

School Policy on Educational Visits

1 The School Context

1.1 This school strongly supports the inclusion of Educational Visits in both curriculum time and in extra-curricular time. We believe that visits:

- Enhance and consolidate the children's learning.
- Promote positive pupil/adult interaction, team building and citizenship skills.
- Provide challenges and experiences not available within the school grounds.
- Broaden the children's horizons.
- Provide opportunities for all abilities to develop new skills.
- Are FUN!
- Promote healthy life-style choices.

1.2 Our over-riding principle is that our children and staff should be safe in whatever activity they undertake that involves this school. No educational visit is entirely without risk, a fact that must be uppermost in our minds when planning and undertaking such an activity.

As long as the leaders of visits act in good faith, with the best of intentions, to the best of their ability, the law is 'on their side'. If you are negligent or unreasonable in your actions they you will be held responsible for the damage or injuries that occur in an incident.

1.3 The Herefordshire Council 'Guidance Document for Off Site Activities or Visits' (2004) is the main document to consult if a visit is planned of any kind. It provides a framework based on best practice and the advice contained in the following documents;

'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' (DfEE 1998) – (HASPEV)

'Standards for LEAs – Overseeing Educational Visits' (2002)

'Standards for Adventure' (DfEE 2002)

'Handbook for Group Leaders' (DfEE 2002). It is imperative that all leaders of educational visits refer to this document prior to taking children off-site.

2 General Guidance – this condenses the essential elements of the above documents, it is a briefing document NOT the full guidance.

2.1 Visits Safety

The following factors should be considered when planning a visit:

- The activities proposed.
- The ability of the group.
- The environment.
- The ratio of supervisory adults to pupils.
- The competence of the leaders.
- Assessment of risks.

The categories for off-site visits are as follows with the approval/notification procedure.

CATEGORIES FOR OFF-SITE VISITS

Cat.	Examples of programmes	Approval/Notification Procedure
A	<p>Local visits, journeys and studies that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Less than 8 hours in duration. ➤ Less than 50 miles from base. <p>E.g. farm visits, visits to sites of historic, commercial or cultural interest, some fieldwork, sport and leisure centre visits, sports fixtures, journeys to a museum or theatre, local parks and churches.</p>	<p>Approval: Head and/or Governors (Form OV5 or own form (LSOV1) plus risk assessments)</p> <p>Notification: None required</p>
B	<p>Visits involving higher profile activities or a higher risk due to the duration of the trip or the distance away from base, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Outdoor and adventurous activities. ➤ Overnight stays. ➤ Any off-site visit that is more than 8 hours in duration. ➤ Any off-site visit that takes place more than 50 miles from base. 	<p>Approval: Head and/or Governors (Form OV5 plus risk assessments)</p> <p>For D of E independent groups: The Awards Officer (Form OV5 plus risk assessments)</p> <p>Notification: LEA 10 days before trip (using the evolve website)</p>
C	<p>Visits with an increased risk due to distance away from base or where there is significant concern about health, safety or welfare, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All visits abroad. 	<p>Approval: Head and/or Governors (Form OV5 plus risk assessments)</p> <p>Notification: LEA at planning stage (No form required)</p> <p>LEA 10 days before trip (using evolve website)</p>

2.2 Legal Framework

'Duty of Care'	Everyone is required to take reasonable care in any situation where harm to someone else could be foreseen. (This is gradually replacing the old 'loco parentis' term.)
'Negligence'	"Acts or omissions by someone with a duty of care in which this is breached by falling below the standard of care required in the circumstances to protect others from unreasonable risk of harm".

2.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Herefordshire Council

Has the ultimate responsibility for off-site visits, delegated to:

Governing Bodies

Should agree a policy for the management of off-site activities (probably by endorsing the council's policy and this 'local summary'). They should ensure that the school policy:

- Has a procedure for approval of visits.
- Has a clear policy for action in emergencies.
- Has a procedure for reporting accidents and incidents.
- Has a monitoring and review policy.

The Head (Supported by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator - EVC)

- Ensures that off-site activities comply with Herefordshire Council guidance and the school's own procedures.
- Ensures that leaders and staff are competent to assess the risks and manage the visits.
- Ensuring that the approval procedure is followed.

Educational Visits co-ordinator (EVC)

- Liases with the employer
- Supports the Head with approval procedures.
- Assesses the competence of party leaders and organises training where necessary.
- Keeps records of all visits, training and competencies

Party Leader

- Has overall responsibility for the visit and must obtain the Heads written approval (on the school's own trip form LSOV1 – see Appendix 2).
- Follow the policy guidelines.
- Inform parents and seek consent.
- Assess the risks.
- Reassess following the visit
- Ensure adult supervisors are clear on their roles and responsibilities.

