



Thirsk Community Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

Definition:

An educational visit is any planned off-site activity undertaken by any pupils and accompanied by member(s) of the school teaching and support staff.

Rational:

Safely managed educational visits with a clear purpose are an important part of a broad and balanced curriculum. They are an opportunity to extend pupils' learning and enrich their appreciation and understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. They can be the catalyst for improved academic performance, a lifetime interest or in some cases professional fulfilment. They are to be encouraged!

Aims:

1. To ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to benefit from educational visits.
2. To ensure all visits are safe, purposeful and appropriate to meet the educational needs of the pupils taking part.
3. To enable the school to identify appropriate functions, responsibilities, training, support and monitoring for all governors, head, staff, helpers and pupils involved.
4. To comply with LA 'Safety guidelines for Education Visits & adventure Activities' and to keep all information and advice up to date.
5. To meet LA guidelines (January 2008)
6. To ensure, where appropriate, further advice is sought from LA and other technically competent personnel.

Guidelines:

PLAN - DO - REVIEW - RECORD

- Governors will be informed of visits but delegate approval of lower risk routine visits to the Headteacher
- A named Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) will be appointed and sent on suitable training
- EVC, Headteacher & chair of Governors to agree EVC's role within school
- All visits should be linked to the school aims, planned then approved well in advance by the school's EVC

- After EVC, Headteacher and LA approval, all higher risk visits, including Adventurous Activities and Residential Experiences, will be submitted to Governors for prior approval.
- The EVC will identify and record with the minimum paperwork, qualifications, training, development and induction arrangements for all group leaders (teacher in charge of visit)
- The EVC will approve Group Leadership, planning checklist, risk assessment, arrangement and evaluation of all visits.
- The EVC and Group Leader will ensure risk assessment and management, including generic, site specific and ongoing, are undertaken and recorded.
- There will be a named Group Leader (and where appropriate, a competent second) on all visits
- The Group Leader will ensure sufficient staff of the right experience are checked (DBS if appropriate) and briefed throughout the visit (see procedure for visits).
- Group Leaders will follow school procedure to ensure a named person, emergency procedures and systems for recording and sharing information on accidents and near misses are in place before briefing parents and pupils.
- Group Leaders will, where possible, undertake exploratory visits or seek references from other staff/ schools if using new venues.
- Parents will be given sufficient written and other information about all visits to make informed decisions and give written consent, medical and contact details.
- Where appropriate, for high risk, residential visits, meetings with parents/ carers will be arranged.
- Expectations of behaviour codes of conduct will be explained to parents/ carers. This will include the need to meet the cost and make arrangements for collecting children in certain circumstances.
- Pupils should be briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all visits. Ongoing briefings are an important part of learning and safety.
- Where possible, pupils should be involved with planning, developing codes of conduct, assessing/ managing risk and evaluating their own attitude, behaviour, development and learning.

Role of the Headteacher:

- Initiate the process for the approval for all off-site activities with the Group Leader
- Seek approval for high risk activities from Governors and LA (via database)

Role of the EVC:

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator is appointed to act on behalf of the Governing Body. The following roles and responsibilities are guidelines:

- Support Group Leaders in preparing for off-site visits
- Support Group Leader in completing Risk Assessment and preparing Emergency Procedures for all activities
- Ensure all necessary documentation has been satisfactorily completed and processed on LA site.
- Maintain a central record of all off-site visits

- Ensure that activity reviews take place, are signed, dated, annotated if appropriate and filed/ passed on for further action if required.
- Guide Group Leaders in planning off-site visits
- Consult/ contact LA for/ with up-to-date information, keep EV database updated.

Role of Group Leader:

The Group Leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit including direct responsibility for the pupils' health safety and welfare.

The Group Leader must:

- Be approved to carry out the visit, be suitably competent, qualified and knowledgeable about the school's policies and procedures.
- Plan and prepare for the visit and assess the risks after initial consultation of EVC, following school policy and LA guidelines.
- Provide EVC with all relevant documentation.
- Provide full written information to parents/ carers and obtain their full consent.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and pupils and ensure effective supervision, and, after discussion with EVC, appointing a competent deputy.
- Consider whether to have/ not have a group of children to directly supervise for the visit.
- Appoint an adult to take responsibility for First Aid.
- Leave a list of all pupils and staff/ parents attending the visit with the school office, to include contact information for staff and venue.
- Carry all relevant documentation, including Emergency Procedures, on visit.
- Manage the overall organisation during the visit and have due regard for the Health, safety and Welfare of everyone at all times.
- Be able to facilitate continuous and on-going risk assessment for the duration of the visit.
- Report and record any accident, incident or near miss appropriately.
- Carry out a review of the visit with EVC.
- Wherever possible lead teacher should remain free of taking a group of children in order to be available to manage any incident immediately.

Risk Assessment:

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using NYCC's Risk Assessment Evaluation Form. The risk assessment will decide the adult:child ratio for each visit. (See Guidance under 'Supervision'). 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 group leader 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 group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- the location;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.
-

Exploratory visit

Wherever possible the group leader 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. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards.

