

COWORTH-FLEXLANDS SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Young people derive considerable benefit from taking part in educational visits. In particular they have opportunities to participate in activities and gain from experiences not available in the normal classroom. Such visits help young people to develop a wide range of valuable personal and social skills.

The school seeks to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities.

Coworth Flexlands School believes that school visits are an essential resource for the teaching of a broad and balanced curriculum. Year groups from Reception to Year 6 will go on at least two visits each year linked to an aspect of their class topic work or as an extension to the arts and sports programs that run throughout the school. Nursery and Kindergarten participate in one activity in the summer term.

FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- Enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for all our pupils;
- Provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils other than could be provided on the school site alone;
- Promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

These visits begin with day or half-day trips and progress to residential experience in years 4, 5 and 6.

The school has adopted the guidance of the documents named below and all guidance within this policy must be read in conjunction with the detailed advice contained within them. These are:

- Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV)-DFES 1998
- The 3 part supplement to the above issued in 2002

These can be found as appendices to this policy and as such form part of the policy itself.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

The Governing Body
(See HASPEV para 19-20)

The Governing Body undertakes to:

- Ensure that the Headmistress and the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) have adhered to the guidelines contained within the above documentation.

- Agree to all residential visits, trips abroad and those involving outdoor and adventurous activities. This is delegated to the Health and Safety Governor who will review the risk assessments for residential trips and outdoor/adventure trips before departure
- Ensure appropriate insurance cover including any necessary additional requirements for participants with medical conditions and activities of a potentially hazardous nature. This is delegated to the Bursar.
- In the event of a major incident to follow the guidelines set out in the emergency plan.
- Ensure measures exist to obtain parental consent on a basis of full information.
- To investigate parental complaints.
- To review annually the EV policy and procedures including incident and emergency management systems – delegated to the Health and Safety governor.

The Headmistress

(See HASPEV para 21-23)

The Headmistress is responsible for ensuring that:

- All visits comply with the guidelines and regulations provided and the Schools own Health and Safety Policy.
- Along with the Health and Safety Governor the Headmistress will authorize all residential trips, external teaching outings such as swimming and outings involving the use of coaches.
- Ensure that all aspects of risk management have been considered and that risk assessments for travel, accommodation and activities have been carried out prior to departure.
- The EVC is competent to oversee the coordination of all off-site education and support the EVC in attending relevant training courses.
- The EVC keeps her informed of the progress of residential visits and that this information is relayed to parents if necessary.
- In the event of a major incident or accident the “Emergency Plan” guidelines are adhered to in terms of informing parents and the Chairman of Governors.
- Adequate Child Protection procedures are in place
- Serious incident, accidents and near accidents are investigated.

The Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC)

(See HASPEV para 23 - 24)

The EVC is responsible for ensuring that:

- Full documentation is provided to support planning of all trips and visits.
- The EVC has specific responsibility for the approval of day trips and those involving parental transport.
- All necessary arrangements and preparations have been completed including the risk assessment before the visit begins.
- All off-site visits are thoroughly planned using standardised whole-school documentation (Maintained on the staff shared area of the intranet).

- All staff are aware of the guidelines available through *Safe Practice of Offsite Activities* concerning their particular visit.
- All visits have appropriate support ratios and adequate cover for health and safety, first aid, medication and behaviour management.
- To work with the visit leader to obtain the consent or refusal of parents and to provide full details of the visit beforehand so that parents can consent or refuse consent on a fully informed basis.
- Voluntary supervisors are appropriate people to supervise children.
- Emergency arrangements are made and that there is an emergency contact for each visit.
- Records of individual visits are kept.
- Arrangements are in place for the Governing Body, delegated to the Health and Safety Governor, to be made aware of visits so that questions can be asked as necessary.
- Visit evaluation is used to inform future visits.
- The recording of accidents and the reporting of serious injuries is completed as required. Accident and incident records should be reviewed regularly, and this information used to inform future visits.
- There is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home.
- Systems are reviewed and, on occasion, monitor practice. This will be done termly at the Health and Safety committee.

The Visit Leader

(See HASPEV para 24 - 27)

The Visit Leader has full responsibility for the safe running of the activity including pre planning, following guidance and ensuring all participants are aware of their roles. It is the responsibility of the leader to maintain standards of behavior and discipline while on educational visits by all participants both staff, volunteer helpers and pupils.

