



## Offsite Visits Policy

Updated February 2017

Review February 2019

### **Rationale**

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good infant practice.

### **Purposes**

Educational Visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively teachers may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the curriculum.

Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised.

### **Guidelines**

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich learning experience for the pupils.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at Patcham Infant School.

### **Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher will endeavour to ensure that:

- they have appointed a suitable Educational Visits Coordinator (Chris Taylor) to oversee all off-site visits;
- the risk assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit;
- the class teacher has experience in supervising and controlling the age group going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
- all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate police clearance;
- parents have signed consent forms;
- arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the children;
- the mode of travel is appropriate;
- travel times out and back are known;
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover;
- they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name;
- they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents and of the staff.

### **Class teacher**

The class teacher is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit. The Class teacher should:

- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
- complete a comprehensive written risk assessment and share with the Head Teacher at least 4 days before the event;
- complete an individual comprehensive written risk assessment for children with complex additional needs and share with the Head Teacher at least 4 days before the event;
- have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of pupils below).

### **Other adults involved in a visit**

Teachers on school-led visits are employees of the LA and of the Governing Body. They will therefore be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours. Teachers are generally supported by one Teaching Assistant (TA) who is usually a first aider. Individual children may in addition be allocated an individual needs assistant as necessary.

School staff and other adults on the visit must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would;
- follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline;
- wear a high-visibility jacket;
- consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

### **Responsibilities of pupils**

The class teacher should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks;
- wear a high visibility jacket;
- follow the instructions of the leader and other adults;
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly;

In extreme cases, any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

### **Parents**

The class teacher should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose of the visit.

The class teacher should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is an additional language;

Parents must:

- sign the consent form;

- give the group leader relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit
- ensure that children have appropriate clothing, footwear and food/drink.

### **Planning off-site visits**

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, beach or castle it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

The Head Teacher is responsible for planning all off-site visits. In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the class teachers of the visit, but the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

### **Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using the Brighton and Hove Risk Assessment Form. The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- what are the risks?
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the class teacher guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit?  
(See section on Supervision.)

The class teacher should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

### **Exploratory visit**

Wherever possible the class teacher should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;
- ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue.

### **First Aid**

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For all visits the class should have at least one trained first aider in the group. The first aider has the responsibility to ensure a suitable and sufficient first aid kit is taken on the trip as well as any special individual items such as asthma inhalers and epipens.

First aid should be available and accessible at all times.

### **Supervision**

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit. There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. As general guidelines, the following ratio of adults to children should be used:

- Reception Classes - 1 adult to 4 children
- Key Stage One, - 1 adult to every 10 participants with a minimum of 2 adults (at Patcham Infant School we work on a 1;6 ratio)

Parents with appropriate CRB clearance are often used to achieve the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the pupil group. Other responsible adults (well known to the school) without CRB clearance may also act in a supportive role as long as they are not left alone with children.

All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Class teachers retain overall responsibility for the group at all times. In case of a conflict of opinion regarding a particular child, the classteacher has the final say, as school visits take place during school hours.

For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a pupil. When children are taken to the toilet, this should be done in groups.

All hazardous activities follow the Patcham Infant School risk assessment procedures. They **must** however then be checked by the school EVC and submitted onto the Educational Visits Online Virtual Environment (EVOLVE) for LA approval, all within designated timescales. EVOLVE records both non-hazardous and hazardous visits and acts as a ready made data base and reporting facility. It enables the Outdoor Education Adviser (OEA) to approve hazardous visits online.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place.

### **Preparing Pupils**

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed.

### **Information to pupils**

It is for the class teacher to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information.

Pupils should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit / activity;
- background information about the place to be visited;
- why safety precautions are in place;
- what standard of behaviour is expected from pupils;
- who is responsible for the group;

### **Transport and pupils**

For trips further afield we use coaches with seat belts.

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- wear your seatbelt and remain seated while travelling on transport;
- make sure your bags do not block aisles on the transport
- stay clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport
- after leaving the vehicle, listen carefully to the instruction given by the class teacher
- if you feel unwell while travelling, tell a class teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group.

For local trips within Brighton we may use buses or trains. A separate risk assessment is always conducted for the transport element of a visit (coach, bus, train or walk)

Wherever possible we try to minimise costs and keep children fit by walking. School staff select routes that pose the least traffic risk, even if it means taking a bit longer. Classes walk along 'crocodile fashion' away from the kerb, staying close together. When crossing roads a suitable place and break in traffic is selected and a member of staff stands in the road wearing a high vis. jacket, until all have crossed.

### **Pupils with special educational and medical needs**

Every effort should be made to accommodate children with SEN or medical needs whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage. Alternatives to the usual visits may need to be considered under the school's reasonable adjustment duty.

### **Safeguarding**

Patcham Infant School is a place for children where responsibilities for safeguarding are taken seriously. It is the responsibility of every adult on an off-site visit to ensure that we maintain the highest level of awareness about possible unsafe practices and deal with any issues immediately and appropriately.

If any helper is concerned that a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or receives a disclosure, they should contact the class teacher as soon as possible.

The information given will be passed onto the Child Protection Designated Person (Helen Hawkins).

All safeguarding arrangements are reviewed regularly.

### **Communicating with Parents / Guardians**

Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place - 'in loco parentis' - and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupil's health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in letter to parents / guardians prior to a visit:

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;
- visit's objectives;
- clothing and equipment to be taken;

- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to.

### **Voluntary contributions**

Whilst Patcham Infant School endeavours to use the local environment to support the children's learning, there are some off-site visits that are further afield and require the school to pay for the site and transport. In order to recover some of the costs, the school will ask for a voluntary contribution. Children will not be treated differently because the family is unable to pay. However, if there are insufficient voluntary contributions, the school will have to decide whether it can afford for the trip to go ahead.

### **Parental consent**

Patcham Infant School will seek consent for all off-site visits.

If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible. The pupil will join another class in school for the duration of the visit and must not be kept at home as that would constitute truancy (unauthorised absence).

### **Emergency Procedures**

A set of parent consent forms are kept in the school office for the duration of the visit and the person responsible for first aid carries all emergency medication. Leaders carry a mobile phone and the school office is manned throughout the day if emergency contact needs to be made. If an emergency arises which is beyond the scope of first aid 999 will be called, as well as the school.

### **Photographs**

School staff usually take photographs of school visits to enhance pupils' learning once back at school. Parent and volunteer helpers are not permitted to take photographs of children (except their own), but may take photos of other subjects.

### **Mobile Phones**

The section on photographs also applies to cameras on mobile phones. In addition all adults on trips are expected to use the mobile phone only for essential calls, rather than social calls or to access the internet/emails.

### **Summary Guidance for Volunteers**

Volunteer helpers will be issued with the risk assessment and a summary guidance leaflet before the trip.