

Cottesbrooke Infant School

Educational Visits Policy

This policy has been evolved from the DfEE guidelines and Birmingham City Council advice and guidance documents. This policy reflects the school's ethos and its commitment to providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all its children, regardless of their abilities, in order to develop further the 'whole child'.

1. Aims and Purposes of School Visits

The school recognises the added value of learning beyond the statutory school day and beyond the school premises.

Each year the school will arrange a number of activities that take place off the school site and/or out of school hours. The range of activities offered, will be varied but always appropriate to the age of the child. They will be part of the school's curriculum and personal development programs. They will be planned well and where appropriate will include follow up work. The activities will be open to all children within that class/year group. Parents will always be notified of forthcoming visits giving full details of the activities to be undertaken and asking for written consent.

All visits will be carried out in accordance with the following policy and guidelines. (with reference to Learning Beyond the Classroom 2006)

The governing body has given its approval to the following types of activities being arranged in support of the educational aims of the school:

- Out of hours clubs (e.g. computer, sewing, football, dance etc.)
- Regular visits to nearby places of interest - local churches, local shops, libraries, parks etc.
- Day or half day visits to places of historical interest eg. Aston hall, Blakesley Hall, Black Country Museum, Tamworth Castle etc.

- Day or half day visits to nearby farms, zoos or safari parks to study animals and wildlife e.g. Umberslade Farm, Twycross Zoo, Hatton Country Park etc.
- Visits to places of cultural interest e.g. museums, art galleries, theatres, cinemas etc.

In accordance with the school's Charging and Remissions Policy parents may be asked to contribute towards the cost of these visits. Although no child will be denied access to these visits on financial grounds, if less than 70% voluntary contributions are received the trip may have to be cancelled. In the event of a child having paid for a visit and then being unable to attend through sickness or any other unavoidable reason, the entrance fee may be refunded but not the cost of the travel.

2. Responsibilities

General

The aim of this Section is to clarify the major responsibilities of all the parties involved in the visit. It should:

- help to ensure that no vital issue is overlooked;
- clarify organisational responsibility;
- encourage awareness of the vital issues of safety and well-being;
- ensure appropriate support for leaders.

THE VISIT LEADER

Each visit will have a nominated Visit Leader. The visit leader may be a Teacher or Teaching Assistant who is able to meet the educational aims of the visit and is competent in all the visit requirements.

In addition to the responsibilities implicit in the above paragraphs, the Visit Leader will have overall responsibility for

management of the visit and must:

- follow LA and governing body regulations, guidelines and policies;
- recognise that whilst leading the visit he / she is representing the Headteacher, School and LA.
- ensure that all accompanying adults, whether employees or volunteers, are fully briefed on their roles and responsibilities;
- ensure the overall maintenance of supervision, order and discipline at all times;
- make adequate arrangements for the safety and well-being of all young people at all times;
- introduce appropriate child protection measures;
- make appropriate and adequate preparations for emergencies (see Emergency Procedures) and ensure that all accompanying leaders are familiar with these procedures;
- arrange for clearly understood delegation in the absence of the visit leader;
- ensure that the visit and activities are suitable for the group;
- ensure that accompanying adults are aware of any special educational or medical needs;
- carry out a comprehensive risk assessment and obtain the EVC's written approval. (See Approval for all Visits Appendix i)

GROUP LEADER (an employee of the school)

In addition to the general responsibilities outlined above, Group Leaders must recognise that they act as employers, whenever the visit takes place. They have a responsibility for:

- maintaining order and discipline;

- safeguarding the health, well-being and safety of the young people in their care;
- informing the Visit Leader of any relevant incidents affecting, or likely to affect, group members.

ADULT VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers who are not employees at the school/centre must:

- understand and agree to the expectations of them;
- understand their relationship to the young people, staff and visit leader;
- recognise the limits of their responsibilities;
- ensure they are not left in sole charge of young people unless this has been formally agreed through a risk assessment;
- follow instructions from staff;
- raise concerns for young people's welfare with the visit leader.

