

Educational Visits Policy

OUTLINE AND PURPOSE

“It has long been acknowledged that pupils can derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits with their schools. In particular they have the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom.

Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits – DfES 1998

“Outdoor learning supports academic achievement, for example through fieldwork projects, as well as the development of ‘soft’ skills and social skills, particularly in hard to reach children. It can take place on school trips, on visits in the local community or in the school grounds.

House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee – February 2005

Outdoor Education gives depth to the curriculum and makes an important contribution to students physical, personal and social education

Outdoor Education- Aspects of good practice – OfSTED – Sept 2004

An educational visit can therefore be seen as any aspect of a pupil’s education that takes place off the main school site and should include visits to such places as parks, museums, swimming pools etc. as well as residential trips.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of the Governors:

- To ensure that the Head Teacher and the EVC have adhered to the guidelines contained within KCC Safe Practice of Offsite Activities.
- To ensure that visits are approved as necessary by the LEA before bookings are confirmed
- To agree to all residential visits and those involving outdoor and adventurous activities. In these instances, to ensure that bookings are not completed until external providers have met all the necessary assurances (This is done in partnership with the Trafford Educational Visits Advisor via Evolve).
- To define which type of visits should be approved by the Governing Body, and/or the Head Teacher, and/or the Educational Visit Co-ordinator, or approval from the LEA.
- To ensure that all aspects of risk management have been considered and that risk assessments for travel, accommodation and activities have been carried out prior to departure. It is not expected that Governors should become directly involved in risk assessment and related matters unless they have an appropriate competence.
- Ask questions about a visit’s educational objectives and how they will be met. Are the objectives appropriate to the age and abilities of the pupil group? Why is a particular venue being used? Is the visit inclusive for all students? Is the visit value for money?
- To ensure measures exist to obtain parental consent on a basis of full information, to investigate parental complaints.
- To review annually the Education Visits policy and procedures including incident and emergency management systems.

Role of the Head Teacher:

- To ensure that visits comply with the guidelines and regulations provided by the LEA and the Schools own Health and Safety Policy.
- To ensure that the Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC) is competent to oversee the co ordination of all off-site education, and support the EVC in attending relevant training courses.
- To ensure that the EVC keeps her informed of the progress of the visit and that this information is relayed to Governors should this be necessary.
- To ensure that the visit leader is competent (experience and training) to undertake the visit and any activities that the trip includes.
- To check that the EVC has designated an appropriately competent group leader who will meet the LEA's criteria. For less routine visits, the Head Teacher will need to ensure that the EVC can obtain advice from an appropriate technical adviser as necessary.
- To ensure that in the event of a major incident or accident, LEA guidelines are adhered to in terms of informing, parents, staff and the media. Help to ensure that serious incidents, accidents and near-accidents are investigated.

Role of the Educational Visit Co-ordinator:

The EVC's role is to support the Head Teacher in ensuring that all visits follow LEA regulations and guidance and all of the schools relevant policies and procedures and will act on behalf of the Head Teacher;

- To approve educational visits as agreed by the Head Teacher and Governing Body.
- To provide adequate documentation to support planning of all trips and visits.
- To ensure all off-site visits are thoroughly planned using standardised whole-school documentation.
- To ensure all staff are aware of the guidelines available through *Safe Practice of Offsite Activities* concerning their particular visit.
- To assign competent people to lead or otherwise supervise a visit. Competence of other adults proposed to provide support or lead activities within a visit will commonly be done with reference to accreditations from an awarding body and/or previous experience and on the job training.
- To ensure visits have appropriate support ratios and adequate cover for health and safety, pupil's welfare, medication and behaviour management.
- To work with the visit leader to obtain the consent or refusal of parents and to provide full details of the visit beforehand so that parents can consent or refuse consent on a fully informed basis.
- To organise the emergency arrangements and ensure there is an emergency contact for each visit.
- To keep records of individual visits including reports of accidents and 'near-accidents' (sometimes known as 'near misses').
- To ensure that arrangements are in place where necessary for the Governing Body to be made aware of residential visits so that questions can be asked as necessary.
- Residential and adventurous trips must be covered by the relevant OE forms (please see LEA Handbook) and forwarded to the LEA for Approval no later than 6 weeks prior to the start of visit.
- To ensure that visit evaluation is used to inform future visits and training needs. Further staff training should be

made available where a need is identified.

- To arrange for the recording of accidents and the reporting of serious injuries as required. Accident and incident records should be reviewed regularly, and this information used to inform future visits.
- To review systems and, on occasion, monitor practice.

