

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Policy for Educational Visits

Person Responsible: Miss M Jackson

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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.

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 stimulus 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 organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at St Mary's Catholic Primary School.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- a suitable group leader has been appointed
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins
- the risk assessment is complete and 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 has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity
- all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance
- the governing body has approved the visit if necessary

Group Leader

The Group Leader (teacher) is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the party and should have been appointed by the Headteacher. The Group Leader should ensure that:

- a deputy has been appointed
- they are suitably qualified if instructing an activity and brief group members
- a comprehensive risk assessment has been completed and passed to the Educational Visits' co-ordinator prior to the event
- due regard has been given to the health and safety of the group at all times
- parents have given consent and all slips have been returned
- 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
- that they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents
- all pupils are well aware of their responsibilities and the expectations of the school

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit

Teachers on school-led visits will be acting under an agreement with their Headteacher 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
- should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous

Any 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 longer visits.

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 plans to avoid them.

The Headteacher 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 Headteacher 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 Headteacher.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit. The risk assessment will be written in conjunction with the Educational Visits co-ordinator (Miss M Jackson). The group leader and Headteacher will decide appropriate adult:child ratio. The risk assessment will 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.

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

Exploratory visit

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory 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 pupils

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. Most visits will have a trained first-aider in the group. 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.

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:

- sex, age and ability of group
- special needs pupils
- nature of activities
- experience of adults in offsite supervision
- duration and nature of the journey
- type of any accommodation
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency.

As general guidelines, the following ratio of adults to children should be used:

Early Years, visits off-site may be as low as:	1:2
Key Stage One, visits off-site on foot:	1:8
Key Stage One, visits off site involving public transport:	1:6
Key Stage Two, visits off-site on foot:	1:10
Key Stage Two, visits off-site involving public transport:	1:8

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 may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the pupil group. Each parent will have a current Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure (DBS) or a List 99.

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. 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. 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 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.

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
- 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 seatbelts and stay seated while travelling on transport;
- make sure bags do not block aisles on the transport
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- never distract or disturb the driver;
- stay clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport;
- Cross roads to get to the transport using the Green Cross Code
- if a pupil feels unwell while travelling, a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group should be told

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

The Headteacher 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 should 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 be 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 (residential)
- visit's objectives
- details of the activities planned
- clothing and equipment to be taken
- money to be taken

Residential visits

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the pupils - we will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group
- access by staff to student rooms must be available at all times
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults
- ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions / exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key personnel
- security arrangements - where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors
- ensure that locks / shutters etc. work on all the rooms used by the group
- storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables
- adequate lighting
- provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs;
- safety in rooms
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

Swimming

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group.

Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit, will **not** be allowed for St Mary's children.

Farm visits

St Mary's recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm will be very carefully planned, and the risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections.

The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare; and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas. An exploratory visit should be carried out.

