



# Educational Visits Policy

## Philosophy

Well-structured educational visits support the learning of children in our school. Our educational visits and outdoor learning experiences complement class-based learning that is in line with the National Curriculum September 2014. At Ruislip Gardens Primary School, we arrange educational visits during each academic year for pupils in all year groups from EYFS through KS1 and KS2.

Health and Safety Executive and Ruislip Gardens Primary School fully recognise that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life – it provides deeper subject learning and increases self-confidence. It also helps pupils develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future.

This policy outlines the focus staff members should have when planning trips and works towards ensuring staff understand their roles, are supported and are competent to lead or take part in trips and visits. We recognise that good planning in advance is one element of a successful, safe outing and understand that the real risks take place when the trip is underway. We outline some best-practice in this policy which aims to support teachers in this regard.

## Staffing and Supervision

Adequate levels of supervision and staffing ratios must be established for the journey based on such factors as the sex, age and ability of the children, the presence of pupils with special educational needs, the nature/length of the journey, the nature of activities to be undertaken and the experience and competence of the staff involved.

At least one member of staff should be a qualified first aider and aware of the special medical needs of any member of the party. Newly qualified teachers should not lead school parties in their first year of teaching. Regular head counting of pupils should take place, particularly before leaving a venue. Pupils should be readily identifiable initially by a high visibility jacket, or alternatively by uniform.

Parents and carers will only be taken if numbers require this as an option. In these cases they will receive a full briefing from the lead teacher before the educational visit and be asked for feedback afterwards. Parents/Carers will only be involved in the crossing of roads if they have received a full briefing on safety before hand

## Risk Assessments

It is a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 to assess the levels of risk, and take steps to eliminate or reduce it. An off-site programme involves work activities and will require a risk assessment to be undertaken, especially as it may involve less familiar areas.

The task of doing the risk assessment is delegated to the party leader (the lead teacher), supported by other staff members including the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) as required. Further advice may be sought from other sources as the need arises e.g. Health and Safety Officer for the Borough, the venue etc.

A key competence for the party leader is the ability to undertake 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessments. This competence can be developed during the course of helping prepare risk assessments, attending outdoor leadership courses where risk assessing is a component part, attending a specific course or by in-house training from the EVC.

**Risk assessment forms need to include the following:**

- A definition of the overall educational purpose of the programme
- The activities planned should be outlined
- **The location is visited beforehand. This is an RGS requirement for all educational visits undertaken**
- The lead organisation and accompanying adults should be identified
- The responsible adult for the activity
- Overall supervision arrangements for groups including medical and behavioural needs, transition from one activity to another and during transit etc.
- Any existing care plans must be taken out on the educational visit, these must be the full document and not excerpts
- Arrangements for supervision during breaks
- Identification of public areas and hazards
- The number of children on the day - taking into account any changes in numbers for absentees who may have paid to attend but not arrived at school.

Frequently occurring day visits such as swimming sessions and sports fixtures need only have one risk assessment for the block of visits.

**Risk Assessments for Outdoor Activity Centres**

The centre may be a field study centre, an environmental education centre, an outdoor pursuits centre or similar destination. In all these cases, the risk assessment and risk management process is specific to the centre and the activities that are planned. The school is responsible for assessing the risks of all the activities that it is providing. The providing centre is responsible for assessing the risks of all the activities that the centre is providing. The school must provide the risk assessment for this activity. A supportive centre will have a generic assessment and safety protocol for centre activities. The school may use these provided details are written into the school risk assessment.

**Risk Assessments for Travel**

The use of all forms of transport, including walking, to and from venues carries with it the risk of accidents and the real possibility of serious injury and loss of life. An accident can be caused as a direct effect of the actions of the party, failure of the mode of transport and actions of a third party. Party leaders have control over the former, some over the mode and none over the actions of third parties. The latter will normally be considered as an inherent risk that has to be accepted. A separate risk assessment form must be completed for travel.

**Unavoidable Changes to Planned Activities**

Activities and scheduling must be carried out in line with the detail that has been recorded in the Risk Assessment as part of the planning process. This RA will have been authorised by relevant members of staff at the school. Any last minute changes must be authorised by lead teacher, in consultation with the EVC if necessary and appropriate. An example would be unavoidable change brought about by bad weather or where alternative travel routes must be followed etc. All decisions taken under these circumstances must be made with regard to the health and safety of pupils and staff as the most important factor.