Role of the Visit Leader:

The Visit Leader has full responsibility for the safe running of the activity including pre planning and following guidance and ensuring all participants are aware of their roles. To achieve this, the Visit Leader will;

- Identify the clear purpose and objectives of the visit.
- Complete visit documentation and obtain EVC approval for any visit off-site, no matter how short its duration.
- Plan the itinerary in such a way as to account for all times on the visit including meal and 'down' times particularly on residential trips.
- Have prior knowledge of the venue – the visit leader should normally have made an exploratory pre visit.
- Inform parents and seek permission/consent, detailing the nature, purpose and related activities involved in the visit.
- Allocate supervisory responsibility to each adult for named pupils and ensure that each adult knows which pupils they are responsible for. To ensure that each pupil knows which adult is responsible for them and that all adults understand that they are responsible to the visit leader for the supervision of the pupils assigned to them.
- To ensure that all adults involved in supervising the visit are aware of the risk assessments including 'Plan B' (i.e. a contingency plan to be followed in the event of changes necessary) and the expected standards of behaviour.
- To continuously monitor the appropriateness of the activity, the physical and mental condition and abilities of the group members and the suitability of the prevailing conditions.

Role of the Pupil

- To be aware of the risk assessments including 'Plan B'.
- To know who their supervisor is at any given time and how to contact him or her and to alert the supervisor if someone is missing or in difficulties.
- To understand the need to have a meeting place to return to, or an instruction to remain where they are, if separated.
- To understand and accept the expected standards of behaviour.

PROCEDURES

The school has in place a clear process to be adhered to in planning and organising an educational visit or trip; (see 'School Visit Procedure Pack' available from the school office)

Planning

- All proposed trips should initially be presented to the EVC on the internal Trips Enquiry form found in the Staff Handbook. Trips will not be arranged without signed approval from the Headteacher.

- All criteria and checks should be completed using the LEA Educational Visits Checklist, found on the EVOLVE website

During the day

- The school documentation identifies many of the issues that school staff need to be aware of during the supervision of a visit off-site. These include the Behaviour policy, Equal Opportunities policy and the Medication in schools policy. This contains permission for emergency medication should the need arise and details of specific medical plans for individual children (within the '*Administration of Medicines in School*' policy, details are given for 'out of school activities'). Where specific medical plans exist the visit leader is responsible for ensuring all staff and accompanying adults are aware of the plan.
- One of the key features of all visits is the need for all staff to be involved in on going risk assessments. Visit Leaders need to make decisions on an on going basis regarding the safety of the visit. (see 'Risk Assessments'). This includes the support ratios and pupil groupings dependant upon social interactions and behavioural issues presented during the day. All members of staff need to be aware of the plans and procedures identified for dealing with pupils with specific behaviour plans.
- Visit Leaders must take a mobile phone in order to remain in contact with the school (and visa versa) during the time off-site. In the event of an emergency the school must be contacted immediately (or as soon as is practical) in order that the Head Teacher can take charge of the management of the incident. This procedure will follow the schools Emergency/Crisis Plan.

Review

- All journeys and visits off-site must be reviewed and evaluated in relation to the visit aims and purpose in order to aid future planning. It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader to inform the EVC of any specific issues effecting future visits concerning the venue, the transport or the group.
- In the case of a residential or outdoor or adventurous activity, this will take the form of a formal meeting in the week following the trip.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risk assessment and risk management are legal requirements. For educational visits they involve the careful examination of what could cause harm during the visit and whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more should be done. The aim is to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill. The programme of a visit, as set out in the risk assessment and the consent form, should not be deviated from.

- **Generic activity risk assessments**, which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place. These are usually prepared by the LEA/ employer or by the school. Examples of generic risk assessment include travel in the school minibus, coach travel and visits to coastal venues. School staff will not normally prepare them unless they have accumulated specific experience or other expertise. These are available from the school office.
- **Visit/site specific risk assessments** which will differ from place to place and group to group. These are usually undertaken by the school for each venue and are amended as necessary for different groups. They should be prepared or agreed by someone trained and competent to assess risks, such as the EVC.
- Activities such as swimming, crossing roads and curricular partnerships with other schools are examples of these site specific risk assessments where the same venue is used each week and barring any changes to the nature of that venue, our prime concern on a weekly basis is the risk presented by the group of pupils undertaking the visit.
- However for visits which are 'one offs' a specific risk assessment for the venue itself as well as for the pupils is required. Examples of this would be visits to farms, galleries, museums, public parks, garden centres etc. as part

