



## Birchwood High School Offsite Visits Policy

### Objectives

Birchwood High School places a high value on fieldwork, excursions, visits and organised holidays. Such trips are of enormous benefit. It is a central part of the ethos of the school to provide the opportunity for educational visits and school excursions. At Birchwood we recognise the benefits of learning outside the classroom - "Every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances". (DCSF LOTC Manifesto 2006)

We see trips as an integral part of the educational experience and we believe that all students should be offered a range of visits during their time at school. However, it is equally important that lessons are not excessively disrupted for students. For this reason, trips, particularly those proposed at short notice, will be scrutinised carefully for their overall impact.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The successful running of trips and visits at Birchwood is based upon the sound knowledge of the identified parties legally responsible for our students when they are off site:

- The Governing Body
- The Principal
- The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)
- The Trip Leader
- Members of staff accompanying a trip

### Principles guiding the coordinating of Trips and Visits from Birchwood High School

#### Section A – Criteria for running trips and visits

1. In order to take place during directed time, all trips must offer essential or highly desirable support to the curriculum, for example Language trips to a French, German or Spanish speaking country, field trips or theatre visits. However, an exception may be made at the discretion of the Principal. In the initial proposal for any visit, the Trip Leader must demonstrate how the students remaining in school will benefit from an associated learning experience.
2. **Equal Opportunities** Every effort will be made to ensure that school journeys, visits and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion.
3. **Pupils with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities, Special Educational and Medical Needs** Wherever feasible, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities must be included, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone in the group. In light of the provisions of the **Disability Discrimination Act** the Trip Organiser will need to identify if any student in the target group for the trip will need special arrangements **before** the trip is advertised to parents or students. This will necessitate discussions with the SENCO.
4. A list of proposed trips will be published on the school website at the start of each academic year in order to help parents with their financial planning.
5. If a trip is a requirement of a Key Stage 4 or 5 course, it is essential that parents are informed of this before a student opts for that particular course.
6. Holiday trips will only be sanctioned if taken during the school holidays. An exception may be made at the discretion of the Principal.

## Section B – Student entitlement and behaviour

1. All students on school trips and visits, whether day or residential, are bound by the same set of rules that they would have to follow at school. The parents or guardians of any student who behaves in an unacceptable way may be contacted and may even be asked to collect their child.
2. A record will be maintained of the names of students who misbehave on trips or cause serious concerns. The parents of the student concerned must be informed at this stage. When planning any trip the Trip Organiser should look at this information and discuss it with the relevant HOY and/or SENCO. A decision should then be made as to whether or not the Trip Organiser is prepared to take the student on the trip. Any negative decision must be discussed with the parents of the student at the earliest opportunity.
3. The school operates a no alcohol policy on **all** school visits and trips across the three Key Stages.
4. Where practicable students should be involved with the development of risk management strategies, both before and during the trip or visit.

