

Shirehampton Primary School



OFF-SITE EDUCATION VISITS POLICY

Updated: January 2017
Next review: January 2020

1 Introduction

1.1 Off-site visits are activities which take place outside school grounds and are arranged by, or on behalf of, the school. The Governors, HT and staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the Trust by providing experiences, which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our pupil's learning experiences.

1.2 In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to acceptable levels, for the health and safety of pupils, staff and volunteers at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with protective characteristics.

1.3 All visits will comply with the requirements outlined in the DfE's 'Health and Safety: Advice for Schools'¹. Further advice will be sought from competent persons where necessary. Copies of these guidance documents are available on the national guidance web site. All staff leading or participating in a visit are required to have read this Policy and to have signed it to say this is the case.

1.4 The following links provide a wealth of information for conducting visits and are the source of information embedded into this policy

National guidance: <http://oeapng.info>

Dfe guidance and legal framework: <http://oeapng.info/category/legal-framework-2/>

Hse advice on duties and powers: DfE Health & Safety: Advice on Legal Duties and Powers

2 Aims

2.1 The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;
- promote the independence of our pupils as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

The visits are planned to enable our pupils to progress in skills and knowledge of the curriculum and of life skills.

2.2 For each subject in the curriculum there are opportunities for off-site visits. These are some examples of the types of visits carried out by our school.

- English – theatre and library visits;
- Science – visits to botanical gardens, ponds, museums, coastal areas;
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment, museums;
- History – castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums, National trust properties and areas of interest in Bristol;
- Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails;

- Art and Design – art gallery visits, use of the locality for drawing, sculpture and photography;
- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities outdoor and adventurous challenges;
- Music – extra-curricular activities, concerts;
- Design and Technology – visits to local factories or design centres, museums;
- Modern Foreign Languages – local language events;
- ICT – its use in local shops/libraries/colleges;
- RE – visits to local places of worship
- PSHE and Citizenship – visits to the fire station, crucial crew and old people's residential homes

3 Residential activities

3.1 Throughout their education year 5 and 6 pupils may benefit from the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. Activities within school time are often linked to the National Curriculum or programmes of study.

3.2 These residential visits enable pupils to take part in activities to build life skills, confidence and experience away from their normal environment. We provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

4 How visits may be planned and approved

4.1 The school has a named Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), who is involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

The EVC will:

- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips (being competent means that the Leader has demonstrated the ability to operate to recognised standards of good practice, and has sufficient relevant experience and knowledge of the group, the activity and the venue);
- Check that Visit Leaders are competent and record details of necessary training and qualifications and/or reviewing verified evidence of relevant experience;
- ensure that risk assessments are completed by competent trained staff;
- check visit plans and sign-off risk assessments;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all private car drivers, have had satisfactory DBS checks, and that the letter from the coach company assures us their drivers too have had satisfactory DBS checks;
- ensure that regular volunteers and those assisting with overnight/residential stays have had satisfactory DBS checks carried out. Volunteers used for one off activities, who are not left alone at any time (out of sight/ear shot of a member of staff) to supervise pupils, do not necessarily need DBS checks completing. The HT's discretion under these circumstances is used;
- make sure that all necessary consent and medical forms are obtained;

- ensure that risk assessments for frequent/regular visits are routinely reviewed (for example a swimming facility) and update where necessary.

An EVC checklist is attached at Appendix 1.

4.2 The Head will appoint/approve a competent Visit Leader to be responsible for running the visit. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school, with an appropriate level of experience, training and qualifications.

4.3 Visit Leaders and staff arranging, or otherwise involved in, off-site activities must read thoroughly the guidelines published within this Policy.

Visit Leaders will:

- ensure all off-site activities take place in accordance with school procedures;
- check to ensure sufficient staff and helpers of the right experience are DBS checked (as detailed above) and briefed throughout the visit;
- conduct/review risk assessments and ensure management to reduce risks including site specific, general and dynamic risk assessments are undertaken and recorded;
- ensure a named person, emergency procedures and systems for recording and sharing information on accidents and near misses are in place before briefing pupils and parents;
- Where appropriate and when considered necessary undertake exploratory visits or seek references from other schools if using new venues; and reassess from time to time;
- ensure that the details of the visit and risk assessments given to the HT and/or SBM;
- ensure any accidents / incidents are reported;
- Feedback any learning points from visits to the EVC and SBM.

