



Thornaby Church of England Primary School

Educational Visits

The Governors and staff of Thornaby Church of England Primary School value the role of educational visits and regard them as an important part of school life.

To enable children and staff to gain a full and enjoyable educational visit it is essential that the following guidelines and policies are adhered to.

The range of activities covered by this document include:

- Residential activities.
- Day visits using transport.
- Day or part day visits on foot.
- After school sporting activities.
- Swimming pool visits.
- Farm visits.

School visits benefit young people in many ways including:

- Being able to apply a different range of skills than those used in the classroom.
- Enabling, supporting and complementing the work of the National Curriculum.
- Developing investigative skills.
- Assessing and managing risks (safely)
- Associating the work of school and teachers directly with the work outside school.
- Develop latent talents, abilities and interests, which can be motivational and have lifelong relevance.
- Longer visits in particular encourage greater independence.

Teachers, volunteers, pupils and parents all have responsibilities during the course of any off-site activity in which they are participating.

Governing Body.

The governing body should satisfy itself that risk assessments have been undertaken and that appropriate safety measures have been put in place and that training needs have been addressed.

Governing bodies have to ensure that

- Every visit has a specific and stated objective.
- That the Head Teacher/group leader shows how their planning comply with regulations and guidelines, including the schools health and safety policy and where applicable, the LEA's policy.
- Ensure that they are informed well in advance about less routine visits.
- Assess proposals for all visits of a residential nature.

Head Teacher.

The Head teacher should ensure:

- That visits comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the LEA, schools governing body and the schools own health and safety policy.
- That the group leader is competent to monitor risks throughout the visit.
- Adequate child protection procedures are in place.
- That all necessary actions have been completed before the visit takes place.
- The risk assessment has been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place.
- Training needs have been assessed by a competent person and the needs of the staff and pupils have been considered.
- The group leader has experience in supervising the age groups on the visit and will organise the group effectively.
- The group leader or another teacher is suitably competent to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place.

- Group leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly.
- Non teacher helpers on the visit are appropriate to supervise children.
- Ratios of staff to pupils are appropriate.
- The LEA or governing body has approved any overnight visits.
- Parents have signed the consent forms.
- Arrangements have been made for the medical and special educational needs of the pupils.
- Adequate first aid provision will be in place.
- The mode of transport is appropriate.
- Travel times out and back are known in school.
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover.
- They have the address and phone number of the visits venue and have a contact name.
- A school contact has been nominated and the group leader has the details.
- For residential visits the group leader, helpers and nominated school contact have the names of all the adults and pupils travelling in the group, and the contact details of parents and the teachers and other helpers next of kin.
- There is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home.

Risk Assessments.

- Complete and comprehensive risk assessments are a legal requirement and **must** be carried out and approved by the Head Teacher before the visit.
- Copies of the risk assessment should be given to all teachers and supervisors on the visit, with details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the risks.
- Frequent visits, for example, to the swimming baths, do not need a risk assessment for each visit, however it is essential to review these assessments at regular intervals.

In order to undertake full and comprehensive assessment of risks, it may be necessary to undertake a pre-visit. When undertaking risk assessment a number of variables need to be taken into account.

- Number of pupils involved.

- The age of the pupils, their sex, ability and general behaviour.
- The time of day and time of year.
- The travel arrangements.
- The hazards at the environment being visited.
- The numbers, experience and quality of accompanying staff and volunteers.
- The nature of the activities.
- The special educational or medical needs of the pupils.
- The quality and suitability of available equipment.
- Seasonal weather conditions.
- Emergency procedures.
- The need to monitor the risk throughout the visit.

Duties and Responsibilities.

All staff should be aware of the expectations placed upon them and should appreciate the nature of their relationship to the pupils and other staff.

All staff must:

- Conduct themselves in a manner compatible with their own safety and the safety and well-being of the pupils.
- Inform the visit leader if they are unsure of their ability to perform any supervisory function requested of them.
- Recognise the limits of their responsibility and act within those at all times.
- Report to the visit leader any concerns they may have regarding pupil behaviour and well-being during the visit.

Responsibilities of Group Leader.

Group leaders, whether teachers or adult helpers have a common duty of care towards the pupils in their charge.

Group leaders must:

- Obtain the Head Teachers prior agreement before any off-site visit.

- Follow the guidelines at all times.
- Appoint a deputy.
- Clearly define each helper's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned.
- Be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age group.
- Be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity and be familiar with the location/centre where the activity takes place.
- Be aware of child protection issues.
- Ensure adequate first aid provision is in place.
- 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.
- Review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise the Head Teacher where adjustments may be necessary.
- Ensure that teachers and helpers are fully aware of what the proposed visits entail.
- Have enough information on the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed.
- Ensure that staff/pupil ratio is appropriate for the group.
- Consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the pupil is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an emergency.
- Ensure that all helpers have details of the school contact.
- Ensure that all helpers have details of the medical or special needs of the pupils.

