

Educational Visits Procedures Guidance



Our vision is:

To encourage and support thoughtful, happy and responsible children with a lifelong passion for learning, within a Christian community.

Our Christian Values are:

**Forgiveness Thankfulness Friendship Compassion Trust
Truthfulness**

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Educational Visits Procedures Guidance 2017

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SIGNED (EXECUTIVE) HEAD TEACHER		DATE	
SIGNED CHAIR OF LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE		DATE	

EDUCATIONAL VISITS – PROCEDURES

1. Planning and Preparation

i) Aims and Objectives of the Visit

The educational aims and objectives of the visit or trip should be clearly identified at an early stage. These should be relevant to the needs of participants and the curriculum, taking account of age, ability, previous experience and resources available.

Some objectives entail working in an environment which presents potential hazards. Such environments should only be visited if pupils are of sufficient maturity and experience to understand the nature of the hazard involved. In general, they should not be exposed to potential hazards if the same objectives can be achieved at a safer location.

ii) The Party Leader

A suitably experienced teacher/youth worker will be appointed, empowered to act on the Headteacher's behalf as Party Leader for the duration of the visit.

Where the staff team comprises of more than two members of staff, a deputy leader should also be appointed. The deputy leader must be kept properly briefed so that he or she can assume responsibility if required.

iii) Staffing (including night-time cover)

All visits need to be adequately staffed. Regard must be paid to the nature of the visit, and the age and particular needs of the young people.

When determining staffing levels for residential visits it is important to remember that staff will need periods of rest, whereas young people may need 24-hour supervision.

In circumstances where supervision is being provided by a third party (i.e., an activity provider), a clear agreement should be sought over who has responsibility at certain times. This agreement should be in writing and all leaders and helpers should be informed.

Young people with poor conduct records may respond positively to the different experience of a visit. This should not, however, be relied upon. This may need to be reflected in the overall staffing level.

Subject to there being the minimum number of staff required by the current Code of Practice, adults other than teachers and school staff will frequently be included in the staff team to enhance the level of supervision. These adults must be acceptable to the Headteacher and the Party Leader. There can be possible conflicts of interest where parents of participating pupils are included in the staff team, though generally parents are welcome as supervisors.

The recommended ratios of staff to pupils are set out in the HSE's guidance for education visits (www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf, based on Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999) and vary according to the duration and type of visit, and the age of the pupils involved.

"Staffing ratios for visits are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources. However, a general guide for visits to local historical sites and museums or for local walks, in normal circumstances, might be:

- *1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3 (under 5s reception classes should have a higher ratio);*
- *1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in school years 4 to 6;*
- *1 adult for every 15-20 pupils in school year 7 onwards".*

Staffing ratios for sports activities should follow similar Health & Safety guidelines.

iv) Preliminary visit to location

A preliminary visit by the party leader will assist in the planning process and contribute to the safe conduct and educational value of the visit. A preliminary visit is strongly recommended (and may be essential) particularly when:

- all or most of the staff team are unfamiliar with the area;
- primary school-aged children are to be involved;
- people with special needs are to be included;
- the environment presents particular potential hazards.

A preliminary visit should seek to:

- check for potential hazards;
- check timings (local services, lengths of walks, tides, etc.)
- establish local contacts;
- check accommodation, especially for fire risk and evacuation, security measures and control of access to pupils' sleeping areas, but also for domestic arrangements or any variations associated with medical conditions;
- agree in advance, between party leaders and centre staff, the division of supervisory responsibility;
- obtain information on local services (police, doctor, dentist, hospital);
- inform the site-specific risk assessment.

Whether or not a visit is made, all means of researching the area should be explored.

v) Risk Assessment

A risk assessment must be undertaken for every visit, however short its duration or distance from the school. The school has copies of forms to be used for different categories of visits.

vi) Approval

Any proposed visit must be notified to the LAC Chair. However, where visits include:

- an overnight stay;
- adventurous activities (as defined in the Code of Practice);
- foreign travel;
- other activities that are perceived to be of increased risk;

they must be put to the LAT CEO with a risk assessment submitted.

vii) Costing and Finance

The financial implications of the visit require detailed consideration at an early stage. Component costs could include travel, access and entry charges, refreshments en route, excursions, accommodation, food, site fees, insurance, equipment, specialist resources, additional spending money for pupils.

The nature of the visit will determine what proportion, if any, of the cost of the visit may be charged to participants according to the school's Charging and Remissions Policy.

Even the simplest of ventures requires the keeping of precise records of income and expenditure.

viii) Special Needs

Pupils with special needs require additional consideration when taking part in visits and trips; their inclusion may have staffing and programme implications. Some or all of the following considerations may apply:

- environmental factors may increase the "risk" level above that applying to other members in the group;
- a higher level of staffing will normally be needed and it may be necessary to include specialist staff to facilitate supervision, communication and encouragement;
- whilst travelling, there should be more frequent stops, extra supervision and particular vigilance over travel sickness;
- medication and dietary requirements should be known and monitored;
- buildings and terrain should be checked for suitability for those with physical disabilities;
- ensure that activities offered are appropriate to the pupil; mental and physical disabilities may require additional or alternative activities.

ix) Programme

A detailed programme should be established with adequate and effective supervision.

x) Free time

"Free time" is potentially hazardous and should be limited or structured according to the age or gender or maturity of the pupils and to the location of the visit. "Free time" should also be risk-assessed.

