

Educational Visits Policy

Definition

An Educational Visit is any planned off site activity undertaken by any pupils and accompanied by members of the school's teaching and support staff. These activities are also referred to as outdoor learning.

Rationale

The value of Educational visits and outdoor learning cannot be overrated. It has been shown that behaviour improves, attainment increases and attendance also improves when pupils have regular experience of outdoor learning. At Great Bardfield Primary School we realise this and, consequently, more educational visits are being organised in each year group. These may be to visit local venues or to travel much further afield.

Roles and Responsibilities

The EVC will endeavour to ensure that:

- All off-site activity meets employer and establishment requirements;
- There is training and induction;
- Emergency arrangements are organised;
- A suitable group leader is appointed and they are supported in making preparations for their visit;
- The risk assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit;
- She will research, visit and propose new venues for classes to visit;
- The group leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups on the visit and will organise them effectively;
- The group leader has the relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor;
- Parents have signed the consent forms;
- Arrangements are in place for any medical or SEN needs within the group;
- The mode of transport is appropriate to the type of journey and age of the children;
- Travel times are known;
- A central record of all off-site visits is maintained;
- Systems are reviewed;
- Post visit records are kept of any accidents, incidents or any near misses.

The Head Teacher will endeavour to ensure that:

- He will support the EVC in her role listed above;
- All adults attending visits are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance;
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover;
- He has the names of all adults and children in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents and staff's next of kin;
- The Governing Body has approved any high risk or residential visit.

Group Leader

One teacher, the Group Leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have been appointed during the planning stages of the visit. The Group Leader should:

- Appoint a deputy;
- Be able to control and lead the pupils of the relevant age group;
- Be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice of that activity;

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- Undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
- Undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;
- Have regard to health and safety of the group at all times;
- Know all the pupils proposed for the visit in order to make adequate provision to meet all needs;
- Observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- Ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibility of pupils below).

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit.

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the LEA or Governing Body. They will therefore be acting in course of their normal employment during their normal hours. They will be acting under an agreement with their Head Teacher and Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

Teachers and other adults on the visit must:

- Do their best to ensure health and safety of everyone in the group;
- Care for each individual as any reasonable parent would;
- Follow the instructions of the leader and help control discipline. Non-teachers should generally not have sole charge of pupils except where risk to health and safety are minimal;
- Consider stopping the visit or 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;
- Follow the dress code set out for that particular visit (on most visits pupils will wear their school uniform).
- Behave sensibly and responsibly;
- Look out for anything or anyone 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.

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may 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 purposes and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits. The Group Leader should also inform parents of 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 not their first language.

Parents must:

- Provide the Group Leader with emergency contact number(s);
- Sign the consent form;
- Give the Group Leader relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.

Planning off-site visits

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum 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. The Head Teacher is ultimately responsible for planning all off-site visits. In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the Group Leader but the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience. The organiser/ Group Leader must agree all the plans with the EVC and the Head Teacher.

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Exploratory visits

An exploratory visit should be undertaken by at least the Group Leader 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 pupils.

This exploratory visit will inform the Risk Assessor and is of paramount importance when planning a visit. Whilst the EVC can support a colleague in considering a risk assessment, it is the duty of the group leader to write it.

Risk Assessment

- This is the process of identifying hazards;
- Assessing the likelihood of it happening (risk);
- Putting control measures in place;
- Check if anything else is needed.

Risk assessment for Educational Visits must be seen at three distinct levels:

1. Generic activity risk assessments which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and when ever it takes place (e.g. coach travel);
2. Visit/site specific risk assessment (pre-visit information and risk assessment provided by the site/organisation);
3. Ongoing risk assessment (during the visit).

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 and fitness;
- Pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- The quality and suitability of available equipment;
- Seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

First Aid

Whilst it is not essential for a trained First Aider to be included on the staff of each visit, it is essential that a person be appointed in charge of First Aid arrangements. In the event of two coaches being used for transportation, there should be someone responsible for first aid on each coach. However, it is a statutory requirement that a paediatric First Aider be present on all Foundation off-site visits.