The Visit Leader will:

- Identify the purpose and objectives of the visit and obtain the Head Teacher's agreement before the off-site visit takes place.
- Appoint a deputy in the event of the leader being unable to remain in charge.
- Undertake and complete all necessary documentation and an appropriate risk assessment. Leave copies for EVC via office staff at least **three working days** before visit is to be taken and take copies to the venue. All details to be recorded in staff shared area of intranet as a reference point.
- Complete the post trip evaluation/accident/incident documentation in area above.
- Plan the itinerary in such a way as to account for all times on the visit including meal and 'down' times particularly on residential trips.
- Have prior knowledge of the venue – the visit leader should normally have made an exploratory pre visit or discussed the visit with the Educational Department of the venue.
- Inform parents and seek permission/consent, detailing the nature, purpose and related activities involved in the visit.
- To ensure the ratio of leaders to children is appropriate for the needs of the group and the nature of the activity to be undertaken. The school minimum requirements are stated below:

Foundation Stage	Min 1:4
Years 1 – 2	Min 1:6
Years 3	Min 1:8
Years 4 – 6	Min 1:10

- To ensure that any parent or non-staff volunteers fully understand their roles and responsibilities prior to the trip and ensure that they are not left in sole charge of a group. Ratios can be doubled to include member of staff plus accompanying adult. The accompanying adult must remain in sight of staff member at all times and must not be allowed to take children to the toilet on their own. Obtain CRB rating for any volunteers taking part in a residential trip. If a visit has been organised for parents and children (e.g.the ballet at Christmas) then the parents may look after their own child and the group leader plus other accompanying staff can be responsible for children without their parents present. The risk assessment must record this arrangement.
- Allocate supervisory responsibility to each adult for named pupils and ensure that each adult knows which pupils they are responsible for and vice versa. Instruct staff and accompanying adults to use the circle plan (children form circle when counting group they are then aware of faces and will quickly spot who is missing).
- Have proper regard to the health and safety of the children and to ensure that adequate supervision is provided at all times ensuring that child protection procedures are followed.
- To ensure that all adults involved in supervising the visit are aware of the risk assessments including 'Plan B (change of leader etc.)' and the expected standards of behaviour.
- To ensure adequate First-Aid provision. Where specific medical plans for individual children exist make all staff and accompanying adults aware of the plan.
- To ensure that during the visit leaders have an up-to-date emergency contact details of central and out of hours numbers, parents/guardians. Full medical details on residential visits.
- To continuously monitor the appropriateness of the activity, the physical and mental condition and abilities of the group members and the suitability of the prevailing conditions. Stopping the visit if the risk to the health and safety of the children is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality.
- Regularly review visits/activities.

The Responsibility of Voluntary Helpers

(See HASPEV para 27)

- Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- Not be left in sole charge of pupils
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline.
- Speak to the group leader if concerned about any issue during the course of the visit
- Voluntary helpers must be made aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision.

The Responsibility of the Pupil

(See HASPEV para 28 – 29)

The visit leader must make it clear to the pupils that:

- They must not take unnecessary risks.

- They must follow the instructions of the leader including those at the venue.
- They must behave responsibly.
- They must not leave the group.

The Role of the School Office

- To assist the EVC in the administration and costing of visits within the guidelines agreed by the Governors and the Bursar for activities within the school day.
- To assist the Visit Leader with costing and booking of venues and transportation and to provide all necessary contact numbers.
- To ensure that all relevant checks have been undertaken if an external provider is to be used.
- To enter dates of visits into the school diary.
- To prepare all communication with Parents by either e-mail or hard copy submitting the documentation to the Head Teacher for approval prior to sending.
- Prepare medical forms to include permission for emergency medication should the need arise and details of specific medical plans for children.
- To prepare kit lists for residential trips for parent information.
- Collect any reply slips concerning the outing.

Day trips - On the day of the visit

- All details of the visit will be kept in the office.
- To ensure that first aid equipment and school or teachers mobile phone will be taken.
- The school secretary will be the contact person for the group having been briefed and aware of the responsibility including the actions to take in the event of a serious accident.
- Inform the Head Teacher/SMT/EVC in the event of an emergency.
- In the case of non availability of the Head Teacher a member of SMT will take responsibility. She will hold all visit documents, including parent contact numbers, and be aware of the responsibility including the actions to take in the event of an emergency.