School Business Manager will:

- ensure that Best Value principles are used when selecting providers, appropriate checks are made, insurance and financial support procedures are followed;
- ensure appropriate transport arrangements are in place i.e. reputable coach company, driver insurance, following specific legal requirements.

4.4 Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must first seek and obtain the initial approval of the HT before any commitment is made on behalf of the school.

4.5 Governors will be informed of visits through the termly Headteacher report but delegate formal approval of visits to the HT.

4.6 It is our policy that all pupils including those with medical conditions should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a protected characteristic is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with protective characteristics. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

5 Risk assessments

5.1 The Visit Leader must carry out a comprehensive risk assessment, before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks that might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. All identified hazards must be reduced to an acceptable level (Medium or Low rating) before the Head of School will approve the visit. Advice may be sought from the EVC or the outdoor education Advisor where required.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- Look for the hazards;
- Decide who might be harmed and how;
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done;
- Implement safety measures needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level;
- Include the SEN/medical needs of the specific pupils participating;
- Plan for emergencies;
- Identify alternative arrangements or “Plan B” if the risks change and activities cannot be completed;
- Record findings;
- Review assessment and revise it if necessary.

5.2 Where necessary, and if possible, staff planning an off-site visit should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments should be ascertained if they are of an appropriate standard and can be adopted.

5.3 It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the risk assessment must show the extent of any hazards involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate the risks. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

5.4 Activity and Visit Leaders must ensure that young people are adequately supervised and take into account the following:

- The nature of the activity (including its duration);
- The location and environment in which the activity is to take place;
- The age and gender (including developmental age) of the young people to be supervised;
- The ability of the young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs);
- Medical conditions and Individual Healthcare Plans
- Staff competence.

5.5 This means that arrangements for supervision, including staff/pupil ratios, must take into account the nature of a group and the individuals in it. It is therefore important that, when planning a repeat visit or a series of activities, the previous plan (no matter how well it worked in the past) is reviewed to ensure it meets current group needs.

5.6 Ratios are a risk management issue, and should be determined through the process of risk assessment. It is not possible to set down definitive staff/pupil ratios for a particular age group or activity. However, some guidance documents do set out ratios, but these should be regarded as starting points for consideration rather than being definitive, as they may only be appropriate where the activity is relatively straightforward and the group has no special requirements. For example, the DfES publication Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (1998) suggested the following “starting points”:

- U3s and Nursery 1:3
- YrR 1: 5
- School years 1 - 3, 1:6
- School years 4 - 6, 1:15 NON RESIDENTIAL 1 : 10 if residential

5.7 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework no longer sets out different requirements for minimum ratios during outings from those required on site. As with other age groups, ratios during outings should be determined by risk assessment, which should be reviewed before each outing. The appropriate ratio on an outing is always likely to be lower than the legal minimum that applies. Staff to child ratios for Foundation Stage can be found in Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

5.8 Normally at least two adults will accompany any off-site visit. The Visit Leader will usually be a teacher but this is not compulsory and the other may be a responsible and competent adult.

5.9 These ratios are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases. Higher levels of supervision may be required or determined by the risk assessment.

5.10 A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue and must include provision for:

- appropriate level of supervision;
- the required use of child restraints;
- vetting of the driver by the police;
- insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency procedures;
- breakdown procedures.

5.11 The Visit Leader will double-check with the Head through our safeguarding procedures that all regular volunteers and those assisting with overnight/residential stays on the trip have been subject to satisfactory DBS checks. Those volunteers used for one-off activities, who are not left alone at any time (out of sight/ear shot of a member of staff) to supervise pupils, do not necessarily need DBS checks completing. The Head’s discretion under these circumstances will be used.

5.12 A copy of the completed risk assessments will be given to the HT to sign, SBM and all adults supervising the trip and will be available to parents and Directors/Governors.

