The Meadows Primary School

Off-site Visit Policy

Introduction

This policy statement and guidelines are designed to be a practical guide that aids any colleague who is planning an educational visit out of school. Its principle purpose is to ensure that every member of staff is working within both legal and school-based guidelines by ensuring that any visit fits within the philosophy and mission of our school and also adheres to health and safety legislation and 'Shropshire's Regulation and Guidance for Educational Visits and Journeys' document.

All guidance documents, planning templates and completed risk assessments can be located on TEAMs/ General/ Off Site Visits folder. The inside cover of the folder also highlights a brief overview of the steps involved in planning and preparing for an off-site visit.

Roles, Responsibilities and Legal Framework

The **Governing Body** is responsible for:

- ensuring that LA Guidelines for Educational Visits and Journeys are followed and plans show compliance with these;
- ensuring that the Head teacher and the EVC are supported in matters relating to educational visits and that they have the appropriate time and expertise to fulfil their responsibilities;
- ascertaining what Governor training is available and relevant;
- being informed about visits via the headteacher's reports
- be informed about less routine visits well in advance;
- receiving reports about completed visits and overseeing that evaluation of these informs future visits;
- asking questions about a visit's educational objectives and how they will be met. Are the objectives appropriate to the age and abilities of the pupil group? The Governors should challenge the nature of the venture when the educational objectives are not clear or where the means to meet them do not appear to be realistic;

(It is not expected that Governors should become directly involved in risk assessment and related matters unless they have an appropriate competence**.**)

The **Head teacher** is responsible for:

Those involved in planning and running visits have sufficient competence and training;

- appoint a competent Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) or take on this responsibility themselves;
- training needs have been assessed by a competent person and the needs of the staff and pupils have been considered. Sufficient resources must be allocated to meet essential training needs;
- encourage the uptake of EVC refresher training every three years;
- encourage the uptake of the training offered to party leaders by the OEA;
- make a judgment on the proposed party leader's competence and suitability to lead a visit. Discipline on an educational visit may, at times, have to be stricter than in the classroom;

- for school led outdoor and adventure activities the party leader or another leader is suitably competent and qualified in accordance with the LA's requirements to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place.

That appropriate planning and risk assessment is undertaken;

- ensure that arrangements are in place for the educational objectives of a visit to be inclusive, to be stated in the pre-visit documentation, and to be made known to all relevant parties;
- be aware of the need to obtain best value. Consideration must be given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships;
- party leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly. This may include making an exploratory visit and time to ensure that all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins;
- check that the party leader has completed all the actions required in the planning checklist;
- approve all visits at school level and notify the LA as required for visits abroad and obtain approval for visits involving relatively high risk activities. Seeking this may be delegated to the EVC;
- ensure that arrangements are in place for the Governing Body to be made aware of visits so that they can fulfil their responsibilities;
- ensure that the accreditation or verification of providers has been checked;
- ensure that visits are evaluated to inform the operation of future visits and identify training needs.
- ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover in place.

That the supervision arrangements are adequate;

- adequate child protection procedures are in place;
- all adults on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children;
- the ratio of adult supervisors to pupils is appropriate and meets any minimum stipulated requirements.

That emergencies and contingencies are planned for;

- that all adults accompanying the party and school home base contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures in case of a major incident on an educational visit and understand these;
- check that contractors have adequate emergency support procedures, and that these will link to school and LA emergency procedures;
- the party leader, other key adults accompanying the party and the school home base contact have the names of all the adults and pupils travelling in the party, and the contact details of parents and the teachers' and other supervisors' next of kin;
- ensure that there is a contingency plan covering, for example the implications of staff illness, delayed return or the need to change routes or activities during the visit;
- arrange for the investigation and reporting of accidents as required. Accident and incident records (including near misses) should be reviewed regularly, and this information used to inform future visits;
- ensure that the school home base contact has the authority to make significant decisions. They

should be contactable and available for the full duration of the visit 24 hours a day. They should be able to respond immediately at the school base to the demands of an emergency and should have a back-up person or number;

- establish a procedure to ensure that parents are informed quickly about incident details through the school home base contact, rather than through the media or pupils;
- recognise that support may be necessary from the LA's corporate communications team when dealing with media enquiries.

The **Educational Visits Coordinator** is responsible for:

- ensuring that arrangements for educational visits meet the employer's requirements including those of risk assessment;
- supporting the Head teacher and Governors with approval and other decisions;
- ensuring **competent** people lead and supervise a visit including ensuring that the LA's qualification requirements for adventure activities are met;
- assessing the competence of leaders and other adults proposed for a visit.
- organising the training of leaders and other adults going on a visit. This will commonly involve training such as first aid, hazard awareness etc.;
- organising thorough induction of leaders and other adults taking pupils on a specific visit;
- making sure that Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are in place as necessary;
- working with the party leader to provide full details of the visit beforehand so that parents can consent or refuse consent on a fully informed basis;
- ensuring appropriate emergency arrangements and emergency contacts for each visit are in place;
- keeping records of individual visits including reports of accidents and 'near misses';
- reviewing systems and, on occasions, monitor practice.

