

## **OBJECTIVES**

The school places a high value on fieldwork, excursions, visits and organised holidays. Such trips are of enormous benefit. It is a central part of the ethos of the school to provide the opportunity for educational visits and school organized experiences beyond the school buildings.

Students' physical, emotional and moral safety is of paramount concern. The School accepts that trips, visits and outdoor activities cannot be completely without risk but it requires that those staff in charge take all reasonable precautions to protect the health, safety and welfare of Students and staff, and minimise the risk of untoward or dangerous situations (in accordance with DCFS Guidance Health and Safety of Students on Educational Visits)

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Every effort will be made to ensure that school journeys, visits and activities are available and accessible to all for whom the trip is relevant; irrespective of special or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender, religion etc.

**Students with learning difficulties and disabilities, special educational and medical needs:** Wherever it is feasible, Students with learning difficulties and disabilities should be included, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone in the group. Any problems/limitations should be considered at the planning stage and when carrying out the risk assessment. Special attention is made to supervision ratios. Each leader, for information, should hold details of the Student/Student's special needs. The group leader should discuss the visit with the SENCO and parents/carers of those children with special needs to ensure sufficient support is in place for each child and the teacher. When deciding if a trip is possible for a student with special needs their safety will be the immediate deciding factor. Beyond this will be an evaluation of the viability and cost. The intent with any trip is that students have a common experience.

## **INITIAL INFORMATION AND PRE-PLANNING**

Wherever possible, trips should be included in the calendar at the beginning of the school year and should also be available on the school website, allowing parents and carers to plan which trips are likely to be best for their children, and to plan for any expensive trips which they may wish to commit themselves and their children to while at Blatchington Mill.

## **MINIBUSES**

Trip organisers are responsible for booking minibuses.

For all but short journeys (less than an hour), it is strongly recommended that there should be two drivers.

The driver should ensure:

- the vehicles are fit for use. Therefore before departure basic checks on the vehicle ought to be carried out: lights, tyre pressures and wear, fluid levels (oil, brakes, radiator, and windscreen washer); wipers and horn.
- that all passengers have correctly adjusted and fastened their seatbelts.
- that all doors are properly closed before departure (but unlocked).
- loose items, bags etc, are safely stowed at floor level and not blocking exits.
- speed limits are adhered to at all times.
- that the bus is left in a clean and tidy state.
- any incidents/accidents/vehicle faults are reported to the appropriate person on returning to school.

## **CONTINGENCY FUND**

A *small* contingency fund should be built into all school trips.

## COSTINGS & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

There may be some reduction in costs to parents/carers if they are in receipt of the following support payments: Income Support; Income Based Jobseekers Allowance; Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16000; the guarantee element of State Pension Credit; an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced in October 2008. There are also several different agencies able to support children in care but it is probably best if staff discuss this direct with the relevant Year Office.

There are three sources of possible financial assistance.

The Hedgcock Bequest is a small annual grant made available to the Local Authority for distribution to schools in respect of applications from Headteachers for support of Students in difficult financial circumstances, to enable them to participate in educational activities from which they would otherwise be excluded. Families should look ahead and plan for any trips their son/daughter may wish to attend, they must then contact the School Business Manager to put forward their case in order for the school to apply on their behalf. The school can only apply once a year, this is usually between October and December and is subject to availability every year. In years where no family puts their child forward, the school may well choose to apply for a student deemed to have some disadvantage.

Brighton & Hove City Council administers various other Educational Trust Funds, which can provide some financial assistance towards the cost of study trips. <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/life-events-and-communities/community-and-voluntary-sector-support/communities-fund>

It is worth families also accessing these. As a school we will ensure this information is available on the school website trips page.

On occasions, though rare, we offer some help with trips from within the school. Matters of this nature must be passed through the School Business Manager who will forward your request to the finance committee.

## LETTER TO PARENTS/CARERS

Letters will be sent ONLY to the relevant students for the trip. For example if a trip is for Business and/or IT GCSE students, the invite letter will not be sent out to the whole year group.