Pupils are never allowed to go off alone.

xi) Medical Arrangements

Special medical requirements of individuals should be known and catered for.

First aid knowledge in the group should be appropriate to the nature of the visit. The identity of First Aiders and the location of professional medical help should be known to all staff and group members.

xii) Safety Issues

A thorough understanding of matters affecting safety is essential for all accompanying staff.

General issues for consideration are:

- areas, times and activities of potential risk;
- standards of behaviour and conduct;
- organisation (communication, meeting times, group movement skills);
- supervision arrangements;
- duty rotas;
- emergency procedures and first aid arrangements;
- implications of weather change.

xiii) Clothing and Equipment

Clothing, footwear and equipment appropriate to the visit should be considered at the early planning stages. A detailed kit list should be sent to parents/guardians well before departure.

Unsuitable clothing can markedly detract from the educational value of the visit and may prove hazardous in exposed situations.

xiv) Briefing Staff

At least one formal briefing meeting must be arranged for the whole staff team, including additional adults, prior to the visit. At this meeting the party leader should ensure that everyone is:

- familiar with (and supports) the visit's objectives;
- aware of and recognises the nature of the responsibilities that they will be asked to assume;
- advised as to their position with regard to personal liability.

Where it is possible to programme staff "free time", this programme is best agreed at this stage. It is important for staff to accept that at other times they are "on call", even if not actually supervising pupils.

xv) Briefing Parents and Guardians

Parents/guardians must be fully informed, in writing, of the nature of the visit before their consent and/or financial commitment is requested.

Included in this information should be details of:

- all activities to be undertaken;
- the staffing ratio and people who will be supervising (e.g., 2 teachers, 1 teacher + 1 parent), and their level of competence for the activity (if appropriate);
- the insurance arrangements for the visit should be explained and copies of policy documents for other cover should be available.

The detail provided must be sufficient so that a reasonable parent/guardian could not claim afterwards to have been misled as to the nature of the visit or the arrangements for supervision or insurance.

For residential visits in particular, it is advisable for the Headteacher to call a meeting of parents prior to the visits. This may be an appropriate time to inform parents, in the presence of the pupils, of the standard of conduct which will be expected during the visit.

xvi) Parental Information and Consent

Activities which come within the school's regular programme (e.g., visits to places in the immediate locality, after-school clubs or sports activities) do not require specific parental consent. It is good practice to have general written consent to any regular activity and for registers of attendance to be kept.

Written agreement is required for day visits involving, for example, adventurous activities, a full day away, special lunch arrangements, special clothing requirements, travel and possible costs, journeys abroad or residential stays in Britain. Full and detailed written information should be sent to parents/guardians as far in advance of the journey as is practicable, and should include the following information as appropriate:

- dates and times of departure and return
- destination
- passport arrangements
- activities planned
- name of travel company and method of travel
- cost, and what it does and does not cover
- methods of payment and cancellation arrangements/penalties
- details of insurance cover
- advice on pocket money and allocation/care on journey and during the trip
- accompanying staff
- emergency contact arrangement
- items prohibited on the journey or during the trip.

xvii) Behaviour management

The standards of behaviour expected and required on a school trip must be clearly established and conveyed to pupils. Parents/guardians and pupils must understand that if behaviour is not of the expected standard, either before or during a visit, the pupil may be unable to participate in the visit or may be sent home from the visit.

xviii) Briefing Pupils

Pupils should be made aware of the purpose of the visit and of the demands that will be made upon them, the code of behaviour which is expected of them during the visit, and of the importance for their own and others' safety of carefully following instructions.

xix) Communication and Information

It is essential that a nominal roll with full addresses, copies of all travel, insurance, parental/guardian consent forms and telephone numbers of all party members (including supervising adults) be left at the school with a named member of staff to act as an emergency contact.

A "telephone tree" may be created to allow for prompt and efficient communication with all parents/guardians of participating pupils.

In the unlikely event of a major emergency, the leader should initiate the Emergency Procedures, detailed below. Leaders may find it helpful to carry a copy of these procedures at all times. The carrying of a mobile phone would be useful.

xx) Emergency Procedures

Emergency plans must include advice based on the following:

Control and Supervision of the Group

- Immediately inform all group staff of the problem; share it; clarify actions to be taken.
- Account for all group members and ensure their well-being.
- Establish the names of people involved in the accident and, if injured, the nature and extent of their injuries.
- Ensure that the injured are accompanied to hospital wherever possible by an adult known to them.
- Clarify with the group what has happened and your consequent course of action.

