



Educational Visits Policy

Review Date	9 December 2021
Approved	Full Governors
Ratified	Full Governors
To be Reviewed	Autumn 2022
Policy Lead	Ms Montgomery

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1. **Rationale**

Well planned, prepared and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning in school. Providing a variety of opportunities for our pupils enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of excellent school practice and help to create opportunities for cultural capital and community cohesion

2. **Purposes**

Educational visits can provide a depth of knowledge to support pupils with their work covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that a visit provides pupils with the stimulus at the start of a piece of work or alternatively a teacher may decide to use an educational visit at any time during the course to enhance and support the pupil work. The teacher should ensure that the educational visit maximises the benefits of the outcome for the pupils

3. **Key personnel**

Key personnel in school are:

- Liz Montgomery – SLT lead for Educational visit
- Tracey Mahovo – EVC (Educational Visits Co-ordinator)
- Outside of school:
- Martin Clist – Local Authority Trip Advisor

4. **Guidelines**

A well organised educational visit is crucial to its success. With the correct amount of organisation and control, the visit should provide the pupils with rich learning experiences.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at Fir Vale School

5. **Educational Visits Co-ordinator**

The EVC will endeavour to ensure that:

- There is a suitably experienced group leader
- All necessary and appropriate formalities have been completed before the visit takes place
- That all risk assessments relevant to the visit have been completed and that the visit is safe to take place
- The group leader has experience in supervising and guiding the age group of the pupils going on the visit and has the ability to organise the group effectively

- The group leader has the relevant skills, qualifications and experience if they are acting as an instructor on the visit and that they have knowledge of the location where the visit is taking place
- All supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance
- The Chair of Governors (or delegate) has approved the visit, if necessary. This is essential for all residential visits
- All First Aid requirements are fulfilled and staff are up-to-date with qualifications e.g. Midas Minibus Driving Test

6. **Group Leader**

The group leader is responsible for the overall planning of the educational visit. They are in charge of the execution of the visit and learning outcomes.

The group leader should:

- Appoint a deputy
- Be able to supervise and guide the pupils of the age group on the visit
- Be suitably qualified if acting as an instructor on the visit and have knowledge in the overall subject area for that activity
- Carry out all planning and preparation of the visit including communicating with other supervisors on the visit and parents
- Undertake and complete comprehensive and appropriate risk assessments for the visit
- Have full regard for the health and safety of the participants on the visit at all times
- Have knowledge of all the pupils taking part on the visit to assess their suitability, taking into consideration their special educational and medical needs. Create specific risk assessments for individual pupils if appropriate
- Ensure pupils understand their responsibilities before departing for the visit
- Ensure that the visit has been authorised by the appropriate body, which may include the Headteacher, EVC, LA trip advisor and Chair of Governors. This must be done via the EVOLVE system

7. **Other teachers and adults involved in the visit**

Teachers and other staff on educational visits act as employees of the Governing Body. They will therefore be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal working hours. They will be acting under an agreement with the Headteacher and Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside their normal working hours

Teachers and other adults on the visit must:

- Understand their specific responsibilities throughout the visit
- Do their utmost to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group

- Care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent/guardian would
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and support with the control and behaviour of the pupils
- Consider intervening with the continuation of the educational visit if they think the risk to the health and safety of the pupils under their supervision is unacceptable or compromised

8. Responsibilities of the pupils

The group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- Not take any unnecessary risks on the visit
- Listen and obey the instructions of the group leader and all other staff on the visit
- Look out for any potential danger to anyone in the group and raise these concerns with the group leader
- Should not partake in any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous

The code of conduct applies at all times when on the visit and pupils are expected to represent the school in a positive manner when off site. Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The safety of all members on the visit is paramount. For those pupils that pose a potential risk to the safety of others should fulfil the curriculum aims in other ways

The group leader should consider the following when assessing the risks of a visit:

- The type of activity and level at which it is being undertaken
- The location
- The competence, experience and qualifications of the supervisory staff
- The pupils age, competence, fitness level and temperament
- Pupils with special education and medical needs
- The quality and suitability of the available equipment
- Seasonal conditions, weather and timing

9. Exploratory Visit

Where possible the group leader should take an exploratory visit to:

- Assess the venue for suitability in meeting the aims and objectives of the educational visit
- Assess potential areas and levels of risk
- Enquire that the venue can cater for all the needs of both the staff and pupils in the group
- Ensure the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a group of pupils

If it is not possible to carry out an exploratory visit, it is essential that the group leader contacts the venue, seeking assurance about the suitability for the attending group. In addition, they could seek views from other schools that have visited the venue. They should also enquire regarding the venue's risk assessments and emergency procedures. If the educational visit is a walking expedition to a remote area, the group leader should seek advice from the tourist board