Adult volunteers must understand that the principle of duty of care will apply to all who are in a supervisory capacity, though it is likely that courts would expect a greater level of care from staff than from voluntary helpers.

THE EDUCATIONAL VISITS CO-ORDINATOR

The functions of the EVC are to:

- work as delegated on behalf of the Head/LA/Governors;
- support the Heads and Governors with approval decisions;
- ensure the competence of the staff and volunteers to lead or otherwise supervise a visit;
- organise the training of leaders and others going on a visit
- ensure the C.R.B checks are in place as necessary;

- ensure that parental consent or refusal is obtained;
- organise the emergency arrangements and ensure emergency contact for each visit;
- keep records of individual visits including accident/incident/near miss reports;
- review systems and monitor practice;

THE HEADTEACHER

Each Head of Establishment is responsible for ensuring that Governing Body and LA policy is implemented. Under his / her conditions of employment the Head Teacher has responsibility for ensuring that all activities are properly planned, appropriately supervised and risks assessed by a competent person.

In particular the Head Teacher must ensure:

- tasks are delegated to EVC as appropriate
- that the visit leader is an appropriately experienced and competent member of staff;
- the suitability, number and competence of all adults accompanying or instructing the party;
- that adequate child protection measures are in place;
- proper and effective support structures in the event of difficulty or emergency, including means of contacting the relevant School Education Officer at the LA.
- that visits are evaluated to inform future visits. (See Appendix ii)

The Head Teacher is encouraged to review visit procedures with the Governing Body on an annual basis in order to ensure that they reflect the current thinking of the Governing Body and are up-to-date in relation to staff changes.

GOVERNING BODY

As part of its responsibility for general conduct, each governing body must:

- ensure that a policy exists for the coordination of visits and for their effective and safe management;
- assure itself that appropriate risk assessment procedures are in place;
- ensure a school approval system for visits is in place;
- determine its procedures for responding to a major emergency;
- have a Charging and Remissions policy

THE LA

As employer, the Local Authority, is responsible for the actions of its employees whilst acting in the course of their employment. By association this includes responsibility for the safety and well-being of young people in its care.

To ensure these responsibilities are met, the Authority provides a guidance document as a statement of good practice and will continue to provide up-to-date advice, a system of monitoring certain activities, training opportunities for leaders and an emergency support service.

Staff following LA regulation and guidance are covered under Public Liability Insurance.

3. Staffing

Educational visits involve considerable responsibility on the part of teachers. The Visit Leader must:

- ensure that the overall party size be restricted to that which is manageable in the circumstances
- ensure that staff have specific abilities to cope with all planned activities
- ensure that teacher and supervisory adult numbers are based on the ratios below
- ensure that minibus drivers are appropriately qualified and prepared to undertake this role
- recognise that large parties create special supervisory problems and should be subdivided for activity purposes
- have advance notice of any disabilities, health or fitness concerns amongst staff, pertinent to their role on the visit (diabetes, epilepsy, severe asthma)

All visits should have at least one teacher and one teaching assistant for every 30 pupils supported by the appropriate number of approved adult helpers. In normal circumstances 50% of the recommended adult numbers should be employees of the school.

NURSERY CLASSES

For under 5s the ratio of one adult to 2 children should be adopted in hazardous situations eg. visits to water, busy shopping and traffic areas. A ratio of one to 3 should be acceptable in normal situations.

RECEPTION CLASSES

For children under 5 years of age a ratio of one adult to 3 children should be adopted.