There are standard letters for both day and residential trips which contain the following information:

- Where/why the trip has been arranged: if it is to be aimed at a particular set of Students (e.g. sports team, BTEC, GCSE Geographers, GNVQ Students etc) then this should be made clear in the letter.
- The letter should also include date and length of trip
- Accommodation details
- Cost (payments can be made by cash, cheque and SchoolComms )
- Travel arrangements
- Excursions/activities
- A deadline date when payments are required. It should also be stated that deposits **may not** be refunded unless a replacement student can be found, less any admin costs that may be incurred (see further details below re deposits)
- Name of organising staff
- Reply slip to show interest or to book their place: if it is a non-residential trip, request emergency contact details and medication information (Day trips). Residential trips require a full medical/consent form.
- Request parent/carers' e-mail address, student mobile numbers and confirmation of parents/carers' mobile numbers on the reply slip.
- If the trip is abroad, whether a collective passport is to be taken or a personal one is required. For foreign holidays where own passport is required, it is good practice to request student's name as stated on their passport.

- If day trip, whether school uniform should be worn and if a packed lunch/money required. If student has free school meals, packed lunch can be ordered from canteen – 24 hours notice required.
- The letter will also emphasise that students whose behaviour in school has created problems may not be permitted to participate in the trip. Equally the student's "appropriateness" for the trip will be considered.

**Before advertising your trip and distributing letters, the letter must be checked through with EVC.**

**DAY TRIPS** : An Initial Offer Letter will now go out to all parents/carers via email (SchoolComms) where possible which will clearly state when the deposits are being collected with a close date clearly stated. Where email is not available a letter will be posted out.

If a trip has a limited number of spaces, the trip will always be launched on a first come, first served basis. Forms should be handed in directly to a member of Finance so they can be received in order, writing the sequencing number on the returned slip.

80% of returned slips will have an automatic confirmed place on the trip whilst the other 20% of students will have their name put into a hat for a duty student to pick out. Names will be picked out of the hat for the order for reserve places at the same time.

The first come, first served approach is based on the reply slips being handed in and not via the payment method. This is to ensure that it is fair to all students.

The template wording for letters is below;

There are 60 places available to students on this trip. Should the trip be oversubscribed

☑ 80% of these will be awarded on a first come first served basis (in other words 48 places)

☑ 20% of places will be awarded from all those that apply within the timeframe below (in other words 12 places).

These will be given as 'names out of a hat'.

5% of places on any trip (from within the initial 80%) may be directed by the Year Team Leader to students in need.

No deposits posted through the Finance Office letterbox will be accepted. All deposits will need to be handed in in person to staff in the Finance Office. We will always ensure that staff are available to receive these at the times published for trip interest returns.

Deposits (and future payments) should be received in clearly marked envelopes detailing both the name of the student and visit. For initial deposits, these will be kept in the order they have been received. No payments will be taken before the published time.

**(Day Trips ONLY as there is a separate system for Residential – see below).**

If a student has been assigned a Reserve Place Only on one trip, this does not make them a priority for any future trips. *Each trip is dealt with in isolation of any other*; bar consideration of the SOT List.

**N.B. Parental permission for all trips must be given in writing or by e-mail: verbal permission is not acceptable.**

***An information booklet of all the literature involved in the trip must be provided for parents /carers and be available in PDF form on the school portal.***

### **DEPOSITS AND PAYMENT RETURNS (Residential Visits ONLY)**

An Initial Offer Letter (1) will go out to all parents/carers via SchoolComms (email) which will clearly state when the 1<sup>st</sup> deposits are being collected. For approximately two weeks the finance office will be open on the specified times for students to hand in their slips and deposits. They should be received in clearly marked envelopes with

the both the name of the student and visit and will be kept in the order they have been received (they will be date stamped and numbered) No payments will be taken before the published time. Payments will only be accepted when given directly to the Trips Administrator(EVC), not posted through the letter box. Any monies coming in before this will simply be returned. There can be no preferential treatment for students who hand their monies in via a member of staff – they must bring it themselves.

After this time a full list of students will be submitted to the Trip Leader and Year Team Leader for approval. No deposits will be cashed until a students' place has been confirmed on a trip. Equally students who are not allocated places on a trip will be informed by letter (*Standard Reserve Letter 3 and Standard Not Going Letter 4*) as well as the students who have been successful (Letter 2). Parents/Carers have an option to request their son/daughters name to be removed from the reserve list and their deposit returned otherwise they uncashed cheque and form remains in the finance office should a place become available.

