The Health and Safety Executive, HSE, fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life, providing deeper subject learning and increasing self-confidence. It also helps students develop risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives.

This Policy aims to help staff to strike the right balance between protecting students and allowing them to learn from school trips and is intended to help staff focus on managing the 'real risks'. The guiding principle for all Off Site Activities (or trips) is that they must be: safe, enjoyable and educational. Overseas, Residential and Adventurous Activities, (ORAs), must be planned very carefully to assess the risk involved and manage the safety and well being of all concerned as well as ensuring that the educational aims are realised. For the protection of staff, students and others involved it is vital that the policy is followed precisely if everyone is to be protected in the event of an incident. This policy is designed to show the strategies to be followed in running a safe ORA off site activity and the systems in place to ensure their implementation.

**All staff hoping to lead an activity must have received training on Offsite Activities.**

Further advice is available from the Department for Education website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/healthandsafety/f00191759/departmental-health-and-safety-advice-on-legal-duties-and-powers-for-local-authorities-headteachers-staff-and-governing-bodies>

This policy has been formulated to sit within the college's development plan and reflects the Government's **recommended** policy. It will be reviewed bi-annually through the College Journeys Working Group. Minor amendments to this policy may be made by the Associate Headteacher at any time in order to improve the safety of ORA Activities.

### **Training**

All staff who wish to run an ORA activity must have completed the basic OSA training as well as the ORA training given by the EVC (Educational Visits Co-ordinator).

### **Running An Overseas Residential Or Adventurous Off Site Activity**

Staff **must** follow the procedures outlined in this policy. All off-site activities are overseen by the Associate Headteacher.

A brief outline of the stages involved in running any off-site activity is below.

1. The leader of the activity will read and follow this policy.
2. The leader of the activity decides on the educational purpose of the visit. This must be made very clear, as it is not legal for staff to organise 'holidays'. The educational purpose of the visit must be stated in the first letter to those with parental responsibility. The Associate Headteacher, Headteacher and Chair of Governors need to be assured that the activity is being run for the correct educational reasons.
3. The leader will see the Associate Headteacher to outline plans, agree a date and obtain authority to lead the activity. All leaders must be approved by the Associate Headteacher. **Nothing will be done in terms of booking or advertising the visit to students before the appropriate approval has been given and the activity is in the College calendar.**

The Leader will book an appointment with the Associate Headteacher's Clerical Assistant. Leaders will need to have full details of what they are proposing so that the relevant paperwork can be completed. At this meeting assistance will be given with completion of the paperwork, production of a letter and transport arrangements.

4. Payment procedures must be agreed with the Finance Assistant via the Associate Headteacher's Clerical Assistant prior to the advertising of the activity to students.
5. After the activity has been agreed, staff can make preliminary bookings.
6. The Clerical Assistant will produce an event specific blue consent form.
7. The forms needed for running an off site activity are of legal importance. Staff are only insured if these are in place. The relevant forms will be issued by the Clerical Assistant and are listed in the OSA Handbook. Failure to complete the necessary forms will invalidate insurance cover. To protect staff, the forms are kept by the college for the legally recommended retention period of seven years after the students involved have left college.
8. A letter and consent form will be issued to targeted students. (Note that if an activity is oversubscribed places are allocated on a random basis).
9. The blue consent form is completed by those with parental responsibility and must be returned to the college reception office for all participants at least a week prior to the activity taking place.
10. The Leader will:
  - provide a final and complete list of the students taking part in the activity and confirm that a list of students will be available on the Today notice-board before the activity takes place
  - the leader will check that all the consent forms have been signed and completed correctly by the date agreed.

