



THE SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT AT THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM (ANGLICAN)

Risk Assessment Advice for Schools & Colleges

It is expected that teachers who bring school parties/parish groups for day or residential visits to Walsingham will have carried out the required risk assessments, prior to their visit, in accordance with their school/County/Diocesan policy. The Schools Department staff are not responsible for risk assessments for individual schools.

We hope that this document will assist teachers and leaders in completing their relevant risk assessment forms prior to a visit to Walsingham. We can supply a sample Risk Assessment on request. ***Please note that we require a copy of your Risk Assessment for our files once you have completed it.***

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During educational visits the Schools Administrator will ensure that activities are carefully organised and that the appropriate number of teachers are allotted to activity groups. **Please ensure you bring the required ratio of staff/helpers to children** and ensure they are briefed on Health & Safety issues & how to supervise their group.

The Schools Administrator and teachers in the department will organise and lead all activities during day or residential visits but overall discipline remains the responsibility of the class teacher/group organiser. **Our staff should always have at least one of your staff/helpers with them.**

Risk assessments are regularly carried out at the Shrine. The Schools Department liaises with our Health and Safety Officer, in accordance with The Health and Safety at work etc. Act 1974 and The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Please ask if you need extra information.

Pre-visit Risk Assessment (planning visits for teachers & leaders).

The Schools' Administrator advises teachers & leaders to visit the site prior to school visits, if this is possible, to carry out a risk assessment and view all places where the children will be working during their visit. Alternatively teachers are welcome to discuss all issues fully over the telephone.

During the course of a visit, children may be visiting other sites in the village which are not owned by the Shrine (e.g. The Abbey Grounds, Methodist Church, Orthodox Church). We strongly recommend therefore that teachers and leaders visit these sites and/or make relevant enquiries about risk assessments to the agency concerned, prior to the visit. Ask us for more information if required.

Safeguarding Policy

The Anglican Shrine is registered with Due Diligence Checking (DDC) via an approved agency which works with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) through the Norwich Diocese. All Heads of Departments at the Shrine acts as

recruiter and counter signatory for all their new employees in the Schools Department.

At present the **Schools Department's Safeguarding Policy** is compiled in accordance with the recommendations of the Diocese of Norwich Board of Education. It is displayed in the Shrine **and the Safeguarding Officer (Venetia Davies) is the named person for safeguarding/disclosure.** Please ask for a copy if you would like one.

All volunteers/employees in the Schools' Department undergo the reference/DBS check procedures as stipulated by the Diocese of Norwich upon appointment to their posts.

We advise all teachers/leaders to ensure that volunteer helpers on school visits have undergone the required checks as stipulated by your own school/County guidelines.

First Aid & Emergency Procedures

All teachers and leaders should have **First Aid kits** with them, though these are also available in the Schools Department and classrooms. An **Emergency Folder** is also situated in the Shrine Reception and any accident that takes place on site during a visit should be recorded via an accident form.

A number of staff hold the First Aid at Work Certificate and in the event of an accident a member of that team will co-ordinate all emergency procedures. **However we cannot guarantee that they will always be available so we strongly advise that there is a teacher & helper trained in first aid in attendance on school visits in case an incident should occur.**

Pre-planning of emergency procedures and communications. Teachers and leaders should ensure that these have been carried out prior to the visit so that all leaders and helpers know what to do in the event of an emergency. Please ask on arrival about the location of the Schools Department office and our emergency procedures.

The nearest Accident and Emergency Department is situated about 40 minutes drive away at the Queen Elizabeth’s Hospital, King’s Lynn. There is a **Doctor’s surgery** in Walsingham, but it has limited opening hours, and also on the outskirts of Fakenham, approximately five miles away.

Mobile Phones – these should be carried by teachers and the School Department staff should be given the numbers. NB. Vodafone & EE are the only reliable networks here on the North Norfolk coast. Many cannot get a clear reception.