PROCEDURES

See HASPEV (Chapters 1 - 10) **HASPEV provide detailed guidelines on procedures in a range of specific situations likely to be encountered/undertaken on visits off-site. Visit leaders will need to be aware of the relevant sections before undertaking the trip.**

The school has in place a clear process to be adhered to in planning and organising an educational visit or trip;

Planning

For all visits off site refer to Planning Checklist

- Complete all internal school forms.
- Confirm details with, and obtain approval for the trip with the Head Teacher/EVC
- Obtain approval from EVC responsible for the overall management of visits and ensure that all visits have been entered into the school diary.

- When the visit is authorised, letters can be sent home to parents as necessary.
- Parents must always be made aware when their children are undertaking a visit and will be off school premises.
- Collect reply slips. No pupil will be allowed to go on a visit without parental permission.
- Liaise with the EVC over any changes to the approved itinerary and arrangements.
- Pre-visits. In most cases it is very important to undertake a pre visit. The need for a pre-visit should be discussed with the EVC. If a pre-visit is considered as not being necessary the reasons must be noted on the visit risk assessment.

In planning and organising a residential trip or visit involving outdoor and adventurous activities the above process remains relevant with the following additions.

- All visits involving a residential (overnight stay) and/or adventurous activities must be approved in principle by Head Teacher and Governors, delegated to the Health and Safety Governor.
- Enter date into the school diary. Letters to be sent home to parents as necessary confirming price, details and dates of meetings prior to trip.
- No pupil will be allowed to go on a visit without written parental permission. Authorisation for the visit leader to act for the child in the event of a medical emergency should be implicit within the permission.
- Send home medical forms and kit lists.
- All staff are trained in basic lifesaving first aid. There should always be an appropriate first aid box available for use. The Risk Assessment will identify when a qualified First Aider is not necessary.

During the day

- When offsite policies such as Behaviour Management, Equal Opportunities and Administration of medicines in School should be adhered to.
- Permission for emergency medication should the need arise should be sought prior to any residential trip.
- Where specific medical or behaviour plans for individual children exist the visit leader is responsible for ensuring all staff and accompanying adults are aware.
- One of the key features of all visits is the need for all staff to be involved in ongoing risk assessments. Visit Leaders need to make decisions on an on going basis regarding the safety of the visit. (see 'Risk Assessments'). This includes the support ratios and pupil groupings dependant upon social interactions and behavioural issues presented during the day.
- Visit Leaders must take a mobile phone in order to remain in contact with the school during the time off-site. In the event of an emergency the school must be contacted immediately (or as soon as is practical) in order that the Head Teacher can take charge of the management of the incident. This procedure will follow the schools Emergency Plan.

Review

- All journeys and visits off-site must be reviewed and evaluated in relation to the visit aims and purpose in order to aid future planning. It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader to inform the EVC of any specific issues effecting future visits concerning the venue, the transport or the group, administrative issues and staffing.

- In the case of a residential trip this will take the form of a formal meeting in the week following the trip unless already done so prior to leaving the site.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risk assessment and risk management are legal requirements. For educational visits they involve the careful examination of what could cause harm during the visit and whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more should be done. The aim is to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill.

