



Education Visits Policy

To be reviewed – Autumn 2017

Educational Visits Policy

Schools: Wincobank Nursery Infant School
Hinde House Primary Phase
Concord Junior School
Hinde House Secondary Phase

Vision

- **Promoting Equality** – by ensuring the needs of all our pupils are met within a safe and secure environment.
- **Celebrating Diversity** – by promoting the similarities and difference between ourselves and the rich variety of cultures within our school.
- **Achieving Excellence** – by enabling all members of school to achieve their full potential, within a caring ethos that is exciting and fun.

Value of Educational Visits

An educational visit is an off-site visit, sanctioned by the school, which takes place under the direct or indirect supervision of staff. We aim that any educational visits will make a valuable contribution to pupils' education and development and realise they are excellent opportunities to extend and enrich children's learning. It is widely accepted that they:

- raise achievement by boosting self-esteem and motivation
- develop key skills
- support the curriculum and aid learning in a range of subject areas
- develop social education and citizenship
- promote education for sustainable development
- promote health and fitness

The following guidelines are offered to enable safe, well organised and well-structured visits to take place.

Approval

All educational visits need to be approved by the Headteacher / Head of School

Some educational visits need to be approved by the Board of Directors (6 weeks prior to visit) before they can take place. Visits requiring these permissions are:

1. adventure activities
2. visits abroad
3. residential experience
4. other hazardous environments or activities

A report must be made to Directors at the appropriate Finance & Resources Committee.

Visit Approval

The proposed visit must be agreed by the Head of School before fixed detailed arrangements are made.

Reference should be made to guidance 'How to organise a visit' advice in school.

Early notification will help ensure that advice and guidance may be sought, offered and acted upon well before the visit takes place.

The LA's guidelines for educational visits provide detailed guidance for visits for Sheffield schools. Staff may refer to these and follow the guidance issued by the LA to form an important early stage in organising and conducting a visit. It is also advisable to speak directly to the Educational Visits Coordinator in each school.

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments are a legal requirement. Risk assessment and risk management must form an integral part of the planning and conduct on your visit. Part of the risk assessment should relate to the characteristics of the children involved. Older children should have the risk assessment explained to them. All children should be made aware of the behaviour expected of them during the visit.

The three levels of risk assessment (generic, event specific and on-going) taken together, form a sound risk management process.

Educational visits are categorised into three groups:

- Low Risk Activities – anything that a normally qualified teacher would be able to lead without having to undergo any other specialist training, i.e. trips to the theatre, local area walks, theme parks.
- Medium Risk Activities – anything requiring skills over and above the normal skills of a teacher, i.e. mountaineering, abseiling etc. – Leader qualifications **are** required.
- High Risk Activities – Activities which do not assure a safe outcome regardless of the leaders competence i.e. solo caving, hang gliding etc. Activities in this category **MUST NOT** be undertaken.

They must all be undertaken for an educational visit to take place.

1. A preliminary visit to the proposed destination is essential if you have never been before. On this visit you should check the following:
 - a) How to get there – if travelling on public transport how long does the journey take?
 - b) The layout of the site and what you want the children to see.
 - c) Where the children will eat lunch and what toilet facilities are available.

- d) Any potential risks. (Carry out a risk assessment and note your conclusions on the school's risk assessment pro forma, (see appendix) this should be countersigned by the Head).
2. Check that the date of your visit does not clash with any other major school events or with other classes going out.
 3. Completed risk assessments must be returned to the Head of School /EVC at least two weeks before the due date to be verified and countersigned by the Head of School for the visit to go ahead.
 4. Primary only - Encourage responsible parents to accompany you on the visit. It is important to have a high enough ratio of competent adult supervisors to pupils for all visits. Do not assume you can take additional support staff with you; these will be allocated to you when necessary. Suitable ratios are a matter of judgement for the Head after consultation with the visit leader and as part of the risk assessment.

DFE guidelines provide benchmark guidance on ratios for day visits etc.

Day Visits

Recommended adult/pupil ratios for normal day visits are:

- **School years 1-3:** 1 teacher or adult for every 6 pupils
- **School years 4-6:** 1 teacher or adult for every 10 pupils
- **School years 7-11:** 1 teacher or adult for every 10 - 15 pupils

Although there is a requirement that there are two adults, one of whom must be a teacher, in case an emergency situation arises.

Staff should consider what level of first aid cover will be required for the visit and include this in the risk assessment.

Staff trained in First Aid – list updated accordingly.

Staff assigned as First Aid cover for the trip should ensure that they have collected any medication e.g. asthma sprays for identified pupils.

First Aid Kits must be carried by the First Aider at ALL times.

A competent first-aider will be allocated where necessary to accompany each visit.

Once confirmation of the visit has been made, letters can be sent to parents. Ensure full details are included.

Leader competence and supervision

To ensure a high quality educational visit experience, it is essential to have competent leaders and supervisors, and to have well thought out and managed supervision for the visit.

On the day of the visit, ensure you have left with Headteacher / Head of School /EVC a list of children you have taken off site and information regarding where children are placed who are not attending the visit.

