

# **Operations Protocol for the movement of children between the islands of St. Marys, St. Agnes, Bryher, Tresco and St. Martins. March 2023**

## **Introduction**

This is a shared protocol between the Council of the Isles of Scilly and Five Islands Academy (the commissioners) to create a mutually agreed protocol for the carriage of children between vessel operators and commissioners.

## **Scope**

This protocol applies to all children normally resident on the Isles of Scilly to the end of their full-time education on Scilly (summer term after their 16th birthday).

This protocol will cover all journeys commissioned to meet the Local Authority's statutory home to school travel duties and educational activities organised by the Five Islands Academy or the Council involving the passage of children, young people and escorts by boat, between the islands of St Mary's, St Agnes, Bryher, Tresco, and St Martin's.

Children and young people will be carried in a vessel licensed by the MCA for the carriage of passengers in local waters with a licensed and qualified Master and crew (if necessary). The vessel and operator will carry all insurances for the transport of passengers. All vessels will be appropriately insured and operated within the terms of its licence. A copy of Master/ crew and vessel licences can be provided to the commissioning body on request, together with current certificates of insurance. The maximum licensed capacity for the vessel must not be exceeded at any time during a commissioned journey.

## **Protocol**

1. It is recognised that seating out in the open/fresh air is best practice for Covid-19. , A mix of seating is available on different vessels. It is recognised that there may not be a seat available inside, for every child. Primary school children are always seated inside. Secondary school children are able to choose where they sit.
2. Boat operators are to inform the Local Authority and Five Islands Academy as soon as possible if mechanical or crew issues will impact on the school boating service.
3. The Local Authority will maintain a contact list of boating operators who have agreed to offer boating transport to school children for service resilience. This will be shared with Five Islands Academy and boat operators.
4. Vessel Masters (the "Master") and their employers, if not the Master, are responsible for the safe transfer of children, young people and their Nominated Escorts on and off the vessel, their safety whilst on board and during all vessel operations.
5. Due care and consideration for the comfort and wellbeing of school aged children on the boats will be shown and interior seats and space, when it is inclement weather or other appropriate times, will be prioritised for the use of school children when their need for access is considered greatest.

6. In addition to the Master, primary age pupils (4-11) will be accompanied by another responsible adult, as agreed by Council or Five Islands Academy . This person, in agreement with the skipper and Academy, may be an employee of the Master, vessel operator or an appropriate adult. This person will be known as the Nominated Escort and will be responsible for the conduct and safety of the children. The nominated escort will need to be responsible for children's behaviour. Children who do not behave safely and / or appropriately may be declined future trips.
7. The Nominated Escort will have an up-to-date DBS check and will be identified in advance to the Five Islands Academy/Council. A record of the DBS check will be held on the Five Islands Academy Single Central Record.
8. The Nominated Escort will be responsible for the conduct and safety of children in their care at all stages of the journey to and from school until the child's hand is taken by the Master or crew (on boarding) or vice versa on disembarkation. The Nominated Escort will retain responsibility for the conduct of children whilst on board the vessel and for their safety whilst following the safety instructions of the Master or crew.
9. Children below school age (i.e. those under 4) accessing activities on St. Marys will be escorted by their parent or carer, as the Nominated Escort, who will remain responsible for their safety and behaviour throughout the journey.
10. Young People from Year 7 (11 years of age) onwards do not need to be escorted on the boat. They are responsible for their conduct and safety on the boat. To support the transition from accompanied to unaccompanied travel and to highlight safety awareness, safety information will be provided to the Young Person in the Mundesley Welcoming Pack. Safety Information to include information on life jackets and to follow instructions of the Master of the Vessel. The Master of the Vessel will support Young People with safety by happily answering safety questions, playing automated safety messages where possible, prioritising seats where possible, daily safety messages (eg, bumpy crossing, holding hands to assist boarding and disembarking, advising when steps are slippery, hold the railing etc).
11. Under exceptional circumstances (where wind is being funnelled near Mermaid Inn, making walking unsteady) it may be deemed necessary to arrange transport to get Young People off the Quay when getting to and from Mundesley Boarding House. Mundesley House Parents are responsible for making the decision and booking transport. Funding for this will come from the Mundesley Parents Contribution.
12. Passenger safety is paramount. The Master will be responsible, on a day to day basis, for the decision whether or not to travel. This judgement will be informed by (but not exclusively):
  - a. prevailing sea state,
  - b. tide,
  - c. weather conditions, visibility and daylight hours remaining,
  - d. conditions at departure and arrival quays,
  - e. vessel type (single engine/ twin engine),
  - f. passenger type (e.g. disability, responsibility) The Master will maintain a standard written risk assessment for all journeys.
13. Where a Master has conducted a Dynamic Risk Assessment and determined that a commissioned journey can be undertaken any decision by a parent/carers to not send their child on the commissioned journey must be notified to the school by the parent/carers. The

decision on whether to send a young person on a boat is entirely down to a parent/carer. Each young person is different and if a parent/carer feels it is unfit for their child to go on a commissioned journey then the parent/carer can choose not to send them, and the Academy will support with remote learning and access to other bases. The Academy will raise concerns if it becomes a regular occurrence and could be seen as school refusal.

14. If a parent/carer chooses not to send their child on a commissioned journey, or if a trip is postponed and the parent/carer opts to send their child on another service, it must be made clear that all transport arrangements (including cost) are the parents' responsibility.
15. A parent/carer must inform the boat operators as soon as possible if a child/young person is not going to travel on a commissioned journey.
16. A parent/carer must notify the school of their intention to use an alternate to a commissioned journey and ensure that the child's safe arrival is registered at Academy. A parent/carer should request that the Academy contact the parent/carer to confirm the safe arrival of students travelling on a non-commissioned journey.
17. Any parent/carer/young person undertaking a non-standard, non-commissioned, journey does so at their own risk and the school / Local Authority disclaims all liability to the child/family in the event of injury, loss or damage. All such liability rests with the vessel operator and parents.
18. If at any time the Master determines the conditions to be unsafe or likely to deteriorate significantly before the scheduled return the journey must either be postponed or re-scheduled and the Academy informed as soon as possible on any given day of any requirement for an early departure or postponement.
19. Should it be necessary for a journey to be postponed the commissioners will make any necessary arrangements to accommodate students until alternate arrangements can be made.
20. A parent/carer will be responsible for ensuring that primary aged children are identified to the Nominated Escort who will maintain a register. The Nominated Escort will be responsible for the safety of primary aged children on the quay and steps, and for their behaviour on board the vessel. Nominated Escorts will be DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked and may not delegate their duties to others without Academy authorisation (Base leader, Headteacher). In the event of delegation under these provisions, any substitute shall be required to hold a valid DBS certificate.
21. The Academy strongly recommends a parent/carer provides a suitably sized, serviced and EN 396 compliant life jacket for their child until the end of key stage three (14 years old) or are big enough to use an adult life jacket but it is entirely the parent/carer's decision to provide one or not. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to provide, maintain and service the lifejacket. Boat Operators are happy to liaise with parents and offer recommendations on suitable lifejackets.

Version	Date
1.0	09.04.2021
2.0	24.03.2023