



DATCHET ST.MARY'S C OF E PRIMARY ACADEMY

Educational Visits Policy

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Policy produced by.....Committee

Approved by..... (Sign)

Print Name..... Date.....

*'Our vision is to stand at the heart of the local community as a school of excellence.
We will provide a happy, nurturing and challenging environment based on adventure and
Christian values'*

1. Aims and Purposes

The school has a strong commitment to the added value of learning beyond the statutory school day and beyond the school premises.

Each year the school arranges a number of educational activities and visits that take place off the school site and/ or out of school hours, which support the aims of the school. These include:

- Out of hours clubs
- Inter school team sports, such as football and netball
- Regular nearby visits (libraries, parks, shops, places of worship)
- Day visits for particular year groups (theatres, museums, art galleries, environmental activities)
- Choir engagements
- Residential visits and activities, which might be classed as adventurous.

2. Responsibilities

Under the statutory guidance which came into effect on 1st March 2004, all schools are required to have a named Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC), who will ensure that the planning and supervision of all visits and adventurous activities meet the DES requirements and LA guidelines. This school's EVC is the Head Teacher.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Local Authority – to approve overseas, residential and adventurous activities
- Head teacher – to approve visits and assesses competence of visit leaders
- EVC – to approve visits, maintain records, provide advice and documentation, assess competence, produce and monitor a school policy, liaise with LA
- Visit leader – to plan visits in line with procedures in this policy, including liaising with the office and EVC, completing risk assessments and relevant forms and continually assess risks
- Supervising teachers and other adults – to supervise children, continually assess risks, manage risks in line with risk assessment
- Pupils – to follow instructions and procedures in line with the risk assessment

As long as the school and local authority guidance is adhered to, any problem resulting in injury will normally be considered an accident.

3. Approval Procedure

All matters regarding each visit outside school – feasibility, planning, safety, organisation etc – will require the prior approval of the head teacher/EVC. The Governing Body receives copies of letters to parents about educational visits, so they are kept informed of all visits.

In addition, visits that are either:

- Overseas
- Residential or
- Involving adventurous activity

further approval will also be required from the governing body for visits of these types. It is essential that all visits have sound and clearly stated educational aims. Trips 'for the sake of it' will not receive approval.

4. Parental Consent

Parents should be made fully aware of any likely risks of the visit and their management, so they may consent or refuse on a fully informed basis (known as 'Acknowledgment of Risk').

The letter to parents should therefore give full details of the visit, the reason for the visit (educational aims), supervision arrangements and the transport arrangements, and ensure that the detail of other incidental activities is included, together with Plan B if appropriate. The letter should also state the cost of the visit per child. (Please see charging policy for further details)

For day visits only, where written consent has not been received, verbal consent to two members of staff can be accepted (for example teacher and receptionist),

5. Staffing

a) Competence

Any member of staff leading a visit will need to have their 'competence to lead' assessed before approval for the visit is given. For the majority of visits this will be assessed by the Head teacher and/or EVC.

b) Ratio

As a general guide and in normal circumstances, the adult /child ratio may be

Age	4 – 1:4
	5- 6 - 1:6
	7-10 –1:10
	11+ - 1:15

However, a professional judgement must be made for **each visit**, by the Visit leader, EVC/Headteacher, as a range of characteristics relevant to the particular visit should determine the ratio. These are:

- Type, duration and level of activity
- Needs of individuals within the group – medical, SEN, behaviour
- Experience and competence of staff and accompanying adults
- Nature of venue
- Weather conditions at that time of year
- Nature of transport involved

The competence of supervisors and the supervision arrangements are more important than ratios.

c) Supervision

Pupils must be supervised throughout all visits. However, there are circumstances when they might be unaccompanied by an adult (remote supervision). The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on risk assessment and must take into account factors such as:

- Prior experience of pupils
- Age of pupils
- Responsibility of pupils
- Competence/ experience of staff
- Environment/ venue

Supervising parents must be fully briefed on the programme, venue, activities, supervision arrangements and their responsibilities. They must also be given a written list of the pupils in their immediate care.

During longer residential visits it is essential that staff work closely with external staff (when appropriate) to maintain supervision of the children. It is acceptable for staff, who it has been agreed are 'off duty', to drink a moderate amount of alcohol, but this should not interfere with responsibilities and supervision on subsequent days activities or when driving the school minibus. An off duty rota could be arranged with the visit leader so that a minimum of 2 adults are on duty at all times.

6. Risk Assessment

'Risk assessment' is a careful examination of what could cause harm to pupils, staff or others, together with an identification of the control measures necessary in order to reduce risks to a level which, in the professional judgement of the assessor, is deemed to be acceptable (i.e. low).

In considering risk, there are 3 levels of which visit leaders should be mindful:

- Generic Risks - normal risks attached to any activity out of school. These will be covered by reference to the 'Educational Visits Checklist', and the school's generic self assessment.
- Event Specific Risk - any significant hazard or risk relating to the specific activity that is not covered in the generic policies. These should be recorded on Form EV5.
- Ongoing Risk – the monitoring of risks throughout the actual visit as circumstances change.

Staff must be aware of the needs and risks associated with individual pupils and not adopt a complacent attitude as a result of previous risk free visits.