5.13 It is important that the risk assessments are communicated and understood by everyone involved in the trip (staff, volunteers, pupils and parents) before it takes place. This includes risks, control measures, emergency arrangements and contingency plans.

5.14 Dynamic risk assessments will be required during the visit if changes occur e.g. weather, illness or an unforeseen hazard. These involve professional judgements in response to changing circumstances. It is critical that control measures are monitored and confirmed or adapted as required.

5.15 On completion of the visit the risk assessment must be reviewed and any learning points and recommendations for improved control measures documented and communicated to relevant staff.

5.16 Any accidents that occur to employees, volunteers or pupils during the visit must be investigated and recorded following normal accident reporting procedures. RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reportable accidents will require the school's HT to be notified as soon as reasonably practicable. See appendix 2 for details of action to be taken in the event of an emergency situation affecting an off site visit.

6 Transport

6.1 When hiring coaches and minibuses, it is our policy only to use reputable companies with vehicles fitted with appropriate seatbelts and to insist that all those participating in the visit wear them.

6.2 No member of staff will be allowed to be alone with a child in a car.

6.3 Where private cars are used for transport, the HT is responsible for ensuring:

- suitability of driver;
- parents written agreement;
- appropriate licence, insurance, roadworthy and child restraints for vehicle;
- that each driver has been subject to DBS checks.

6.4 Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party and appropriate child restraints will be used, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach.

6.5 The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- food and refreshments
- accommodation
- external providers.

6.6 The school follows all legal requirements about charging for visits. Where the visit takes place in school time, no charge will be made to parents, but they will be asked for a voluntary contribution. If the visit is not viable for financial reasons, it will not run and any money collected will be repaid. Where a visit takes place mostly out of school time, parents will be asked to pay.

7. Communication with parents/carers

7.1 The parents/carers of pupils taking part in an off-site activity will be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit to make an informed decision.

7.2 Parents/carers must give their written permission, medical and contact details, before a child can be involved in any off-site educational visits. Parents/Carers will be required to complete the Local Visits Consent Form on enrolment and annually thereafter at school. Verbal consent may be given, as a last resort, if written consent is not forthcoming. This must be noted on the risk assessment or class list with a date and time of consent.

7.3 Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary except in the case of residential visits). This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

7.4 No child may be excluded from a visit taking place in school time because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle via letters sent home about intended visits.

7.5 The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Visits Leader to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

7.6 Where appropriate for residential, foreign or adventure activity visits, information meetings with parents will be arranged.

7.7 Expectations of behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents. This will include the need to meet the cost and make arrangements for collecting pupils in certain circumstances.

7.8 Further guidance on the procedure for organising international/residential and day trips is attached at Appendix 3.

8. Pupils

8.1 Pupils should be briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all visits. Training and careful briefing on activities will be given, particularly for unfamiliar ones. Ongoing briefings are an important part of learning and safety and will always be provided whilst on the visit.

8.2 Where possible pupils should be involved with planning, developing codes of conduct, assessing/managing risk and evaluating their own attitude, behaviour, development and learning. 9

9 Further health and safety considerations

9.1 All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the Visit Leader, of the emergency procedures that will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school office number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal working day the home telephone number/mobile telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided. This will usually be the HT.

9.2 Before a group embarks on the visit, the Head and emergency contact (if different from the HT) should have access to a list of everyone, pupils and adults, travelling with the group, together with the emergency contact information for every individual, programme and timetable for the activity.

9.3 The safety of the group, and especially the pupils, is of paramount importance. During the activity the group leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure their safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that pupils are both safe and well looked after at all times.

9.4 Prior to a visit, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the School, the Visit Leader should discuss with the Head the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

9.5 Pupils whose medical/health complaints cause particular concern will be referred to their clinician, including their GP for appropriate guidance and advice. Every reasonable effort will be made to achieve inclusion for those pupils with medical/health complaints, subject to overall safety requirements.

