

Educational Visits and Activities Policy

School Policies

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Educational Visits and Activities Policy

All schools are required to offer children a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for the opportunities and experiences of adult life.

In our school we seek to ensure that the National Curriculum is delivered to all children, regardless of social background, race, gender or differences in ability. All are entitled to the development of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes. To enrich the curriculum for our children, we also offer a range of educational visits and other activities that add to what they learn in school.

Organisation

The National Curriculum defines what we teach the children in school. This is the basis for each class's programme of learning for each school year. In addition teachers will identify and agree a possible programme of visits and activities in each academic year.

Within each class's programme of study, the teachers plan educational activities and possible visits that would support the children's learning. We give details of these visits and activities to parent/guardians at the beginning of each school term in our letters to parent/guardians. We plan other activities as the school year progresses and as opportunity arise and inform parent/guardians of these in due course.

Visits and activities usually take place within the school day, though occasionally will last longer. We will inform parent/guardians of changes to the normal school timetable as required. We follow the LA's guidelines relating to health and safety and we ask parent/guardians to give written permission for their child to take part in any activity that takes children off the school site. If we do not receive this written permission, the child will be unable to participate.

We have a generic "Loco Parentis" form, which every parent/guardian should fill in at the beginning of the school year. This form covers trips that would be made regularly, eg museum visit. If a visit includes activities that might be considered to be of a higher risk, then an appropriate loco parentis form will be given to parent/guardians. If a child does not have this form completed by a parent/guardian, then they will not be allowed on the school visit.

Charging for school activities

All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum. Most charges are made via voluntary contributions from parent/guardians, to help cover transport and entrance costs. There are some circumstances when the school can make a charge for certain activities. (eg. If an outside agency and specialist coaches are involved).

No child should be excluded from the visit if individual contributions are not made. Although school can cover a small number of children not able to pay,

the money collected must be enough to make the trip viable, otherwise the trip may have to be cancelled and all money returned.

Planning: See HASLOC Guidance

It is important that for any visit out of school, some formal planning takes place. This involves considering the difficulties and dangers which could arise and then making plans to reduce them. The Headteacher must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is competent to do so and has the necessary relevant experience.

Risk Assessment: See HASLOC Guidance

An assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Pupils must not be placed in situations which expose them to unacceptable levels of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures need to be in place 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?

The group leader and other supervisors should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action as necessary.

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

- The type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken
- The location, routes and modes of transport
- The competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff
- The ratios of teachers and supervisory staff to pupils
- The group members age, competence, fitness and temperament.
- The suitability of activities matched to age and temperament of the children
- The quality and suitability of any equipment.
- Special educational and medical needs of pupils
- Seasonal conditions, weather and timing
- Emergency procedures and the need to monitor risks throughout the visit.

Whenever possible, an exploratory visit should be made by any teacher who is taking children on a residential visit.

In other cases the group leader should if possible, undertake an exploratory visit to:

- Ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit.
- Assess potential areas of risk.
- Ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of staff and the pupils in the group.
- Become familiar with the area before taking a group of young people there

Other Considerations

Other factors which should form part of the planning stage include:

- The facilities/ equipment the group will need to take on the visit and to be provided at the venue
- Transport arrangements
- Communication arrangements
- Supervision ratios (appropriate to age/abilities of the children) *
- Information to parent/guardians
- Preparing Pupils
- Contingency measures for early/late return

Supervision Ratios

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any visit. The factors to consider include :

- The age and ability of the children
- The nature of the activities
- Experience of adults in off- site supervision
- Duration and nature of the journey
- Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited
- Competence and behaviour of pupils
- First aid cover

Some LAs set their own levels of supervision for off site visits, in other schools decisions have to be made based on the factors above.

A general guide for visits to local historical sites, museums or local walks, in normal circumstances, as suggested in DFE guidelines might be:

Foundation Stage – As high a ratio as possible, certainly 1 adult – 6 pupils
Y1 – Y3 1 adult to 6 pupils
Y4 – Y6 1 adult to 10 pupils

In all cases staff must ensure the highest “duty of care “levels that we possibly can, at all times.

Parent/guardians/volunteers can be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and pupil group. Anyone who has not had a criminal conviction check (DBS) should never be left in sole charge of pupils.

All adult supervisors, including teachers and parent/guardian/volunteer 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 likely to cause trouble. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. They should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils should be told of any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and the safety of others.

Curriculum links

All educational visits and activities should support and enrich the work we do in school. There are also a number of people who visit the school to support our work in certain areas of the curriculum. Staff should always try and find opportunities to invite outside agencies into school whenever possible.

For each subject in the curriculum there is usually a possible programme of activities which might include visits by specialists. 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
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
- History – castle visits, study of locality, local museums
- Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails, field trips
- Art and design – art gallery visits, use of the locality, visiting artists
- PE – range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches;
- Music – range of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, local schools’ orchestra, concerts for parent/guardians
- Design and technology – visits to local factories/design centres
- IT – specialist training centres, newspaper offices /libraries/secondary schools etc;
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy

We also have regular visits from our road safety officers and various health workers. These visits support the personal, social and health education of our children.

Residential activities

Children in Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is in school time and linked to areas of the National Curriculum. We make a charge for board and lodging, insurance and specialist instruction for certain activities. Parent/guardians in receipt of state benefits are exempt from payment.

The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work. We undertake this visit only with the written agreement of the LA. All specialist activities are undertaken with qualified instructors.

Summary

The guidelines in this policy are based on general common sense and ensuring the best duty of care that we can offer.

For any further guidance refer to the DFE publication :

Health and Safety of Learners Outside the Classroom (HASLOC)

School Contact: Jayne Meadows or Mr P Marshall