- obtain reports containing:
    - confirmation that a signed consent form has been received by the College
    - medical information and GP details
    - details of any special needs
    - a telephone number for parents and carers
  - the leader will take a copy of each consent form, (EV8) with them, when they go on an activity.
  - discuss with the Associate Headteacher any behaviour issues of students who are on Red Report
  - as part of the process of risk analysis, the leader will obtain an event analysis report for the students taking part in the trip to give due consideration to the mix of students, based on their behaviour record in college.
11. A copy of the ORA OSA approval form will be returned to the leader.
  12. Any further correspondence e.g. itineraries, instructions, amendments, must be copied and given to the Associate Head's Clerical Assistant prior to the activity taking place. The Associate Head's Clerical Assistant will receive written confirmation of all bookings.
  13. The college reception office will collect any voluntary contributions, usually via ParentPay, from students and collect the consent form EV8. **NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ACTIVITY WITHOUT HAVING SUBMITTED A COMPLETED FORM EV8.** In some cases, usually when the booking is made a long time in advance, EV8s are not collected until just before the trip. However, in all cases EV8 forms must be in the office at least a week prior to the activity taking place. Students missing this deadline will not be allowed to participate except in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Associate Headteacher.
  14. Before departing on an activity all paperwork should be in the possession of the appropriate person(s).
  15. In case of emergency the critical incident plan will be adhered to.
  16. The leader will contact the Associate Headteacher after the activity to confirm that it has ended successfully.

If there is any doubt as to procedure, then staff should contact the Associate Headteacher or one of his assistants for further advice. Stored paperwork from previous activities including examples of risk assessments and reviews of activities are available from the Associate Headteacher's Clerical Assistant.

### **Parental Consent**

**Those with parental responsibility** have a right to refuse to allow participation in off site activities and staff have to make alternative arrangements to ensure that National Curriculum or external examination work is made available in an alternative way.

Other information that is required to be given in writing to parents/carers is listed in the section "PARENTAL INFORMATION & CHARGING" below.

A nominated member of the staffing on an activity will be made responsible for communication with college during that activity. This person may be the leader but is likely to be someone else. They will keep the college informed of any incidents that happen during the activity, such as any changes to the party list or the itinerary, lost paperwork or minor injuries to any of the party. A report of the activity needs to be written on Form EVR after it has taken place. If there are any incidents these need to form part of this report. The Associate Head and the Associate Head's Clerical Assistant will add any additional comments before discussion with the College Journeys Working Group.

## College Journeys Working Group

This group is run by the Associate Headteacher and includes staff who regularly run ORA OSAs as well as staff involved in the administration of OSAs. The purpose of the CJWG is to review recent OSAs using feedback from trip leaders. It also reviews the OSA policies on an annual basis.

### Registration

A register will be taken before the OSA departs. The Associate Headteacher's Office or the Attendance Administrator will then be informed of any students who are absent.

### Planning time

ORA activities take considerably longer to organise than ordinary OSAs, in most cases up to 1 year.

### Levels of Risk Assessment

Teachers and other staff in schools have a common law duty to act as any prudent parent would when in charge of students. Risk Assessments are carried out to answer the questions: "What could go wrong?" and "What are the staff going to do about it?" A risk assessment must take a common sense and proportionate approach and should follow these guidelines:

1. An on-going risk assessment must be carried out by the Leader as a part of every activity. It is not possible to have this written down in advance to cover every eventuality.
2. Formal written risk assessments are required for all ORA activities.
  - a. Any risks associated with the activity must be planned for (e.g. reminding students to stay away from the platform at a train station or of the traffic at a motorway service station).
  - b. Standards of discipline during an offsite activity must be effective, absolute and continuous. Any student who could be said to be 'a danger to themselves or others', may be banned from future OSAs for a set period. Any student on 'Red Report' is considered to have shown that they cannot be trusted to behave correctly whilst on college premises and may be banned from taking part on the basis that they are perceived to be 'a danger to themselves or others.' Any decision to ban a student can only be made by the Headteacher or the Associate Headteacher. In all cases where a student is banned, the curricular aims of the activity must be met in other ways.

Only in exceptional circumstances should a refund be requested in writing and submitted to the EVC for consideration. Requests should be submitted by the trip leader and should detail reasons for the request. Each request will be considered on an individual basis by the EVC and Finance Manager and will take into account all circumstances including payments already made by the College, whether places have been filled, and the financial viability of the trip. Only refunds authorised by the EVC will be processed by the Finance Department.