Where a residential trip is oversubscribed, the same process as day trips will apply. See above.

There may also be a discretionary maximum of 5% of places) taken within the initial 80%. These will be for students identified by the Year Team Leader and Trips Co-Ordinator for students in need, or who have missed out on previous curriculum residential trips having been on the reserve list. This is different to Day Trips, where each trip is taken in isolation. It should be noted that the Ski Trip does not count as a curriculum trip.

Deposits are generally non-returnable but the following is included in both the Initial Offer Letter 1 and Acceptance Letter 2 :

*As we have now confirmed our reservation and paid a deposit, it will not be possible to return any deposits to students who withdraw from the trip at a later date unless there is another student to replace him/her. This is also true if a student needs to be removed for poor/ unsatisfactory behaviour in and around school*

#### Withdrawals from the trip :

Should a parent/carer choose to withdraw their son/daughter 12 weeks or more prior to departure of a residential trip, it will not be possible to return any of the monies paid to date and the family could also be liable for any outstanding balance.

This includes the son/daughter being removed from the trip due to unsatisfactory behaviour. (This will not be the same should a student be withdrawn for medical reason; but this would require a supporting letter from the child's Doctor).

Students who have a behaviour record that the school perceives as a concern may be placed on a contract - to encourage an improvement in behaviour and also support the staff taking the students on the trip. Areas which may then form part of a contract between home and school may be

- Improving behaviour
- Improving attendance
- Improving uniform

When a student is placed on a contract, whether on the trip list or the reserve list, the intention is for that student to improve thus ensuring their attendance and appropriate behaviour on the trip. There is always a risk that a child might not fulfil the terms of the contract. If this is the case they will be removed from the trip – and if a replacement cannot be found, the family may well have to pay for the trip in full. However, the school will endeavour to replace the student who has been removed from the trip and keep the costs to the family as low as possible.

It should be clear in the information given out to parents/carers in the trip booklet and the presentation evening (for both see later) that these situations may arise.

## ***EVC in the Finance Office must be informed in writing should you wish to withdraw your child from a residential trip.***

- If a student is removed from a trip due to behaviour concerns, the parent/carer is still liable for the full cost incurred by the school for this particular student's place.
- If a student is removed for medical reasons, with the appropriate medical certification, we will do all within our powers to retrieve payments made by the family for the trip.
- If a student is removed from the trip by parents/ carers for other reasons each case will be dealt with individually. **School must be informed in writing.** There will be no guarantee that any of the payments made will be returned; in fact there may still be further charges. However as a school we will endeavour to keep these as low as possible for the family.
- The Trip Leader and EVC will always try and fill any spaces that are vacated.

### **STUDENTS OFF TRIPS (SOT) LIST**

This is held by the EVC with input from previous Trip Leaders and Year Team Leaders. It identifies clearly the names of students who are to be either prohibited from going on a trip, or who can only attend subject to a contract being signed by the Trip Leader, the Student and Home. The list also states how long a student should be subject to these restrictions. The list is also available and up to date on the Trips area of the 360 for staff only to access. Any student who is placed on this list must be informed by the Trip Leader who has placed them on it. There is a standard letter to be sent home for this purpose. If a student is to be placed on the list it must be in consultation with the Deputy Head. Any queries regarding this can be passed to RK, as SLT Educational Visits Co-ordinator.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT/HEALTH & SAFETY**

It is essential that a Risk Assessment is prepared for any off-site activity, which must be approved and countersigned by EVC in Finance Office. It is the trip organiser's responsibility to ensure a Risk Assessment has been prepared and given to the EVC to check, it is also the Trip Lead's responsibility that all accompanying staff know any emergency procedures/ contact numbers. . We have template RAs that can be adapted for each individual trip.

Since September 2009, the Local Authority will only accept risk assessments for residential or hazardous activities through Brighton and Hove's online notification and approval system for off-site activities 'EVOLVE' which is completed by the Trip Leader, checked by the EVC and then signed off by the Headteacher.

