



BALANCE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SURATTHANI  
โรงเรียนนานาชาติ บาลานซ์ สุราษฎร์ธานี

# School Trips Excursions

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## Rationale: Why Have School Trips & Excursions?

Educational visits, both nationally and overseas, enable students to benefit from learning experiences not available in the classroom; visits help to develop a pupil's investigative skills and also encourage greater independence. Such opportunities also provide pupils with knowledge and awareness of the world around them and encourage personal and social development.

For any visit the primary consideration is the safety of the students and staff. For this reason, careful planning and organisation are essential. This policy sets out the requirements that organising staff need to follow in order to ensure that the highest possible duty of care is delivered to all those on the trip. This ensures that students and staff experience the best possible benefits from their visits whilst minimising risks to health, safety and welfare. Safety is ensured by appropriate planning, the use of competent staff and providers, adequate supervision and a clear understanding of what degree of freedom is to be given to students.

### 1. Risk Assessment

The Trip Leader must carry out a full generic risk assessment for all activities taking place. Approval of any visit is conditional on completion of satisfactory risk assessment. Guidance will be given by the Campus Leadership Team and School Activities Administrator.

1.1 Complete Trip proposal form (Appendix 1) an hand to the respective Heads of School and School Activities Administrator. In the case of overseas trips, a detailed written proposal should be attached which includes timings, approximate costing, accommodation, purpose of the trip and health and safety issues.

1.2 Following approval in principle, designated trip leader to complete risk assessment using set guidelines and ensure appropriate safety measures in place. (Appendix 2). This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them. The group leader and other supervisors should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action as necessary.

The group leader/trip organiser should take the following factors into consideration:

- The type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.
- The location, routes and modes of transport.
- The competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff.
- The ratios of teachers to pupils.
- The group members' fitness, competence and temperament and the suitability of the activity.
- The special educational or medical needs of pupils.
- The quality and suitability of available equipment.
- Seasonal conditions.
- Emergency procedures.
- How to cope when a pupil becomes unable or unwilling to continue.

The risk assessment process should include a preliminary visit.

1.3 The School Activities Administrator should submit the necessary applications to the relevant authorities of those students who are on trips to other states or overseas visits i.e., minimum 4 weeks for residential trip and 2 months for overseas trip (Appendix 3).

During the trip all members of staff should conduct a continuous dynamic risk assessment and not be lulled into a false sense of security that a paper risk assessment has been completed.

## **2. External Providers**

In the majority of cases, the trip will involve the use of external providers either as tour guides or providers of specialist services. The Trip Leader must be satisfied that the provider is suitably qualified and/or experienced to conduct that aspect of their trip. The EVC will work with the Trip Leader to check the background of any new provider. Providers must, where possible, provide proof of public liability insurance, specialised activity insurance and references.

## **3. Safeguarding**

The safety and well-being of students and staff involved in school visits is paramount. All visits will be organised in such a way as to minimise the risk to all participants. All safeguarding guidelines will be applied to the vetting of any adult who is involved with a trip. In addition all staff will be familiar with the school's Safeguarding Policy. These guidelines also apply for foreign exchanges where families of students from the school are hosting students from partner schools.

## **4. Staffing of Trips and Visits**

It is expected that the member of staff who is organising the trip has previous experience of running this type of visit. In the event that the organiser lacks experience then they must ensure that at least one member of their team is suitably experienced and must defer to their judgement concerning all trip-related matters.

The Trip Leader must ensure that their team are all competent and have suitable background checks. Competence and experience are not the same thing. Competence is judged by that person's ability to carry out the tasks that they will be responsible for.

### **Staffing Levels:**

- One teacher/adult for every 5 pupils in Early Years and KS1.
- One teacher/adult for every 10 pupils in Years 3 to 11.
- For overnight visits the ratio is 1 to 10 providing there are at least two staff.
- For single gender parties one of the staff must be of the same gender. For mixed parties a staff member of each gender must be included.

### **Supervision Responsibilities**

Teachers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. All teachers should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision.

- Regular roll calls of pupils should take place, particularly when moving from one area to another and before leaving any venue.
- The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the group.
- For the protection of both teachers and adults, all teachers should ensure that they are not alone with a pupil wherever possible.
- The suitability of potential supervisors should be assessed by the group leader and respective Head of School at an early stage of the planning process. Similar considerations should be made for adults who have no supervisory role but who wish to take part in the visit.
- All adult helpers, including teachers and parent/volunteer helpers, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. Supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision.

### **Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times**

- If the school is leading an adventure activity the instructor must be suitably competent to lead or instruct pupils in the activity.
- All supervisors should carry a list of all pupils and adults involved in the visit at all times.
- The teacher in charge remains responsible for pupils even when not in direct contact with them.

