



## **Educational Visits Policy**

*Article 19: You should not be harmed and should be looked after and kept safe*  
*Article 28: Your right to learn and to go to school*

### **Introduction.**

Educational visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school and outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the school's curriculum by providing experiences that would otherwise be impossible. Therefore, all off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and improving our children's learning experiences.

We have a clear process for planning and evaluating off-site visits and 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, but they take place after school on occasions. Our school adopts the LA guidance and uses their proforma when planning Educational Visits.

### **Aims.**

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;

- Provide a broader range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone, building on their cultural capital.
- Promote our children's independence as learners and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

### **Curriculum links.**

There is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists).

English - theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;

- Science - use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens;
- Mathematics - use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
- History - castle visits, the 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 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 clergy.
- PSHE and citizenship - visit the fire station or an older people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

### **Residential activities.**

Children in upper Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work and have links with PSHE, Science and Geography. We undertake this visit only with the written agreement of the LA. We provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

### **How visits may be authorised.**

The EVC will appoint a party leader responsible for running the activity. This will typically be a teacher employed at the school.

The school's educational visits coordinator, who may be the Headteacher, will be involved in the planning and managing off-site visits. S/he will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- support the Headteacher 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 police checks and that the letter from our coach company assures us their drivers too have had police checks;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example, road-crossing) and frequent visits to local venues (for example, a swimming facility).

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the EVC before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made. The EV pack is available from the staff handbook, school office, or EVC. Paperwork is also available on the School Server.

If the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air. The Headteacher will seek the approval of the governing body and the Local Education Authority before permitting the activity to take place.

Our policy is 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 to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to have a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

### **Risk assessment.**

The group leader carries out a comprehensive risk assessment 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 are safety measures 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?

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue to conduct an on-site risk assessment. It is essential to consider the probable weather conditions at the year proposed for the trip. The party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability for the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's security, health, and safety approach. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group Leader to experience the activity beforehand or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

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

An activity should generally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the correct ratios (see Appendix 1). Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

The risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use regularly has provided us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

the provision and required use of seat belts and booster seats (if needed);

- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- adequate insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures.

The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to police checks.

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the EVC and all adults supervising the trip.

### **Transport.**

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

transport;

entrance fees;

insurance;

- provision of any particular resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for.

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

Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that each driver's insurance covers such journeys and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks.

Our minibus meets LA guidelines, and each seat has a belt. Whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, we instruct all children to attach their seat belts.

The school charges parents if their children are transported in the school minibus to sporting fixtures. The charge covers the expenses of the journey only; we do not make any profit from this.

### **Communication with parents.**

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

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary except in the case of residential visits). This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to contribute. Parents will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow the Headteacher to decide about the financial viability of the activity in a reasonable time.

### **Other health and safety considerations.**

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

Before a party leaves school, the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity.

The party's safety, especially the children, is of paramount importance. Therefore, during the activity, the party leader must take whatever steps necessary to ensure

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.

Before 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 party leader should discuss with the Headteacher the possibility of making additional arrangements for that child.

### **Group Leaders' planning.**

Group Leaders must read the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:

They must consult the LA's documentation detailing procedures and requirements, including advice on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation. Finally, they must draw up a Visit Plan that records in writing (including standard forms where appropriate) the arrangements made.

### **Visit plan.**

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

risk assessment;

report on a 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 party leaders;
- guidance for the emergency contact and Headteacher;
- medical questionnaire returns;
- first-aid boxes.

### **Monitoring and review.**

Visit leaders are encouraged to review visits, consider the successful and less successful parts of the visit, and consider ways in which the visit could have been improved. In addition, informal conversations might occur between the visit leader(s) and the EVC or Headteacher regarding the outcome of the visit.

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

Appendix 1:

STAFFING AND STAFF RATIOS

| General Activities including fieldwork                         |                              |   |   |
|--|------------------------------|---|---|
| Activity   | Age of young people          | Staff: young person ratios - typical range <b>NB actual ratios must be determined by a process of risk assessment</b> | Visit Leader competence                                   |
| Visits in the UK<br>but not:-<br>residential<br>adventurous    | Nursery                      | 1:2-3 (minimum 2 staff)   | Previous experience                                       |
|  | Reception                    | 1:3-6 (minimum 2 staff)   |   |
|  | Years 1-2 (KS1)              | 1:6-10 (minimum 2 staff)  |   |
|  | Years 3-6 (KS2)              | 1:10-10 (minimum 2 staff)<br>occasionally 1:15, see note below*   |   |
|  | Special schools              | 1:6-10 (minimum 2 staff)  |   |
| e.g. Visits abroad or<br>adventurous and<br>residential visits | All years                    | 1:10 (but minimum 2 staff)**  | Previous experience<br>and qualified where<br>adventurous |
|  | Special schools /<br>centres | 1:5-8 (but minimum 2 staff)   |   |