



# St. Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School

*"I serve Jesus with my body, heart, mind and soul."*

*Serviam* means 'I serve'. Jesus Christ has taught us that it is more blessed to serve than to be served. At St Ethelbert's school, following our Catholic faith, we serve the whole person – mind, heart, body and soul.

Body – because we care for our wellbeing, our parish neighbourhood and our environment.

Heart – because we teach love and respect for all.

Mind – because we believe in excellent education.

Soul – because we learn to pray and become closer to God as his children.

## MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP OF OFF-SITE WORK

### SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDELINES REGARDING LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

**(1) Context**

The leader owes a duty of care not to act negligently in exercising supervisory responsibility for the pupils or students in his or her charge. The standard of care that would usually be expected by a Court considering a claim for negligence would be that which would be exercised by a prudent parent in the circumstances.

Because teachers and activity leaders are trained professional people, Courts have tended to expect them to exercise a higher standard of care than that which might be expected from the ordinary parent.

Headteachers are responsible for making appropriate arrangements to ensure this standard of care - whether or not they are accompanying the party.

**(2) Status of the booklet "Management and Leadership of Off-site Work" (issued February 1994).**

If the advice contained in the booklet is followed, Headteachers can be reasonably confident that their legal and other duties will have been covered. It is, however, still essential for them to be satisfied that the overriding duty of care, summarised in Section (1) above, will be met adequately. This may mean that some of the supervision ratios indicated in the guidelines need to be strengthened. For example, the ratios of teacher: pupil of 1:20 (paragraph 6.1.3) and adult: pupil of 1:20 (para. 6.2) will often need to be improved.

In some cases it is entirely acceptable for the ratio of one teacher to twenty pupils (para. 6.1.3) to be widened - but in those circumstances it is essential that the risks involved are properly assessed and appropriate supervisory arrangements made which the Headteacher is satisfied are suitable in relation to the particular circumstances.

**(3) How to determine the appropriate supervisory arrangements.**

**(a) Hazards**

- Terrain/stairs/drops/slippery surfaces/rough ground

- Traffic
- How easily can children become lost?
- Are the pupils likely to deliberately separate themselves from the rest of the party?
- Will there be dangerous animals, including farm animals which could present a hazard (particularly to small children)?
- Is it likely that children will become over-excited or even frightened?
- Weather - Cold, wet weather will have a bearing even on a local visit.
- Will you be using a 'self drive' vehicle? If so, are the drivers sufficiently experienced in relation to the proposed visit? Will they be expected to supervise during the day as well as driving between the school and the venue? (See Minibus Safety Code of Good Practice. KCC Sept 1998 at Page 11.49 in the KCC Framework for Health & Safety).
- Medical condition of pupils - Do any members of the party have particular needs (including the possibility of emergency treatment for particular allergies or for epilepsy)? Is it possible that a large proportion of the party might be affected by a relatively minor medical condition (for example, travel sickness or hay fever)? (See DfEE document "Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs", (1996) and the KCC E&L document "Supporting pupils with medical needs: Supplementary guidance", June 1998.
- Age of children.
- Expected behaviour - Some classes are more difficult to control than others - so it may not be appropriate to simply repeat the arrangements for a previous occasion.

**(b) Risks**

Make supervisory arrangements which take account of the perceived hazards and reduce the risks to a reasonable level. (The Headteacher must be confident that the pupils will be adequately safeguarded at all times and, should an accident occur, must be able to state clearly what hazards had been taken into account and what management action had been taken in order to overcome them).

- The leader (and probably other escorts should be familiar with the venue - having made a special pre-visit if necessary).
- The adults must know the children sufficiently well and the children should recognise the escorting adults as people from whom they can expect to receive instructions and help.
- Communication must be adequate both between groups within the same party and with the school/base.
- Consider the availability of back-up (for example a party working close to the school and with good telephone links would be able to make an arrangement for a member of staff from the school to join the party should a difficulty arise, such as an injury to a pupil or an escort. Such arrangements would clearly be inappropriate if the party was travelling some distance eg. to London or France).

- Make sure everybody knows who does what by briefing the escorts in advance and possibly producing brief notes for the leader and the helpers.

School staff are naturally operating as employees (although some classroom assistants may help in an unpaid capacity) but parent helpers in particular need to know what is expected of them. To what extent should they supervise and to what degree are they helpers? (for example, if children have to cross the road, they must obey supervisors). The role is different if adults are helping with swimming or in assisting children with worksheets. Do you need Police checks, or will the escorts always be with school staff? Is it appropriate to have slightly larger groups, each with two or more adults rather than small groups with only one adult?

**(c) Staffing**

- The leader must always be a teacher. He or she must be available to all members of the party quickly. If the party is to split into groups, it is often appropriate for the party leader not to be a group leader also. The leader needs to have clear arrangements so that group leaders can contact him or her at any time.
- Consider the appropriate number of adults to pupils, bearing in mind that there must be adequate cover even if one of the escorts (including the leader) is incapacitated themselves or has to stay with a child who is sick or injured. Thus there should normally be a least two responsible adults including one teacher. Arrangements for speedy (eg 30 minutes) backup from school could also be considered.
- If the party is going abroad (even on a day trip) are there sufficient escorts who have an adequate command of the language?
- In some cases, it may be necessary to engage a supply teacher either as one of the escorts or in order to release a permanent member of staff to accompany the party. There is no reason why this cost should not be taken into account when inviting voluntary contributions from parents.
- Provided that the advice contained in these guidelines and, where appropriate, in the book is followed, volunteer escorts as well as teachers/classroom assistants will be covered by the County Council's insurance arrangements.

[a] as far as their Public Liability is concerned

[b] as regards any injury that they may suffer themselves.

(It is not, of course, possible to insure any individual against negligent acts which they have knowingly undertaken in contravention of specific advice).

Student teachers can be included as escorts (even if they are under 21 years of age).

At least one member of the party should have a knowledge of First Aid (but not necessarily the Four-day Certificate).

**(4) Finally**

It is essential to obtain the approval of the School Governors before undertaking any residential journey and it is desirable to let at least the Chairman of Governors know of other activities away from the school premises.

It is recognised that children benefit greatly from experiences away from the school premises, but it is essential that the Headteacher is fully satisfied that appropriate arrangements have been made for their safety. A de-briefing after the visit could well be helpful.

**Headteacher  
January 2018**

**Review October 2017**