



# Educational Visits Policy

## INTRODUCTION

### **The Role of the Educational Visits Coordinator**

It is good practice for each school to have an Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) who will be involved in the planning and management of educational visits and adventure activities. That role will be the responsibility of the head teacher at Northleigh School.

The role of the EVC will be to check the visits educational objectives and check that they are met. The need for evaluation of any visit is essential and should be carried out by the organiser of the visit and then shared with the EVC; written evaluation is required but should be in point form not narrative. Similarly the question of whether the visit represents the most cost effective way of filling the learning objectives needs to be addressed.

Other alternative strategies need to be considered; video/film/computer simulations/lectures/local visits/book or paper based enquiry/role play etc, before a definitive decision is made that the proposed visit is the best strategy.

The purpose and value of educational visits are manifold. Boosting of self-esteem and the developing of key skills are crucial in the objective setting of visits. The opportunity to build on pupils strengths, interest and experiences and develop confidence to learn independently and collaboratively, alongside the development of their physical skills and the encouragement to recognise the importance of pursuing a healthy lifestyle while keeping themselves and others safe. Social skills developed through problem solving, decision making, teamwork and residential experiences will aid the delivery of personal and social education. Environmental awareness may contribute to particular objectives in the sciences and geography/history curriculum while project work will enhance the aesthetic and creative programmes of study.

## The Range of Activities

The following are offered as a breadth of activities that might be included as off site activities that are undertaken by school;

- Adventurous activities using licensed providers
- Residential activities during school time
- Day or part day visits using transport
- Swimming pool visits
- Farm visits
- Field visits
- After school sporting activities
- Day or part day visits on foot

Adventure activities and adventurous activities can be classified in three categories:

1. No significant risk ( A )
2. Some higher risk or higher profile activities ( B )
3. Demanding activities that, if not school led, would need licensing, or are potentially hazardous e.g. canoeing, high rope activity ( C )

- Risk Level A- Low Risk (Museum, Theatre, Study Centre, Parkland)
- Risk Level B- Medium Risk (Walking within non-remote country, residential visits, cycling on roads)
- Risk Level C-High Risk (AALA activities, Field study in remote areas, City Locations, in or near water, overseas visits)

### Category A

These comprise activities that present no significant risks. They should be supervised by a teacher who has been assessed as competent by the EVC to lead this category of educational visit. Activities should be conducted following the schools standard visit procedures.

### Category B

These comprise some higher risk or higher profile activities. Safe supervision requires that the leader, as a minimum, has undergone an additional familiarisation process to the activity and/or location.

## **Category C**

This is the most demanding category. It includes all those activities that if not school led would be in the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996. It also includes activities that fall outside the scope of licensing or are less commonly pursued by pupil groups such as motor sports whose safe supervision requires that the leader should normally complete some prior test of his/her specific competence. Such testing might include a recognised course of training or an assessment of competence by an appropriate body. At the employers discretion category C may also include activities not currently licensable such as high rope courses, sub-aqua activities or canoeing in placid waters. Competence in this area needs to be the relevant NGB Award or Level 3 NVQ in Outdoor Education.

In assessing the appropriate category in which to place an activity the EVC and outdoor education advisor should take account of the environment in which the activity will take place.

- In or near water
- In winter conditions
- On or near cliffs or steep terrain
- In an area subject to extremes of weather or environmental change

Field study activities next to open water, such as pond dipping, might rate as category B. winter camping might rate as category C, as might off road cycling over steep terrain. Category C includes any activity in water.

## **Responsibility for Off-Site Visits**

Enshrined within the terms and conditions of employment of all teaching staff is the requirement for a duty of care to be demonstrated to the pupils. As with other aspects of health and safety, responsibility cannot be delegated to others. The role of the EVC is to ensure that the activity leader is competent to undertake the activity and understands the nature of the responsibility related to that activity. The activity leader has full responsibility for the safe running of the activity, including agreement for the activity to take place, following guidance laid down and ensuring that all participants are aware of their roles. Teachers, volunteers, pupils and parents all have responsibility during the course of any off-site activity in which they are participating.