Fire Safety

Annual fire risk assessments are undertaken and the appropriate control measures are in place. All buildings are fitted with fire alarms, smoke sensors and fire extinguishers. Fire instructions are displayed on the back of bedroom doors with information about fire evacuation procedures and the location of the fire assembly point. Teachers should familiarise themselves with these procedures and locations of fire exits and the assembly point on arrival. The Shrine has adopted a ‘No Smoking Policy’ in all the buildings.

The main assembly point if a fire alarm sounds or a fire is discovered is by the white tented Altar of the Mysteries of Light on the main lawn. Check location on arrival. It is across the lawn opposite the Pilgrim Hall.

Group registers - Please ensure that group leaders have lists of pupils in their groups and know how many there are in total.

Children with Special Needs and Dietary Requirements

Please advise the Schools Department prior to your visit if there are children with particular special needs (especially wheelchair users). The Shrine grounds are fully accessible to wheelchairs, as are some other sites in the village, though some careful thought may need to be given in one or two

places. ***We need to know these details*** in order to plan the visit effectively and brief teaching staff.

Arrangements can be made (providing this is done in advance) for ***vegetarian options or for other special dietary requirements*** if meals are being provided as part of your visit. It is essential you inform the Shrine of any nut or food allergies and please be aware that nuts are contained within some of our foods and salads so cross-contamination is likely. We strongly advise a pre-planning visit to clarify all these issues with the relevant departments at the Shrine, if there are any areas of concern.

Medicines and Medication: Teachers and leaders must be aware of any child receiving medication and liaise with the Shrine if storage facilities are required for medicines.

Always consult your school/County policy guidelines on these issues when planning your visit.

Parking of Mini Buses/Cars and Coaches

Coaches are advised to drop children off outside the Shrine on the corner of Knight Street in Little Walsingham village. Staff from the Schools Department will meet groups there (please consult your teacher's notes/pre-visit confirmation letter for precise details). Alternatively, if groups are large and if pre-planned/advised by the Schools Department, coaches may drop off in the Coach Park on the edge of the village. We will advise you on the safest walking route to the Shrine from there.

The map that has been sent to you will show where the coach park is situated.

Cars/Mini Buses -may wish to park in the 'Pay and Display' car park next to Common Place in the village. A map is available on request.

If you are not dropped off outside the Shrine you are responsible for escorting groups safely into the Shrine Grounds. Again, we advise a pre-

planning visit to assess risks and plan safe crossing points.

There are no designated zebra-crossings on the roads outside the Shrine so great care should be taken. The Schools Department staff will assist and advise on this. Ask about how the coach should position itself on arrival when you book – a map will also be sent indicating these details.

Toilet Facilities

On arrival, the Schools' Department staff will accompany teachers with their groups to our toilet facilities. **Thereafter, at lunchtime etc, in the interests of safety, we do ask that teachers/helpers always accompany their groups and we would like to remind you that supervision of children using the facilities is the responsibility of the teachers/helpers. *Children should not be allowed to go off on their own to toilets on site.***

The toilets are situated by the Milner Wing Reception and by the main Refectory building (next to the Norton Café) within the Shrine grounds.

Occasionally, if a large number of youngsters are visiting, it may be necessary to use **public toilet facilities** in the village High Street. The Schools' Department will show teachers/helpers where these are.

Again, we advise that teachers/helpers exercise appropriate supervision when the children are using these facilities since they are situated within the village and are not owned by the Shrine.

The Shrine Grounds

The Shrine amenities are self-contained within a walled garden.

There are **no vehicles** permitted in the gardens with the exception of buggies for those with disabilities. The gardener uses a quad bike and trailer. Warn children to watch out for this.