The school Continuing Professional Development leader ensures that training for the appropriate staff is available. An initial meeting should be held for prospective accompanying adults.

Insurance

Adequate insurance arrangements must be in place. Staff should consider carefully the insurance position in relation to the planned visit and seek advice from the Headteacher / Head of School / EVC in good time.

Emergency Procedures

All those involved in the visit, including supervisors, pupils and their parents, should be informed of who will take charge in an emergency, the named back up cover and what they are expected to do.

There should be ready access to all relevant information required, including written parental consent for the duration of the visit.

In emergency situations the Headteacher / Head of School is the school based contact. All staff involved should be familiar with the school's critical incident plan.

Please note; when responsible for pupils during a visit you have a duty of care to make sure that pupils are safe and healthy and a common law duty to act as a reasonable parent would.

Child Protection

Careful consideration should be given to child protection issues when organising the staffing and supervision of a visit. The Head of School has discretion in regards as to whether or not parent volunteers require a Criminal Records Check prior to any visit and, if they are, carried out in good time.

Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Medical conditions

The Special Needs and Disabilities Act 2001 makes it a legal requirement that reasonable adjustments must be made to prevent disabled pupils from being put at a disadvantage therefore we must consider early in the planning process, participants' special educational needs, disabilities and medical conditions and how they can be accommodated.

Financial Regulations

The Governing Body wish to promote experiences outside the school situation encouraging children to stay safe, enjoy and achieve, be healthy, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. We would wish parents/carers to make voluntary contributions to enable such visits to go ahead.

- All visits should be financially viable. Payment cards are available to parents who wish to pay in instalments. Teachers should try as far as possible not to incur financial loss.
- All money collected from children should be sent to the office in a sealed container/ envelope.
Money should not be left unattended in a classroom.
- No formal charges can be made for visits within school hours.
- Charges may be made for visits mostly outside of school hours.
- A voluntary contribution may be asked of parents/carers to help cover costs of any visit in or out of normal school hours. However, if the visit is mostly within school time, no child may be left out because his or her parents/carers cannot or will not make a contribution. See DfE regulations.
- If the amount of voluntary contributions falls below the amount deemed necessary by the school to finance the visit, the school has a right to decide whether or not the visit is viable.
- Details of all payments made must be recorded by the school office.
- **Spending money** – Children should not normally be required to have spending money, however, on some occasions they may bring a small amount. This will be stated on the letter to parents.

Parental Consent

Parents need to be informed about and given the opportunity to consent to educational visits.

Parental consent will always be sought when taking children off the school premises. Written consent must be received (in exceptional circumstances parent/carers may be contacted by telephone, this verbal consent **MUST** then be written by staff on the appropriate permission slip for the visit). Consent forms must be handed to the EVC on return from the visit.

The following items should be included in the visit letter to parents (where appropriate):

- Name and organiser of school visit – visit leader's name
- Destination, dates and purpose of visit
- Departure and return times

- Number of children and staff involved (refer to LA guidelines/ratio)
- Itinerary and transport details
- Type and quality of accommodation
- Price, deposits and payment arrangements
- Meals provided
- Details of any special clothing required – suitable footwear is important and children must wear school uniform on all visits unless specified
- Medical information
- List of potential activities
- Permission for photograph or video

Parents may withhold their consent if they wish.

In the event of a residential visit, parent packs must be prepared and a parent meeting held to inform parent/carers of detailed arrangements and consents required.

Conduct on the Visit

During the visit, review sessions should be built in to the programme to support the process of on-going risk assessment. This allows appropriate changes to arrangements should this be necessary.

1. General Road and Transport Safety

- When out walking, the class must be kept together in one group. One adult should be at the front and one at the back. The children should walk alongside partners chosen appropriately by the teacher.
- When crossing any road, the class must be together. The teacher at the front will stop the traffic and/or ensure that the road remains clear or that the traffic is stopped until all children have crossed.
- Similarly, getting onto a bus or train, the teacher must ensure that all children are safely on the bus/train before it leaves. To do this they must remain together in one group. It is preferable to miss a bus/train than to get on it in a rush without being able to ensure all the children are together and safely on the bus/train. At each change of transport, the class should be counted carefully to verify all the children are present.
- When getting off a bus/train the children should line up by a wall/fence and the teacher must ensure that all children are off the bus/train before it leaves. The class should be counted immediately.
- All children **MUST** wear seatbelts when travelling by coach.
- No children are to use the back seat of a coach unless it is unavoidable to do so and even then no child should sit in the central seat.

- A responsible adult must always stand at the front of the front inside wheel of a bus/coach when children are boarding or alighting.
- Children must not stand whilst the coach is in motion or kneel on seats.
- Where a party is alighting on a pavement, the party must not cross a road until the bus/coach has departed allowing a clear view of other traffic. Children should line up against a wall/fence and be counted immediately.
- At the place of visit, the children should be told of a meeting point should they become lost. The teacher will decide whether the class remain in one group or will be split between the adults on the visit. Children should be advised of where they **must not go**.

