



## OFFSITE ACTIVITIES POLICY

Policy of:	<b>Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke</b>
Policy applicable to:	<b>Parents, Students and Staff</b>
Policy owned by:	<b>Caroline Watson – Assistant Principal</b>
Point of contact: (if different to above)	<b>SLT</b>

Approved:	Last approved by SLT: 17 April 2024 Original Approved: 29 April 2019
Cycle of review:	Annual
Source documents:	
Related documents (staff only):	Offsite Guide – see Staff Hub/Offsite

**This Policy is available in larger font upon request**

Next review due: April 2025

**The College subscribes to the Hampshire County Council's 'Outdoor Education, PE and DofE Support, Advice, Guidance and Training' programme. We pay an annual subscription to secure advice, review of risk assessments and sign off for any residential and/or hazardous offsite activities, both in the UK and overseas, together with general advice and guidance.**

**The offsite system for setting up a trip and gaining approval for all trips is held on 'Vista' under 'Tools'.**

**Detailed procedures for leading offsite activities are held on Vista in the Offsite Section - 'Instruction for Offsite Activities' and on the Staff Hub>Offsite.**

### **Aims**

QMC offers a wide range of offsite activities/educational trips for students. These take place locally, nationally and internationally. These experiences are an important part of the curriculum and give students the opportunity to:

- Use and apply their knowledge and understanding to the real-world context,
- Engage in different social settings that develop their organisational, team working and leadership skills,
- Raise their awareness and understanding of the wider safety issues and, through opportunities to become involved in risk assessment and risk management, learn to take acceptable levels of risk,
- Learn and apply new skills in new and exciting settings,
- Develop cultural capital,
- Benefit from experts/expertise.

### **Definition of an Offsite Activity**

Any offsite activity/trip (day or residential) organised by a member of staff on behalf of the College that supports subject learning.

Some activities have separate arrangements, such as:

- Work experience placements,
- Students accompanying Admissions Team into schools to promote QMC,
- Classroom experience for Learning with Children course.

### **Accommodation**

The trip leader will ensure that any accommodation used by students is safe and adequate. Full consideration will be given to an individual's specific needs as noted on Vista and under Child Protection and Safeguarding. Any issues regarding rooming should be raised well in advance of arrival at the destination. Families may be required to cover the cost for specific arrangements.

### **Alcohol on a College Trip**

Regardless of age, students are not permitted to buy or consume alcohol whilst on a College trip. Students and their families sign a consent and behaviour agreement prior to travel. This stipulation is non-negotiable. If a student is found with alcohol it will be confiscated and destroyed (there will be no compensation for the monetary value of the items and complaints will not be upheld).

### **Behaviour on a College Trip**

All students are expected to abide by the College's Code of Conduct whilst participating in offsite activities. It is expected that all students observe the highest standard of politeness, courtesy and conduct at all times. Whilst travelling, particularly when they are abroad, students are representing themselves, the group, the College and the country. It is expected that they will behave in a way that reflects positively on themselves,

their fellow students, the staff and College. Students are obliged to follow instructions given by staff. All incidences of poor behaviour will be reported immediately to the parents/guardians and home contact for the trip and followed up upon return to College. In all cases of poor behaviour, consultation will take place and must be clearly communicated and documented – to include parents/guardians.

### **Equality & Diversity**

In applying this policy, the College will have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and provide for good relations between people of diverse groups, in particular on the grounds of the following characteristics protected by the Equality Act (2010); age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation, in addition to offending background, trade union membership, or any other personal characteristic.

### **Essential/Non-essential Offsite Activities**

Some offsite activities and trips form an essential part of the curriculum. As such, College will do all that is reasonably practicable to facilitate attendance. Non-essential trips are likely to be restricted in terms of number of places offered/affordability.

### **Financing of Trips**

The College wish to be as fair as possible in the offer of opportunities to participate in offsite trips. However, by their very nature some activities are expensive. Bursary students can apply for support for any trips essential to the curriculum. Applications can be made to the Queen Mary's Foundation for non-essential trips. These tend to be means-tested according to national guidelines and success cannot be guaranteed – the Queen Mary's Foundation is independent from Queen Mary's College.

Students should not be permitted to attend non-essential trips unless they have good attendance and have contributed to course resources costs.

Payment plans should be clearly stipulated on the Vista Offsite system and communicated to students and their parents/guardians, particularly whether deposits are/are not refundable.

All parties must be clear that there can be no refunds if students are deemed 'not fit to travel'.