Paths around the gardens are made of bonded gravel and there are occasional shallow steps. There is a sloped disabled route throughout for disabled users. The gardens consist of lawned areas with flowerbeds, trees and shrubs. Some shrubs e.g. yew trees, have berries when in season. **Please warn children NOT to pick and eat them – these are very poisonous.**

The Stations of the Cross – a series of brick house shaped structures, which contain sculptured pictures of Jesus on his way to be crucified, are spread around the gardens. They are permanent structures. Children are not to climb on these. As well as these Stations, there is also a **small grass slope which has three life size wooden crosses**. Again, we advise that teachers ask children not to swing or play on these crosses as this is also a garden of remembrance.

Also, as part of the Stations of the Cross, there is a **small model tomb**. This is made of concrete and brick. This is a place of prayer to remind pilgrims of the burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Children are welcome to crawl inside the tomb. It is safe to do so. We do advise however that this is done at your own risk and we also advise teachers to supervise this closely – 3 to 4 children at a time.

No dogs are permitted in the grounds with the exception of assistance dogs.

General Safety Information:

Please advise children to keep off the lavender beds and supervise them carefully in the yard area leading up to the Refectory and Barn Chapel as this is used by cars and delivery vehicles. There is also a gateway which leads directly out onto a busy road – Knight Street.

The Shrine has a Business Continuity Plan in place which defines procedures in the event of a major disaster or emergency evacuation plan.

Classrooms

School groups usually receive some introductory activities in our classrooms and packed lunches are eaten in them. There are three rooms:

The Pilgrim Hall

A Tudor barn which is heated by oil fired heating radiators. There is a small kitchen/storeroom at the rear of the hall, which is not accessible to students. It is furnished with 'Go Pak' tables which seat six children to a table and metal-framed plastic chairs and has a wood floor with a large rug at one end of the room for about forty children to sit on.

There is a spare emergency toilet in the lobby at the back of the hall.

Cloakroom - Pegs are also provided in a small area behind the hall for students to hang their coats on arrival. Lunches may also be stored in this cooler space.

Access to Kitchen & Storage Areas - Children and young people are not allowed in kitchens and storage areas

Access - This building may be accessed via steps, or via a pathway (ideal for wheelchairs). Please advise children to use handrails when using steps.

The Orangery

This building is wooden framed and the walls consist of toughened glass panels with sliding doors. It has a tiled floor. It is heated by warm air blower style heaters adjacent to the roof space. It is fully accessible to wheel chair users. It is furnished with washable 'Go Pak' tables and metal framed plastic chairs.

Pilgrim Refectory (restaurant)

This may be used occasionally for large school groups as a teaching space and to eat packed lunches. This room has metal framed tables, plastic/metal framed chairs and a vinyl floor covering. There is a 'cafeteria style' serving counter for residential pilgrims to collect their meals at lunch time/supper time. This area is out of bounds for non-resident pupils/staff. **Staff and**

helpers are welcome to help themselves to a complimentary cup of tea/coffee from the automatic machines in this area at lunch time.

The Barn Chapel

This is a renovated stone barn which may be used for prayer and worship. Occasionally it is used for small group activities. It has a wooden laminated floor and is furnished with wooden chairs. There is a moveable wooden altar table in there and a small lectern. The Barn is accessed by walking along a brick paved path and across the small gravelled yard behind the main Refectory building. **Children should not be allowed to enter unsupervised.**

The Shrine Church

This is within the grounds and only a very short distance from the classrooms. Again ***it is fully accessible to wheel chair users, although assistance may be required.***

Inside the building is a brick structure known as **The Holy House**. This is in effect 'the Shrine'. The rest of the church is known as the **Pilgrim Church**.

Visits to the Shrine are always supervised in small groups by the Schools Department. Teachers and helpers will be asked to assist and accompany these groups. Organised activities will be planned for time spent in the Shrine.

The Shrine has a tiled **floor** throughout, except for one side chapel that has a fitted carpet and portable wooden ramps are supplied for wheel chair users to access the Holy House with assistance.