### **5. First Aid & Medical Facilities**

At least one member of the team must have emergency first aid training. This can be either school staff or external providers if the group are going to be accompanied at all times. No trip will be allowed to take place without sufficiently trained staff.

If any member of the trip has allergies that require an epi-pen, the Trip Leader must ensure that everyone knows where the epi-pens are located and that all staff are trained in its use. This can be done through the school nurse.

Every trip will be allocated a first aid kit. These are standard kits and if additional or different equipment is required due to the nature of the trip then the Trip Leader must liaise with the school nurse.

The trip should be planned sufficiently that the whereabouts of the nearest medical facilities are known at all times. The numbers of the emergency services and search & rescue services should be available at all times.

### **6. Preparing Pupils**

Pupils who are involved in a trip's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school trip.

Pupils should understand:

- The aims and objectives of the visit/activity, what the trip will entail and background information about the place to be visited.
- Pupils should clearly understand why safety precautions are in place, how to avoid specific dangers, what to do if approached by anyone from outside the group, rendezvous procedures and what to do if separated from the group.
- Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them, appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct and why rules must be followed.
- Pupils should be easily identifiable, e.g., wearing school uniform/PE kit. Pupils should not wear name badges. For day trips school uniform or PE kit should be worn unless specific arrangements have been made with the respective Heads of School.

### **6.1 Pupil Participation**

The teacher in charge should ensure that the pupils are capable of undertaking the proposed activity. Teachers are in charge of managing the risk of the activity at all times and should stop any activity they risk assess as too risky.

Students should not be coerced into activities of which they have a genuine fear. Students whose behaviour is such that the teacher in charge is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. In extreme cases the teacher in charge should consider whether such pupils should be sent home early, in extreme cases subject to the logistics of such a decision. Parents and pupils should be told in advance of the visit about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour.

### **6.2 Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Every effort should be made to include pupils with special educational needs. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios, and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- Is the pupil capable of taking part in and benefiting from the activity?
- Can the activity be adapted to enable the pupil to participate at a suitable level?
- Will additional/different resources be necessary?
- Will additional supervision be necessary?

The teacher in charge should discuss the visit with the parents of pupils with SEN to ensure that suitable arrangements have been put in place to ensure their safety.

### **6.3 Pupils with Medical Needs**

All teachers supervising visits should be aware of a pupil's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures. If the pupil's safety cannot be guaranteed, it may be appropriate to ask the parent to accompany a particular child.

Parents should be asked to supply along with the Parental Consent form: -

- Details of medical conditions.
- Emergency contact numbers.
- Written details of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times) and parental permission to administer.

- Parental permission if the pupil needs to administer their own medication or agreement for a teacher to administer.
- Information on any allergies/phobias.
- Information on any dietary requirements.

## 7. Emergency Procedures

For all residential visits all group members should carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation in case an individual becomes separated.

- Pupils should be aware of who is responsible in any instances where the group leader has delegated responsibility to another member of staff or instructor.
- If at any time there is a change in the planned schedule, new activities should be assessed and pupils provided with the appropriate information. The School Activities Administrator, respective Heads of School should immediately be informed.
- Students should have an evacuation drill at the accommodation site.

**Emergency contacts should also be left with the School Activities Administrator and respective school secretary.**

## 8. Transport

All transport should be organised through the school admin Department. The school only uses approved operators but staff should remain vigilant and should check the condition of the vehicle before the students board. Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules.

### Buses

All buses should have three-point seat belts fitted. If seat belts are missing or faulty the organiser should be informed and alternative transport sent. Ensuring that the driver is competent and alert, that the speed is restricted and that only quiet roads are used will reduce the risk.

### Cars

Private cars should never be used to transport students unless the insurance has been checked to ensure that it is covered for business use and that parents have given consent.

### Planes

The school will only ever use reputable airlines that have all been FAA approved.

### Boats

There is an increased risk whenever boats are used and the Trip Leader needs to ensure that additional measures are put in place to safeguard students. All boat operators should have their operators licence checked. Every boat must be visually inspected by competent staff to ensure its worthiness. Pilots and Drivers should be checked for competency. All members of the trip must wear Buoyancy Aids unless the boat is a large vessel. A large vessel is defined as one where you can freely walk around.

## 9. Halal Food

In relevant schools, staff must ensure that Muslim students have access to Halal food. Ideally all meals will be taken in Halal restaurants unless this is not possible due to the destination.