All risks associated with the activity must be planned for.

### Insurance

There are a number of different types of insurance involved and staff need to check that they have the insurance appropriate to their needs:

**Liability insurance** – Zurich Municipal will maintain third party insurance. It will cover employees and volunteers for most, but not all, eventualities. *Staff could be held separately liable, particularly if they have failed to*

*follow appropriate guidelines and advice.* For this reason it is advisable to have personal liability cover. For teachers this is usually provided through their professional associations but check carefully.

**Motor vehicle insurance** - staff have to make specific mention on their car insurance if they wish to use a private vehicle for work purposes (such as carrying students during off-site activities). Most staff will not be insured to carry students unless they specify this to their insurance company. (It often states something to the effect of "for business use" in the policy if they are covered). The addition of this to a policy is usually free. Approval is also needed, in advance, from the Headteacher/Associate Headteacher and staff are required to complete a form to request permission to use private car to transport students.

Insurance will usually be cancelled if the car is overloaded or if regulations are not adhered to, (for example ensuring the use of seat belts).

On no account will staff give unauthorised lifts to students. A member of staff must **never** place themselves in danger by arranging to take an individual student in their car. When using staff cars there must always be more than one student involved and staff must have the prior approval of the Headteacher.

It is important to note that there are separate rules governing the use of college minibuses and staff need to consult the Director of Business before using a minibus for transporting students.

Using parental lifts on approved activities is not thought to be subject to the same regulations but they should only give lifts when there is more than 1 student.

Off-site activity insurance - There is an automatic insurance scheme for most activities authorised by the college and where the correct procedures, including all forms completed by the deadlines, and training have been followed.

A summary of the significant features, benefits and limitations of the cover by Zurich Municipal's School Journey policy is available from the Associate Headteacher.

EHIC cards are required for all trips within the EU.

### **Qualifications of Staff**

The term staff includes all those adults who might be working with the party. Nobody can be in charge of an activity unless they are a Rooks Heath employee and have undertaken the approved training. Staff accompanying an ORA activity must have had at least the basic approved OSA training. The Associate Headteacher holds a record of the level of OSA/ORa training for each member of staff.

Staff who are involved in adventurous activities should note that it is important to be clear that the correct expertise is available in sufficient quantity and at the right time. There are many such activities but some common ones include water sports (see DfES guidelines on Water Margins) and the various modes of travel on land including hill walking. The party leader needs to ensure that the persons who teach and lead these activities are suitably qualified and will ensure the completion of the Form EV4. A good guide to suitability can be obtained from the relevant governing body for the activity concerned e.g. the British Canoe Union. Someone who purports to know what they are doing will know about these requirements. There is a need to be careful to go beyond phrases such as "fully qualified" and to check that people are qualified for the particular aspect of the activity, at the level and in the place that it is being conducted. The licensing scheme for outdoor centres will help although it will only cover some outdoor activities and some perfectly acceptable activities will not be certified.

### **First Aider**

All activities will have a member of staff responsible for first aid procedures whose training is *suitable for the environment of the activity* in question.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Immediately before the activity, and in many cases on the activity, emergency procedures must be clearly explained to all in the party.

When there are circumstances beyond their control, staff are expected to use their prior knowledge, experience and training to deal with unexpected events. It is part of the role of the leader of the activity to ensure that all members of the activity know what to do in such an emergency. The college and will provide back up support.

**Having a Plan B** in place allows a change to the planned programme when something has prevented the original from happening. For this reason it is important that staff never promise that a particular activity will take place. The Plan B will try to allow for things like changes in weather conditions, traffic delays, unexpected closures and so forth. Plan B activities will usually have been risk assessed as possible alternatives.

## Supervision

As a college we recognise the difficulties of off site activities and will only allow an activity to take place if the Headteacher and Associate Headteacher are confident that the leader and staff are suitable for the proposed activity.