of a specific curriculum module for a specific class group

- For both of these the EVC will direct the visit leader to the relevant sections of LEA/employer and national guidelines covering the type of visit.
- **Ongoing risk assessments** are those that take account of unplanned and unexpected changes, for example, illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activity. The visit leader is responsible for making decisions on an on going basis during the visit as to the appropriateness of continuing the visit in the light of prevailing conditions.
- **All staff and pupils should be aware of a “PLAN B” in the event of the planned agenda needing to change.** Visit leaders are always in charge. They should trust their own knowledge of the young people and use their own professional judgement. This may include challenging an activity leader where the visit leader’s knowledge of the group is superior, or intervening to prompt a change of plan, including stopping an activity if they feel uncomfortable or believe that that it has become too hazardous.
- Where it is considered unsafe to include a particular pupil because there is serious doubts concerning their behaviour or it is felt that they represent a significant risk to themselves or others within the group (including staff), the Head Teacher will make the final decision on whether the pupil should access the trip and suitable alternatives that will meet the educational needs of the visit will be planned.

NETTING OF PROVIDERS

- When a residential or visit that includes adventurous activities (see LEA Approval System and Procedures Guidance Notes) is being considered, the Providers of such services will be vetted by the LEA on our behalf to ensure that it meets the LEA requirements. This is why the LEA Ed Visits Advisor must be contacted prior (Pre Check) to any contracts being established. It is important that this check is made even if the chosen Provider is one that the school has used on previous occasions.
- See the EVC Evolve website

LICENSED ACTIVITIES

- Most Providers who offer adventurous activities require an Adventurous Activity Licence. The adventurous activities that fall within the scope of the Licencing Authority are; Caving, Climbing, Trekking and Watersports

The status of a Provider in terms of licencing will be confirmed during the Pre Check process. The EVA on behalf of the LEA will confirm if any Provider requires a licence and will check if a Providers licence is current.

INSURANCE

- When a trip is undertaken as part of the normal school curriculum, even though it is conducted off school premises, the insurance arrangements for the school will prevail.
- The visit leader must check the need for additional insurance depending upon the nature of the activity to be undertaken. (*See Safe Practice of Educational Visits*)
- When a tour operator is used the type and extent of the insurance cover being used should be ascertained. All Providers must hold £5 million Public Liability Insurance. As part of the LEA vetting process the Outdoor Education Unit will check that this level of Insurance is in place. This can be confirmed when contacting the Outdoor Education Unit as part out the visit Pre Check.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

- The basic principle underlying the charging provisions of the 1988 Act (ERA 1988) is that education provided by any maintained school for its registered pupils should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours.
- There is also the principle that an educational visit mainly outside the school day should be free of charge if it contributes to the delivery of the National Curriculum.
- Charges may be made for residential accommodation.
- Visits that are non-educational should not take place during school time denying access to full programmes of study.
- All visits during the school day should therefore be deemed to be educational.
- Voluntary contributions can be requested for any educational visit that takes place during the school day; however a pupil cannot be prevented from taking part in the visit on the basis of a family not making any or sufficient contribution.
- Where the visit is non-educational the charge cannot exceed the actual costs to be incurred. Costs can be calculated against transport, board and lodging, admission costs, costs of appropriate non-teaching staff, incidental costs of staff, materials and equipment and insurance costs.
- Accounts related to off-site activities should be kept by the visit leader and checked by the school finance secretary.

VOLUNTARY HELP

- The use of voluntary helpers should only be permitted by the Head Teacher or EVC This permission will be based upon knowledge of the volunteers and their previous experience and training (on the job). The fact that help is voluntary does not negate the legal responsibility of those involved.
- CRB checks should be carried out by the office on all volunteer helpers – hence much advance notice is needed and those intending to use voluntary help should liaise with the EVC as early as possible in the planning phase
- All volunteer helpers have the same responsibility to follow the instructions of the visit leader.

TRANSPORT

- Parents should always be informed of the type of transport to be used and risk assessments carried out.
- Hired transport – The school should ensure appropriate levels of supervisory staff are available to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils. The driver of the coach has no responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of the pupils.
- Public transport – Close supervision should be ensured.
- Use of private cars – Staff must ensure they have appropriate insurance cover for conveying pupils during the course of their professional duties. Parents must always be informed if members of staff intend to use private transport. School will not reimburse parents for the use of their cars.

REVIEW

- ❖ Visit Leaders will need to evaluate the success of each trip with the EVC who can oversee the need for changes in arrangements for subsequent visits to the venue or with the particular group.
- ❖ In the event of a visit that involves a residential and/or adventurous activities, a formal review meeting between the EVC and the Visit Leader must take place.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Buildings, Health & Safety Committee of the Governing Body in conjunction with the EVC.