### **Fit to Travel**

When students are accepted onto trips it is on the proviso that they are fit to travel when it comes to the date of the offsite activity. The College insurance covers all pre-existing medical conditions (students and their parents/guardians do not need to purchase additional insurance for pre-existing conditions). The College will consider each case on its merits and facilitate support for individuals to meet their needs where possible. Trips can be planned many months in advance, if College becomes concerned about a student's wellbeing, we may request a 'fit to travel' letter from a medical practitioner.

### **Insurance**

The College's travel insurance covers pre-existing medical conditions (see 'Fit to Travel'). Our insurance does not exclude any activity, for example, rock climbing at an approved centre, resort skiing, ice-skating at an approved rink, etc. However, anything particularly hazardous, or out of the ordinary, should be raised with the Assistant Principal Organisational Support in order that we can run the risk past our insurers. For example, off-piste skiing and anything to do with helicopters.

### **Organisation of Offsite Activities**

QMC has procedures in place for the planning and organisation of all offsite activities to ensure that the health, welfare and safety of staff and students on a trip are protected. Each trip must receive official authorisation at several stages before full details are sent to parents/guardians. Prior written consent must be obtained from parents/guardians for all offsite activities together with medical details. Students who are over 18 may sign for themselves.

Global consent is obtained electronically at enrolment and is sufficient for all non-hazardous, day trips. The Vista Offsite system will indicate if the electronic forms have been received. Any missing forms must be procured. A specific electronic consent, medical and behavioural form must be sought for every student on each trip that is deemed hazardous and/or residential.

Administration facilities are in place to handle the collection and logging of all consent forms, medical details and money relating to trips. Staff must not handle money for trips. Monies must be handled through the Resources payment point only. Ideally payments will be made online through Tucasi/ScoPay, or via debit/credit card in Resources. Cash is to be discouraged at all times.

In situations where a trip is oversubscribed (ie, there are not enough spaces for all the students who have applied to go on the trip) trip leaders will consider the student's attendance record and other factors, such as, progress points. Where a student has already been absent for a substantial number of days, particularly if this is unauthorised, it is in the student's best interests not to have further disruption to their lessons, so they will be precluded from attending unless the trip is compulsory. Parents/guardians must be notified of the selection process in the initial information on any trips where places are limited.

Trip leaders designated on the system must attend the trip. If this is not possible due to unforeseen circumstances the appropriate Director of Learning and Assistant Principal must be informed and the trip details amended prior to departure.

### **Overseas Trips**

Overseas trips must be discussed well in advance of the departure date. The College is well-versed in running trips to a number of popular European destinations, Los Angeles and New York. Any trip abroad, these destinations included, must be discussed and agreed by SLT prior to any advertising or bookings. Destinations outside the norm will require a written paper for consideration by SLT. Overseas trips are not automatically deemed as hazardous. However, there are inherent additional risks associated with overseas activities that must be considered within the risk assessment. Trip packs issued to students and communicated to parents/guardians, well in advance of the departure date, must cover all eventualities including delayed transport, emergency contact information and procedures, risk of terrorist incidents in major cities, health complications for members of the party, general emergencies, safeguarding, etc. The staffing ratios must reflect the risk assessment and are a critical part of the approval process. Our links with the Hampshire County Council Outdoor Education Advice and Guidance ensure that significant resources are available to support teachers in their planning for any trip abroad. Staff should see the Offsite Team for further information, exemplars and in-house contacts who are experienced in trip management who would be willing to share their knowledge and experience. All overseas and/or hazardous trips are signed off by HCC and the Principal, in addition to in-house checking and sign off procedures.

### **Passport Requirements**

Regardless of an individual's choice of name, it is mandatory when travelling to use the name exactly as it appears in a student's passport. Even minor discrepancies (eg, a missing middle name or incorrect spelling 'Ann' not 'Anne') can lead to problems: delays, denial of travel at the UK or destination airport, issues at security and with customs.

It is also imperative that passports have at least six months left on the passport after the trip return date. Websites may indicate three months is sufficient, but we have first-hand experience of complications when travelling so will not accept anyone on a trip with less than six months. Students will not be allowed to travel and deposits/full funds will be forfeited.

### **Safeguarding & Medical**

The safety of the party, and especially the students, is of paramount importance. Trip leaders must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the safety of participants during every activity. It is vitally important that we hold up to date information relating to any medical or wellbeing issues. Parents/guardians/students must make trip leaders aware of any issues immediately upon signing on to the trip.

