Educational Visits Policy

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 and provide our children with opportunities for learning that they might not otherwise have.

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 hook to engage children 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.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous planning beforehand, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at Holbeach Primary School:

The certified Educational Visits Officer (EVC) at Holbeach will endeavour to ensure that:

- Each visit has a suitable group leader
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins
- the risk assessment is complete and agree 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 knows the location of the activity
- all adults on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance. In the case of Residential visits all qualifications have been approved and verified
- the governing body has approved the visit if necessary
- parents have signed consent forms for visits (with the exception of local visits)
- 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
- the school has the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name
- that the school has the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group and their emergency contacts

Group Leader

One teacher, the group leader, has overall responsibity for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been appointed by the Head Teacher. The Group Leader should:

- where practical appoint a deputy leader
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range
- be conversant in the good practice for that activity
- 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 safety
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below
- ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of pupils below)

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the LA or of the Governing Body. 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 Head Teacher 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

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 or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it
- not undertake any task that they think will be dangerous

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

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 residential 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

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 adjustments to avoid them.

The Head Teacher/Educational Visits Officer 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.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using the appropriate LA 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

Pre-visits

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake a pre-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 a pre-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.

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. 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 the activities planned.

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:

- gender, age and ability of group
- special needs pupils
- the nature of activities
- experience of adults in off-site supervision
- duration and nature of the journey
- type of any accommodation (if residential)
- 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 adventurous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

There are no legal guidelines for ratios of adults to children during educational visits (with the exception of EYFS) as it is dependent upon the nature of the visit and age and needs of the children. Lewisham LA adopt the National Guidance Policy on this www.oeapng.info. and advise the following as general guidelines:

- Early Years, visits off-site may be as low as: 1:2
- Each class has a minimum of two competent staff
- KS1 1-8
- KS2 and above 1-12 with the ideal that supervised groups should be between 6-12
- SEN & additional needs may well indicate 1-2 or 1-1 (SENCO & EHCP's will help here)

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 should be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally, 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 LEA or 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.

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 risk assessments, 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.

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.

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 and rendezvous procedures

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

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

- The Head Teacher will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should

be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

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 in 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 (if any)
- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to

Parental consent

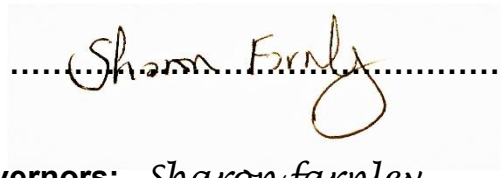
Holbeach Primary School will seek consent for:

- local visits (a form completed when the child first joins the school)
- non-local visits (permission slips completed for each individual visit)
- residential visits

If parents withhold consent, 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 or EVC 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.

Date of Policy: January 2025
Date of Review: January 2027 (or when any changes are deemed necessary)

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Signed: 

Chair of Governors: Sharon farnley **(please print name)**

Signed: 

Headteacher: Tom Bulpitt **(please print name)**

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