## 10. Communications with Parents

Before residential visits, or when children are to engage in adventure activities, parents should be encouraged to attend a briefing about the trip. There should be alternative arrangements for parents who cannot attend. Information on matters that might affect pupil health and safety should be given to parents:

- Details of the activities planned and timing of visit
- Modes of travel, including the name of travel company.
- Size of the group and the level of supervision.
- Details of accommodation, with supervisory arrangements on site.
- Details of provision for special educational or medical needs.
- Procedures for pupils who become ill.
- Details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation, medical cover, any exceptions in the policy and whether parents need to arrange additional cover.

A Parental Consent form needs to be completed by each child's parents before the trip.

## 11. Residential Trips

It is the responsibility of the Trip Leader to ensure that suitable accommodation is used during residential visits. The accommodation should be clean and free of vermin. Students should have access to bathrooms unless they are camping where this is not possible. The building should meet basic fire regulations with emergency exits, fire extinguishers, alarms and fire doors. Staff should be aware of muster points and emergency evacuation procedures.

Male and female students must never share rooms. Where possible males and females should be placed on separate floors and a member of staff of the same gender assigned to that floor. Where this is not possible, staff should be placed in between male and female rooms. Staff should patrol corridors during the evenings, but male staff should never enter female rooms or bathrooms unless in an emergency.

## 12. Financial Planning

The group leader should ensure that parents have early written information about the cost of the trip. Parents should be given enough time to prepare financially for the trip i.e., minimum 4 weeks for day trip, 6 weeks for residential trip and 2 months for overseas trip. The Finance Department should be given a copy of the trip letter and details of payment should be discussed with The Operations Manager & Head of School. The Operations Manager & Heads of School should advise and provide guidance on costing.

## 13. Insurance

It is the responsibility of the Trip Leader to ensure, well before the group departs, that adequate insurance agreements are in place. This should be checked with the Finance Manager. It will



then be the group leaders' responsibility to ensure extra insurance coverage if required. Appropriate insurance must also be taken out for all international visits.

#### **14. Emergency Communications**

It is essential that the team have access to a method of emergency communications during every stage of their trip. This can range from a mobile phone/handphone up to a satellite phone. The Trip Leader must make sure that their phone works wherever they are, that it has sufficient credit and that they have all emergency numbers saved on the device or quickly accessible. Each team will be given laminated emergency contact cards on departure from school. There should be a member of staff at school (preferably the respective Heads of School) who acts as the school home contact. The school contact's main responsibility is to link the group with the school and the parents, and to provide assistance as necessary.

All those involved in the school trip, including teachers, pupils and parents, should be informed of who will take charge in an emergency and what they are expected to do in an emergency.

##### **14.1 Emergency Procedures Framework during the Visit**

If an emergency occurs on a school visit, the main factors to consider include:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that the entire group is safe and looked after.
- Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.
- Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures.
- Ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group is adequately supervised at all times and kept together.
- Notify the police if necessary.
- Inform the school contact.
- Details of the incident to pass on to the school should include: nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, names of casualties and details of their injuries, names of others involved so that parents can be reassured, action taken so far, action yet to be taken (and by whom).
- Notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required. (This may be done by school contact.)
- Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence.
- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible.
- No one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to their families.
- No one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.

The main factors for the school contact to consider include:

- Ensuring that the group leader is in control of the emergency, and establishing if any assistance is required from the home base.
- Contacting parents. The school link is the contact between the group and parents. Parents should be kept as well informed as possible at all stages of the emergency.

The reporting of the incident is to use appropriate forms, if necessary.

## **14.2 Emergency Procedures**

Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take lifesaving action in an extreme situation.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school visit. If an accident happens, the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation.
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group.
- Attend to the casualty.

Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know about the incident.

## **14.3 Who Will Take Charge in an Emergency?**

The group leader would usually take charge and would need to ensure that emergency procedures are in place and that back-up cover is arranged. The group leader should liaise with the representative of the tour operator.

## **14.4 Media Contact**

The school should have a designated person to deal with media enquiries. The media contact should liaise with the school contact, the group leader and, where appropriate, the emergency services. In the event of an emergency all media enquiries should be referred to the media contact. The name of any casualty should not be given to the media.

## **14.5 After a Serious Incident**

It is not always possible to assess whether uninjured group members have been traumatised or whether pupils or staff in school have been affected. Schools in this situation have sometimes found it helpful to contact support services and to seek professional advice.

## **15. Reporting Accidents, Illnesses and Near Misses**

It is the duty of the Trip Leader to ensure that any accident, illness or near miss is reported to the Campus Leadership Team / School Nurse / Activities administrator. A near miss is any incident that was narrowly avoided and could have led to the injury of a member of the party. This will be used to review future procedures.

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