

Educational Visits Policy

Policy Status

Recommended

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.

Principles:

A major consideration in the organisation of any visit must be the safety of the participants and there must be full compliance with both the LA guidelines and the school policy. The minimum adult: pupil ratio is dependant on the age of the children / nature of the visit and staff must check that they comply with all school and LA regulations. The party leader for a trip must be satisfied that the venue is a suitable one, and where appropriate, any officials from the venue who will be involved in the visit / activities are suitably qualified.

Roles & Responsibilities:

The Head Teacher or Educational Visits Co-ordinator will endeavour to ensure that:

- All necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins
- The County electronic risk assessment is completed and passed to the Schools Educational Visits Officer (EVO), where possible, at least one week before the date of a day visit and 20 days for residential visits
- The group leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- All supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance
- The governing body has approved the visit if necessary
- Parents have signed consent forms -if required Notification to parents is key before the trip.
- 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
- That they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents and the staff's and volunteers' next of kin or be able to contact school to obtain these details.

Group Leader

One teacher, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit. The Group Leader should:

- Ensure that information relating to the trip is shared with the EVC/HT via a risk assessment paper form and or entered onto the electronic Educational Visit website EGO if relevant
- Appoint a deputy
- 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 as directed in LA guidance
- Undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment
- 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 teachers and adults involved in a visit:

Teachers 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. Non-teachers should generally not have sole charge of pupils except where risks to health and safety are minimal;
- 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 group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- Not take unnecessary risks
- Follow the instructions of the leader and other adults
- Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly
- Look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it
- Should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous
- Abide by the code of conduct during one day trips and residential visits.

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be risked assessed and appropriate steps will be put into place if possible, BUT if it is assessed that those steps will not be sufficient, that child will be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

Parents:

The group leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits.

The group leader 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 a second language.

Parents must:

- Provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s)
- Sign the consent form/code of conduct
- Give the group leader relevant information about their child's health or information which might be relevant to the visit.

Pre-visit preparation:

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

All visits must benefit from an exploratory/preliminary visit if this is at all possible. For outdoor visits this is essential and some tour operators will arrange preliminary visits before firm bookings are made.

Preliminary visits contribute to the planning by ensuring the venue:

- Can be effectively assessed for risk
- Can be effectively assessed with regards to it meeting the needs of the visit
- Can cater for the needs of the group

Preliminary visits can also contribute to the overall planning by ensuring the party leader:

- Is familiar with the geographical, logical and social aspects of the venue
- Has met staff at the venue and discussed relevant information specific to our school needs

Many visits are a straightforward repeat of a previous trip but with a different group of pupils. Many factors however can change over the course of the year and therefore it is still good practice to, where possible, carry out a repeat preliminary visit. If this is not possible, it is essential that the group leader contacts the venue to assess what may have changed from previous visits.

Other considerations:

The school will follow the guidance set out by the LA with regard to First Aid, approval for the type of visit, dependant on the category the visit falls into, safety and dealing with any accidents if they occur.

Thorough risk assessments must always be carried out before setting off on a visit. The LA proformas (available from EVC) must be used for this and a copy of these should be left at school. However, it must be noted that the group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

An emergency mobile phone should be carried at all times and the mobile numbers of accompanying staff exchanged.

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 adventurous activities, visits which involve overnight stays, or visits abroad it is sensible to have at least one trained first-aider in the group. The minimum first-aid provision for any trip is:

- 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 one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils.

All visits of a residential nature will have a code of conduct which parents/carers will be asked to sign before the visit departs, to confirm that they have read this and discussed it with their child. Where the code of conduct is broken and the safety & enjoyment of others is jeopardised as a result, the school reserves the right to demand that parents collect their children within 12 hours (uk visits) 24 hours (non-uk visits) at their own expense to enable school staff to continue with their role.

Where the trip is abroad, staff should carry with them the telephone number of the British Consulate in case they need to contact them.

Financial planning for the visit and any request for remissions will be in line with the school charging and remissions policy. If a trip is not financially viable, it cannot go ahead.

The Head Teacher will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them 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. However, cost for such additional supervision may have to be covered by parents/carers.

Coastal visits

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
- The group should keep to the path at all times

Farm visits

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 O157 food poisoning and other infections.

The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare; and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas. An exploratory visit should be carried out.

The basis rules for a farm visit will be:
never let pupils:

- place their faces against the animals or their hands in their mouths after feeding the animals
- eat until they have washed their hands
- sample any animal foodstuffs
- drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities)
- ride on tractors or other machines
- play in the farm area

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