Fire Precautions within the Shrine Church

Extinguishers may be found around the building in the side aisles. Teachers/helpers are advised to take notice of their location on entry to the building.

IMPORTANT

There are candles burning at various points in the Church and in the Holy House. Teachers are advised to warn children of the dangers/risks involved when moving around near lighted candles.

We do advise that those with long hair tie it back when visiting the Shrine. Also, take care with sleeves when lighting candles!

Candle lighting is encouraged during visits and will be carefully supervised by The Schools' Department who will give instructions on how to safely light the candles, but again, we do emphasise that ultimately it is the responsibility of the teachers and leaders to ensure that children behave sensibly and are supervised closely when lighting candles. We advise that teachers do a familiarisation visit to assess this area.

There are steps/staircases in the Shrine Church which lead to Chapels. The Schools Department will ask children to move around these areas in small groups or pairs. Please supervise children in these areas at all times.

We advise teachers and leaders to brief children carefully about walking and not running, and behaving sensibly(quietly/respectfully). Teachers, leaders and helpers are asked to supervise their group closely. ULTIMATELY YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR DISCIPLINE AT ALL TIMES.

The Holy Well

Most school groups like to incorporate this into a visit programme so that children can taste the water and think about what this means to thousands of pilgrims who visit each year.

The water comes from a fresh spring over a hundred feet under ground. Water is pumped up via an electric pump. The water is checked twice yearly by North Norfolk District Council and the water containers are cleaned and

refilled daily. ***Teachers may wish to ask the consent of parents for their children to taste water from silver scoops at the well.***

The well area is enclosed behind metal railings with locked gates. The gates are only opened when the well is in use, for safety reasons. To gain access to the well there are a series of stone steps either side. The steps are not steep and there is a handrail on one side. Those unable to climb down the steps can receive water at the top of the well.

Please advise children to behave sensibly and to use rails. Please ensure your helpers supervise children throughout.

The Schools' Department will supervise and advise on safe access to receive water from the well but teachers are advised to explain to children the potential hazards involved if they do not take care. The steps can become slippery so care needs to be taken.

Dress Code in the Shrine

Flat and preferably rubber soled/non-slip shoes/trainers are encouraged for visits. These are comfortable for walking around all-day and safer if paths/tiled floors/steps are wet. In the winter children may wish to bring Wellingtons to change into when visiting the Abbey Grounds.

We always advise that children bring waterproof coats with them especially if your visit includes a walk into the village/Abbey Grounds.

If the weather is hot, we advise that sun hats are brought and that children do not have their shoulders/backs exposed to the sun. Sunscreen cream/lotion should be brought.

In the Shrine it is traditional for baseball caps/other hats to be removed on entering the building. We explain to children that this is traditionally out of respect for a Holy Place and we would appreciate it if teachers would discuss this before a visit. We recognise that there may be occasions when this is not

appropriate e.g. those who belong to other world faiths/medical reasons. ***The Schools' Administrator would appreciate being informed of any such exceptions prior to a visit, so as to avoid embarrassment on the day.***

Children/adults should be encouraged to dress respectfully, though shorts/skirts may be worn.

Teachers are advised to talk to the children prior to a visit about quiet conduct and respect for church buildings and special areas within the church like the Altars/sanctuary area. We ask children not to walk up steps to touch altars or items on them. There may well be other pilgrims praying etc during your visit.

Walking in the Village

The Schools' Administrator and teachers in the Department will offer advice and instruct children during visits on safe crossing places on public roads in the village and on safe walking routes.

Fluorescent yellow waistcoats are available for teachers and helpers from the Schools' Department and staff are requested to wear these whilst supervising children out within the village.

However, it is ultimately the responsibility of teachers and leaders to ensure that children conduct themselves sensibly and to ensure that they have instructed children prior to the visit on how to walk in an orderly line when out and about.

We also strongly advise teachers and leaders to instruct and use parent helpers effectively so as to assist in this process, e.g. helpers taking responsibility for small numbers of children, having a set procedure for lining up, lists of names for each helper etc.

