



Policy Title	OFF-SITE EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY
Committee responsible	Finance & Premises
Last reviewed	January 2017
Next review due	January 2020
Who is governed by this policy	All staff and pupils at the school
Available on website	YES

Signed
 (Chair of Governors)

Signed
 (Headteacher)

Date

OFF-SITE EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 Off-site educational visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.

1.2 In this policy we seek 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. The visits usually take place within the school day.

1.3 This document supplements and follows the advice and guidance contained within the following significant publications:

- West Sussex County Council's Regulations and Guidance for Educational Visits and Off-site Visits, available through West Sussex Services for Schools website.
- Department for Education advice on 'Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, School Leaders, School Staff and Governing Bodies', available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools>
- The Health and safety Executive statement: "School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities – Tackling the Health and Safety Myths", available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.htm>

2. Aims

2.1 The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils 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 short excursions into the local area in Early Years and progress to a residential experience at the end of Key Stage 2.

3. Curriculum Links

3.1 For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). All these activities are in line with guidance published by the LA and actively look to support and enhance topic work relevant to each class.

4. Residential Activities

4.1 Children in Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is in school time and linked to the National Curriculum, so we do not make any charge for the education element. We do, however, make a charge for board and lodging, insurance and specialist instruction for certain activities.

4.2 The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities. We undertake this visit only with the agreement of the Governing Body and the LA. We use a recognised Activity Centre which only uses qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

4.3 The school reserves the right not to take a pupil away on a residential visit if we feel that his/her behaviour could compromise the safety and welfare of themselves or other pupils. This would only happen in extreme cases and the Chair of Governors would make the final decision.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Governing Body will satisfy itself that the appropriate procedures, risk assessments and control measures are in place and that the documented guidance notes are being followed. All off-site visits that are residential, abroad or hazardous need to be approved by the Governing Body. Such approval must be recorded in the minutes of the Governing Body.

5.2 The Head Teacher is delegated by the Governing Body to approve all off-site visits of a perceived low risk, local, daily or regular nature. The Head Teacher will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will always be a teacher employed at the school.

5.3 The school's Educational Visits Coordinator (the Headteacher and Bursar) will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits. They will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- support the Governing Body in their decisions on approval;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had a full enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road crossing):
- make reports of accidents or 'near misses';
- review and regularly monitor procedures;
- liaise with the Outdoor Education Adviser where necessary to ensure the proposed visit complies with the WSCC policies for Learning Outside the Classroom.

5.4 The Group Leader is responsible for identifying the purpose of the visit and following the checklist published in the Local Authority guidance.

6.0 Guidance Notes for Off-site Visits

6.1 Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LA (and available from the school office). Further information is available from the Evolve website (www.westsussexvisits.org). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LA's instructions. Additional training for group leaders is available through the Outdoor education Office (0330 222 8344).

6.2 Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the Headteacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.

6.3 Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, or an activity deemed by the LA to be high risk, the Headteacher will seek the approval of the Governing Body and the Local Authority before permitting the activity to take place.

6.4 An Evolve Visit form must be completed for all residential visits and for those that are either visits abroad or for adventurous/hazardous pursuits. Out of county visits are also required to use

this system. The form will need to be submitted to, and approved by, the Head Teacher one month in advance and certainly before becoming financially committed. These types of off-site activity also need the Governing Body's approval. School Journey Insurance is automatically covered by the Local Authority.

6.5 OE2 form (Appendix A): This optional form provides information on what WSCC expects an external provider to deliver. It should be sent to any provider being considered for the first time and attached to the Evolve form as evidence of the planning process.

6.6 It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits (see 4.3). Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that he/she is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

7. Risk Assessments

7.1 A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment will take account of:

- Generic risks as published in this document and the WSCC Regulations for Educational Visits and the use of Evolve March 2013, and Section B (Adventurous Activities) of the Regulations & Notes of Guidance for Off-site Activities 2007.
- Event Specific Risks as identified from a pre-visit or thorough knowledge or experience of the environment, accommodation, the leader's competence, the group and other factors such as transport.
- On-going Risks identified by the professional staff responding to changing circumstances and the success of planned activity and procedures. The participants and staff will be fully briefed on the purpose and the risk assessment control measures.
- Participants are encouraged to consider risks involved in an off-site educational activity and to assist in the design of appropriate risk management strategies that support their learning. They will be fully aware of the purpose of the visit and understand expectations of behaviour.

7.2 The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the perceived hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce the risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

7.3 Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if he/she lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

7.4 An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

- 1 adult to between 10 and 15 pupils in Years 4 to 6
- 1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 3
- 1 adult to 3 pupils in Early Years

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However these are *minimum* requirements and we endeavour to include additional adult supervision in all cases.

7.5 A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. We ensure that the coach companies we use on a regular basis have appropriate health and safety measures in place, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance of the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures.

7.6 Risk Assessment forms (Appendix B) should be completed and attached to the Evolve form when risks are perceived as significant. External providers own risk assessments can be used to help in this process. For certain activities an Adventurous Activity Licence is legally required (see www.aala.org.uk). If this is the case, the provider's licence number should be quoted instead of their risk assessment documentation.

7.7 Providers that hold a LOTC (Learning Outside the Classroom) Quality Badge have been externally assessed and are acceptable as a 'checked' provider on the Evolve site.

7.8 The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip who will have the opportunity to be alone with children, have been subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

7.9 The group leader will ensure that all adults supervising the trip are made aware of the risk assessment and of any medical needs of the children.

7.10 Evaluation report: On return the Group Leader must report to the EVC and, where necessary, an evaluation report should be completed in order to achieve any learning about a 'near miss' or where an incident took place. The online accident reporting procedure should be used where necessary. If such a form was completed at the venue, there is also a need to place such an occurrence on the record at the 'home' establishment. A general evaluation of the visit is possible, within 28 days, through the Evolve visit form. This can inform future visits and may be a useful check on the value of the risk assessments undertaken.

8. Medical

8.1 A qualified First Aider will always be present on the trip. It will be their responsibility to carry the necessary first aid supplies and to ensure that children's medicines and inhalers are collected from the school office before leaving site. In some cases it may be necessary for more than one First Aider to accompany the children depending on the nature of the activity.

8. Transport

8.1 The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport
- entrance fees
- insurance
- provision of any special resources or equipment
- costs related to adult helpers

8.2 Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

8.3 Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to an enhanced DBS check.

9. Communication with parents

9.1 The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all the appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing, or online through the ParentMail, system before a child can be involved in any off-site activity.

9.2 Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions with a limited subsidy from the school where necessary. This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

9.3 No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle via letters sent home about intended visits.

9.4 The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Headteacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

10. Further health and safety considerations

10.1 All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

10.2 All volunteers will be provided with a copy of 'Educational Visits – Parent/Volunteer Guide' (Appendix C) before leaving site which enables them to understand their responsibilities, and the expectations of the school.

10.3 All incidents must be reported to the school as soon as possible so they can be recorded on-line within 24 hours.

10.4 The party leader will carry the WSCC emergency telephone number for use if a member of the group has suffered a life-threatening injury or fatality, or a member of the group is in peril including being missing.

10.5 The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

10.6 Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the Headteacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 This policy is monitored by the Governing Body and will be reviewed every three years or before if necessary.