The official RIDDOR accident form for all injuries beyond a scuff or scrape will be provided as a blank hard copy by the EVC from the Finance Office in the Initial Trips Pack: the Brighton & Hove Health and Safety Incident Report (HS2) forms are held in the school Medical Room for other cases where Students or staff are injured during a school visit.

Any queries or concerns regarding Health and Safety issues should be directed to Sarah Hextall, Business Manager.

### **FIRST AID**

A First Aid kit should be taken on all trips and the school keep a couple of such kits in the Medical Room: these should be collected before the visit and returned afterwards. Details of any equipment used during the visit should be given to the Medical Room to allow for replacements to be bought.

**Staff should not administer any kind of medication (other than paracetamol) on school trips unless it has been provided by the student's parent/carer.** Paracetamol can **only** be administered when we have **written permission** from the parents/carers as part of the trip consent. You must ensure this is part of your literature. In the case of students who need medication check with parents/carers whether they wish you to keep and administer it (always get this permission in writing) or whether the Students are competent to administer it themselves. In either case note down details of the drug and dosage.

In hot countries care should be taken to ensure that Students are protected from the harmful rays of the sun and from the effects of dehydration.

The exact circumstances of any accidents, injuries or illnesses must be carefully recorded, as well as the RIDDOR completed by the Trip Leader on the trip's return.

### **SCHOOL MOBILE PHONES**

The EVC has a mobile phone/charger which can be borrowed for use on school trips. We will ensure that this is delivered to you during the school day before you depart.

### **STAFF ON TRIPS**

All trips should be lead by an experienced member of staff.

**As a general rule**, staff/student ratios should be 1 member of staff to 15 Students. For residential mixed groups there must be both male and female members of staff. We allow one extra member of staff on residential trips to ensure that ratios are correct even when a student has to be taken to hospital/doctors etc.

Once a trip has been agreed, the names of accompanying staff must be agreed with the Diary Committee. The implications for cover costs could change dramatically depending on who accompanies school trips and visits: a number of non-teaching staff have traditionally accompanied school trips and this should be continued and encouraged.

### **INSURANCE**

The School Insurance Policy is with Zurich, although some trips may have separate cover through a Tour Operator, for example the Ski Trip. The trip leader must make himself/herself aware of procedure on insurance policy in the event of a claim. Parents/carers should be offered a copy of the insurance policy at a parents/carers' meeting and this will form part of the literature booklet.

Within the trip booklet will be a recommendation that should students take their own mobile phones these will not be covered by the school insurance and parents/carers should ensure that they have personal insurance to cover any loss/damage etc.

### **PARENTS/CARERS' MEETINGS – Residentials ONLY**

For all residential visits (with the exception of Duke of Edinburgh expeditions) there should be a parents/carers' meeting built into the planning for the trip. An Internal Set-Up form must be completed for this meeting and approved by Facilities and then Diary Committee before any letters can be sent out to parents/carers advising them of this Information Evening.

The purpose of the parents/carers' meeting is to give further information to students and parents/carers a few weeks before the visit. For trips organised with a commercial travel company, a representative of the company should ideally be present at this meeting.

Parents/carers' meetings should cover the following details:

- Accompanying staff.
- Travel arrangements and journey times.
- Insurance.
- Accommodation address and telephone number.
- Advice re clothing, luggage, pocket money, valuables, safety and behaviour, customs and excursions.

- Student mobiles should have data roaming switched off if travelling abroad.
- Telephone chain/emergency contact numbers. The school emergency contact number is 01273 221200. This number will divert directly to SLT mobile member of staff is on duty during the trip.

Parents/carers should be told what is expected of the students in terms of behaviour during the trip. In the event of students behaving badly, parents/carers should be informed that the school will take further action by, for example, charging for any deliberate damage, or not allowing Students to attend further school trips (see SOT List information above). Parents and Carers must also be informed that in extreme cases of poor behaviour (or certain other eventualities), they may be expected to go and collect their child mid-trip.

All these details should be laid out in the Standard Trip Booklet provided which you can add specific trip information and given to the parents/carers on the night, or posted to them if they do not attend. An electronic will also be uploaded onto 360.