Out of college activities will always be conducted according to the College's Student Expectations agreement which students must adhere to. Students are expected to follow the instructions of the trip leader and other staff (whether they agree with them or not). These may include instructions on time keeping, behaviour, dress code or attitude to other members of the public or party, including being sensitive to local codes and customs. The need to ensure appropriate behaviour during an activity will be assisted by thorough preparation of the students, staff and volunteer adults taking part in the visit. Clear standards should be identified and adhered to. The legal responsibility of teachers towards the students (duty of care) is in no way diminished because the activity is taking place off the College premises and students must report to a member of staff any incident which may compromise the health, safety and welfare of trip members.

Parents/guardians should make an informed decision on whether their young person should participate in the trip based on the information provided and prepare their young person sufficiently, including reinforcing the appropriate code of conduct. It is vitally important that we hold up to date information relating to any medical or wellbeing issues. Please ensure the trip leader is made aware immediately a student is accepted onto a trip and that all medical forms and consent forms are accurate and up to date.

### **Safety and Welfare of Students on College Trips**

To ensure the safety and welfare of all students on an offsite activity, the trip leader is required to undertake a comprehensive online risk assessment of all aspects of the trip as part of the Vista Offsite system. This will be checked by the line manager and AP prior to information being sent out to parents/guardians.

### **Students Making Their Own Way To/From Venues**

This will not be approved. In extenuating circumstances a request by students or their parents/guardians to travel independently, either to or from a venue, will be considered case by case with appropriate discussion/approval from Assistant Principal in consultation with the Principal and written consent from the parent/guardian.

### **Supervisory Levels**

QMC ensures that the trip leader has arranged adequate staff supervision. All trips will be accompanied by a minimum of 2 staff members – see ratio guidelines below and subsequent notes:

- 1-12 for any hazardous and/or residential trip
- 1-12 for any day trip beyond a 60 mile radius from College (London falls just inside the 60 mile rule)
- 1-20 for any day trip within a 60 mile radius thereafter

These are guidelines only and part of the authorisation process, and any outcomes from the risk assessment, must consider student numbers, activities, location, gender ratios, time of day/night, transport, medical conditions, star notes, student tracking notes, safeguarding and child protection considerations, experience of staff, etc.

The Senior Leadership Team consider there are few occasions when a ratio of 1-12 or 1-20 would be appropriate and stipulate that all trips should have a minimum of two members of staff in attendance. On the rare occasion where a trip would be sanctioned with one member of staff it is imperative that parents/guardians are informed and give consent. SLT approval must be sought first.

### **Transport in College Minibuses**

Any staff member driving the College minibus must have D1 on their driving licence and must have taken the MIDAS course. The course consists of a theory session and test, and a driving session and test.

Any staff who have taken their driving test after 1 January 1997 will not have Category D1 on their licence. The rules stipulate that it is possible for teachers to drive as volunteers (with the appropriate MIDAS training) if they are over 21, have category B, drive voluntarily (not as part of their contract) and do not tow a trailer. However, there is a weight restriction of 3.5 tonnes and all of our minibuses fall outside this at 4.6 tonnes.

### **Transport in Private Cars**

If there are circumstances where it would be convenient to take a limited number of students (from 2 to the official capacity of the car, eg, a seatbelt for every passenger) in a private car this should be:

- Approved by the DoL, AP and additional SLT member
- The driver must hold valid business insurance and evidence this
- Students must be made aware of the arrangements and parents/guardians must have given their written consent.
- Full consideration must be given to Child Protection and Safeguarding.

The College's insurance '... will extend cover to apply to any private motor car not belonging to, hired or lent to [College] whilst being used with [College's] permission by any person in [College's] employment. This cover will only apply while such vehicle is being used in connection with [College] business.'

These incidences should be a last resort and not undertaken in any pattern that can be determined as regular.

### **Visa Requirements (and ESTAs for US)**

It is the responsibility of the student and their family to research and arrange Visa & ESTA requirements, as appropriate, for any College trips. Families must be certain that they can obtain the appropriate Visa and ESTA for the trip destination and return to the UK. Visa requirements can be complicated, lengthy and may require interview at the relevant embassy, etc. Deposits/full funds will be forfeited if students are unable to secure the appropriate visa in time.

Please note that we have had ESTAs turned down, even for transiting the country only, due to countries visited in childhood, etc. We cannot help with this or overcome these issues and deposits/full refunds will be forfeited if students are unable to secure the appropriate ESTA in time. Please research the regulations carefully.

Next review Date: 4 April 2025  
Last review Date: 4 April 2024  
Policy Date: 29 April 2019

Staff Hub/Offsite