10 Visit documentation

10.1 The documentation for educational visits must include the following where applicable to the visit. Paper copies should be taken on the visit by the Visit Leader including:

- risk assessments;
- general information;
- names, ages, contact details, consent and medical fitness forms, and other relevant details of all those going on the visit – residential visits only;
- Individual Healthcare Plans;
- accommodation plan, where relevant;
- contingency plan details;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;
- guidance for the emergency contact and HT;
- first-aid arrangements;
- accident report forms.

Staff Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood this policy prior to my participation in an off-site educational visit.

Name:

Date:

PLEASE RETURN TO THE HT BEFORE THE TRIP TAKES PLACE

Appendix 1

EVC Check List

- ✓ I have attended EVC training as recommended/required by my employer's policy.
- ✓ My employer and my establishment have a policy for visits and learning outside the classroom.
- ✓ Staff induction and training needs are identified and addressed.
- ✓ Ensure visits are formally notified to and authorised by the HT.
- ✓ Staff that lead visits meet necessary competence requirements.
- ✓ All adults including volunteers are vetted and those judged to be engaging in regulated activity are subject to enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks with barred list check.
- ✓ There is an appropriate risk assessment which has been agreed and signed by the Ht with a copy given to the SBM.
- ✓ As EVC, I am kept informed of the planning of visits.
- ✓ There is a 'Plan B' when necessary.
- ✓ Preliminary visits have taken place if required.
- ✓ Third party provider assurances have been obtained.
- ✓ The number and competence of leaders, staff and volunteers will ensure effective supervision.
- ✓ Medical, first aid and inclusion issues have been addressed.
- ✓ There is an establishment emergency response procedure, appropriate to the nature of visits undertaken, which is periodically tested.
- ✓ There is a designated 24/7 emergency contact, with access to all information and documentation relating to the visit.
- ✓ All staff and group members are aware of their roles and responsibilities and have read and understood the Off-site education policy.
- ✓ Those in parental authority have been appropriately briefed regarding itinerary, accommodation, activities, transport and emergency telephone numbers.
- ✓ The visit leader has sufficient funds and an effective means of communication in case of an emergency. □ Visits are debriefed and reviewed.
- ✓ Accidents and incidents are reported, learning is shared and RIDDOR requirements are met.

Appendix 2

ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY SITUATION AFFECTING AN OFF-SITE VISIT

The following suggestions are intended as a guide to enable staff, at times of stress, to follow a course of action covering the main basic priorities. Obviously, no such list will ever be complete and there will be other necessary actions, depending on the situation. However, it is important that the relevant information is quickly and easily available, whatever the time of day or night.

- a) The staff in charge of any venture must have lists of names, telephone numbers and addresses of next of kin of all members of the party, and always carry a mobile phone or coins for the telephone. It may be possible to reverse charges but this is unsatisfactory and time consuming.
- b) Similar lists to those above, complete with next of kin contact addresses and telephone numbers, along with any relevant consent forms, must be readily available at the home establishment. These must include any last minute amendments.

Action to be taken by the Party Leader (or by other Party Staff) in the event of a serious accident/incident

- a) Assess the situation
- b) Protect the party from further injury or danger
- c) Render first aid or other service as appropriate
- d) Call Rescue Services (999) and/or Police, as appropriate
 - State the nature of the emergency
 - Give your name and address/location and telephone number, followed by:
 - The location of the incident
 - The nature of the incident
 - The names of the individuals involved
 - The condition of those involved and where they are located
- e) Phone base contact person (as soon as possible)
- f) It is probable that both staff and students will be in a state of shock, therefore:
 - Remove remainder of the party to some secure accommodation and place under the care of a member of staff able to protect them from the attention of the press/media
 - If necessary, request the Police to assist
 - Calm and comfort young persons and arrange for their evacuation.
- g) Do not make any statements to press/media or allow anyone else to make statements other than expressions of sympathy.
- h) Do not allow party members to telephone home until contact has been made with the Authority.
- i) Retain all equipment involved in an unaltered condition.
- j) Do not allow anyone to see any party member without an independent witness being present.
- k) No-one, unless they are in a relevant official capacity, has the right to see any-one who does not wish to see them.

l) Refer all press/media to BCC Media Office.