- **Generic activity risk assessments**, which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place. Examples of generic risk assessment include travel by coach or Parents and visits to coastal venues. These will be drawn up by the EVC for use in conjunction with other specific risk assessments.
- **Visit/site specific risk assessments** which will differ from place to place and group to group. These are usually undertaken by the school for each venue and are amended as necessary for different groups. They should be prepared or agreed by someone trained and competent to assess risks, such as the EVC.
- Site specific risk assessments where the same venue is used each week e.g. swimming will be prepared by the EVC and, barring any changes to the nature of the venue, the prime concern on a weekly basis is the risk presented by the group of pupils undertaking the visit.
- For visits which are 'one offs' a specific risk assessment for the venue itself as well as for the pupils is required. Examples of this would be visits to farms, galleries, museums, public parks, garden centres etc. as part of a specific curriculum module for a specific class group
- For both of these the EVC will direct the visit leader to the relevant sections of the School guidelines covering the type of visit.
- **Ongoing risk assessments** are those that take account of unplanned and unexpected changes, for example, illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activity. The visit leader is responsible for making decisions on an ongoing basis during the visit as to the appropriateness of continuing the visit in the light of prevailing conditions.
- **All staff and pupils should be aware of a "PLAN B" in the event of the planned agenda needing to change.** Visit leaders are always in charge. They should trust their own knowledge of the young people and use their own professional judgement. This may include challenging an activity leader where the visit leader's knowledge of the group is superior or intervening to prompt a change of plan, including stopping an activity if they feel uncomfortable or believe that that it has become too hazardous.
- Where it is considered unsafe to include a particular pupil because there are serious doubts concerning their behaviour or it is felt that they represent a significant risk to themselves or others within the group the Headmistress will make the final decision on whether the pupil should access the trip. Suitable alternatives that will meet the educational needs of the excluded pupil will be planned.

FUNDING

- Day off-site activities are funded by monies collected via school fees from all parents in the school. This amount is set and reviewed annually by the GP&F Committee of the Governing Body.
- All residential trips are funded by the parents concerned via their school account.

VETTING OF PROVIDERS

- When a residential or visit that includes adventurous activities is being considered, the Providers of such services will be vetted by the School.

- Check level of insurance in place when using tour provider. See Insurance section

LICENSED ACTIVITIES

- Most Providers who offer adventurous activities require an Adventurous Activity Licence. The adventurous activities that fall within the scope of the Licensing Authority are; Caving, Climbing, Trekking and Water sports.
- The status of a Provider in terms of licensing will be confirmed during the Pre Check process.

INSURANCE

- When a trip is undertaken as part of the normal school curriculum, even though it is conducted off school premises, the insurance arrangements for the school will prevail.
- The visit leader must check the need for additional travel insurance depending upon the nature of the activity to be undertaken. (*See Safe Practice of Educational Visits*)
- When a tour operator is used the type and extent of the insurance cover being used should be ascertained. All Providers must hold £5 million Public Liability Insurance. As part of the vetting process the School will check that this level of Insurance is in place.

VOLUNTARY HELP

- The use of voluntary helpers is only permitted by the Head Teacher or EVC This permission will be based upon knowledge of the volunteers. The fact that help is voluntary does not negate the legal responsibility of those involved.
- It is not necessary for all volunteer helpers to undertake a CRB check as they will NOT be left in sole charge of the children. However in the case of residential trips this is compulsory.
- Volunteer helpers must not be left in sole charge of children.
- All volunteer helpers have the same responsibility to follow the instructions of the visit leader.
- All voluntary helpers will have read this policy and signed to say they understand their role.

TRANSPORT

- Parents should always be informed of the type of transport to be used and risk assessments carried out.
- Hired transport – The Leader should ensure appropriate levels of supervisory staff are available to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils. The school has a designated list of coach providers which must be used. These companies have a proven track record of maintenance. On the day of the visit the group leader should undertake an inspection of the coach.
- Use of private cars – Staff are covered by the school's insurance policy to use their own car to transport children. Parents must always be informed if members of staff intend to use private transport.
- Use of private cars – When parents are asked to assist in the transportation of children in addition to their own to a school function the following apply:
 1. Parents must complete the appropriate permission slip.
 2. Parents must provide the school with a copy of their driving licence and insurance document.

3. If points are added to a licence for any offence it is deemed by the Governors that these parents are not allowed to transport children.
 4. Seat belts must be worn and booster seats provided for transportation of those pupils who are required to use it by law.
 5. School will not reimburse parents for the use of their cars.
 6. The using of au-pairs / nannies is not permitted by the school to transport children other than those in their care. It is necessary for parents to check their own insurance as to transporting children.
- In the case of a child with a physical disability school staff are not permitted to lift them on to a bus, car or other form of transport. Arrangements have to be made by the parents to cover this eventuality.

REVIEW

Visit Leaders will need to evaluate the success of each trip with the EVC who can oversee the need for changes in arrangements for subsequent visits to the venue or with the particular group.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

Arrangements for Educational Visits are reviewed annually to ensure the provision is adequate and effective by the Health and Safety Committee. Additional reviews will take place following any significant changes in staffing and/or pupil numbers.