Teachers.

Teachers on school visits act as employees of the LEA whether the visit is during normal school hours or outside the school day.

Teachers must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would in the same circumstances.

They should:

- Follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline.

- Consider stopping the visit or the activity notifying the group leader if they think the risk to the health and safety of the pupils in their charge is too great.

Adult Volunteers.

Non-teacher adults on the visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit.

They must:

- Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group.
- Not to be left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment.
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and teacher supervisor and help with the control and discipline.
- Speak to the group leader or teachers if concerned about health and safety of the pupils at any time.

Pupils.

The group leader must make it clear to pupils that they must:

- Not take unnecessary risks.
- Follow the instructions of the leader and other helpers including those at the venue.
- Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly.
- Look out for anything that might threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the leader or helper about it.

Any pupil whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit.

Parents.

Parent should be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should go on a visit.

The group leader should ensure that parents are given sufficient information in writing and invited to any briefing sessions.

The group leader should also tell parents how they could prepare their child for the visit, e.g. reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

Parents should also be asked to agree the arrangements for sending a pupil home early from a residential visit and who will meet the cost.

Parents will need to:

- Provide the group leader with emergency contact numbers.
- Sign the consent form.
- Give the group leader information about their child's emotional, psychological and physical health, which may be relevant to the visit.

Records and Communications.

Records of a visit can provide a very useful and informative way of demonstrating the accountability of the school towards its pupils.

- Pre visit risk assessments should be kept.
- Any after visit reports should also be kept on file.
- Reports of any accidents or incidents should be kept on file.

Other than visits in the local vicinity of the school, Parents should always be made aware when their children are leaving the school premises.

Parents may exercise their right not to allow their children to take part in a visit. Under these circumstances the school must make alternative arrangements to ensure that the National Curriculum work that was being developed during the visit is made available to the pupil in school. The refusal of the parent not to allow the pupil to go on the visit does not offer the opportunity for the child to be kept off school for the day.

Communication with parents regarding school visits will be included in

- The school prospectus.
- Letters regarding the use of private transport.
- Information about visits during school time.
- Voluntary contributions.
- Trips outside school hours.
- Details of children's medical needs.
- Meetings with parents.
- Consent forms.

First Aid.

- There should be a suitably qualified first aider on every visit, other than trips in the local vicinity where a first aider from school can be on the scene within 5 mins or if it is a coach journey and there is a qualified first aider at the destination eg Marrick Priory, swimming baths etc.
- A suitable first aid kit should be taken on every visit.
- All minibuses are required by law to carry a first aid kit.

Supervision.

Ratios.

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Sex, age and ability of group.
- Pupils with special educational or medical needs.
- Nature of activities.
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision.
- Duration and nature of journey.
- Type of any accommodation.
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.
- Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited.
- Competence and behaviour of pupils.
- First aid cover.

Staffing ratios for visits will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources. However suggested guidelines might be:

Years 1 - 3	1 adult for every 6 pupils. (Foundation Stage should set a higher ratio after considering the above factors.)
Years 4 - 6	1 adult for every 10 - 15 pupils. (Depending on the activity.)

The above are examples only. The group leader should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group.

When parents are taken on visits it should always be clear that the teachers in charge have overall responsibility. Parents helping on the visit should;

- Be carefully selected and not have one of their own children on the trip.
- Have CRB clearance.
- Have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities.

Head counts/keeping a check.

Whatever the length of the visit regular head counts should be taken of the children, particularly before leaving the venue.

All adults should carry a list of all pupils and adults involved in the visit.

Pupils especially Foundation Stage to Y3 should be easily identifiable.

Pupils should **not** wear name badges, but badges with the school name could be considered.

The group leaders should ensure that the children know what to do if they get separated from the group.

Insurance.

The group leader must ensure, well before the visit, that adequate insurance arrangements are in place.

Emergency Procedures.

Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation.

If an accident happens, the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation.
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group.
- Attend to the casualty.
- Inform emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the accident.
- Ensure that a teacher accompanies any casualties to hospital if necessary and the rest of the group are supervised.
- Write down accurately all relevant facts and witness details and preserve all vital evidence.
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident.
- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible. Contact HSE or local authority inspector, if appropriate.

No one in the group should speak to the media and no names should be provided.

No one in the group should discuss any legal liability with other parties.

