



Educational Visits Policy

2019

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Signed	Jez Barnard	Jez Barnard	SDC Committee 24th April 2019	FGPP Committee 24th March 2021

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Recording of All Offsite Visits

All visits off site are recorded on the EVOLVE system which is monitored by the local authority. Depending on the category (risk) of a visit the authorisation is twofold: For local and non-adventurous activity visit, authorisation is by the Headteacher & EVC. Visits with greater risk or specific skills required and residential visits need to be authorised by the Nottinghamshire Local Authority Outdoor Education Advisory Team. Staff are trained to input their visits and then this is checked by the EVC and then Headteacher for authorisation. If necessary, it is then submitted to the LA. Visits should be submitted at least 3 weeks before where possible and at least 1 month before residential visits so that any changes or checks can be made. Visit details are stored on the EVOLVE website which is password protected for confidentiality.

The Outdoor Education Adviser

Phone 01623 556110

Email: outdoor.environmental@nottscc.gov.uk

Post: Outdoor Education Adviser
Outdoor and Environmental Education
The Mill Adventure Base,
Kingsmill Reservoir,
Sutton in Ashfield, Mansfield
Nottinghamshire
NG17 5LA

Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good primary practice.

Purposes

Educational Visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. Teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at John Clifford School.

Headteacher

The Headteacher at John Clifford School will endeavour to ensure that:

- they have appointed a suitable group leader;
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins. (This applies even when the head teacher is not going on the visit);
- the risk assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit; training needs have been met;
- the group leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
- the group leader has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity;
- all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance;
- parents have signed consent forms/gateway permission (including local visits permission-done on school admission)
- 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;
 - the group leader and head teacher have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name;
 - the group leader and head teacher have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents, staff and volunteers' next of kin.

Group Leader

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

- 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;
 - undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;
 - always have regard to the health and safety of the group;
- know 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 on school- led visits act as employees of the LA. They will therefore be acting in the 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.

Teacher 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;
- always 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;
- not undertake any task that may be dangerous unless instructed by a member of staff, who will have assessed the safety.

Any pupils whose behaviour may 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 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.

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, 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.

The head teacher is responsible for 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 plans with the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) / head teacher.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using Nottinghamshire's Local Authority's Risk Assessment Forms and the school specific form and recorded on the EVOLVE system. The risk assessment and guidelines will decide the adult: child ratio for each visit. (See Guidance for 'Supervision').

The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- what are the risks?
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided? what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit? (See section on Supervision.)

The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks and completing the 'school specific risk assessment' form:

- 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, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

Exploratory Visit

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit 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 all staff and pupils in the group;
- ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Board/Local Authority.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For all visits it is required to have at least one trained first-aider in the group. The group leader should have a working knowledge of first aid and all adults in the group should know how to contact emergency services.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;**
- appointed person to oversee first-aid arrangements.**

First-aid should always be available and accessible. If a first-aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The Headteacher should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed. The contents of a first-aid kit will depend on what activities are planned.

Supervision

It is important to have an appropriate ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit.

The factors to take into consideration include:

- gender, age and ability of 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 so supervision levels should be set accordingly.

As a general guideline, the ratio of adults to children, outlined in the Nottinghamshire's Schools Off –Site Visits guidance folder, should be used. Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits. These ratios include residential visits.

Where there is more than one adult supervisor, a group leader, who has authority over the whole party, should be appointed. 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 time. 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 always retain responsibility for the group.

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. **If children require access to toilets this must be supervised by a member of school staff.** If the school is taking part in an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the LEA or Governing Body must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity. This is checked by using the EV2 form.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

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

Pupils should be assessed to ensure they can undertake the proposed activities. During the visit they should not be coerced into 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 and liaise with the Headteacher 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; what standard of behaviour is 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

Transport and Pupils

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

- arrival on time and waiting for the transport away from the road, track, etc.
- not rushing towards the transport when it arrives;
- Wearing a seatbelt and staying seated while travelling on transport; (it will always be checked by a member of staff before travel.)
- never attempting to get on or off the moving transport;
- never running about while transport is moving or passing someone on steps or stairs;
- staying clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport;
- after leaving the vehicle, always wait for instructions from a member of staff before crossing the road;

Pupils with Special Educational and Medical Needs

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.

Communicating with Parents/Carers

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 letter to parents / guardians prior to a visit:

dates of the visit;
 times of departure and return; mode(s) of travel
 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 of how the assessed risks will be managed;
 clothing, food and equipment to be taken; money to be taken;
 the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to.

Parental Consent

John Clifford School will seek consent for:
 visits involving children (local visits consent signed on admission to school;) adventure activities;
 residential visits.
 transportation by an adult in a private car (on admission to school)

If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should 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. If the parents give a conditional consent the head teacher will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not. The School's parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

Residential Visits

Hostels and Hotels/Accommodation

The school will bear in mind the following:

the group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the young people's – we will obtain arrangements of the rooms in advance;
 the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group;
 access by staff to student rooms must always be available;
 separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults;
 ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key staff;
 security arrangements – ensure that locks / shutters etc. work on all the rooms used by the group;
 storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables;
 adequate lighting
 provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs;
 safety in rooms /recreational accommodation / any other facilities for the group.

Coastal Visits (where applicable)

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. 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;
 cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should always keep to the path. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

Swimming8

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 John Clifford children. Paddling in the sea will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One teacher should always stay out of the water for better surveillance. Where paddling is to be allowed on a visit, a ratio of 1 adult: 4 children is a minimum.

Farm Visits

John Clifford recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. 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 0157 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 basic rules for a farm visit will be:

We will never let pupils:

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

Steph Pounder EVC April 2019