**Medical Needs**

It is essential that teachers planning for and supervising the educational visit know the medical needs of the children attending. This information should be gathered with the help of the designated First Aid Officer who will liaise with the school medical officer to ensure essential items are taken on the trip both for specific conditions and for the group as a whole. It may be that consideration needs to be given as to whether a particular child can partake in a certain activity. Any member of staff who is given the care of a child with medical needs must have received the appropriate training, have the medical equipment and Care Plan in their



charge and must be fully briefed on the nature of the medical need and steps to take if an emergency occurs.

### **Expectations of Pupils**

Pupils should be given appropriate information and guidance prior to the visit taking place so that they understand the standard of behaviour that is expected of them, an outline of the day ahead and a clear understanding of which adult is responsible for their care. Pupils should also clearly understand the action to take in the event of either an emergency or becoming separated from the group. Pupils must understand that a lack of control and discipline can be a major cause of accidents.

### **Point of Departure**

No educational visit should leave the school premises until a full register has been taken. Any absentees should be notified to the school office prior to departure. Any pupils arriving late at school once the group have departed for the visit **MUST** remain in school and will join another class. For safety reasons, under no circumstances will a child be allowed to join up with the departed group. A clear outline of the allocation of pupils to groups and the itinerary for the educational visit should also be left with the school office.

Pupils and parent helpers should have been recently briefed and reminded of rules of conduct and behaviour standards and routine and emergency safety procedures.

It is not a requirement that the contact details for each pupil are taken on the educational visit. The school office should remain the only point of contact for teachers on the visit. The school office will form a chain of contact for swift communication in case of emergency. The exception to this is that in the event of emergency services needing to be called this must be actioned by someone present on the educational visit.

### **Emergency Procedures**

- Assess the nature and extent of the emergency
- Simultaneously or through delegation the lead teacher must ensure a headcount of the party, the safety of other group members and ensure First Aid is being administered as necessary and that Emergency Services are being contacted as appropriate.
- An adult in the party should accompany any casualties to hospital
- Collect the remainder of the group and arrange for their return to base
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the accident site to assist or liaise with the search/rescue/emergency services
- Contact the Head teacher, Manager/designated contact person/school office
- Contact the centre/venue where you are staying and inform them
- Ensure any and all information shared with relevant parties is factual, accurate and clearly delivered
- Make no comment to the Press should they become involved

The Headteacher, Manager or designated contact person should rapidly appraise the situation. Where the incident is clearly serious he/she should immediately contact the following London Borough of Hillingdon, Education Services. **In office hours:**

**Education Services - 01895 277468 Out of office hours: Emergency control service – Switchboard at London Borough of Hillingdon - 01895 250 111.**

The Switchboard will then alert Civil Protection section who will make all necessary contacts (including Education Services senior management) and establish (evoke) incident procedures.

The school concerned or the Education service will contact the Corporate Communication section at the Civic Centre who will brief the media. All media interest should be channelled through them.



The Head/Service Manager of the school or centre will arrange to contact parents as soon as possible and establish all necessary links locally. At the incident site, record all relevant details in writing as soon as possible. Ensure to record names and addresses of witnesses and names of the emergency service officers. Restrict telephone calls to the essential and keep emergency numbers as clear as possible. Legal liability should not be discussed.

### **Parent Communication**

The school will communicate details of all educational visits in a timely and clear manner. Any changes prior to a visit will be notified to parents and carers in the most expedient way. Parents will be invited to give their consent for their child taking part in an educational visit. In the event that a child falls seriously ill or injured during a visit the school will make contact with the parent as soon as is practical.

Any medical information, dietary requirements and contact details held by the school is provided by the parents and carers. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to notify the school of any changes to this information although the school do invite updates via a data collection exercise which takes place on an annual basis.

### **Residential Visits**

A visit is categorised as residential when the group have to stay one or more nights. A planner unique to the programme should be prepared before the journey or visit takes place. This should encompass the advice and guidance outlined above. This should clearly identify the range of activities that are to be undertaken during the programme, and will be the basis for informing the children, parents and supervising staff of the arrangements. In selecting a venue with associated activities, the Headteacher/EVC must be satisfied that it is safe for the particular needs of their children. In practice this will involve a dialogue between a school and the provider, with the outcome being a transparent agreement on respective roles and responsibilities.

A daily management process should be established to:

- review the programme to date
- finalise the day's activities both in response to the review and in the light of the day's weather if required, produce a detailed day planner.

Where relevant, this process should be implemented in conjunction with the staff of the provider. A day planner should include appropriate checklists and itineraries, for example route cards for mountain expeditions and journey plans for kayaking expeditions.

### **Development plan**

1. To keep risk assessment records up to date.
2. To ensure all staff are aware of changes to medical information as and when they arise

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