Information and Communication

Restrict access to telephones until your emergency contact at school has been alerted, with precise details. Due to the large number of young people who now have mobile phones it will be necessary to decide if they may be taken on the visit or not. Do not release names of injured participants.

Leaders should avoid any direct dealings with the media. If the incident is serious the emergency contact should alert the Headteacher (or designated deputy) who may then contact the LAT CEO as appropriate.

Contact with relatives should be as early as possible and consistent in content. It is vital

to ensure parental/guardian contact before the news spreads through the media. This would normally be done through the Headteacher, deputy or other designated person at the school.

Close liaison is required between all parties, police and the media.

2. The Visit

i) Responsibility of Supervisors

Teachers or other adults supervising children on visits have a duty of care to them. The actions of the responsible adult should correspond to those expected of a careful and prudent parent.

In addition, the following should be taken into account:

- children in a group will frequently behave less responsibly than the same young person would with his or her parents;
- that in respect of what is "careful and prudent" many parents have greater expectations of staff than they would have of themselves.

ii) Delegating Responsibility

The party leader may wish/need to delegate responsibility for the supervision of some or all of the pupils at various times to other members of the staff team.

The member of staff must be:

- competent to take charge of this particular group of pupils, doing this activity, in this location;
- properly briefed as to his or her responsibility;
- aware of the next meeting time and place, and understands the procedure to adopt in the event of an accident or emergency.

iii) Supervision – General

The party leader should ensure that at all times during the visit:

- each member of staff know exactly for which pupil/s, if any, he or she is responsible;
- each child knows which member of staff is in charge of his or her group.

When no such instruction has been given, it should be assumed that the party leader is responsible for the whole group. It is not satisfactory to assume an undefined, shared responsibility for a group between several members of staff.

Children must be given clear instructions that they are to stay in their group or within a defined area of the member of staff in charge.

iv) Assembly, Departure and the Journey

Meet in good time and allow for packing of the vehicle. Don't forget the all-important head count! A checklist of important items/issues is useful.

Guidelines/rules should be established, relevant to the nature of the journey, about eating, drinking, litter, other people and general behaviour.

Be prepared for travel sickness! Parents of children who suffer from travel sickness should be reminded in advance to administer travel sickness medication as appropriate, and supply the party leader with the child's medication for the return journey.

Arrange appropriate refreshment stops and ensure adequate supervision.

v) On Arrival

Depending on the type of visit this may require considerable patience, adaptability and organisation.

Where problems are perceived with arrangements, an objective discussion and co-operative approach with the management will normally be the most effective. Talk through issues, rather than complain.

vi) Fire

Rules with regard to smoking, matches, etc., should be established.

Rules relating to the locking of rooms overnight will need consideration. It may generally be wiser to insist that rooms remain unlocked.

On arrival, the party leader must ensure that fire precautions and evacuation procedures are clearly explained to all.

vii) Group Control

Group control should be maintained at all times; it is better to be over-directive initially. Control is facilitated by:

- clear, unambiguous instructions with regard to where, how and when;
- a regular roll-call or head-count;
- some means of group identification (e.g., uniform);
- a clear understanding of the standards of behaviour expected;
- keeping activity groups manageable in size, appropriate to the conditions.

viii) Participation in "Ancillary" Activities

Frequently activities which are not central to the visit take place, e.g., swimming/paddling. Whilst adding appreciably to the enjoyment and atmosphere of the visit, such activities may carry a substantial degree of risk. Leaders are advised to plan, risk-assess and organise accordingly.

ix) Homesickness, Accidents and Illness

Homesickness requires a sensitive response. If the condition is not self-curing within a reasonable time the child may have to be returned home after fully discussing the matter with the parents/guardians.

Accidents and illness may require the application of first aid but medical assistance should be sought in appropriate cases. In cases of hospitalisation, sufferers should be accompanied by an adult they know and arrangements made for frequent visits. Party leaders should ensure any appropriate documentation is dealt with promptly.

Accidents involving injury or damage to an individual require that the party leader make a detailed written record of the circumstances of the incident, listing all the relevant factors. This should be done immediately following the incident.

In the event of major accidents the **Emergency Procedures** detailed in **Part 1 xix** should be applied.

3. The Return and Post-Visit Issues

i) The Return Journey

Brief the group about the return journey and involve them fully in any preparations.

Administer travel sickness medication where applicable.

ii) Reviewing the Visit

The importance of an appropriate review cannot be over-emphasised, its main purpose being to identify the strengths and weaknesses of arrangements so as to improve the practice of future visits.

Reviews of achievements of objectives and safety, as a minimum, should be made for every activity session.

The Educational Visits Coordinator must compile accident and incident reports and use these to inform future risk assessments.

References and Guidance

DfES Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits 1998

http://tna.europarchive.org/20030731072630/http://www.dfes.gov.uk:80/h_s_ev/hspv.pdf

Health and Safety Executive Risk Assessment Guidance