For children over 5 a ratio of one to 5 children should be appropriate in environments planned for very young children which are free of particular hazards such as traffic and water and where there is no danger of children wandering into less safe areas. However, the higher ratio of one adult to 3 pupils should be used for activities which:

- involve exposure to greater hazards eg. water, traffic

- involve younger children or those less sensitive to danger
- involve fewer trained adults (depends on volunteer helpers with limited experience)

KEY STAGE ONE (Years 1 and 2)

A ratio of one adult to between 6 - 10 children should be appropriate in most environments. Ideally there should be 5 adults per class group of 30 and no less than 4. The higher adult to pupil ratios are recommended for:

- younger children in the age range
- circumstances of above average hazard
- children with Special Educational Needs as appropriate

There may be some circumstances where ratios could increase beyond the recommendations (minimum 2 adults). It might include a visit which starts at the school gate, journey to the door of a theatre or swimming pool and back again.

USE OF VOLUNTEERS

Adults, other than teachers and ancillary staff based at the school, can make a valuable contribution to the visit. The LA values and recognises this contribution, provided that:

- volunteers are competent for the allotted task
- each individual is approved by the Head Teacher/Visit Leader
- they have been carefully briefed on the scope of their responsibility

All staff should be aware of the potential for conflict if a parent of one of the pupils on the visit is included as a volunteer helper.

Where behaviour has implications for the safety of a pupil or that of the group then the pupil could be withdrawn from the activity or a parent/carer will be asked to accompany them on the visit. Alternative means of fulfilling the curricular aims of the visit must be provided for any child withdrawn.

4. How to Organise a Visit

A safe and successful visit is started at an early stage with good planning. Following guidelines automatically starts to manage risk. Using checklists also helps to ensure that nothing is missed.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment is a legal responsibility of employers and must be carried out for every visit or off site activity by a trained person, usually the Visit Leader, and shared with all staff on the visit:

- The Approval for all visits form should be completed prior to each visit. (See Appendix i)
- The checklist for Farm visits should be completed before any farm visit in addition to the approval for all visits (See Appendix iii)
- Visit leaders must carry out an appropriate risk assessment for each group of children, the extent of which will depend on the nature of the visit. (See Appendix iv)

The key issues for consideration are:

- The Environment - The area/situation that the group are going to including any hazards that you can identify and how you would manage these.
- The Group -The behaviour, medical needs, special needs, allergies etc of the children and staff in the group.
- The Leadership and Activity - What activities will you be doing with the group in the environment, have all the leaders done this before, or are the leadership team relatively new?
- Using a Provider - Communicate with the provider, ask them if they have risk assessments carried out and safety measures in place. Define what they are responsible for (i.e. activities, leading the session) and what your staff are solely responsible for (i.e. lunchtime supervision, travel to and from supervision) and then risk assess what you are responsible for.

- Transport -The special risk associated with transport, particularly by minibus or private car, need serious consideration and should form part of the risk assessment process. (See Section 11 learning Beyond the Classroom)
- Emergency procedures -what are the emergency procedures? How will you summon help? Where is the nearest First Aid point?
- When the necessary documents are complete they should be approved by the EVC and retained on file.
- All adults with responsibility on the visit should be given a copy of the risk assessment and understand the measures taken to minimise the risk.
- For visits within the local environment a generic risk assessment must be completed. This will be reviewed annually. (See Appendix v)

Questions

Have we covered everything? Can we put this RA into action?
 Have we identified significant hazards? Have we identified control measures to reduce these risks?

Record it, share it, review it, fix it, review it.

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Visit

RISKS ASSESSED

RISK MANAGEMENT

AFTER VISIT



→
VISION
FORWARD

Actions from risk assessment and procedures put into place

Review the visit

Ongoing review during visit.

Note where changes took place on original RA

Q. Do we have appropriate actions in place?
A. If not adjust actions accordingly.

ONGOING RISK ASSESSMENTS

Circumstances may change during a visit and staff on the visit will alter and change their plans accordingly. These changes are not usually recorded at the time but the changes do need to be recorded. This assists the planning process for a subsequent visit, and in reviewing the completed visit.