Members of Staff/Volunteers

- Assist the party leader to ensure the health and safety and welfare of the children.
- Be clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Submit a CRB check if necessary.

The Children

- Must be made aware of risks.
- Must be made aware of their responsibilities to care for themselves and others.
- Follow instructions.
- Keep the agreed code of conduct.
- Be vigilant for possible risks.
- It is the school policy that any child who displays behaviour likely to endanger themselves or others will be refused participation in the visit or sent home.

Parents

- Should tell the leader about any relevant medical conditions.
- Sign the consent form.
- Provide an emergency contact number.
- Agree arrangements for sending a child home early.

Base Contact

A designated member of staff who can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

2.4 Checklist for Off-site Visits

Purpose

- Have you clearly identified the aims of the visit?
- Is the visit appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the group?

Location/venue

- If using an external provider for adventurous activities, has the provider been 'checked' in line with Council guidelines?
- Do you know or have you visited the location(s)?

Insurance

- Is insurance cover adequate?

Risk assessments

- Has a suitable risk assessment been carried out?

First aid and medical

- Have you assessed the first aid needs for the visit?
- Do you have a first aid kit appropriate to the visit?
- Do you know if members of staff/helpers have medical conditions?

Young People

- Have you advised young people in advance about your expectations for their behaviour?
- Are they aware of any 'rules'?
- Have you identified and agreed with young people and staff the sanctions available to curb unacceptable behaviour?
- Do you and/or other staff know the young people you are taking away?
- Is everyone aware of the nature and purpose of the visit?

Parents

- Are parents aware of the behaviour expected of young people and that, in the event of gross misconduct, they are responsible for the early return of the young person?
- Are parents aware of the nature and purpose of the visit? Has written consent been obtained?
- Has parental consent been gained for named staff to administer specific medication/injections, and have they received appropriate training?
- Do you have parental consent forms for each young person on the visit?

Transport

- Is there an appropriate balance between time spent travelling and time spent on site?
- Have you considered the suitability and safety of the transport to be used?

The Programme

- Is there flexibility within the programme? (E.g. do you have appropriate contingency plans that would be suitable in the event of bad weather, staff illness, etc?)

Finance

- Have all financial matters been appropriately dealt with?
- Have you sufficient cash/spare cash?

Emergency procedures

- Do you have emergency contact telephone numbers for designated senior staff?
- Are you aware of the appropriate action to be taken in the event of a major accident/incident that might invite media attention?
- Is a mobile phone necessary? If so, can you get reception in the area you are visiting?
- Have you ensured that the base contact has the names of all participants, including adults, plus contact details?

Leadership

- If staff are going to lead adventurous activities, have they been 'checked' in line with Council guidelines?
- Are you (the visit leader) aware of, and comfortable with, your role?
- Are all staff and helpers aware of, and comfortable with, their roles?

Competency

- Do the adults in the party have the appropriate skills and competencies for the visit? (Check this carefully and arrange suitable training and/or briefing to clarify your expectations.)
- Have adult helpers been approved by the Heads and/or the Department of Education Awards Officer?

Supervision

- Is the level of staffing sufficient for there to be adequate supervision at all times? This will be determined by (a) the type, level and duration of activity, (b) the requirements of the group, (c) the competence of staff, (d) the time of year and prevailing conditions.

Approval

- Has the venture been approved by the Heads or Department of Education Awards Officer?

Final Preparation

- Has there been suitable progression/preparation for young people prior to the visit?
- Does the visit conform to Herefordshire Council guidelines?
- Have you issued all relevant details? (E.g. itinerary, kit lists, etc.)
- Are you and other staff aware of the relevant medical details of young people, staff and voluntary helpers?
- Will you need a weather forecast or other location information such as tide times, etc. and do you know where to get this information?
- Will your group need waterproof clothing, boots or other equipment? (who will be providing these?)
- Does specialist equipment conform to standards recommended by responsible agencies?
- Have you relevant literature, work sheets, clipboards, etc?

Evaluation

- Have you reported back to the Head?
- Has the group been debriefed and any relevant follow-up work completed?
- Have all loose ends been tied up, e.g. paperwork, finance, thank you letters, etc?
- Have you evaluated the visit, and, if appropriate, made notes of points to be considered for future visits?