The **Party Leader** is responsible for:

- obtaining the Headteacher's or EVC's prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place;
- working under the direction of the EVC in relation to the planning and organisation of the visit;
- following LA and/or Governing Body, guidelines and policies;
- appointing a deputy;
- clearly defining all adult supervisors' roles and ensure that all tasks have been assigned;
- being able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- (for school led outdoor and adventure activities), be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity and be familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place;
- being aware of child protection issues;
- ensuring that adequate first-aid provision will be available;
- undertaking and completing the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of party members and parents;
- undertaking and recording a comprehensive risk assessment;
- evaluating visits/activities and advising the Head teacher and EVC where adjustments may be necessary;
- having enough information about the intended participants to be able to make more reasonable adjustments to meet health, disability or educational needs;

- ensuring that the ratio of adult supervisors to pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group and accords with any LA or Governing Body guidelines;
- considering stopping the visit or a particular activity if the risk to the health or safety of the pupils is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality and an alternative activity already planned;
- ensuring that leaders and any other adult supervisors have details of the school home base contact;
- ensuring that leaders and other adult supervisors and the school home base contact have a copy of the emergency procedures;
- ensuring that the party's teachers and other adult supervisors have the details of pupils' special educational or medical needs which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively;
- ensuring that any accidents, incidents and/or near misses and any other relevant reporting requirements are met.

Planning the visit

Whenever possible, it is recommended that the party leader should visit the proposed location in advance to carry out a preliminary check, this will enable them to;

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the visit;
- undertake a full appraisal of learning opportunities and experiences;
- identify what facilities which are available and what the leader will need to provide;
- establish the level of care and supervision which will be required;
- identify any special problems or hazards and the organisation and expertise required to cope with them;
- establish what information the provider will need and by when.

The Head teacher should be consulted when a visit is being arranged so that dates can be checked, letters to parents can be arranged and costs can be agreed. A risk assessment needs to be completed. This is now done through the online 'E-visits' system. The 'paper risk assessment' is still to be used, and then uploaded onto the e-visits system. This proforma is located on Teams in the 'Educational Visits' folder. The paper risk assessment can then be copied for all staff attending the visit. These should be collected and destroyed at the end of the visit by the visit leader. The digital document needs to be completed in full and sent to the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), who will then check the document, approve and send on to the Head teacher for final approval. This should be completed **at least one week** before the trip date. Once approved, copies need to be made for every adult involved in the visit. They should then sign their copies to show that they have read the risk assessment document and understand their role in supporting the party leader.

Visit requiring additional information or different requirements.

Some visit types require additional documents and timescales in order to be completed successfully. Please see below for the different visits we carry out at The Meadows and what is needed.

Forest Schools

In the current version of the 'Regulations and Guidelines for Education Visits and Journeys' Document, there is a section on **Forest Schools.** Schools are required to submit form **16a** for approval if pupils are taken to an offsite Forest School site (this does not include LA sites) or if an external provider is used. This is in addition to the risk assessments required for each session.

Please see Forest School policy for full details. However, some of the key points are:

- Forest school leaders must have a certificate confirming their qualification (OCN or BTEC), outdoor first aid certificate, current DBS and child protection training.
- Forest school re-validation training takes place once every three years.
- The school needs to ensure that a paediatric First Aider is available on site.
- First aid kits are taken to all sessions (including inhalers and an emergency inhaler) and the burns first aid kit including fire blanket is taken for the fire session. 10 litres of water is taken to extinguish the 'planned fire'.
- The site must be suitable and the Forest School Leader always checks the site before the children enter.
- Fire safety - Introduce fire and fire safety gradually.
- Ensure proper training in fire lighting and proper supervision at all times.
- Fire to be kept small and within boundaries, ensure fire is properly extinguished and ashes scattered at end of session.
- Party leader/ Forest school leader is responsible for ensuring that adults and children are dressed appropriately for each session.
- There must be a 'lost child' procedure on the risk assessment and all attending adults must be aware of this.
- Risk assessments must reflect the focus activities; they may differ, depending on the focus. Some activities will require an extra adult (FIRE SESSION).
- Any incidents are recorded on site and on the evaluation part of the risk assessment; this information is shared back at school with the head teacher and EVC.