NEAR MISSES/INCIDENTS

In the event of an incident or a near miss occurring, or if circumstances change significantly and avoiding action is necessary, a serious incident form should be completed and handed to the EVC. (See Appendix vi)

Completion of this form is not intended to apportion blame to individuals, but to identify where incidents have occurred and where others can learn from this experience.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

Aims and objectives of the visit should be clearly identified on the Approval for all visits form (appendix i) and the risk assessment forms (Appendix iv/v) These should be relevant to the pupils and curriculum needs, taking account of age, ability, previous experience and resources available. Clear, appropriate objectives will contribute significantly to the safety and well-being of the pupils as well as the educational outcomes.

APPROVALS

Verbal approval should be sought from the EVC as soon as possible and before any arrangements are made.

PRELIMINARY VISIT AND RESEARCH

A preliminary visit by the Visit Leader at least is considered highly desirable on both educational and safety grounds. In some cases a preliminary visit is essential. Such cases will include:

- Visits to locations where there may be special hazards
- Visits to unfamiliar terrain or location, especially where activity is school led
- Visits to be led by less experienced staff

PREPARATION OF PUPILS

Adequate and appropriate preparation of pupils will significantly enhance enjoyment, education value and safety. The age, maturity and ability of pupils will determine the nature and extent of the preparation but it should include:

- Information and guidance on what the visit involves
- A clear understanding of what is expected of them, including standards of behaviour and the need to follow rules
- A knowledge of potential dangers and how to avoid them
- Appropriate and inappropriate personal conduct
- What to do if approached by strangers
- Action if separated from the group
- Knowledge of emergency procedures
- The need to follow the instructions of teachers and supervisors

SELECTION OF PUPILS

Visits offer valuable educational experience and should, wherever possible, be made available to all relevant pupils subject to any limitations on numbers due to staffing or limited facilities.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

The Visit Leader must consider and apply as necessary the Child Protection procedures for the Education Service. The issue of child protection on educational visits has become of increasing concern in recent years. Visit leaders must assess the suitability of all volunteers for the role in question, in consultation with the Headteacher. (See Child Protection Policy/Policy for Adults Working with Children)

COSTING AND FINANCE

The financial implications of a trip require detailed consideration at an early stage. When planning a visit, staff should ensure that the total cost of the trip (entry, transport, activities) does not exceed what would be considered reasonable in respect of any other trips planned during that academic year. Staff should also consider alternative transport arrangements e.g. use of public transport in order to keep costs down.

The school office staff will keep records of all income and expenditure appertaining to school visits.

TRANSPORT

When organising a trip, the Visit leader should consider the cheapest and most suitable form of transport including coach, train, mini bus or public transport. For most visits a coach will be used. Due to staffing ratios there may not always be sufficient places for all children and staff. If this is the case, using a mini bus for additional children/ adults may be considered. Alternatively adults may be transported in staff cars. It is Staffs responsibility to check with their insurance company that they are insured to carry passengers for this purpose.

INSURANCE

The school subscribes to the LA's Insurance Policy, which covers all pupils, employees and participating volunteers against personal injury. Should parents wish to know further details, these may be obtained from the school office.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CONSENT

Activities which take place within the immediate locality of the school and which are part of the school's curriculum eg traffic surveys, sporting activities, should not require written parental consent on each occasion. A generic permission slip for these visits must be obtained at the start of each academic year, using the agreed proforma and informing parents that such activities are an integral part of the school curriculum. (Appendix vii)

Any specific concerns or objections raised by parents should be kept on file by the EVC.

Any other visits require brief written information to parents including any special clothing needed, lunch arrangements or travel and a written consent form specific to that trip. (See Appendix viii)

Where parents withhold consent the pupil must not be taken on the visit and attempts should be made to deliver the visit aims through alternative means.

