



Offsite Activities Policy

Philosophy

At Furze Platt Senior School we are strongly committed to the value of offsite activities and the contribution they make, not only to students' knowledge and understanding of curriculum subjects, but also their personal development.

A vibrant programme of offsite activities also enables us to meet the aspirations in our school vision statement. In particular it supports our commitment to help students to 'enjoy and value their learning' and to 'have broad horizons'.

Finally, providing a wider range of offsite activities makes an important contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Guiding principles

- All curriculum areas will be encouraged and supported to provide extended curriculum activities, including off site activities, to enhance and enrich students' experience of their subject
- There will be planned opportunities in our curriculum which ensure entire cohorts/year groups have equal access to offsite activities (e.g. through Flexible Learning Days)
- When planning the residential trip programme, the school will ensure a balance between modestly priced opportunities and those which inevitably cost more (see *Appendix A*)
- The school is committed to supporting access to those students who suffer economic disadvantage and will provide financial support to students in receipt of Pupil Premium.
- All teachers leading or participating in trips will receive appropriate training

Processes

- All of our processes and procedures conform to the guidelines in the current **RBWM Offsite and Hazardous Activities Policy and Procedures**.
- We have a designated Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) who advises staff, ensures appropriate training and monitors that processes are followed
- All requests to lead offsite activities are submitted to the senior leadership team for prior approval
- The headteacher is responsible for granting permission for both day and residential trips as well as approving leadership and staffing of these trips.
- All paperwork for residential trips, including risk assessments, is reviewed and approved by the EVC and the Local Authority Off Site Activities Advisor's team, whose services the school purchases.

Appendix A

Planning Residential Trips

At Furze Platt Senior School we recognise that residential trips offer a wide range of benefits to students educationally and socially. They broaden horizons, promote engagement through strengthened relationships with adults in a different setting and social and cultural understanding. Our aspiration is for every student to have at least one residential experience whilst at the school.

To ensure we support maximum participation in high quality, well organised trips we will ensure the following:

1. That a calendar of residential trips is published on an **annual** basis so all parent are aware of the opportunities available and can plan their finances;
2. Where possible and appropriate, departments offering international trips which, by their very nature, are costly, should also run a programme of less costly visits with the UK;
3. Parents will have at least 18 months' notice of a more costly international trip (£500 or more) so that they have adequate time to plan their payments. Parents will be offered the opportunity to pay in instalments for all international trips/ or all trips charging more than £100.

Timing of residential trips

1. Trips which are an essential part of the curriculum can take place in school time. Colleagues are encouraged to plan smart to minimise teaching time lost in other subjects.
2. Extended curriculum/enrichment trips should take place in school holiday time. If it is necessary to request some school time to enable the trip to take place the reasons for this must be explained clearly to SLT. Colleagues will be informed within 7 days whether the trip can proceed.

Calendar for approving trips

1. Applications 'in principle' need to be made to SLT by December in the academic year preceding the trip (e.g. a trip for Feb 2015 is applied for by Dec 2013). Applications in principle for 'particularly costly' trips should be made **approximately 21 months** before the trip – so that parents can be informed 18 months in advance.
2. All decisions for the following academic year will be made by the end of January. Decisions regarding 'particularly costly' trips will have been made before this.
3. A calendar of trips for the next academic year will be published to parents in the last week in January.

Ensuring value for money

1. Staff must ensure that they have sought prices from at least two providers so that they can evidence value for money.
2. Colleagues should actively explore opportunities through organisations such as the British Council and other organisations promoting educational travel opportunities.
3. Trip organisers should do everything that can reasonably be done to keep costs down. For example, many modest hotels or hostels provided can fulfil the requirements of location, safety, security and reasonable levels of comfort. Such accommodation should be investigated first.
4. The price advertised to students and parents must be an all-inclusive price, including, for example, all transport, all accommodation, all meals, and all excursions or entry fees. Students should only be expected to take a little extra 'pocket money' to spend on gifts or souvenirs.
5. Staff should make a recommendation to parents about an appropriate amount of spending money that pupils should take.

Staff

1. Participating in a school trip is a valuable professional development experience and it should be a reasonable expectation that a wide range of staff are provided with the opportunity.
2. Trip leaders should suggest **core** staff who are essential for a trip and the total number of staff required.
3. The remaining staff places should be advertised to all staff.
4. SLT will ensure that over time, as wide a range of staff as possible are offered a residential trip experience.

Students

1. Trip Leaders should make it clear which students (e.g. year group/studying the subject) are eligible for the trip.
2. Staff should be mindful of equal opportunities and where a student with SEN wishes to go on a trip make arrangements for additional adult support (ideally a TA). The cost of this should be discussed with SLT.
3. If a trip is compulsory for a course then funding should be sought for Pupil Premium students.
4. Where students would benefit from more than one trip (e.g. to see Drama performances) an agreed funded limit will be decided.
5. Occasionally there may be compelling educational or social reasons why a student merits financial assistance to access a non compulsory trip. In such cases this should be discussed with the headteacher who may then authorise a bid for funding.