

NORTH HEATH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Introduction

This document outlines the specific policies and procedures for North Heath Community Primary School. It supplements and follows the advice and guidance contained within the following publications:

- West Sussex County Council Local Educational Authority's "Regulations and Notes of Guidance for Off-Site activities".
- The DFES document "Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits" (HASPEV)

This is to ensure consideration for the health and safety of all those involved and to maintain the educational quality of visits and value for money.

Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Educational visits help to enrich the curriculum and provide a variety of 'real life' opportunities which enable the pupils to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them. Educational visits are an essential element of good primary practice.

Purposes

Educational visits can provide stimulus and support work covered in the school curriculum. They may be used to provide a stimulus at the start of a topic or unit of work; alternatively teachers may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a topic to enhance and support the pupil's learning.

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Roles and Responsibilities

The planning and organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success.

The Role of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

- To ensure that all off-site activities follow the correct procedures and meet the school's requirements in liaison with the Headteacher.
- To liaise with the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTCC) County Advisor where necessary to ensure the proposed visit complies with LEA regulations.
- To support the group leader in identifying the purpose and organisation of the visit.
- To support the head with approval and other decisions.
- To ensure a suitable and competent group leader has been appointed.
- To ensure the group leader has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity. (Residential visits)
- To ensure all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise pupils and that Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are in place where necessary. (i.e. when groups will not remain together for the whole visit)
- To ensure the risk assessment is complete and it meets requirements.
- To ensure training needs have been met.
- To ensure the governing body has approved the visit if necessary.
- To ensure parents are informed and give consent.
- To ensure arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the pupils.
- To ensure the mode of travel is appropriate and travel times out and back are known.
- To ensure there is adequate and relevant insurance cover.
- To ensure they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name.
- To ensure that they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents' and the staffs' and volunteers' next of kin. (Residential visits)

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- To organise emergency arrangements.
- To keep records of visits, accidents and incident reports
- To review systems and monitor practice.

The 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 EVC. The group leader should;

- appoint a deputy;
- liaise with the EVC before and during the planning of a visit;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit using EVOLVE and email to the EVC;
- carry out a pre visit in order to undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment which will be uploaded to EVOLVE and emailed to the EVC;
- ensure parents are informed and give consent;
- be responsible for the supervision and conduct of the pupils, including responsibility for the pupils' health, safety and welfare whilst on the visit;
- take a school mobile and the emergency numbers with them;
- define the roles and responsibilities of other group members and parents;
- be a qualified teacher with a minimum of three years experience of accompanying visits;
- maintain high standards of pupil behaviour and ensure good supervision at all times;
- contact the Headteacher or senior teacher in the event of the unexpected happening, or an accident.

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;

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Parents & Carers

The group leader should ensure that parent/s/carer/s are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for Residential visits.

Parents, when appropriate, will be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the trip. A child who does not make a financial contribution will not be denied access to the trip. In the case of residential trips parents will be given details of the costs in advance with all the possible methods of payment.

The group leader should also tell parent/s/carer/s how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parent/s/carer/s for whom English is a second language.

Parent/carer/s must:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s);
- sign the consent form;
- provide the group leader with 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 EVC 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 Head Teacher and EVC must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

The group leader must agree all plans with the EVC who will then liaise with the Head Teacher as necessary.

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Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before going on a visit, using the West Sussex Risk Assessment Form (appendix 1) found in EV folder in office and on EVOLVE. The recommended adult: child ratio is 1:6 for KS1 and FS and 1:10/15 for KS2 however the risk assessment will decide the adult: child ratio for each visit. 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?

After the visit, the risk assessment will be evaluated and updated as required. This will be used to inform future visits.

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:

- number of pupils involved;
- age, sex, ability and general behaviour of the pupils;
- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- the location;
- the previous experience of the adults and pupils involved in undertaking off-site visits;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of accompanying staff and volunteers;
- pupils with special educational needs or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing
- travel arrangements;
- previous risk assessments for the same visit and the review

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Pre-Visit

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake a pre-visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- assess potential areas and level 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 class of pupils.

If it is not feasible to carry out a pre-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. This can be achieved through EVOLVE.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risk of the visit. For adventurous activities and residential visits which involve overnight stays it is essential to have at least one trained First-Aider in the group. The group leader should be responsible for ensuring there is a First Aider 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 group leader and EVC 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.

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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:

- sex, age and ability of pupils in the 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 involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

As general guidelines, WSCC recommend the following ratio of adults to children should be used:

Foundation Stage and KS1:	1:6
KS2	1:10/15

Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through North Heath School's risk assessment procedure for educational visits. (see appendix 1)

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 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.

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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 a residential visit, an EO1 form (see appendix 2) must be completed and submitted to county using EVOLVE. The LEA will then agree that the visit can take place.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting should take place. The group leader should establish meeting 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 others' 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 that they are capable of undertaking 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 all visits the group leader should consider whether inappropriate pupil's behaviour means that a pupil/s will return home early.

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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 measures 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 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 the aisles on the transport;
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- 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' or similar;
- if you feel unwell while travelling, tell a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group.

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Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Medical Needs

Pupils with special educational needs or medical needs will not be excluded 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/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.
- messages will be displayed on the playground if the group will be arriving back later than expected.

Parental Consent

North Heath Community Primary School will seek consent for:

- all visits
- adventure activities;
- residential visits.

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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

Accommodation

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the pupil's;
- a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use should be obtained in advance;
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group;
- access by staff to pupil rooms must be available at all times;
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults;
- ensure that the whole party are aware of the layout of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key personnel;
- security arrangements - where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors;
- 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 (electrical connections, secure balconies, windows);
- recreational accommodation/facilities for the group.

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On Arrival at the Residential Centre

- Boundaries/limitations will be explained to the pupils with both the on site staff and group leaders.
- Duty rotas and procedures will be explained.
- A fire drill will be carried out on the day of arrival.
- Adults and pupils will also be briefed on procedures for night time evacuation.

Fire Evacuation

Group leaders will ensure that the following are in place:

- All exit routes from dormitories and other sleeping accommodation are clearly indicated.
- The posted instructions are clear and have been read to all members of the party and are understood.
- A fire drill is held during the first day and adults check that the building is vacated.

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 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 keep to the path at all times.

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Swimming

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group.

Swimming or paddling in the sea on a coastal visit, will **not** be allowed for pupils at North Heath Community Primary School.

Farm Visits

North Heath Community Primary 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. A pre-visit must be carried out.

The basic rules for a farm visit will be:

We never let pupils:

- place their faces against the animals or put 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 farm machines;
- play in the farm area.

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Appendix 1 - Risk Assessment proforma

Appendix 2 - EO1 Residential Application proforma