2. Be clear about the role of support staff and parents

- One teacher should have overall responsibility for the planning and supervision of the visit as visit leader.
- Other members of staff and adults on a visit are responsible for assisting the visit leader in their responsibilities. One should be appointed as deputy leader, prepared to take full responsibility for the leader's role if the leader is unable to do so.
- Teaching staff usually have prime responsibility for supervision on a visit. When parties are separated, each group should normally be under the charge of a member of staff. However, in particular circumstances, Heads may, as part of the risk assessment, agree that a teaching assistant, a member of the school support staff or other adult school employee working under the direction of a teacher has the competence to fulfil the role and responsibilities normally taken by a teacher on a visit.
- Teaching assistants, school support staff, parents, governors and other adult voluntary assistants can play an important role in providing extra supervision and/or undertaking other tasks. The visit leader must ensure they are competent to undertake their duties and understand their role.
- All staff must act in a responsible way with pupils. Ensuring pupils behave in a responsible manner. While being fully aware of the needs of all pupils on the visit. Be aware of the implications of personal actions.

Volunteers and parents cannot be expected to take on the same level of responsibility as employed members of staff.

- All supporting adults should be given a pack at the start of the visit that includes a summary of the meeting, a list of children in their party/group, itinerary of the day, mobile numbers/school phone numbers in case they become separated from the main group and a copy of the risk assessments.

- Support staff and parents need to be briefed in a short meeting or through notes (including risk assessments) prior to the visits.
- The visit leader must be informed immediately of any accidents that happen including any near misses and must complete the incident log. This log informs teachers who may conduct visits in the future of potential risks.
- For residential/expeditions ensure pupils have a contact number for staff on the visit as well as staff based at school. An emergency mobile number should be available to pupils at all times.

Coming Home

- If the party is likely to return more than 10 minutes later than the estimated return time, the school should be contacted in order to communicate this to the parents who are waiting. This information should be shared as soon as it is known.
- If your planned return is out of normal school hours, ensure you know how the children will be getting home and who is collecting them.

On your return

- Return to the school office all receipts, unused petty cash etc. The accounts for the visit can then be completed and prepared for audit.
- Return all equipment i.e. school mobile, camera etc.
- The first aider should then restock items used and return the kit to the First Aid Room.

Visit review

We should ensure that a visit review takes place to consider its planning and conduct. An end of year review of a series of visits will take place to look at successes and how alterations can be made if necessary.

An essential part of the review process should be discussing incidents and accidents (which nearly occurred).

Organisation and management of each trip or visit will vary according to the aims and venue.

Please remind children that they will be representing school and will be expected to be on their best behaviour at all times.

Before leaving for the trip...

- List of children's names (laminated)
- Any Special Needs/medical conditions/medication required
- Name and contact number of all adults accompanying the visit stating whether they are teaching or non-teaching staff
- Adults on the trip should carry duplicate lists and risk assessments if they are to be separated from the main party.

Please leave photocopies in the school office before you leave.

Pre-visit briefings...

Brief all staff attending the visit;

- Purpose of visit
- Arrangements for special needs
- Behaviour and conduct
- Emergency arrangements
- Supervision – all adults should be aware of the visit leader
- Children should be aware of what to do if they become separated from the main group
- Answer any questions from parents or children

Day of the Visit

- Do register as normal
- Leave your information, children's names etc. with the office
- Check you have any maps, entry tickets etc. you may require
- Collect any cheque, bus fares etc.
- Collect the school mobile telephone
- Check the First Aid Kit
- Any medication or special equipment needed
- School telephone numbers

Useful web links/resources:

- **Sheffield Educational Visits resources & online approval system (EVOLVE)** at: <http://sheffieldvisits.org.uk>
- **Thornbridge Outdoor Centre, Sheffield City Council** at: <http://www.thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk/>
- **Departmental advice on health & safety for schools, DforE** at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe//advice/f00191759/departamental-advice-on-health-and-safety-for-schools>

Procedures specifically for Secondary

- Verbal permission obtained from Principal/EVC
- Full details of visit to be given to Suzanne Swift
 - Dates of visit
 - Activity
 - Place of Visit
 - Staffing requirements
 - Travel
 - Cost
 - Cover (*out of school forms to be completed to enable cover to be arranged*)
- Letters can be sent home to parents.
Students must return a signed permission slip to be eligible for a school visit. Telephone calls home are not permitted unless in extreme circumstances and agreed by the principal.
- Check list, Generic risk assessment, event specific risk assessment to be completed by the visit leader.
- Risk assessments, check list and reply slips must be returned to Suzanne Swift – visit must be authorised by EVC/Head of School/EP.
- Residential, Overseas, Coastal visits, must be authorised by the Governing Body.
- Student register to be created – a copy with each member of staff, FH (Principal) and WW (EVC) to have a copy, one copy to be pinned on the notice board in student reception.
- For residential/overseas or remotely supervised visits, all students must have an “in case of emergency” card, which should include school details, mobile number for staff on visit, two mobile numbers for school based staff (these staff will be available at all times during the visit).
- Staff on the visit should have with them contact details for pupils, school telephone number, school based contacts mobile numbers, critical incident plan/accident book, first aid kit.
- Review visit – report any incidents, accident or near misses.