



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Reviewed January 2019

Next Review Date: January 2020

Related Documents:

Safeguarding & Child Protection, SEND & Inclusion, Administering Medicine, Health & Safety, First Aid, MAT Finance Manual, Charging & Remissions

1. Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good primary practice.

2. Purposes

Educational Visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively, teachers may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the curriculum. Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised.

3. Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils. The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at school.

3.1. Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will endeavour to ensure that:

- they have appointed a suitable group leader;
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins. (This applies even when the head is not going on the visit);
- the risk assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit;
- training needs have been met;
- the group leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
- the group leader has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity;
- all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance;
- the governing body has approved the visit if necessary;
- parents have signed consent forms (this is not necessary for visits in the immediate locality of the school);
- arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the children;
- the mode of travel is appropriate;
- travel times out and back are known;
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover;
- they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name;
- that they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents and the staff and volunteers' next of kin.

3.2. 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 Head Teacher. The Group Leader should:

- appoint a deputy;
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;
- have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;

- ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of pupils below).

3.3. Other teachers and adults involved in a visit

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the St Thomas More Multi-Academy Trust. They will therefore be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours. They will be acting under an agreement with their Headteacher and Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

Teacher and other adults on the visit must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would;
- follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline. Non-teachers should generally not have sole charge of pupils except where risks to health and safety are minimal;
- consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

3.4. 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;
- look out for anything that might hurt/threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it;
- should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous.

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

3.5. Parents

The group leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits. The group leader should also tell parents 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 parents for whom English is a second language;

Parents must:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s);
- sign the consent form;
- give the group leader relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.

4. 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 Head Teacher 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 must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience. The organiser / group leader must agree all plans with the Head Teacher.

5. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using the Risk Assessment Evaluation Form. The risk assessment will decide the adult: child ratio for each visit. (See Guidance under 'Supervision'). 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? (See section on Supervision.)

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:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- the location;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

6. Exploratory visit

- Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit to: ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- assess potential areas and levels 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 party of young people.

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory 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. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards.

7. First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities, visits which involve overnight stays, or visits abroad it is sensible to have at least one trained first-aider in the group. The group leader should have a working knowledge of first aid 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 Head Teacher 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.

8. 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 group;
- special needs pupils;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in offsite 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 involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

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

- 1 adult to every 2 children in nursery.
- 1 adult to every 3 pupils in Reception.
- 1 adult to every 4 pupils in school year 1.
- 1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 2 and 3.
- 1 adult for every 8 pupils in school years 4 and 5.
- 1 adult for every 10 pupils in school year 6

Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits. These ratios do not include residential visits. 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.

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

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

9. 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 other's 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.

9.1. 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 residential visits the group leader should consider whether such pupils will return home early.

9.2. 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 precautions 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

9.3. Transport and pupils

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

- arrive on time and wait for the 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 aisles on the transport
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- never throw things out of the transport vehicle's 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, 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
- if you feel unwell while travelling, tell a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group.

9.4. Inclusion

The Special Educational Needs Act 2001 made it unlawful for any school to discriminate against disabled pupils (current or prospective) because of their disability, without justification - which must be both material and substantial to the

particular case. Where necessary, we will make reasonable adjustments to avoid pupils being placed at a substantial disadvantage.

In line with our Equal Opportunities policy, all pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity and disability will have the opportunity of attending all educational visits and activities offered. The school will endeavour to select and adapt visits to enable all pupils to access them. Every effort will be made to support pupils with educational or medical needs whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

However, there may be times when it is not appropriate for a child to attend the visit. Where the visit leader, EVC and Headteacher deem that a child's attendance would compromise the safety of him/herself, other members of the group and any other person, the Headteacher may decide not to allow the child to participate on the visit. In such circumstances, a meeting would be arranged with the child's parents/guardians/guardians to discuss the issue and make alternative arrangements. Pupils who do not attend Educational visits should still attend school and arrangements will be made to educate the child in another classroom for the duration of the visit.

