

Abingdon Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

March 2015

1. Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with supporting documents, including: National Guidance available on Evolve (tab at top right of page) . All planning for visits no matter how short should be submitted to the Head teacher through Evolve at **least 2 weeks before departure** to ensure adequate time for scrutiny and discussion.

2. 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 hockey
- Regular nearby visits (libraries, parks, shops, places of worship)
- Day visits for particular year groups (theatres, museums, art galleries, environmental activities)
- Residential visits and activities, which might be classed as adventurous.

3. 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 DfE requirements and LA guidelines. This school's EVC is currently the Head teacher, Andrea Williams.

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 and National guidance is adhered to, any problem resulting in injury will normally be considered an accident.

Inclusion

Our school has a strong policy on Inclusion. For educational visits we plan for promote

- a presumption of entitlement to participate
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- integration through participation with peers.

It is unlawful to:

- treat a disabled young person less favourably
- fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at
- a substantial disadvantage **without justification.**

Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them (to include a given young person) is within their competence and is reasonable

4. Approval Procedure

It is necessary to consult the Head Teacher before planning a visit.

All matters regarding each visit outside school – feasibility, planning, safety, organisation etc – will require the prior approval of the head teacher and/or EVC.

In addition, visits that are either:

- Overseas
- Residential or
- Involving adventurous activity (as defined in Section Y)

will require the additional approval of the LA.

It is essential that all visits have sound and clearly stated educational aims. Trips ‘for the sake of it’ will not receive approval.

5. Parental Consent

Upon admission to the school, each parent signs a form giving authority to the school to organise day/part day visits for their child, but this does not apply to residential visits for which the authority to be ‘in loco parentis’ must be separately sought.

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.

Many visits from this inner-urban school can be made without cost.

For visits which include transport costs, the parent of each child is asked to contribute an appropriate amount towards the overall costs. Costs are kept to a minimum and any parent who has concerns about contributions is asked to speak to the Head teacher as soon as possible so that any extra support can be sought. In the case of residential visits, the funding is calculated separately and, although sources of funding are continually sought for these, it is school policy to request a reasonable contribution from parents.

6. 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. In assessing competence to lead, account will be taken of previous experience of leading activities, behaviour management skills, use of initiative and wider school responsibility, the type of activities being undertaken and the skill level required to lead the activity.

b) Ratio

Most Nursery trips will involve parents accompanying their own children. As a general guide and in normal circumstances in class groups, 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 and 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 and understand the procedures for use in emergencies, particularly that the use of mobile phones is forbidden by anyone but the group leader or deputy if that person is incapacitated.

During longer residential visits it is essential that staff work closely with external staff (when appropriate) to maintain supervision of the children. An off duty rota could be arranged with the visit leader so that a minimum of 2 adults are on duty at all times.

7. 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.
- Event Specific Risk - any significant hazard or risk relating to the specific activity that is not covered in the generic policies.
- 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 the National guidance.

In organising a visit, it is useful and necessary, to make the following considerations:

- Size of party; capacity of transport
- Time/point of departure (cheaper after 09.00 for coaches)
- Time/point of return (cheaper before 15.00 for coaches)
- Parking arrangements
- Toilet arrangements
- Focus of visit/children’s workload
- Time required at place of visit
- Lunchtime arrangements in wet/dry weather
- Does the coach need to remain with the party throughout the time
- Access to first aid equipment
- Accessibility to telephone/mobile phone

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 group leader 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

8. 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.

9. 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.

If any pupils are to travel by car, the driver must have business use which specifies the transport of children.

10. 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. On trips which are further afield or are likely to involve adventurous activity a trained First aider should be present. First aid kits are available from the medical room. If the visit involves the party splitting up, a kit should be taken for each group.

11. 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 DfE ‘Group Safety at Water Margins’ is relevant. All staff, including parents, should be provided with advice and guidance prior to the visit.

12. 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. ”

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.”

11. Emergency Procedure

Visit leaders must take with them a copy of **the Emergency card**, which sets out the 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.

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.

12. Lunches

The school kitchen must be informed about lunch arrangements for the trip at least 2 weeks before departure. This will normally be done by the school clerk but group leaders are responsible for checking that this has been done within the correct time. Trips on a Monday morning can be difficult for catering staff as supplies for sandwiches may not arrive in time for a 9.00am departure.

13. 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.

14. Booking Procedure

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

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

Procedures

1. Request to Head teacher, check that proposed dates, costs and staffing number are convenient and put in electronic diary.
2. Admin officer will book transport, complete transport booking form and give a copy to SBM and teacher.
3. Liaise with the Admin office with regards to letter to parents
4. Liaise with SBM regarding booking activities, venues and insurance
5. Inform parents using standard letter from admin officer. (Where own letter is used, email a copy to Admin office)
6. Complete details of visit on Evolve
7. Attach Risk Assessment, children’s medical information and letter to parents to Evolve
8. Carry out pre-visit if possible and necessary
9. Keep record of contributions made by parents using class list and envelope, ensuring money is checked and then send to office daily for safekeeping

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.**

Pupils

Pupils should be involved in risk assessments wherever possible –this is a valuable way of encouraging responsibility for safety. Although the school clearly adopts a uniform policy, it is recognised that clothing for visits needs to be selected according to the environmental and climatic conditions on the day of the visit, and allowances must be made in this regard. The school possesses some waterproof clothing for equipping children for inclement weather. Brightly coloured hats are available for use in crowded areas or where visibility would be an advantage e.g. remote supervision

Visits present opportunities to promote the positive image of the school, and there are consequently codes of behaviour and attitude which must be stringently applied:

- Remain seated and quiet on all transport
- Walk smartly and in twos in public places
- Be polite and respectful
- Leave no litter
- Be considerate towards each other and members of the public
- Be on task when this is required

15. Review

This policy is reviewed annually. It is next due for review in April 2016