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 the 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 made to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly. All staff members at Great Bardfield Primary School are CRB checked. However, in the event that on the day of a visit a situation arises where there are not enough staff to proceed safely with the visit, another responsible adult (e.g. parent, Governor) could be invited to attend. However, under no circumstances can this adult be solely left in charge of a group of children but must remain with a teacher from Great Bardfield Primary School. 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.

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Residential visits

The planning for these visits, normally taken by Year 6 children but not exclusively, is more rigorous than for day visits. Residential visits always require the authorisation of the Governing Body. The school will bear in mind the following:

- The Group Leader should ideally have their own room as close to the pupils as possible. A floor plan of the rooms should be available for emergencies;
- Access by staff to student rooms must be available at all times;
- There should be separate sleeping areas for male and female pupils;
- The whole party should be 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 - staff should make sure that security measures are in force to stop unauthorised visitors;
- Ensure that locks, shutters, etc. work on all the rooms used by the group;
- Who will be responsible for the safekeeping of any valuables;
- Provision for disabled and special needs pupils or any pupil who may fall ill;
- Dietary requirements for Muslim pupils should be in place.

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

Pupils with special educational or medical needs will not be excluded from educational 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 and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

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 any correspondence 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;
- Visit's objectives;
- Details of the activities planned and how the assessed risks will be managed;
- Clothing and equipment to be taken;
- Money to be taken;
- The information required from parents and what they will be asked to consent to.

Parental Consent

Great Bardfield Primary School will seek signed consent for all off-site visits from parents. If parents withhold consent, the pupil will 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. The school's parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group. Verbal consent only is not acceptable.

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. The lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety. Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

Participation

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Pupils should be assessed to ensure they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities. No child should be excluded from an activity. In the case of children with physical needs, it may be necessary to plan another visit in which they are able to fully take part. During the visit they should not be coerced into any activities they fear. Pupils whose behaviour is such that the Group Leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits, the Group Leader should consider whether such pupils will return home early.

Information to pupils

It is for the Group Leader to decide how to provide information but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information. Pupils should understand:

- The aims and objectives of the visit/activity;
- Background information about the place to be visited;
- How to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- Why safety precautions are in place;
- Why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- The standard of behaviour expected from pupils;
- Who is responsible for the group;
- What to do if approached by a stranger;
- What to do if separated from the group;
- Emergency procedures;
- Rendezvous procedures.

Transport and pupils

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- Arrive on time and wait for the transport away from the road;
- Do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- Wear suitable seatbelts and stay seated while travelling on transport;
- Make sure that any bags do not block the aisles;
- Never attempt to get on or off the transport while it is moving;
- Never throw things out of the windows;
- Never get out of their seat while the transport is moving;
- Never kneel or stand on the seats;
- Never distract the driver;
- Stay clear of doors when entering or leaving the transport;
- After leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road;
- If you have to cross roads to get to the transport, do not cross the road until you are told by an adult that it is safe to do so;
- If you feel unwell while travelling, tell an adult immediately.

Coastal visits

Group Leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred in or by the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. At Great Bardfield Primary School, the Group Leader should keep 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 that group members are aware of warning signs and flags;
- Establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return in the unlikely event of being separated from the rest of the group;
- Look out for hazards on the beach such as glass, sewage outlets, etc.;
- Some of the group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group Leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds.

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 children at Great Bardfield Primary School. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, in recognised bathing areas which have official clearance for public bathing. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One

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teacher should always stay out of the water in order to maintain strict surveillance. Where paddling is to be allowed on a trip, the Group Leader must make sure that there is a high ratio of adults to pupils. Please note there are additional guidelines for weekly visits to Queensbury Swimming Baths.

Emergency Procedures

Even when careful planning and a thorough risk assessment have taken place there may be unforeseen circumstances, resulting in a serious incident. The group leader would take charge, assessing the seriousness of the situation.

The priorities are:

- Attend to the casualty;
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group;
- Call the emergency services and school.

In the event of very serious or fatal injuries the number 01274 431007 should be called. This number can be found on the yellow card which must be carried by every teacher on each off-site visit they make. If the media appear at the scene of an accident, Great Bardfield Primary School staff should refrain from speaking to them.

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