10. **First Aid**

First Aid provisions should be considered when assessing the risk of the visit. At least one first-aid trained member of staff should accompany the visit. The group leader should obtain a suitably stocked first-aid box from the school medical room to take on the visit and have a full emergency contact list to hand at all times. In the event of injury or illness, first aid will be administered, emergency services sought where appropriate and a call home made, as necessary

11. **Supervision**

It is important to have sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site educational visits. Your group leader must take into account the following:

- Gender, age and ability of the pupils
- Special educational and medical needs of the pupils
- Nature of the activities
- Experience of the supervising adults
- Duration and nature of the journey
- Type of any accommodation
- Competence of staff in general (specifically relating to the scheduled activities)

The group leader should also ensure there are sufficient supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. The supervision levels should be set according e.g. to the risks if the visit is to a remote area or involves hazardous activities.

All adult supervisors must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular all supervisors should be aware of any pupils that may require closer supervision (such as pupils with special education or medical needs). Consideration should also be given to pupils who have behavioural difficulties.

If the educational visit is an adventure activity, the Local Authority and Governing Body must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree for the visit to take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity.

At regular intervals throughout the educational visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The Group leader should establish meeting points and tell pupils what to do in the event of becoming separated from the group. A school mobile phone should be taken by the group leader and the mobile number given to all pupils and adult supervisors on the visit.

12. Preparing pupils

The group leader must provide all the relevant information and guidance to the pupils as part of the educational trip preparation. Pupils should have a clear understanding of the expectations of themselves and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand the code of conduct that is expected of them and why the rules must be followed. They need to understand that often lack of control and discipline is a major contributory factor in accidents occurring on educational visits. Pupils should be made aware of potential dangers and how they should act to ensure the safety of themselves and the group.

13. Participation

Pupils should be assessed for capability in taking part of the activities on the educational visit. They should not be coerced into doing activities they are fearful of.

Pupils whose behaviour is of concern to any member of staff or pupil should be removed from the activity. The group leader should consider sending home a pupils with such behaviour if the visit is a residential.

14. Information to pupils

The group leader should decide what format is best to provide information to the pupils. They must be satisfied that in doing so the pupils will understand the key safety information. Pupils should understand:

- The aim and objectives of the visit
- Background information about the place they are visiting
- How to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow the rules
- Why safety precautions are in place
- Why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities
- The standard of behaviour that is expected of the pupil
- Who the group leader is
- What they should do if they are approached by a stranger
- What they should do if they are separated from the group
- Emergency procedures
- Meeting points set out by the group leader

15. **Transport and pupils**

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of the basic safety rules including:

- Arrive on time and wait away from the road or track for the transport to arrive
- Do not rush towards the transport when it arrives
- Wear your seatbelt and stay seated while travelling on transport
- Make sure your bags and belongings do not block the aisles on the transport
- Never attempt to get on or off moving transport
- Never throw things out of the transport vehicle 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, wait for it to move off before crossing the road
- If you need to cross the road to get to the transport, always use the Green Cross Code
- If the pupils feels unwell while travelling, they must tell a teacher or supervisor, who is responsible for the group

16. **Pupils with special educational and medical needs**

Fir Vale School is committed to being an inclusive school. All reasonable adjustments will be made so that pupils with special educational and medical needs can participate in educational visits. Where possible every effort will be made to accommodate these pupils, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention must be given to ensure the appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures are included in the planning of education visits. Copies of pupil care plans must be downloaded and reviewed before departing for the visit. Pupil care plans can be found on T-Drive, Medical, Pupil care plan.

17. **Communicating with Parents/Guardians**

Parent need to be assured that all staff and supervisors on the visits will be acting in their place and in doing so will be exercising the same care that a parent would. The following information must clearly be communicated to parents in a letter and written consent for permission to participate on the visit is vital.

The educational visit letter should include the following:

- Date of the visit
- Where the visit is taking place
- What the aims and rationale of the visit are

- The departure and return time
- Mode of travel and the name of the travel company (if travelling outside the UK)
- Details of the accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site
- Name of the group leader, how many staff on the visit in total and the number of pupils attending the visit
- Details of the planned activities
- Insurance provision and scope
- Clothing, lunch, money and equipment required to be taken by the pupils
- Consent form for the parent/guardians to complete on if they agree or not to their child's participation in the visit

18. **Parental consent**

Fir vale school will seek consent for:

- All educational visits involving pupil.
- All sports fixtures involving pupils
- All reward trips involving pupils
- All residential and visits abroad involving pupils

It is the responsibility of the group leader to return all consent forms to the EVC for cross reference to the pupil emergency contact numbers held in SIMS as well as compiling a pupil list of which pupils can and cannot attend the visit.

