



Educational Visits Policy

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.
- 1.2 In this policy, we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits, we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 The aims of our off-site visits are to:
 - enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
 - provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;
 - promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

These visits begin with short excursions into the local area in the Early Years, and progress to residential experiences towards the end of Key Stage 2.

- 2.2 All visits are logged using the national 'Evolve'. *EVOLVE visits* is an online system for the planning, approval and management of educational visits, sports fixtures and extra-curricular activities. It is proven to reduce paperwork, simplify procedures, produce self-review and inspection preparation data, and improve staff confidence in that they automatically follow both employer, and National Guidelines. *EVOLVE visits* has been designed and developed by a team with extensive experience of implementing and managing IT systems in schools, and planning and co-ordinating educational visits. It is modular, flexible and designed to promote efficiency and confidence in those that use it... teachers.

3 Curriculum links

- 3.1 For each subject in the curriculum, there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). Below are examples of possible linked 'visits'. All these activities are in line with guidance published by the LA:
 - English – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;
 - Science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens, museums;
 - Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
 - History – historical building visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums;
 - Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails;
 - Art and Design – art gallery visits, use of the locality;
 - PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches;

- Music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, local schools' orchestra, concerts for parents and carers to hear;
- Design and Technology – visits to local factories or design centres;
- ICT – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools, etc;
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local religious representatives.
- PSHE and citizenship – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

4 Residential activities

- 4.1 Children in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is in school time and linked to the National Curriculum. Charities are approached to subsidise families who may be unable to pay for school trips and families are encouraged to speak to the school regarding this if needed. The school may also use the Pupil Premium funding to support 'vulnerable/disadvantaged' families to ensure equal access for all to these experiences.
- 4.2 The Year 6 residential visit also enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work.
- 4.3 We undertake these visits only with the written agreement of the LA. We (or the centres) provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

5 How visits may be authorised

- 5.1 The head teacher will appoint a visit leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school.
- 5.2 The school's educational visits coordinator (EVC) will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

They will:

- ensure each visit leader completes the 'Evolve' visit record and approval form prior to the visit;
- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- support the head teacher (when the HT is not the EVC) and governing body in their decisions on approval;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory DBS checks make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure that there are regular generic assessments of the risks (e.g. road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (e.g. a swimming facility).

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LA (available from the Evolve website). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LA's instructions.

- 5.3 Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the head teacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the school.
- 5.4 Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, adventurous activities or a journey by sea or air, the head teacher will seek the approval of the governing body and the LA before permitting the activity to take place.
- 5.5 It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents or carers to help us to adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

6 Risk assessment

6.1 A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

6.2 Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. S/he should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. S/he will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments should be adopted. The LA will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

6.3 It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the leader must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

6.4 Other than the regulations affecting Early Years provision, pupil to staff ratios for school trips are not prescribed in law. Those planning trips, on the basis of risk assessment, should decide the ratios, taking into account the activity to be undertaken and the age and maturity of the pupils. The DfE publication HASPEV (1998) suggests the following "starting points"

- 1 adult to between 10 and 15 pupils in Years 4 to 6;
- 1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 3.

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases. The ratios for Early Years are set out in the Early Years and Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, and must be applied, not just to onsite activity but offsite activity and visits.

6.5 A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach companies we use are regularly checked for the following health and safety measures:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- break down procedures.

6.6 The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to DBS checks (see 5.2 above).

6.7 A copy of the completed risk assessment will be attached to the Evolve form.

7 Transport

7.1 The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport (including preliminary visits);

- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments that the school has opted to pay for.

7.2 Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

7.3 Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks (see 5.2). In addition, the school has blanket car insurance for up to 10 cars (being used at the same time) for educational purposes.

8 Communication with parents and carers

8.1 The parents/carers of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents or carers must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

8.2 Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions. Charities are approached to subsidise families who may be unable to pay for school trips and families are encouraged to speak to the school regarding this if needed. Pupil Premium funding may also be used. This must be made clear to parents and carers in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

8.3 No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents and carers will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits. However, a lack of parental contributions may result in an activity or visit being cancelled.

8.4 The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the head teacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

9 Further health and safety considerations

9.1 All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the visit leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day, the home / mobile telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

9.2 Before a party leaves school, the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, adult mobile phone numbers, together with a programme and timetable for the activity. The school office holds all relevant contact details for those involved on the visit.

9.3 The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity, the visit leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

9.4 Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the visit leader should discuss with the head teacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

9.5 More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements can be obtained Evolve.

10 Visit leaders' planning

10.1 Visit leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:

- 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide' (DfES 1998) and its supplements:

'A Handbook for Group Leaders' (DfES 2002)

'Group Safety at Water Margins' (DfES 2002)

They must consult the LA's documentation detailing procedures and requirements and complete a the Evolve form.

11 Visit Plan

11.1 The Visit Plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

- risk assessment;
- report on preliminary visit;
- applications for approval of visit;
- general information;
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- travel schedule;
- accommodation plan (if applicable);
- full plan of activities;
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;
- guidance for visit leaders;
- guidance for the emergency contact and head teacher;
- medical questionnaire returns;
- First-aid boxes.

12 Monitoring and review

12.1 This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every three years, or before if necessary.