### **MEDICAL/CONSENT FORMS**

It is important that students and parents/carers complete a Medical/Consent Form before all trips.

Separate parental permission is also required for certain other activities, e.g. unsupervised time, swimming etc. Consent forms must also request the swimmer's abilities. Again we have template letters that can be adapted – available from the EVC.

Permission must also be sought for photos to be taken. These photos may form part of the trip blog and could be posted (with all permissions) on the school website News section thereafter. Photo permission will form part of the consents and there will be a list of agreement and non-agreement to inform the Trip Leader before a trip.

For European trips, students should take with them a **European Health Insurance Card (E.H.I.C.)**. These can be applied for from a local post office or via [www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers). Whilst in the USA students will require an ESTA which can be obtained from <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/> and costs \$14 (£8.90). It is recommended that these are collected in advance of the trip.

### **KIT LISTS**

Where relevant, kit lists should be sent out with trip details and in the trip booklet to help parents/carers and Students be properly prepared for any visit.

### **BLOGS AND TWITTER**

We encourage the use of a school trip blog for residential. It helps keep families informed and is a useful activity of an evening for staff and students to be involved in. These can be set up very easily via Network Services. Families can then set up an alert to their email address to inform them when a post has been made.

For all residential and overseas trips we will also set up a twitter account for parents/carers/carers to follow. The intent here is not to confuse with the blog. No photos of students will ever be posted on the twitter feed, only ever on the blog. The twitter account will be for sending quick simple information to all those following; for example that the trip will be returning to school 40 minutes later than expected.

Each trip will have its own separate twitter account.

The trip twitter account will be under the nomenclature @BMS\_NYC2015 or @BMS\_Iceland15 or @BMS\_Skiing2016 etc (13 only when the place is too long!)

Trips that go out annually may well choose to not add the year to their name, so that the same twitter account can be used each year.

If staff on the trip wish to use the twitter feed more comprehensively than this they are welcome, but we appreciate that a trip takes up a lot of staff time and do not wish to add further pressures. The twitter account will not replace the blog.

Any photos posted on the twitter account will be of places, never students.

Photographs of students can only be posted on the blog or website with all students' permission – see above.

### **CONTACT SYSTEMS (NON-EMERGENCY)**

The EVC will set up a SchoolComms group for all the parents/carers and carers of students attending a particular residential trip so that both the Trip Leader and the SLT EVC Co-ordinator can communicate quickly and easily with families before, during and after the trip if necessary. This is an extremely useful and effective efficient method of communication.

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT SYSTEM/CONTINGENCY PLANS**

Thought should be given as to how you would deal with, for example, staff illness on a trip or how you would proceed if a member of staff has to accompany a student home unexpectedly. Discussion with colleagues should allow the trip leader to identify someone who would be available to assist in such an emergency situation. If a minibus driver is required, this obviously limits the choice of helpers. With any residential trips we will allow enough staff to attend to ensure that teacher:student ratios are still appropriate even if a member of staff has to attend hospital etc with a student.

Some thought must be given to the way in which trip leaders will contact parents/carers in case an emergency situation arises during a trip. For example, if a student breaks a leg during a skiing visit, or someone has been to hospital you should contact RK (or whoever is the named SLT EVC contact for the duration of the trip) and parents/carers will then be contacted by RK/the staff; not the students.

During term time the school should be informed if there is an emergency and, if the trip is in holiday time, RK as SLT EVC or the identified member of SLT who is available in Hove would be the first to be contacted. They will be given full details of the trip, students taking part and emergency contacts by the EVC in the Finance Office. This should be arranged by the trip organiser.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For overseas trips, it is good practice to use panic cards which include details of where the students are staying, emergency contact numbers etc.

On trips where staff may be less familiar with some of the children, it may be a good idea to take passport size photographs, which can be taken from SIMS.

As a precaution, trip organisers taking students on term-time trips, should leave a contact mobile telephone number with the EVC in the Finance Office, and take a school mobile telephone.

It is the responsibility of the trip organiser to inform the Student Services when students are away on a trip during term time: in addition, it is essential to send an email to staff and place a list of absent students in the staff room in advance of the trip, giving colleagues sufficient notice (of at least a week) that students will be missing their lessons.