The level of staffing must be sufficient for there to be adequate supervision at all times. This will be determined by: (a) the type, level and duration of the activity (b) the nature and requirements of the group (c) the experience and competence of the staff (d) the venue, time of year and prevailing or predicted conditions (e) the likelihood and consequences of any reasonably foreseeable changes. The leader needs to be able to show that the ratio is sufficient to ensure a safe and educational activity.

To this end:

- Any member of the Rooks Heath staff can be the leader.
- A fluent speaker of the host country is always required to be one of the staff on the activity.
- On residential activities where there are mixed sex parties, there must be at least one adult of each sex. On all other mixed sex trips it is highly desirable that there should be at least one adult of each sex but consideration will be given for alternative provision to cater for the needs of all students. The *Event Specific Risk Assessment* must take account of eventualities that might occur where there are no staff members of the same sex as students.
- For all activities there must be enough staff (i.e. adults over 19) to enable the activities to take place safely.
- All staff, including voluntary staff, may have to be police checked. (This can take 2 months).
- Supervision can be 'remote' (i.e. not direct e.g. allowed to explore a museum) when those with parental responsibility have been informed in advance. A leader can authorise students to roam freely, within a location, while they remain at a pre-determined position but parents/carers must be advised in advance.
- Reasonable adaptations to the activity will be made to enable students with SEN to participate in activities. However, if this means that the activity has to be changed considerably, then staff will have no alternative but to omit the student with SEN from the activity.
- Adults who are participating in an offsite activity must have no responsibility for their own children whilst they are responsible for the safety of students as they could be placed in a compromising situation, (conflict of interests). This will usually mean that their children do not participate in an activity.
- The College's discipline policy is in force during an off-site activity.

- Staff on residential activities must build in non-contact time to allow “downtime”. This can be done on a rota basis but a sufficient number of staff to cope with emergencies must be on duty at all times and in a location known to all students. Staff “off duty” time will be referred to in a letter to the persons with parental responsibility. Staff on duty must always be deemed to be ‘fit to drive’.

### **Parental Information**

The list below gives the minimum information that will be given in writing to those with parental responsibility:

- Dates
- Times of departure and return
- Method(s) of travel, including name of travel company, train stations and lines you intend to use
- Destination with full address and telephone number
- Emergency contact arrangements at home, and away, if not all students are at one centre
- Staff (for ORA activities)
- Names of leader and accompanying teachers
- Names and status of other accompanying adults who will exercise any responsibility
- Name of teacher in charge of first aid
- Extent and nature of supervision, including staff non-contact time
- Aim of visit and activities planned - adventurous ones being clearly specified
- Cost: what it covers and what it does not cover
- Methods of payment and cancellation arrangements
- Advice on pocket money
- Insurance effected on the students in respect of baggage, accident and medical cover - a copy of the insurance schedule should be at least available for inspection by parents
- Clothing and equipment list; a list of prohibited items
- Code of conduct: details relating to the standard of behaviour expected from the students during the visit, including rules on smoking, illegal substances and alcoholic drinks
- Parents should complete a permission/medical consent form (Form EV8) and give their written permission for emergency medical treatment

### **Charging**

The Associate Headteacher’s Clerical Assistant will be responsible for the production of letters to those with parental responsibility. After the introductory section of the letter indicating the venue, nature, value, date and time of the activity, staff will usually have to ask for voluntary contributions. Students who are in Y11 or below cannot be forced to pay and if the activity is to go ahead then staff will have to find the finance for anyone who cannot afford to or refuses to pay. Sixth Form students are no longer in compulsory education and will be charged accordingly. Phrases below are thought to be legal can be found in the OSA Handbook.

Carers of Children in Public Care can claim help from the relevant Health and Social Care department.

The leader is responsible for the financial administration of an activity.



The Associate Headteacher's Clerical Assistant will produce the letters necessary for the activity in consultation with the leader. These have to be approved by the Associate Headteacher before they are issued to students.