EVOLVE

All visit will be inputted by the organiser on to the NYCC EVOLVE system for visits, includes attachments of all relevant documentation. Once submitted the Headteacher will approve the visit and this will then be submitted to NYCC for approval.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities, visits which involve overnight stays, or visits abroad it is essential to have at least one trained first-aider in the group. The group leader should have a working knowledge of first aid and all adults in the group should know how to contact emergency services.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first-aider is attending to

a member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The Head Teacher should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed. The contents of a first-aid kit will depend on what activities are planned.

Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit.

The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group;
- special needs pupils;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;

- type of any accommodation;
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

Each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits and ratios of adult to pupil selected accordingly. Where there is more than one adult supervisor a group leader, who has authority over the whole party, should be appointed.

Where a high adult:pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents with appropriate clearance may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the pupil group.

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. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

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.

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the LEA or Governing Body must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity.

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

take place. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

School Guidelines for Teacher/ Pupil Ratios:

- Foundation Stage: 1 : 4
- KS1: 1 : 6
- Lower KS2: 1 : 8
- Upper KS2: 1 : 10

Please note that this is at the discretion of the Headteacher

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 pupils 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;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- visit's objectives;
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- clothing and equipment to be taken;
- money to be taken;
-

Parental consent

Thirsk Community Primary School will seek consent for:

- visits involving young children;
- adventure activities;
- other residential 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. If the parents give a conditional consent the Head Teacher will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not. The School's parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

Residential Trips

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the young people's - we will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of
- the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance;
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group;

- access by staff to student rooms must be available at all times;
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults;
- ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions / exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key personnel;
- security arrangements - where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors;
- ensure that locks / shutters etc. work on all the rooms used by the group;
- storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables;
- adequate lighting - it is advisable to bring a torch;
- provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs;
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

Coastal visits

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. The group leader should bear the following points in mind in the risk assessment of a coastal activity:

- tides and sandbanks are potential hazards so timings and exit routes should be checked;
- ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags;
- establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc;
- some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight.

The group should keep to the path at all times. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

Swimming

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group.

Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit, will **not** be allowed for Thirsk Community Primary School children. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One teacher should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.

Where paddling is to be allowed on a visit, a ratio of 1 adult:4 children is a minimum.

Farm visits

Thirsk Community Primary School recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm will be very carefully planned, and the risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of

farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections.

Thirsk Community Primary School

Emergency Procedures for School Visits

Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit, have a duty of care to make sure pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and take life-saving action in an extreme situation.

If an accident happens, the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- Attend to the casualty
- Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident (i.e. Group Leader, School Contact)

Who will take charge in an emergency?

Group Leader - would usually take charge and would need to ensure that emergency procedures are in place and the back up cover is arranged.

School/ Home Contact - main responsibility is to link up with school/ parents/ LA (where appropriate). To provide assistance as necessary. The named person should have all the necessary information about the visit.

Framework

All involved with the school visits should be informed of who will take charge in an emergency, the named back up cover and what they are expected to do in an emergency.

Emergency Procedures

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible
- Ensure that all the group are safe and looked after
- Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them
- Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures
- Ensure that a teacher (not the Group Leader) accompanies casualty to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised and kept together at all times
- Notify the Police if necessary

- Inform the school contact. The school contact number should be accessible by all, at all times during visit
- Details of the incident to pass on to school should include: nature, date and time of incident; location of incident; names of casualties and details of their injuries; names of others involved, so that parents can be reassured; action taken so far; action yet to be taken (and by whom)
- Notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required (this may be done by school contact)
- Ascertain telephone numbers for future calls. Mobile phones, though useful, are subject to technical difficulties, and should not replace usual communication procedures
- Write down accurately and as soon as possible the relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence (a camera/ mobile phone is useful for this purpose)
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident
- Complete accident report form ASAP. Contact LA if appropriate.
- No one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to the their families. Media enquiries should be referred to LA contact.
- No-one in the group should discuss legal liabilities with other parties

School Based Procedures

Prior to the visit, the name, school and home telephone numbers of a school contact should be identified. It is advisable to arrange a second school contact as a reserve. Headteacher and Group Leader should bear in mind that contact lines can become busy in the event of an incident and that alternative numbers to ring would be useful.

Access to the 'SCHOOL INCIDENT RESPONSE GUIDE' is vital.

Main factors for the school contact:

- Ensuring that the Group Leader is in control of the emergency and establishing if any assistance is required from the school base
- Contacting parents. School contact should act as link between group and parents.
- Liaison with LA/ Governing Body.
- Liaison with media contact at LA
- Reporting of incident using appropriate forms, if necessary. Some incidents are reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995)

Media Contact

LA's have a designated person to deal with the media and their enquiries. Use them.

After a Serious Incident

It is not always possible to assess whether group members not injured or directly involved in the incident have been traumatised or whether other pupils or staff in the school have been affected. In some cases reactions do not appear immediately. In this situation we may sometimes find it useful to contact Local Community Support Services and to seek

professional advice on how to help individuals and the school as a whole cope with the effects of a tragedy.

To be reviewed annually