Pupils should be involved in risk assessment and management. This may include identifying potential risks and discussing their role in reducing risks. Through this they will develop risk awareness – an educational issue as well as a safety issue. It is an essential life skill.

The publication 'Group Safety at Water Margins' must be consulted when assessing risks where the visit involves walking along the seashore, collecting samples in ponds or rivers, or paddling in shallow water.

The health and safety of those involved in a visit overrides any disability act. Further detail on risk assessment will be found in Section G of the booklet.

On the day of the Visit

- Refer to the checklist
- Collect first aid kit(s)
- Take asthma pumps and Epipens as necessary
- Brief supervising adults, including parents
- Ensure mobile phones are working, that the office has the number(s) and that they are switched on during the whole visit
- Count number of pupils regularly, and always when changing locations

7. Plan B

Despite the most detailed and careful pre-visit planning, things can go wrong on the day, e.g. parent helper is unavailable, member of staff is ill, transport fails to arrive, museum have lost booking. To avoid having to make important decisions under pressure, it is important that some advanced thinking is done to cater for any foreseeable eventuality. This takes the form of a Plan B. Not having a Plan B has been a common cause of accidents.

8. Transport

Travel arrangements should be included in the risk assessment. If public transport is to be used, all pupils and supervisors must be fully briefed as to procedures on platforms, at bus stops, on busy streets etc.

If travel is by coach or minibus, all pupils must wear a seat belt. Staff must ensure that pupils comply with this rule.

Only members of staff who have received training in accordance with the LA's policy may drive the minibus. There are additional requirements where the minibus is borrowed / hired. Before using the vehicle, the driver must complete a checklist and report any defects to the head teacher or SMT. Additional checks should be made for longer journeys and each half term by the member of SMT with responsibility for the minibus.

If any pupils are to travel by car, the driver must complete Form EV6. This is also relevant to sports fixtures, and applies to both staff and parents' cars. A new form must be completed every academic year.

9. First Aid

The level of first aid provision should be based on risk assessment. On all visits there should be a responsible adult who has a good working knowledge of first aid. The Appointed Person First Aid Certificate is the minimum requirement for residential visits.

First aid kits are available from the school office. If the visit involves the party splitting up, a kit should be taken for each group.

10. Water ‘Margin’ Activities

Where pupils might participate in learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along a riverbank or seashore, collecting samples in ponds or streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow water, then the guidance contained in DES ‘Group Safety at Water Margins’ is relevant. All staff, including parents, should be provided with a copy of this guidance prior to the visit.

11. Seeking Parental Consent

Parents should be made fully aware of any likely risks of the visit and their management, so they may consent or refuse on a fully informed basis (known as ‘Acknowledgement of Risk’). The letter to parents should therefore give full detail of the visit, the reason for the visit (educational aims), supervision arrangements and the transport arrangements. Ensure that detail of other incidental activities is included, together with Plan B if appropriate. The letter should also state the cost of the visit per child.

Typically the reply slip should read:-

“I give permission for my child _____ to take part in I have read and understand the information about the visit. I enclose my voluntary contribution.”

In the case of sports fixtures, the reply slip should read:-

“My child _____ is able to play in the match (at) on

I have read and understand the information in the letter, and give permission for my child to take part.”

12. Emergency Procedure

Visit leaders must take with them a copy of **the Emergency card**, which sets out the local authority’s procedures to be followed in the case of an emergency. An A4 copy of the **Emergency Card** is also found in each First Aid kit used for visits.

School Contacts must hold a copy of **the Emergency Card** at all times, which details procedures for supporting visit leaders and liaising with the local authority. The Emergency card is available in credit card size.

For visits that take place in school time, the office and EVC hold visit information including itinerary, venue details, names and emergency contact details for all participants including staff. For visits outside school hours, the school contacts must also hold this information or be able to access it quickly.

13. Educational Visits Checklist

The Educational Visits Checklist is an essential part of the risk management process and should be adhered to for all visits.

14. Evaluation

Within a week of a visit, the visit leader should evaluate the visit with the other supervising adults and inform the EVC of any aspects to be considered in future planning.

15. Booking Procedure

Please inform the following people about proposed visits out of school before booking:

- Headteacher
- Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)
- Admin Officer

Procedures

1. Inform the Headteacher, check that proposed dates are convenient and put in diary.
2. Complete transport booking form from admin office at least 3 months in advance or as early as possible, and copy to EVC.
3. Complete approved form (residential trips and adventurous activities only)
4. Liaise with the Admin office with regards to booking transport, cost, letter to parents and, if necessary, additional insurance
5. Inform parents using standard letter from admin officer. (Where own letter is used, email a copy to Admin office)
6. Register details of visit
7. Attach Risk Assessment and letter to parents
8. Carry out pre-visit if possible and necessary
9. Keep record of contributions made by parents using class list on A4 envelope, ensuring money is checked and then send to office daily for safekeeping
10. Use the educational visits checklist as an aide memoir before and on the day of the visit

If the Headteacher and EVC have not agreed to the visit, and the necessary forms are not completed, then **THE VISIT MUST NOT GO AHEAD.**

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