## Section C – Staff responsibility

1. The Trip Leader will carry out a risk assessment on any student who is considered a potential risk. Parents will be informed by the Trip Leader at the beginning of, and throughout this process.
2. All members of staff on a school-led visit act as employees of Birchwood High School, whether the visit takes place within or outside normal hours.
3. All staff accompanying a trip should be reminded that while in loco parentis they have a **greater** duty of care than the parents of the students on the trip.
4. All visits must be planned according to this policy and its appendices. This includes the completion of documentation on Evolve and the adherence to the time frames in the appendices.
5. Staff should constantly reassess the risk assessment and inform the Trip Leader if they are concerned. The Trip Leader should consider stopping the visit or activity if they think the risk to the health and safety of the students in their charge is unacceptable.
6. The ratio of staff to students should be discussed with the EVC and must take into account the age and ability of the students, as well as any special considerations such as special needs or disability.
7. There will always be a teacher accompanying each trip, but, if a high adult:pupil ratio is required, it may not be feasible to use school staff alone. Members of the public with connections to the school may be used as a supplement to the staff, provided that they have an enhanced and relevant DBS check which must be seen by the trips coordinator and by the HR Manager. However, Year 13 trips to London are permitted without a teacher as long as the visit is carefully planned with the students with regard to the risk assessment and parental consent has been obtained.
8. A qualified teacher must be in charge of the party at all times. \*see point 7 for exception
9. Staff are not permitted to take their own children on any school trip or visit (unless there are exceptional circumstances. In such a case the children should be of a similar age to the students).
10. Staff are not permitted to drink alcohol while in charge of students. If staff require to smoke they should do so discreetly and away from any students also ensuring that no students are left unsupervised at any point.
11. All adults accompanying a school-led visit are expected to act in a professional manner at all times, as outlined in the Code of Conduct.
12. The lead teacher should ensure that all documentation, including student personal information is kept securely until the trip is complete. All sensitive information should then be disposed of appropriately and in a secure manner. As outlined in the Data Protection and GDPR policy
13. In case of emergency: the lead teacher should ensure that they have identified in advance of the trip the availability of a variety of means of communication with the school contact (email, personal mobile phone, hotel landline) should a crisis situation arise.
14. In case of emergency: the lead teacher should ensure that they have a way of accessing additional cash, should a crisis situation arise. This on rare occasions may have to be from their own personal account. However, contact with the SLT trip link should be able to mitigate this issue. Any monies spent on behalf of the school will be reimbursed promptly. It is expected that receipts will be provided for all expenses incurred.
15. Whilst on a school trip/visit, Staff may require the use of their own personal mobile phone for use on the trip. This could be for emergency use or for updating the school social media feed. If this is the case then the School authorise this, so long as any photos are not stored on the personal device for longer than required, all safeguards are in place with regards sharing of information and the Trips coordinator is informed that the Personal phone may be used. Please refer to the BYOD policy\* and Code of Conduct for further information

## **Section D - The process of planning an educational visit**

**(Step by step guides for planning day and residential trips within the UK and abroad can be found in the appendices of this policy and on the shared area in the Trips Folder)**

1. All proposals for trips must be submitted to SLT by the end of the Spring Term for the following academic year.
2. It is understood that opportunities arise during the academic year and they will be considered by SLT once the Senior Administration Manager has been consulted about the suitability of dates.
3. Permission of all affected HOFs and HOYs must be obtained and forwarded to the trips coordinator.
4. Once a trip has been sanctioned any change to the initial proposal must be agreed before it is implemented, eg offering the trip to another year group.
5. It is absolutely essential that **written parental consent** is obtained for every trip and visit (the exception to this is PE fixtures for which there is a generic consent form and parents can give verbal consent on the day of a fixture).
6. Should a trip be oversubscribed, lots must be drawn to decide which students may go on the trip.
7. Parents must be kept informed of all developments once the trip has been offered to students. This includes informing parents whether or not their child has been successful in obtaining a place on the trip.
8. The Trip Organiser will propose which staff are to accompany the trip to the EVC. Approval of their HOFs must be obtained at this point and the EVC and Teacher Administration Manager may make recommendations. Visits during term time should be staffed with a mixture of teaching and support staff where appropriate.
9. School staff must be given the opportunity to take up the subsidised places on all trips before the Trip Organisers invite partners or friends.

## **Section E – Finance**

1. Trips should be charged in line with the Birchwood Charging and Remissions Policy which follows government legislation guidelines.
2. Additional discretionary funding may be available to support hardship (details available via the school). Students who are in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) will have curriculum linked day trips paid. For residential visits, parents should contact the trip organiser for guidance on financial support.
3. The Trip Organiser should aim to keep costs below the cap of £1,000 for intercontinental visits. An exception may be made at the discretion of the Principal
4. The Trip Organiser should remain in regular contact with the Finance office.
5. The initial non-refundable deposit from parents should be approximately 25% of the total trip cost.
6. Supply costs – while costing the trip the Trip Organiser must discuss the cost of supply with the Senior Administration Manager.

## **Section F – Training**

1. Any member of staff new to Birchwood must run their first trip with an experienced 'trip buddy'.
2. All staff who run or might run trips must have received Evolve training in the last 3 years, either in-house or from County.
3. Ski trips must be run by a member of staff who possesses the Ski Course Organisers Certificate. (SCO1) and must have accompanied an experienced leader previously.
4. The EVC and the Principal will withhold the right of a member of staff to lead a group if they are not deemed experienced or competent to carry out the role of 'Trip Leader'

This document has been drawn up in accordance with the Hertfordshire Offsite Visits policy and should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning Policy, the Code of Conduct, the Equal Opportunities Policy, the Charging and Remissions Policy and the Data Protection and GDPR Policy.