Residential Visits

When visits which involve outdoor and adventure activities (OAA) or field studies in 'high risk' environments and/or visits outside of England, Wales and Scotland, a copy of the 16a form should be sent to Dave Thorley, Outdoor Education; Email: dave.thorley@shropshire.gov.uk or Ed.visits@shropshire.gov.uk Telephone: 01743 254485 Mobile: 07970909252 at the planning stage of the visit, or in any event, **no later than six working weeks before the departure date.** Staff must have enhanced DBS checks for residentials. Arthog and other residential visits which take place with an accredited centre (accredited badge logos are on page 59 of the 'Regulations and Guidelines for Education Visits and Journeys') do not require a full 16A. Risk assessments at school are required, however, for travel and 'down time'.

Sporting events

The fact that they take place regularly does not alter the responsibilities or duty of care to ensure that arrangements are planned/ organised in a proper manner and in accordance with the principles set out in the guidance document. Risk Assessments have been completed for off-site sporting events, visits to other schools and weekly swimming; these are kept in the Off -site Activities folder on the server.

It is particularly important that an accurate list of the children taking part in such events is left with the Head teacher or Secretary/EVC.

Pricing

In accordance with the LA's charging policy we are able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to cover the cost of the visit. This is simply the total cost divided by the number of children who will be going on the visit. Costs are generally limited to the transport costs and any entrance fee.

If the school minibuses are to be used, the likely mileage needs to be worked out and parking fees known. However, pupil premium funds can be used to pay for pupils who are entitled to income support.

Parent/Carer Information and Consent

All parents/carers enrolling their child at our school are asked to sign a consent form to grant permission for the child to be taken out into the immediate local community for work throughout their time at school. This is part of our admissions procedure. From that point on, parents/carers would only be informed that a local visit out of school is to take place and further consent forms would not be necessary. Parents/carers must be informed that a local visit is to take place as they have the right to refuse permission if they choose to do so.

All other visits must have permission given directly by the parent/carer. It is important to give the parent/carer details of the visit and what it will entail. This is particularly important for residential visits when both written and verbal (i.e. a formal meeting) communication takes place.

Clothing

Generally speaking, children will be required to wear their normal school uniform unless there is good reason for them not to do so. Staff dress should be in keeping with that required of the children. Staff are asked to wear their red fleece jackets/ coats when on visits to make themselves more visible to the children.

Register and Contact List

Numbered copies of the risk assessment, registration and contact list should be provided for the Head teacher, EVC and any other adults accompanying the visit as required (one copy left at school). A register of all children being taken on the activity should be taken prior to departure from school, any variation from the original planning document, child absences etc. should be recorded on all copies of the form. If more than one coach or minibus is used the register must indicate which vehicle each child and adult is on. They must use that vehicle for all parts of the journey. All registers must be returned to the party leader at the end of the visit/activity to be destroyed in accordance with data protection procedures. Contact lists are left at school in the office.

Timing

Where possible, visits should be arranged so that they fit into the normal school day. When this is not possible it is essential that parents / carers are informed of where and at what time they need to meet their children. Busy times must be avoided if possible due to the limited space for parking. When being transported by coaches, it is best to avoid school drop off times (between 8.15 and 8.45am) and school pick up times (between 3.00 and 3.30pm). Each child needs to be 'handed over' to a parent or other responsible person and marked off on the register. For visits arranged for older children there should be provision on the letter that is sent home for parents to indicate if they wish their child to make his/her own way home. This information can then be marked on the register prior to departure.

The party leader **MUST** inform school as soon as the destination has been reached, and of any delay on expected return. In the event of a delayed return to school, parents/carers will be notified via the school's text messaging service.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessment for educational visits can be considered as having three levels: -

- generic activity risk assessments which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place e.g. travel
- visit/site specific risk assessments which will differ from place to place and group to group; and
- dynamic risk assessments that take account of changes that happen whilst the visit is underway, for example, illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activity. This type of risk assessment is not recorded but the lessons learnt should form part of the subsequent review of any recorded risk assessment.

This must be seen as a priority at all times, before and during the visit. A risk assessment for the visit must be completed on e-visits.
The factors to take into consideration when completing the digital document are as follows:

1. The age and ability of the group.
2. Ratio.
3. Pupils with special educational or medical needs, including behavioural problems.
4. The nature of the activities to be undertaken.
5. The experience of non-staff adults in off-site supervision.
6. Duration and nature of the journey.
7. Competence and expertise of staff.
8. Time of year.
9. Isolation.
10. Physical hazards (e.g. road or other crossings).
11. First Aid.

All risk assessments must be signed and saved on the server.

Staffing Ratios

There should always be adequate staffing for any visit out of school. Recommended staffing levels are:

Early Years	1:4
School years 1-3	1:6 (overnight stays - minimum 1:8)
School years 4-6	1:15 (overnight stays - minimum 1:10)

Ratios may vary according to the activity/risk factor at the discretion of the Head teacher.