PROGRAMME

A brief description of the day's activities, and any associated risk, should be outlined on the risk assessment form. (If the venue provides a programme this can be attached to the Risk assessment.) It is also advisable for Visit leaders to have an alternative plan in case inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances prevent the original activities taking place. (appendix iv)

The EVC and all supervisory staff should be familiar with the programme of activities including alternatives. Pupils will need to be aware of the general programme.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Pupils with special needs may require additional consideration, as their inclusion may have staffing and programme implications. Some or all of the following considerations may apply:

- Environmental factors may increase the 'risk' level above that applying to other members in the group
- A higher level of staffing will normally be needed and it may be necessary to include specialist staff to facilitate supervision, communication and encouragement
- Whilst travelling arrange more frequent stops, employ extra supervision and be particularly vigilant over travel sickness
- Medication and dietary requirements should be known and monitored
- Check on the suitability of buildings and terrain for those with physical disabilities
- Ensure that activities offered are appropriate to the pupil: mental and physical disabilities may require activities to be adapted or alternative ones provided (Refer to DDA Section 14)

SPECIAL MEDICAL NEEDS

All staff involved in the visit should be provided with written details of the medical needs of individuals. Parents should be asked to supply such information annually using the data checksheet. Parents should inform school of any changes immediately.

A copy of each of these forms should be taken on the visit by the Visit Leader - the original to remain at school. Arrangements for the administration of medicines by the teacher or teaching assistant in charge must be made where necessary and recorded using the school's proforma for the administration of medicines. (See Appendix ix)

In circumstances where special care is necessary to ensure safety parents/carers will be asked to attend the visit. The suitability of transport and the manual handling skills of staff should be checked where young people in wheelchairs are involved.

FIRST AID AND MEDICAL CARE

A good knowledge of First Aid and a First Aid box are required for all visits. There must be a nominated person responsible for first aid arrangements including a stocked and checked first aid box appropriate to the nature of the visit and the numbers in the group. Minimum recommended first aid items by the Health and Safety Executive are:

- A general advice leaflet
- Six individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings
- One large sterile unmedicated wound dressing approximately 18cm x 18cm
- Two triangular bandages
- Two safety pins
- Individually wrapped moist cleansing wipes
- One pair of disposable gloves
- A resuscitator (for hygienic mouth to mouth resuscitation) would also be useful.

Appropriate items should be added to the list above where specific risks are identified.

First Aid provision should be appropriate to the nature of the visit. Group Leaders should:

- Undertake a risk assessment that will identify the level of First Aid knowledge required and the equipment to be carried.
- Identify the location of professional medical help which should be known to all staff
- Where excessive exposure to the sun is likely parents should provide high factor protective cream and hats. Group leaders should encourage adequate application of sun protection
- Ensure that all adults involved know how to contact the emergency services

ON THE DAY

- Class registers should be completed carefully and sent to the office prior to the visit. A class tick list of all those going on the visit should be sent to Head/Deputy/EVC

- Group leaders should check that all permission slips have been returned. If not office staff will endeavour to obtain verbal permission and make a note of it to be kept on file. Provision must be made for any child not attending the trip.
- Group leaders should check that all children have a packed lunch and a drink either from home or school.
- All children should have a wristband with school contact details securely fitted. Children should not wear labels with their names visible unless they are in a venue not accessible to the general public.
- Whenever possible classes should remain together throughout the day, subdivided into smaller groups. If the activity means that classes have to be split into smaller groups, the group leader must have a list of all the groups and who is in charge of them.
- If there is a male member of staff accompanying the trip, they should supervise the boys in the Gents toilets. If there is no male accompanying the trip then boys and girls must use the ladies toilets unless there are designated children's toilets.

5. Emergency Procedures

Despite good planning and leadership, unforeseen emergencies or accidents may arise. On such occasions leaders may need the support, advice and management skills of the Head Teacher, Governing Body and the LA. The following emergency procedures are designed to ensure the rapid transfer of information, enlist services and assistance and to deal with the probable attentions of the media.

Some emergencies may be classed as 'critical incidents'. It is essential that school procedures reflect the guidance in the document 'Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidance Procedures for Schools'.