Note: This information is available on a laminated card given to every party leader.

Action to be taken by the Base Contact Person when contacted by the Party Leader

1. Take down a contact telephone number for the leader and the group. Listen carefully and write down:
 - a) What happened;
 - b) To whom;
 - c) Where;
 - d) When;
 - e) What has happened since the incident.
2. If the contact person is not the Headteacher they must inform the Headteacher or a senior member of staff of the relevant details as soon as possible.
3. Inform the Authority and Delegated Services.
4. Not only must the parents of any injured children be notified as a priority, but arrangements should be made for all parents to be contacted regarding the safety of their particular children.
5. If necessary, assistance should be given to transport parents to their injured child if he/she is hospitalised.
6. If necessary, an incident centre should be established as soon as possible. Each school should have a planned location for this eventuality.

The Base Contact Person must have by their phone:

- i. Lists of all party member (including adults), and the address and telephone number of their next of kin;
- ii. Complete details of the itinerary;
- iii. Home/contact telephone numbers of senior establishment staff.

Note: This information is available on a laminated card held by every Base Contact person.

Appendix 3

PROCEDURE NOTE FOR INTERNATIONAL/RESIDENTIAL/DAY TRIPS

These summary guidelines should be read in-conjunction with the Off-Site Educational Visits Policy.

Teachers organising any trip must receive prior approval from the Head for the trip to take place. Competent staff to lead and help with the trips will also be approved at this stage which should include one First Aid trained person.

Educational Visit Co-Ordinator's Responsibilities (EVC)

In conjunction with the Teacher organising the trip, the EVC will ensure the following action is taken:

1. A letter to be sent to parents explaining the details of the trip i.e. venue, date, times of departure and arrival back and cost.
2. When the list of pupils going on the trip has been produced, the teacher in charge of the trip will approve their attendance with advice from the HT before a letter is sent to parents with information about payment details and dates when monies need to be in for.
3. A class list is produced with the pupils names, forms, payment details and paperwork received which is completed each time a payment is given in (also recorded is the date and method of payment) and the paperwork. Payment cards will also be produced at this stage for parents to pay in instalments.
4. Dependant on the time available before a trip takes place, a fortnightly catch-up meeting should take place between the Teacher organising the trip and the EVC to receive up-dates on outstanding payments, indemnity forms and travel arrangements.
5. All payments are processed via the school office which provides each pupil with a receipt and a payment record. The system also records receipt of indemnities, passports etc. and enables reports to be produced for each trip.
6. Before each trip takes place the RA and associated documentation is completed by the Visits Leader. These are then sent to the Head of School for authorisation.
7. In the case of residential or international trips a letter is sent to parents inviting them to a meeting to discuss final details. This is arranged at least 2 terms before the trip is to take place. The office administrator will inform the class teacher and Visits Leader of any outstanding forms or monies at least three weeks before the trip.
8. When EHIC cards are collected the dates need to be checked to make sure they are still in date. If they are not a telephone call is carried out to parents informing them of this and the procedure they need to carry out in order to renew it. This must also be carried out on passports and a call to the countries Embassy needs to be made if there is less than 6 months left to run on the passport to ensure that this will be sufficient.
9. At least one member of the Senior Leadership Team will be designated to each international/residential trip in case of emergency and the visit will be approved by an external advisor.
10. Packs are produced for the designated SLT member(s) containing copies of the indemnity forms, next of kin details for the staff who are going on the trip along with a mobile phone number, spreadsheet of essential information regarding the pupils on the trip and any allergies or medication which the pupils may have. A pack is also produced for the teacher in charge containing the same information along with a copy of the current insurance certificate.

11. Dependant on the activity taking place, an appropriate First Aid kit must be taken on all trips. The Office Manager should maintain a list of up-to-date First Aiders and send relevant reminders to staff, copy to the School Business Manager, when up-dates are required.

12. These guidelines have been produced as the school considers its responsibility for the safeguarding of children engaged on trips to be of paramount importance. Therefore, failure to adhere to these guidelines could lead to investigation and possible disciplinary action.