If the parent/guardians have not given consent for a pupil to attend a visit then that pupil must not partake in the visit. It should be arranged for the curricular aims of the visit to be delivered to the pupil in other ways where possible.

19. **Residential visits**

Hotels and Hostels

Fir vale will take into consideration the following:

- The group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the pupils. A floor plan and room reservations will be requested in advance
- The immediate accommodation area should be for the exclusive use of the party
- Access to pupil rooms must be available at all times
- Separate male and female sleeping areas for both staff and pupils
- Ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, where the fire exits are, the fire points, the evacuation procedure
- What the security arrangements are for the venue

- Ensure that all locks, shutters etc. work on each room
- That there is adequate lighting, heating and water supply to the venue
- What the procedure is if a child becomes sick or in need of assistance
- Ensure all rooms are safe in terms of electrics and balcony spaces
- That recreational facilities are for the sole use of the party or that supervision is adequate to alleviate risk

20. **Coastal visits**

The group leader and other supervisors should be aware of the high number of incidents relating to school pupils that occur by or in the sea. There are many dangers involving the coast besides swimming. The group leader should bear the following in mind:

- Tide and sandbanks are a potential hazard for timing and the exit routes should be planned beforehand
- Ensure the whole group are aware of the warning signs and what the beach flags mean
- Establish a safe meeting point on the beach should anyone become separated from the group
- Be aware for any visible hazards such as broken glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows
- Some of the groups' time spent on the beach could be recreational and therefore communicate with the group about which areas are out of bounds
- Cliff tops and rocky areas can be highly dangerous even during daylight. The group should keep away from these areas at all times. A specific pathway should be set out to adhere to when walking above sea height
- The whole group need to be made aware of rip tides, the dangers and how to get out of one should they accidentally encounter one

21. **Swimming**

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

Swimming in the sea should not be allowed on trips unless a specific risk assessment has been completed. Paddling in the sea should only be allowed under strict supervision and preferably in bathing areas which have official surveillance. Pupils should always be in sight of the staff on the visit. One staff member should remain out of the water and further back from view for better surveillance.

The school should assess swimming competency in pupils prior to a visit that includes swimming.

22. **Farm visits**

Fir vale school recognise that farms can be dangerous even for people that work on them. Taking pupils to the farm can be extremely beneficial for their education and will always be carefully planned and risk assessed before embarking on such a visit. Pupils must be made aware of the dangers that occur with the misuse of large cattle, farm machinery and the potential hazards associated with E coli and other infections.

The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed, has a good reputation, familiar with school parties and excellent safety standards. That it practices great animal welfare, with clean areas, hand washing facilities and public areas. An exploratory visit should be carried out before the visit.

The basic rules for a farm visit would be:

- Never leave pupils unattended at any time
- Pupils are not to put their faces near the animals or their hands in the animal's mouths
- The pupils must wash their hands thoroughly after handling or feeding any animals
- Pupils must not eat food until they have washed their hands
- Pupils must not sample any animal feed
- Pupils must not drink from the farm taps unless in the designated public areas
- Touch or ride on any farm machinery
- Play in the farm area
- Pupils must not enter the fields, stables or other animal shelters unless instructed by the farm hands that it is safe to do so

23. Using the EVOLVE system

Please use the flowchart for guidance.

All educational visits should be logged using the online evolve system. This can be accessed under Sheffield city council, The EVC will set up staff, volunteers and pupils in EVOLVE and provide staff with the required password and username to complete an online EVOLVE form.

All group leaders need to complete a planning proforma at least 4 weeks prior to the visit and should include all the visit details. This is then to be discussed at the weekly SLT meeting. If the visit is agreed, the planning proforma is passed back to the EVC. They will then inform the group leader via email that the visit has been approved and they must fully complete the online EVOLVE form at least 7 days prior to the visit taking place.

Once the group leader has completed all the areas of the online EVOLVE form, this is then submitted to the EVC for checks and approval. If the EVC is satisfied this form is then sent to the Headteacher for final approval. If the visit requires

local authority approval, this is sent automatically to the designated local authority trip adviser for approval.

It is the group leader's responsibility to ensure all the appropriate risk assessments are completed and added to the online form.

24. Emergency procedures

The group leader must familiarise themselves with the emergency procedure during the planning process of their visit in the event that an emergency arises. They must have a copy to hand at all times and share this procedure with all supervisors on the visit. Additional copies can be obtained from the EVC and amendments are made by the EVC.

25. Planning proforma

The planning proformas can be obtained from the EVC. If you require support in completing the form, please seek advice from the EVC. When you have completed the planning proforma, the form along with all relevant supporting documents, pupil lists and supporting information for the letters home should be handed to the EVC for review at the weekly SLT meeting.