Food & Shops in the Village High Street. There are coffee shops and a small shop selling light snacks etc. as well as also public houses and a few gift shops.

All of these amenities are only a short walk away from the Shrine. We advise teachers and leaders to plan carefully how they wish to supervise and co-ordinate pupils if they are to be allowed to visit the shops, cafes, etc. during a visit. This is solely the responsibility of the teachers and leaders. We also advise that this is taken into consideration on pre-planning visits. When visiting the shops please could you ensure only 8 children at a time go in a shop as they are small and do not have adequate staff to deal with more children.

Residential Accommodation

The Shrine has accommodation for over 200 persons, located in a variety of buildings situated around the site.

Guests may book on a full or half-board basis. Meals are supplied in the Refectory which is totally accessible to those with disabilities. There are limited self-catering facilities for small groups.

School groups are usually offered accommodation in Richeldis which is a purpose built block consisting of three floors. There is a lift within this building. There are single and twinned/triple rooms. Other buildings which maybe used for school groups are St Joseph's House and on occasions, Stella Maris. Each building has lounge spaces for meeting and socialising. There are also televisions in the lounge areas. St. Joseph's is also fully accessible to wheelchairs and hoists/other equipment is available.

There are bathrooms/shower rooms and toilets on all floors, in the various buildings, though rooms are not en suite. Tea making points are also provided.

The Shrine must be notified in advance of any children with disabilities or special needs in order to ensure the correct accommodation facilities can be provided. There are designated disabled bedrooms and equipment available on request.

We do make every effort to place groups together in one building with boys/girls on separate floors. Male/female staff will be accommodated in separate rooms on the appropriate floors.

Every effort is made to ensure that the school group has exclusive use of that building; however this may not always be possible in busy periods. We advise that teachers consult their own school policy/County health and safety policy for guidance on this and liaise with the Shrine if restrictions are necessary.

Pilgrim Hall / Orangery Sleepovers

We also allow the Pilgrim Hall and / or Orangery to be booked by groups for cheaper 'camping-style' sleepovers. At the back of the Pilgrim Hall is a toilet and separate 'kitchen' area with two showers with adequate changing room in each. The kitchen has a table top oven with 2 hobs, a microwave, small fridge/freezer, kettle and sink allowing you to bring and prepare your own breakfast and lunches. Pupils and staff would need to bring sleeping bags, sleep mats and crockery & cutlery.

If bringing boys and girls we recommend that both rooms are booked and girls go in one room and boys in the other. Although joined by a corridor and flight of stairs the Orangery is not within calling distance of the Hall. Two DBS checked adults would need to sleep in each room but you may need to follow your own school policy guidelines for this.

Security

There is always someone available, day and night. The Reception desk is manned until 7.00 pm each night, in summer this may increase to 9.00 pm, and thereafter, a member of the security team is available by telephone.

Emergency internal telephones are situated in all buildings and teachers and leaders should check where these are located.

The gates leading into the grounds are locked each night at 11.00 p.m. and the main archway is locked at midnight. The security person patrols all the buildings to check buildings are secure and locked. Main doors to residential buildings are inaccessible to non-residents. Although buildings are locked

there is easy access from the inside, in the event of a fire. Most of the buildings have key pad entry systems but it is also important to ensure teachers and leaders are vigilant of doors being left open and of intruders entering the building..

The Hospitality Team can be contacted on 01328 820239 and are always happy to liaise with group leaders to ensure accommodation is allotted in the appropriate way to suit individual groups. If bringing a school group to stay please read the **Guidelines** which should be sent to you with your booking information.

Teachers are ultimately responsible for the safety of the children and should ensure that they have adequate staff in each building / floor level capable of dealing with emergencies should they arise.

SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER ENQUIRIES PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE SCHOOLS' ADMINISTRATOR

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