If the trip involves a large number of students out of school during term time, the canteen needs to be informed as a matter of courtesy.

On the return of the trip a member of staff will always be in attendance until the last student has been dismissed with their parent/carer/agreed adult.



It is not acceptable for teachers to authorise students to be absent from school following a trip: if students take time off following a school trip, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

### **BEHAVIOUR ON THE TRIP**

All students should observe the highest standards of politeness, courtesy and conduct at all times. Particular care needs to be taken when on public transport or in residential accommodation. Even out of school time students are representing the school and should do everything in a way that reflects positively on them as well as on the school. The expectations of good behaviour must be explained to students before any trip and reiterated as appropriate.

### **STUDENTS SENT HOME**

It should be made clear to parents and carers in advance that if a student is sent home for misbehaviour then parents/carers will be expected to pay for all costs incurred – for example if they are discovered to be drinking alcohol/smoking, in possession of drugs or buying dangerous objects (e.g. knives).

If a student is then placed on the SOT list, parents/carers/carers must be informed – detailing why, at what level and for how long. This will be in letter form with a copy placed on record in the Year Office as well as with the EVC.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

For residential trips always check allocated rooms on arrival at your accommodation and make sure that there is nothing unsafe and that you have noted anything that is broken, missing or in any way inadequate. Inform the hotel management at once.

Students **MUST** be shown Fire Escape routes in hotels and guest houses on arrival.

Make sure that the students know where to find a member of staff in the night in the case of any emergency.

Members of staff must check that all students are in their rooms at the appropriate bed-time. The security of their rooms should also be checked and where there are locks these should be used. If students are sleeping in downstairs rooms windows should be shut.

### **SUPERVISION OF SWIMMING IN SWIMMING POOLS**

Staff must ensure that the Swimming Pool is safe. This would include:

- Are there accurate signs displaying the depth of the pool?
- Are there lifeguards present?
- Is there a poolside telephone and an alarm?
- Is the water clear and regularly tested for cleanliness?
- Is the water less than 1.5 metres deep? If so diving is not to be permitted.

A member of staff must always remain on the side of the pool. There should be a supervision level of at least 1 member of staff to 15 students (with a minimum of 2). Written parental permission must also be received.

### **Supervision of Swimming in the Sea or other natural waters**

THIS IS POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS. IT SHOULD **NOT** BE UNDERTAKEN UNLESS THERE IS A TEACHER PRESENT ON THE TRIP WHO HOLDS A RELEVANT LIFE GUARDING QUALIFICATION OR THERE ARE LIFEGUARDS IN ATTENDANCE. WRITTEN PARENTAL PERMISSION **MUST** ALSO HAVE BEEN RECEIVED AND THE TRIP LEADER HAS ALSO GIVEN THEIR PERMISSION.

If there is a possibility that the trip may want to go swimming (with life guards present) a risk assessment must be in place prior to the trips departure and added onto EVOLVE. THE TRIP MUST NOT GO SWIMMING WITHOUT THIS BEING COMPLETED EVEN IF A LIFEGUARD IS PRESENT. The LA may request a copy of the lifeguard's qualifications so Trip Leads should ensure the external provider is able to obtain these.

Trip Leaders to be aware that a lifeguard may be trained for lifeguarding in swimming pools, but not the sea – or vice versa. The correct qualification must be confirmed by the Trip Leader.

### **CANCELLATION OF TRIPS**

If a trip is cancelled for any reason, the organiser must ensure that JFA is informed as soon as possible.

### **BALANCE SHEET**

On return from residential school trips, organisers should produce a simple balance sheet, which matches the costings agreed at the beginning of the trip. **Please remember to attach receipts for all expenditure.** The sheet should also identify any unused contingency.

A list of expenditures, unspent cash and traveller's cheques, receipts, other balance sheet items to all be returned to the EVC in the Finance Office within 4 school weeks of the trip's return: Or before the end of the summer term should this be sooner.

The trip must be 'closed' before the end of the academic year for auditing purposes. This will then close the e-workflow.

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Consider making a note of any student given an FTE from the trip initial sign up on – will automatically be removed.