It should be noted that Disability Discrimination Act does not require responsible bodies to place employees or pupils at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises.

10. 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 pupils' health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in letter 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.

10.1. Parental consent

School will seek consent for:

- visits involving young children;
- adventure activities;
- visits abroad;
- other residential visits.

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.

11. Residential visits

Hostels and Hotels

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the young people's – we will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance;
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group;
- access by staff to student 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 lay-out 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 arrangements 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 – it is advisable to bring a torch;

- provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs;
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

12. 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. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

12.1. Swimming

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group. Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit, will not be allowed for our children. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One teacher should always stay out of the water for better surveillance. Where paddling is to be allowed on a visit, a ratio of 1 adult: 4 children is a minimum.

13. Farm visits

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. An exploratory visit should be carried out. The basic rules for a farm visit will be, we will never let pupils:

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

14. Financial Planning

The cost of the trip should be carefully planned. Consideration should be taken into adding a *buffer* to the overall price or individual price to cover incidentals or unforeseen costs.

- Costs should be inserted **NET of VAT**
- Any staffing costs should be included in your cost calculations

14.1. Insurance

The school has a separate insurance policy in place for excursions. Details are available on Google Drive. It contains emergency contact numbers. Please ensure you take a copy with you on your trip.

Separate specialist insurance may be purchased as part of a package provided by a travel company. Costs for these should be incorporated into planning.

14.2. Use of Specialist Travel Companies

Specialist travel companies should be used for the following trips:

- International trips
- Trips involving overnight accommodation, where accommodation requires payment (this could be direct with a hotel)

Companies must be up to date members of both **ABTA** and **ATOL** (where appropriate)

14.3. Cost Summary

COST PER STUDENT IS ARRIVED AT AFTER BUFFER AND STAFF COSTS

Cost per Student	
Buffer / Incidental Charge	
Total cost per student	
Total cost of the trip including staffing	
Primary Business Manager/Headteacher Agreement	

14.4. Payments

For trips under £40, it is expected that balances should be paid in full. For trips over £40, parents/guardians should be offered a deposit and payment plan. Payment dates should be clearly identified. Deposits should be of a value that is no more than 25% of the total cost of the trip. As we are a cheque and cash free school, all payments must be made via Parent

Payment records must be kept by the organiser for resolving any queries with either the finance department or the pupil. In addition, to protect the misuse of public funds, no payments can be made unless the trip is in receipt of cleared funds to cover that payment.

15. Other Considerations

15.1 Receipts

For costs incurred on the trip, receipts MUST be obtained for all items of expenditure to ensure transparency.

15.2. Pocket Money

Given the age/maturity of pupils on some trips, it has been necessary to include in the costings, a provision for “pocket money” to ensure they have sufficient money throughout the duration of the trip. Its disbursement, timing and amount is controlled by the lead tutor, who is best placed to determine these matters. For transparency, and to protect the lead tutor, he/she should obtain the signature of the pupil when disbursing the money and retain for audit inspection, if requested. No receipts will be required for the related spend in this area.

17. Emergency Procedure

The school's emergency response to an incident is based on the following key factors:

1. There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit (during school hours this is the office).
2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager at all times.
3. For activities that take place during normal school hours, the visit leadership team will be aware of any relevant medical information for all participants, including staff.
4. For activities that take place outside normal school hours, the visit leadership team and the emergency contact/s will be aware of any relevant medical information and emergency contact information for all participants, including staff.
5. The visit leader/s and the base contact/s know to request support from the local authority in the event that an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention.
6. For visits that take place outside the School Learning Area, the visit leader will carry either:
 - a) An LA Emergency 'Card' (see EVOLVE Resources), or
 - b) An OEAP National Guidance Emergency action card (Available via www.oeap.info)
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desktop exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders

18. Review and Monitor

The school recognises that every educational trip requires considerable time and effort to organise, and there are associated costs such as lessons missed, staff cover, study and revision time lost. For this reason the trip organiser is required to state the purpose of the visit at the outset when seeking initial approval. This policy will be reviewed every year, unless changes to legislation occur earlier, by the Headteacher and staff, taking into account all of the above. It will then be submitted to the Chair of the Governors for approval.