PREPARATION BEFORE THE VISIT

All Group Leaders should carry a mobile phone with school's emergency contact details and those of other group leaders. (There is a school mobile available from the school office. The school's mobile number is 07528 913095)

School contacts (this would usually be the Head, Deputy or EVC) should have:

- A list of all pupils attending the trip.
- a data check sheet for each pupil
- details of next of kin with contact numbers for all adults on the visit. (See Appendix x)
- Office and mobile telephone numbers of their senior Education Officers and other designated Learning and Culture emergency contact numbers

Identical list should form part of the Visit Leaders Pack and taken on the visit with them.

Where appropriate all adults who will be supervising pupils during the visit should be briefed as to the above procedure and should know the location of the nearest accident and emergency hospital.

Information relating to the possible need for emergency hospital treatment for any members of the party, is detailed on the data checking sheet, one copy of this form, in respect of each young person in the party, should be carried by the Visit Leader.

Where travel by minibus is involved it is important to have the Emergency Contact names and telephone number/s clearly displayed in the vehicle. (See appendix xi)

A written summary of these Emergency Procedures should be part of the Visit Leader's reference pack. These can be obtained from the EVC. (Appendix xiii)

ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT OR EMERGENCY

CONTROL AND SUPERVISION OF THE GROUP

- Assess the situation.
- Call the emergency services if required, including the Police.
- Notify School contacts.
- Account for ALL other group members and ensure their well-being.
- Immediately inform all group staff of the problem; share it; clarify actions to be taken and by whom.
- Agree who will be the co-ordinator and person dealing with communications etc.
- Establish the names and numbers of people involved in the incident and, if injured, the nature and extent of the injuries.
- Ensure that the injured are accompanied to hospital wherever possible by a teacher or, if a teacher is unavailable an adult helper.
- Clarify with the rest of the group what has happened and your consequent course of action.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

All Group leaders should have a charged mobile on which they can contact/be contacted by school.

Alert the school Emergency Contact with precise details as soon as practical.

Do not release names of involved or injured participants other than to official sources such as police, medical services, or the LA.

Leaders should avoid any direct dealings with the media. Media response to a major incident is often immediate; depending on location leaders should expect and be prepared for media attention

within 30 minutes. **In the event of a serious incident, Birmingham City Council Press and Public Relations team will handle media contact.**

If the incident is serious, the Emergency Contact should alert the Education Officer (or other Learning and Culture Emergency Contact) and Chair of Governors. They will then jointly determine the need to initiate the LA Emergency Procedures.

In the unlikely event of the Education Officer team (or other senior LA officer) being unavailable, emergency contact with the LA can be made through Police Headquarters, Lloyd House, Birmingham. Tel.0845 113 5000. It must be stressed that this is a major emergency contact procedure only and must NOT be used for dealing with routine organisational difficulties.

Contact with relatives should be as early as possible, consistent with accuracy. It is vital to ensure parental contact, whenever possible, before news spreads through the media. This would normally be done through the Headteacher, Deputy EVC or other designated person at the school. **In the event of fatalities, contact should be made with the police.**

Once the initial facts are clear and a press release agreed, the City Council/Press Office will act as a base for media reception and as a channel for communication.

ADMINISTRATION

As soon as possible:

- take photographs if possible;
- record all facts relating to the incident: time, date, those involved, what happened, witness details;
- maintain a record of subsequent events;
- notify the tour operator or provider, where used;
- notify the insurers;

- complete an LA accident report form.

CARE OF GROUP MEMBERS AND RELATIVES

Immediately following a serious incident it is highly likely that group members and staff will be in a state of shock. It is therefore important to ensure their well-being and to provide them with security and protection from media attention.

All involved may need help in coping with possible shock and trauma, which may last for many weeks. Support and counselling may be necessary; in this event the City Council services will be of significant help.

6. Evaluation

School Visits contribute a great deal to children's learning and are an integral part of the curriculum. As such they must constantly be updated and evaluated to ensure that the venues/activities continue to meet the changing needs of the children and that they continue to be the most effective means of addressing the aims. (see Appendix ii)