2.5 Staffing

- a) The minimum age for a member of staff/supervising adult is 18, as long as they are deemed competent.
- b) Supervision tends to vary according to numerous factors.
- c) Mixed gender groups should, where possible, be accompanied by at least one adult of each gender. It is essential for residential trips.
- d) Ratios
Hasper guidance suggest, as a 'general guide':
1:6 for Year 1 – 3 at a higher ratio for Early Years
1:15 for Year 4 – 6.
- e) First Aid
A First Aid kit is essential on all visits. There must be a qualified First Aider on adventurous and residential activities.

2.6 Risk Assessment

- a) A risk assessment is a careful examination of what hazards and risks may occur on your visit and what practicable, reasonable steps you have taken to prevent harm. A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm. A risk is the level of possibility that harm will occur following your control measures – therefore the residual hazard may therefore be significant but the risk could (and should) be low. Risk should be low because of your control measures.
- b) A generic risk assessment is perfectly acceptable as long as it covers all eventualities and are reviewed regularly to take account of new factors.
- c) Form OV1 (see Appendix 3) is the recommended Risk Assessment for off-site visits. Please consult the LEA document for the details for assessing risk (p20)

3. Planning a Visit or Trip

- 3.1 In the light of current advice from the Government and LEA, it would seem wise to cover ourselves by making sure that all off-site visits, even a walk 'up town', are seen to be properly planned and approved.

The Governors should be made aware that all approvals for visits are delegated to the Headteachers.

The Headteachers must be given full details of the visit on form LSOV1 which one of them, or a delegated member of the Senior Management Team (usually the School Business Manager) shall sign.

- 3.2 The form will include a box to tick which asks if risk assessments have been completed. It is the group leader's responsibility to complete a risk assessment form and tick the box.
- 3.3 Staff are encouraged to use the following check lists when planning their visits as this will ensure that we are following the LEA guidelines. In the unlikely event of an accident or incident we can show clearly that the planning, risk assessment and control measures were thorough.

3.4 Procedure for Category A Visits (less than 8 hours duration, less than 50 miles from school)

1. Aims identified?
2. Appropriate to age, ability and aptitude of the children?
3. Preliminary visit undertaken?
4. Have risk assessments been carried out?
5. Have first aid needs been assessed?
6. Have individual medical needs been accounted for?
7. Have the children been made aware of the purpose of the trip, your expectations and rules?
8. Have consent forms been completed by parents?
9. Are travel arrangements safe, suitable and have appropriate time balance between travel and activity?
10. Does your itinerary have contingency plans for bad weather etc.
11. Are financial arrangements appropriate?
12. Are school emergency procedures understood by all staff?
13. Do you have an emergency contact number?
14. Do you have access to a mobile phone?
15. Has school got a list of all participants including staff?
16. Are you sure of your role and responsibilities?
17. Are your helpers/staff aware of their roles and responsibilities?
18. Is the level of supervision adequate?
19. Has one of the Headteachers or School Bursar approved the visit?
20. Have you a final preparation list which includes equipment, such as clip-boards, clothing, medical details etc?
21. Have you reported back to one of the Headteachers and evaluated the visit using form OV8? (see Appendix 4)
22. If any accidents/ incidents occurred, have you completed for OV6? (see Appendix 5)

3.5 Procedure for Category B Visits (Outdoor and adventurous activities, overnight stays, longer than 8 hours and more than 50 miles from school or any combination of these).

1. Aims identified?
2. Appropriate to age, ability and aptitude of the children?
3. Preliminary visit undertaken?
4. Has the external provider been checked in line with LEA guidelines?
5. Have risk assessments been carried out?
6. Is insurance cover adequate?
7. Have first aid needs been assessed?
8. Have individual medical needs been accounted for?
9. Have the children been made aware of the purpose of the trip, your expectations and rules?
10. Have consent forms been completed by parents?
11. Are the children aware of sanctions for unacceptable behaviour?
12. Have you sufficient spare cash?
13. Are travel arrangements safe, suitable and have appropriate time balance between travel and activity?
14. Does your itinerary have contingency plans for bad weather etc.
15. Are financial arrangements appropriate?
16. Are school emergency procedures understood by all staff?
17. Do you have an emergency contact number?
18. Do you have access to a mobile phone?
19. Has school got a list of all participants including staff?
20. Are you sure of your role and responsibilities?
21. Are your helpers/staff aware of their roles and responsibilities?
22. Is the level of supervision adequate?

23. Has one of the Headteachers approved the visit?
24. Has the LEA been notified using the Evolve website (10 days before planned visit)?
25. Have you a final preparation list which includes equipment, such as clip-boards, clothing, medical details etc?
26. If any accidents/ incidents occurred, have you completed for OV6?