### **Visits Abroad**

For visits abroad particular account needs to be taken of:

- o Culture: food and drink, local customs, religion, expected behaviour/dress, gender issues, sanitary arrangements, political stability and local financial information.
- o Accommodation: checked for suitability, security, safety precautions and emergency evacuation.
- o Transport systems have been assessed as safe for use.
- o Emergency support.

Overseas expeditions, which take place in remote areas, must be planned, in consultation with the Associate Headteacher, at least 18-24 months before the venture. The risks involved in taking students to developing countries are far greater and the leader will therefore be expected to have a lot of experience of organising and leading OSAs. All visits abroad need to have specific approval at an early stage and before making bookings or offering the activity to students. Further guidance is available in the OSA Handbook.

### **Water**

Water margin activities are those that might take place near water, such as walking along a river bank or seashore where students will not actually be entering the water. Except for swimming in a public pool, it does not include other water-based activities such as swimming, canoeing etc or anything that involves entering the water. All staff accompanying the activity will be given a copy of 'Group Safety at Water Margins'.

All other forms of water-based activity are regarded as adventurous. There are specific rules for these activities and staff wishing to run such an activity should seek advice from the Associate Headteacher.

### **Snow Sports**

Staff organising a snow sport activity, (but not instructing, leading or supervising on snow), need to have, as a minimum qualification, the Ski Course Organiser Award, (SCO) and must have previously accompanied at least one educational snow sports activity.

Young people may only ski or snow board when under the direction of an appropriately qualified and competent person.

A member of staff intending to lead skiing or snowboarding i.e. not using a ski instructor must:

- be qualified
- have been specifically approved for this purpose by the Associate Head Teacher
- operate at all times within the remit of their qualifications and competence

### **Other Adventurous Activities**

All adventurous activities need to have approval by the Associate Headteacher at an early stage and before making bookings or offering the activity to students. Adventurous activities include:

- o Air activities
- o Camping
- o Hill walking and mountaineering

- o Horse riding
- o Motor sports
- o Open country above 300m or more than 1km from vehicular access need
- o Rock climbing
- o Rope courses
- o Shooting, archery etc.
- o Snow activities
- o Underground activities
- o Most water activities

The following require the leader to be assessed by the Associate Headteacher as particularly competent:

- o Field studies
- o Farm visits
- o Local traffic survey
- o Museum, library etc.
- o PE and sports fixtures
- o Swimming in UK public pools
- o Theme parks
- o Walking in parks or non-remote areas
- o Water margin activities

Only staff who have had previous experience and have been assessed as competent by the Associate Headteacher will be allowed to lead such activities.

### **Emergency Events and Post Activity Review**

In the case of an emergency occurring on an activity it is important that staff follow recognised procedures as outlined in the Critical Incident Policy, Critical Incident Handbook and OSA Handbook. A set of cards summarises most of this information.

### **Post Activity Review**

After an activity has taken place, it is necessary for a review of the activity to be completed by the leader that will cover:

- o Whether or not the activity was deemed to be successful and why.
- o Any problems relating to, for example, transport, accommodation, location of the activity, documentation, students and anything else the party leader deems appropriate.
- o Any student who has been identified as behaving in a way deemed to be dangerous to themselves or others. (The Associate Headteacher is likely to ban such students from forthcoming off site activities).

The Associate Headteacher and Clerical Assistant will also add their suggestions for improvement based on their experiences of the activity. These reviews will be used by the CJWG to determine future policy and practice. In the case of activities for which there was a critical incident, the CJWG will call an extraordinary meeting to discuss the activity and what can be learned.

### **Publicity**

After an activity has taken place, staff are asked to complete form OSA17 which is a template for news articles. This will be used on the college website and in the newsletter. Ideally staff will also add photographs that will not only publicise their department but also the college and provide a lasting memory for the participants.

**A legal note**

For a member of staff to be taken to a civil court for negligence over something that happened on an educational visit, it needs to be shown that “there has been a breach in the duty of care that was reasonably foreseeable and damage must have resulted”. Staff will be judged as to whether they acted as a trained professional should act. Staff finding themselves in this position are advised to consult their professional association as a matter of urgency.