APPENDIX 1 - EDUCATIONAL VISITS STAFF OVERVIEW

The Health and Safety is paramount when organising any visit into areas where we do not have direct control of facilities, other users or potential risks or hazards. **All visits must be checked with the Office Manager to ensure there are no clashes in the diary then approved by the HT. Only AFTER doing this should the date be confirmed and put in school diary.**

Normally with school trips the Office need about a month's notice, three weeks at the very minimum if it is a half day trip. They need enough time to get bus quotes back and to draft up and send the letter out. Parents must be given a minimum of two weeks to pay if the amount is under £20 or at least a month to pay for anything over £20 in instalments. The office also needs a few days extra to chase non returns.

The kitchen need a weeks' notice to reduce their food order for that day (you'll need to let the Cook know) and if any children require FSM packed lunches the kitchen needs to know at least a week in advance.

If the school has not been on the trip before then the Office must have their finance details to set them up as a supplier.

All visit risk assessments must be completed at least 3 weeks in advance and approved by the HT and MAT Facilities Manager.

A member of staff must investigate the visit prior to children visiting and accurate costing obtained including transport costs. A senior member of staff within the year group will be assigned to lead/organise the visit.

AS THE IDEA IS DISCUSSED

- Check diary for clashes
- Speak to office re music, swimming clashes
- Check with Headteacher
- Obtain estimate cost and payment schedule

CHECKLIST AT LEAST THREE WEEKS BEFORE:

- Letter to parents
- ✓ date, place and time of visit
- ✓ reason for visit
- ✓ travel arrangements
- ✓ picking up arrangements
- ✓ clothing requirements
- ✓ request helpers (optional)
- ✓ request voluntary contribution (cover costs)

CHECKLIST WEEK BEFORE:

- Obtain/check that consent forms completed and returned
- Produce a Risk Assessment indicating:
 - ✓ activities
 - ✓ potential risks and hazards & precautionary measures
 - ✓ SEN requirements
 - ✓ briefing to children and parent volunteers
 - ✓ emergency arrangements, request contact details from office
 - ✓ checking and monitoring arrangements
 - ✓ availability of class lists, bus lists etc.
 - ✓ buses checked –confirm times again with office order FSM
- Arrange briefing parents and volunteers and go through the following:
 - ✓ Buses - sit with groups, seat belts
 - ✓ Walk with group, ensure walk as group not run ahead
 - ✓ Take regular head counts
 - ✓ Ensure listen to speaker
 - ✓ Walk in twos on roadside, paths
 - ✓ Parents sign risk assessment
 - ✓ Parents no phone/camera

CHECKLIST ON THE VISIT ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE:

- ✓ Buses checked –confirm times again
- ✓ Bus A, B signs if needed
- ✓ Leave note office so know who on which bus
- ✓ Contact numbers from office- ask for these in advance of the day of the visit
- ✓ Risk assessment- parents to sign to say have had briefing
- ✓ Parent groupings- who with which adult
- ✓ Medicines e.g. inhalers
- ✓ Packed lunches from canteen
- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Batteries
- ✓ Memory card
- ✓ Camera for groups
- ✓ Milk
- ✓ Fruit
- ✓ Aprons
- ✓ Inhalers
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Phone
- ✓ Phone number other teacher
- ✓ Sick bucket
- ✓ Bags for sick bucket
- ✓ Wipes
- ✓ Gloves
- ✓ Paper towels
- ✓ Tissues
- ✓ Entrance tickets
- ✓ Cheque to pay if not being invoiced

On visit take regular headcounts. Take a register every time you get on or off bus. Complete checks before any bus is allowed to move off. **For more info see Educational Visits Policy**