## **Risk Assessment**

There are five steps to risk assessment;

1. Look for hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
4. Record your findings
5. Review your assessment and revise it if necessary

Risk Assessment for educational visits can be usefully considered as having three levels

- Generic activity risk assessments which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place.
- Visit/site specific risk assessments which will differ from place to place and group to group.
- Ongoing risk assessment that takes account of, for example illness of staff or pupils, changes in weather, availability of preferred activity. This category is crucial if new dangers emerge during the visit. Changing circumstances can radically alter the safety of an activity and staff should always err on the side of caution. In this category risks can be reassessed as the visit is taking place.

### **Pre-Visits**

In order to undertake a full and comprehensive assessment of risks it will be essential in the majority of cases to undertake a pre-visit. Even where visits are made regularly risks should be reassessed from time to time. When undertaking risk assessment a number of variables need to be taken into account:

1. The number of pupils involved.
2. The age of the pupils, their sex, ability and general behaviour.
3. The previous experience of the group in undertaking off-site visits.
4. The time of the day and the time of the year.
5. The travel arrangements.
6. The hazards of the environment being visited.
7. The numbers, experience and quality of accompanying staff and volunteers.
8. The nature of the visit.

### **General Aspects for the Organisation of Visits**

- Ensure that the ratio of adults meets the county recommendations.
- Ensure that voluntary help have been CRB checked, or cleared by the EVC.
- Ensure that prior to the visit, volunteers are briefed of their responsibilities, in writing.
- Communicate with parents that their pupils are leaving the premises.
- Ensure that at least one trained first aider accompanies every off-site visit.
- When a school visit is conducted off the school premises the insurance arrangements for the school will prevail. However should a visit include time out of normal school hours there may be a requirement for additional insurance cover. The activity leader should check with the EVC as to the requirements for such visits. It is also suggested that parents are informed of the

insurance cover. The adage” you get what you pay for” is very real in the insurance world.

- Should emergency procedures need to be evoked, the activity leader should always inform the school of the particular incident and the school in turn will inform the LEA and any other groups that require information.
- Standards of behaviour must be effective, absolute and continuous. Disciplinary response off site must be at least as robust as it would for disobedience on site.
- Ensure that the visit is organised in sufficient time to organise an effective and safe visit; that any pre-visits are undertaken; that all involved are clear in understanding their responsibilities; that the essential Risk Assessment has been made, presented to the EVC and after the visit an evaluation is made.
- Ensure that parents transporting pupils to and from off-site visits have valid driving licences, road fund licence and MOT. They should also have valid car insurance for carrying pupils on an off site visit. Volunteer drivers should be asked to sign a declaration indicating that all these requirements are in place. The declaration needs to be kept up to date. Parents and teachers should not be reimbursed for the use of their vehicles as they will invalidate insurance cover unless the vehicle is specially insured as a taxi.
- Ensure that school mini bus drivers have the county certificate passing them for mini bus driving and ensuring that they have another adult with them during transporting the pupils. It is unreasonable to expect to supervise the passengers and not possible to deal effectively with emergencies whilst travelling. (It is also advisable to, when possible, have a male and a female staff member accompanying each bus.

### **Role of the Trustees**

1. Ensure that guidance is available to inform the schools policy, practices and procedures relating to the health and safety of pupils on educational visits. These should include measures to obtain parental consent on a basis of full information, to investigate parental complaints, and to discuss and review procedures including incident and emergency management systems.
2. Support the EVC in matters relating to educational visits and ensure that they have the appropriate time and expertise to fulfil their responsibilities.
3. Ascertain that governor training is available and relevant.
4. Agree on types of visit they should be formed about.
5. Ask questions about visits, educational objectives and how they will be met. Are the objectives appropriate to the age and abilities of the pupil group? Where the objectives are not clear the governors should challenge the nature of the visit.
6. Help ensure that early planning and pre visits can take place and that results can be acted upon.
7. Ensure that bookings are not completed until external providers have met all necessary assurances.

8. Ensure that the EVC has taken all reasonable and practicable measures to include pupils with special educational needs or medical needs on a visit.

**Ratio of Adult to Child Required When Making a Visit**

School Year	Category A Comparatively low risk activities	Category B Medium risk activities	Category C High risk activities
R Yr 7-13	1:4 depending on age and activity minimum 1 competent adult per group	1:4 depending on age and activity minimum 1 competent adult per group	1:2

1. Authorised by: \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher

Date: September 2016

2. Authorised by: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Trustees

Date: September 2016

Review Date: **September 2018**