

Horspath C of E Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. The direct experience gives our pupils a fuller understanding of the world around them.

Purposes

Our educational visits are designed to provide stimulus and support the children's learning. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus throughout a topic or the year; at the start of a unit of work; alternatively teachers may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the curriculum.

Organisation

At Horspath School we plan and organise educational visits using clear guidelines set by Oxfordshire County Council Outdoor Education Department.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits members of staff organise.

Head Teacher/ Educational Visits Leader

The Head Teacher/ Educational Visits Leader at Horspath School will endeavour to ensure that:

- a suitable visit leader has been appointed;
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins. (This applies even when the head is not going on the visit);
- the risk assessment is complete and it is that any risks have been minimised to an appropriate level to make the visit viable;
- 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;
- the governing body has approved the visit if necessary (see School Governors section below);
- parents have signed consent forms (including blanket consent);
- arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the children (asthma, allergy and special dietary records should be consulted);
- the mode of travel is appropriate;
- travel times out and back are known to administration staff at school and parents;
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover;

- the visit leader must have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name;
- the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group are known, as are the contact details of parents and the staff's and volunteers' next of kin.

School Governors

Where educational visits are planned to London, outside the UK or include an overnight stay, approval from the school's governing body will be required before the trip goes ahead. The Head Teacher will be required to demonstrate to the governing body that all of the checks, risk assessments and procedures (detailed above) are in place and are sufficiently robust to minimise any risks to pupils and staff.

Visit Leader

One teacher/ appropriate member of staff, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been appointed by the Head Teacher. The Group Leader should:

- refer to Leaders Check list for proposed visit (available in Educational visits file)
- complete the Educational Visits Plan (form available in Educational visits file)
- be able to manage and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- be suitable qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents (if appropriate);
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;
- have regard to the health and safety of the group (pupils and adults) at all times;
- know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability (and complete additional risk assessment for specific pupils if required);
- 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 River Learning Trust or of the Governing Body. 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;
- adhere to the school's code of conduct policy
- 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;
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly in accordance with the schools behaviour policy;
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it;

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 purpose and details of the visit as well as the cost of the visit well in advance on the visit. Parents must be invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits.

Where appropriate 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.
- ensure their child is appropriately dressed for the visit

Planning off-site visits

Whether the visit is to a local green, 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 Headteacher is 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 Headteacher must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

The organiser / visit leader must agree all plans with the Headteacher or the Educational Visits Leader.

Planning must take into consideration educational benefits to the children and the visit leader should be able to justify how the visit is relevant and beneficial to pupils' learning.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out in advance of a visit. The risk assessment will decide the adult: child ratio for each visit. (See Guidance in Educational Visits file). The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- What are the risks?
- Who is affected by them?
- Which 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.)

At Horspath School we have some generic risk assessments that exist for on-going activities (e.g. walking to the church). These are signed by members of staff and any new member of staff should read and sign the risk assessments to state they understand and are able to fulfil the criteria set. The generic risk assessments are kept in the Educational Visits file.

The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if needed.

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, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.
- have an outlined Plan B should any barriers affect the trip (eg alternative traffic routes, adult helper illness, toilets, weather)

Risk assessments are approved by the validated EVC at least a week before the visit is planned

Exploratory visit

Wherever possible the visit 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 the 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. If appropriate, the views from other schools could be sought. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities, visits which involve overnight stays, or visits abroad at least one trained first-aider should form part of the group. The visit 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;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. 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.

Any pupils requiring any additional First Aid requirements (eg inhalers) should be named in the Risk Assessment to highlight provision.

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:

- 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. When visits are to remote areas or involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

Oxfordshire doesn't set ratios for pupils on educational visit. Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits.

Where there is more than one adult supervisor, a visit 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 or regular volunteers who are well known to the school may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. Where parents or volunteers are acting in this volunteer role, a risk assessment must be completed detailing what volunteers can and cannot do e.g. accompanying pupils to the toilet.

All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, 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 retain responsibility for the group at all times.

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 the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the 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.

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. 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.

Pupils should be briefed on health and safety issues and expectations (including behaviour) in the presence of at least one other adult.

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
- 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, track, etc.
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- wear your seatbelt and stay seated while travelling on transport;
- make sure your bags do not block aisles on the transport
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- never throw things out of the transport vehicle's windows;
- never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- never run about while transport is moving or pass someone on steps or stairs;
- never kneel or stand on seats or otherwise impede the driver's vision
- never distract or disturb the driver;
- stay clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding 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 always use the Green Cross Code
- if you feel unwell while travelling, tell a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

The Headteacher 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 / 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 pupil's 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 including the name of any travel company;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- visit's objectives;
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation and medical cover. Any cover to be arranged by the parents, if appropriate, will be requested;
- clothing 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.

Coastal visits

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 visit 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 keep to the path at all times. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

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 Horspath children. Paddling 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.

Governors should be notified in advance of any activities involving water.

Farm visits

Horspath School 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 basis 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 or other machines;
- play in the farm area

Evaluation of visits

After the visit the visit leader should complete an evaluation of the visit (form available in Educational Visits file). The evaluation should take into account any accidents (a separate accident form should be completed) or incidents that should be taken into consideration for future visits.

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Next review: September 2019