In addition to the Party Leader in charge of the visit, there should be enough supervisors to cope **effectively with an emergency.** A deputy leader should be stated on the risk assessment; front page. When visits are to remote areas the risks may be greater, and a higher level of supervision required. This is particularly true of residential visits.

Supervisors can be additional teachers, non-teaching staff, parent helpers or school governors. When allocating groups for each adult, consideration should be given to which pupils are allocated to which supervisor. For instance, it would not be appropriate for parent helpers to be expected to supervise pupils with challenging behaviour. As with parents helping in school, any parent asked to assist on school visits should have an enhanced DBS check and be listed on the school's Single Central Record.

First Aid

There needs to be a **minimum of two** paediatric First Aiders on each visit. Most members of staff are qualified paediatric First Aiders. Sufficient First Aid kits (including emergency inhalers) should be taken to allow each group easy access to one if necessary. The names of First Aiders should be detailed on the planning document (Appendix A). The Party Leader also needs to ensure that all medication needed is available before school departure. Inhalers need to be carried by the individual pupils unless they are too young, in which case their group leader can carry it for them in designated green asthma bags, allocated to each class. Any medication that needs to be administrated during the visit needs to have the 'Administrating medicine' form completed by the parent/carer and the party leader will ensure a first aider administers it.

Toileting Procedures

Where practical, schedule toilet breaks as part of your visit and outline on the risk assessment planning document.

- No child is to go into a toilet block on their own.
- For girls and KS1 boys, the ladies' toilets should be used with a member of staff present.
- KS2 boys will need to use the male toilets. If a male member of staff is not available, the boys should accompany each other into the toilet block with a member of staff remaining immediately outside.
- Consideration should be given to making use of disabled toilets as these are generally unisex and are often separate from the main toilet block.

Insurance

All colleagues must check with administrative staff that adequate insurance cover is in place for the visit to go ahead. It may be decided in consultation with the head teacher that enhanced insurance cover, in addition to the county cover, is appropriate.

Pre-Visit Safety Talk

Prior to the visit the Party Leader should discuss the itinerary and involve the children with the risk assessment process. The children need to be made fully aware of what to do to keep themselves safe including what to do if they find themselves separated from the group. Give the children sufficient details to enable them to identify a 'safe adult' (show pictures of employee's uniforms/logos etc.). KS1 pupils should wear bright, yellow Meadows caps and wear wrist bands with emergency school contact phone number on.
Instructions for the children on what to do if they are lost:

- Remain where you are.
- If an adult approaches and asks if you are lost say which school you are from and ask them to find your group or member of staff.
- Only go with an adult who your teacher has told you is a safe adult. DO NOT LEAVE WITH ANY OTHER ADULT.
- If an adult tries to make you go with them make as much noise as you can – shout/scream etc. to gain the attention of a safe adult.

- When you arrive at the destination, remind the children of who is a safe adult, pointing one out if possible.

Lost Child Procedures

When it is noticed a child is missing:

IMMEDIATELY

- Inform party leader of situation.
- Party Leader will call all groups together to check for the missing child. If not found, then the whole group is to go to place that the child was last seen.
- Party leader and sufficient adults to remain with group. Remaining adults to search immediate area for child, calling child's name as they do so.

IF CHILD IS NOT FOUND WITHIN A FEW MINUTES,

- Party leader to alert site staff to instigate a full search.
- If no sign of the child after **10 minutes,** or if there are no staff at the location, call the Police (999) immediately, inform school and follow procedures in the Major Incident Procedures Pack.
- If the party leader feels it is appropriate to call the Police sooner, they may do so.
- The Party Leader needs to retain a coordinator's role and hand supervisory responsibility to another member of staff.

In the Case of Major Accident/Incident

Follow the advice in the Emergency Procedures Pack. The immediate priority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children. The procedures include:

- Always keep a mobile phone in your possession.
- Call emergency services and be guided by them.
- Administer First Aid as appropriate.
- **Do not** try to contact parents / carers.
- Inform the school home base contact as soon as practicable.
- Take notes as soon as practicable.

Terrorist Threat

When visiting 'high risk areas', always have a plan and a safe place to go (and include this on the risk assessment). Share this safe place with everyone on the visit. On arrival, show this safe place so everyone knows where it is.

Factors to consider when visiting 'high risk areas':

Consider increasing supervision ratios from normal arrangements.

Stay alert to local and national news before and during the visit.

Research the venue/s to avoid occasions when large crowds are likely or political demonstrations are planned in the area.

Be additionally vigilant in crowded places such as shopping malls, travel places (train stations) and stadiums.

Consider changing either the date or visit location to a time or location that carries less risk/ or cancel.

In the event of a threat, 'RUN, HIDE, TELL'.

After the Visit

Inform EVC of how the visit went. It would be useful to 'de-brief' the staff so that successes and any areas for development can be identified and noted, again for future reference.