The school contact should be kept up to date with the situation and provide assistance as necessary.

Transport.

The Head Teacher should satisfy themselves that all travel arrangements, including the hire of private coaches or buses, are suitable for the nature of the visit.

When arranging transport the group leader should consider:

- Passenger safety.
- Type of journey.
- Traffic conditions.
- Insurance cover.
- Weather.
- Journey time and distance.
- Stopping points on longer journeys.
- Supervision.

The driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit.

All minibuses and coaches which carry groups of three or more children aged between 3 and 15 years inclusive must be fitted with a seat belt for each child. The seats must face forward and seat restraints must comply with legal requirements.

The driver should not normally be responsible for supervision.

Driver supervision may be sufficient if a small number of older children are being taken on a short journey.

All group members should be made aware of the position of the emergency doors.

When hiring coaches and buses the group leader is responsible for ensuring:

- That the buses and coaches are hired from a reputable company.
- That the operators have the appropriate public service vehicle (PSV) operators' licence.
- That seat belts are available for all pupils. (Whilst seat belts must be fitted on coaches which carry groups of children, they are not legally required on buses. Buses where seat belts are not fitted are not appropriate for school visits.)
- That the transport has appropriate access and securing facilities for any of the group using a wheelchair.

The law on driver licensing no longer permits car drivers who pass their test after 1st January 1997 to drive minibuses without passing a Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PVC) driving test or unless they are driving under a section 19 Permit. This does not apply to existing licence holders who are over 21.

Drivers of any vehicle must ensure that they have the correct entitlement on their licence.

Private Cars.

Teachers and others who drive pupils in their own cars must ensure their passengers' safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy, and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying the pupils.

The driver is responsible for making sure that the pupils have a seat belt and use it at all times.

Vehicles without seat belts should not be used.

If the school uses cars belonging to and driven by parents to transport pupils, the school must ensure that the drivers are aware of their legal responsibility for the safety of the pupils in their cars.

Parents' agreement should be sought (on the consent form) for their children to be carried in others parents' cars.

Swimming when on school visits.

Swimming should only take place in proper swimming pool facilities.

Group leaders should always follow the recommended safe supervision levels at the pool for all their pupils.

A minimum ratio should be

Years 4 - 6 1 adult to 12 pupils
(For pupils in Y3 and below the ratio should be higher.)

The following checks should be made:

- Is there constant pool supervision by a sufficient number of qualified staff?
- Is the water temperature appropriate?
- Where there is no lifeguard the leader should stay on the pool side at a raised location and the group leader should have the relevant life saving award?
- Is the water clear?
- Are there sign indicating the depth of the water?
- Does the pool cater for pupils with disabilities?
- Does the deep end allow for safe diving?
- Is there a resuscitator and other pieces of first aid and other rescue equipment? Is there someone trained to use them?
- Is there a changing room for each sex?
- Are the changing and showering facilities safe and hygienic?
- Can clothes be stored safely?
- Have the pupils been instructed how to behave around water?

Farm Visits.

Farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm should be carefully planned.

The risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E-coli food poisoning and other infections.

Teachers should check that the farm is well managed and has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare, it should have good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas.

When visiting a farm pupils should not:

- Place their faces against the animals or put their hands in their own mouths after feeding the animals.
- Eat until they have washed their hands.
- Sample any animal foodstuffs.
- Drink from farm taps.

- Ride on tractors or other machines.
- Play in the farm area.

Further guidelines are available from HSE's *Avoiding ill health at open farms: Advice to teachers*.

Residential Visits.

Staff Ratios:

It is recommended that there should be at least 1 member of staff for every 10 pupils.

Safety

Issues for the group leader to consider are as follows:

- The group should ideally have adjoining rooms with teachers' quarters next to the pupils rooms. If possible the group leader should obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the groups in advance.
- There must be at least one teacher from each sex for mixed groups.
- There must be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for pupils and adults.
- The immediate accommodation should be exclusively for the groups use.
- There should be appropriate and safe heating and ventilation.
- The whole group should be aware of the lay out of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routines, and everyone can identify key personnel.
- Security arrangements where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors.
- All staff employed at the centre should be checked on their suitability for working with young people.
- Locks on doors should work in the groups rooms but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times.

- There should be drying facilities.
- There should be adequate lighting.
- There should be provision for children with special needs and for those who fall sick.
- Balconies should be stable, windows secure and electrical connections safe.
- Where possible pupils should not be lodged on ground floor rooms.
- The fire alarm must be audible throughout the whole accommodation.
- There should be recreational facilities for the group.
- There should be an appropriate number of supervisors on duty during the night.
- As soon as possible after arrival a fire drill should take place.

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