

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Overview

At Orsett CE Primary School we acknowledge the great value of Educational Visits in broadening and enhancing both the learning and social experience of pupils. This policy follows advice from Thurrock Local Authority. Under statutory guidance which came into effect on 1st March 2004, all schools are required to have a named Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC), who will ensure that the planning and supervision of all visits and adventurous activities meet the DfE Requirements and LA guidelines.

The EVC at Orsett CE Primary School is Roy Meleady.

All staff are required to complete an on line risk assessment and submit it to the EVC for approval prior to taking children on a school trip.

All Visit Leaders are required to read the schools policy and follow Local Authority procedures for arranging an out of school visit.

Approval for Visits

All matters regarding each visit outside school – feasibility, planning, safety, organisation etc – will require the prior approval of the EVC.

Approval of 'normal' day visits is at the discretion of the EVC and Headteacher. However, visits that are either:

√ overseas

√ residential or

√ involving an adventurous activity (as defined in Section Y of the booklet)

will require the additional approval of the LA (Form EV2 online through EVOLVE). The Governing Body will also need to be informed about these visits prior to a commitment being made.

If an external provider or tour operator is being used, the provider needs to be approved by the Local Authority Outdoor Education Advisor.

Competence to Lead

Any member of staff leading a visit will need to have their 'competence to lead' assessed before approval for the visit is given. For the majority of visits this will be assessed by the EVC. In assessing competence to lead, the EVC will take account of the leaders experience and professional training. In the case of the leading (i.e. instructing) of adventurous activities the assessment is undertaken by the Local Authority.

Reasons for Visits

It is essential that all visits have sound and clearly stated educational aims. Trips 'for the sake of it' will not receive approval.

Assessment of Risk

'Risk assessment' is a careful examination of what could cause harm to pupils, staff or others, together with an identification of the control measures necessary in order to reduce risks to a level which, in the professional judgement of the assessor, is deemed to be acceptable (i.e. low).

In considering risk, there are 3 levels of which visit leaders should be mindful:

√ Generic Risks – normal risks attached to any activity out of school. These will be covered by careful completion of the 'Educational Visits Checklist'.

√ Event Specific Risk – any significant hazard or risk relating to the specific activity and outside the scope of item 1 above. These should be added to the risk assessment attached to evolve electronic form.

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- √ Ongoing Risk – the monitoring of risks throughout the actual visit as circumstances change.

Plan B

Despite the most detailed and detailed pre-visit planning, things can go wrong on the day, eg parent helper is unavailable, member of staff is ill, transport fails to arrive, museum have lost booking, etc. To avoid having to make important decisions under pressure, it is important that some advanced thinking is done to cater for any foreseeable eventuality. This takes the form of **Plan B**.

Staffing Ratios

A professional judgement must be made by the Visit Leader, Headteacher and Deputy as to the appropriate ratio for each visit.

This will be determined by:

- √ type, duration and level of activity
- √ needs of individuals within the group (SEN)
- √ experience and competence of staff and accompanying adults
- √ nature of the venue
- √ weather conditions at the time of year
- √ nature of transport involved

Supervision

Pupils must be supervised throughout all visits. However, there are circumstances when they might be unaccompanied by an adult (remote supervision). The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on risk assessment and must take into account factors such as:

- √ prior experience of pupils
- √ age of pupils
- √ responsibility of pupils
- √ competence/experience of staff
- √ environment/venue

Role of Supervising Parents

Supervising parents must be fully briefed on the programme, venue, activities, supervision arrangements and their responsibilities. They must also be given a written list of the pupils in their immediate care, and a contact number, in case groups are split.

First Aid

The level of first aid provision should be based on risk assessment. On all visits there should be a member of staff who has a good working knowledge of first aid. The Appointed Person First Aid Certificate is the minimum requirement for residential visits.

First aid kits are available from the school office; if the visit involves the party splitting up by any distance, a kit should be taken for each group.

Transport

Travel arrangements should be included in the risk assessment. If public transport is to be used, all pupils and supervisors must be fully briefed as to procedures on platforms, at bus stops, on busy streets etc.

If travel is by coach or minibus, all pupils must wear a seat belt. Staff must ensure that pupils comply with this rule; pupils may also be asked to check the seat belt of their neighbour. If a minibus is being borrowed or hired, the driver must have passed the LBWF test for the driving of council vehicles or the equivalent Community Transport test.

If any pupils are to travel by car, the driver must have a shown MOT and comprehensive insurance documents to the schools office. This is also relevant to sports fixtures, and applies to both staff and parents' cars.

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Water 'Margin' Activities

Where pupils might participate in learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along a riverbank or seashore, collecting samples in ponds or streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow water, then the guidance contained in DfE 'Group Safety at Water Margins' is relevant. All staff, including parents, should be provided with a copy of this guidance prior to the visit. A copy of this can be obtained from the EVC.

Educational Visits Checklist

This checklist is an essential part of the risk management process and is applicable for all visits. It may be photocopied from the booklet.

Seeking Parental Consent

Parents should be made fully aware of any likely risks of the visit and their management, so they may consent or refuse on a fully informed basis (known as 'Acknowledgement of Risk').

The letter to parents should therefore give full detail of the visit, the reason for the visit (educational aims), supervision arrangements and the transport arrangements. Ensure that detail of other incidental activities is included, together with Plan B if appropriate. The letter should also state the cost of the visit per child.

The reply slip should read:-

"I give permission for my child _____ to take part in I have read and understand the information about the visit. I enclose my voluntary contribution."

In the case of sports fixtures, the reply slip should read:-

"My child _____ is able to play in the match (at) on
I have read and understand the information in the letter, and give permission for my child to take part."

Before a Visit

- ✓ Fill in the school's preliminary form at least 6 weeks in advance. Copies should go to the office and EVC.
- ✓ In the case of residential, overseas, or adventurous activities, complete relevant forms as detailed in 'Approval for Visits' above.

If approved:-

- ✓ Book the Visit and complete a coach booking form
- ✓ Book Transport
- ✓ Send a letter home
- ✓ Complete Educational Visit Checklist and copy to EVC

On the Day of the Visit

Be sure to:-

- ✓ Collect first aid kit(s)
- ✓ Collect a sick bucket if appropriate
- ✓ Send pupils for asthma inhalers
- ✓ Brief supervising parents
- ✓ Give supervising parents their lists of pupils
- ✓ Ensure that a minimum of one mobile phone is working, and that the office has the number(s)
- ✓ Count pupils

During the course of the visit, pupils should be counted regularly as appropriate, and always when changing locations. Always 'double-count'.

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The Visit Leader of the visit is responsible for telephoning school when they arrive at their destination and as they leave their destination. If it is a residential trip then the Visit Leader should be in contact with the school daily. The adults' mobile phone(s) should be switched on during the entire outbound and homeward journey.

After the Visit

It is important that after each visit a proper debrief takes place. This should take place within a week of the visit date, and should involve the Visit Leader, accompanying staff and, if appropriate, the supervising parents. The purpose of the debrief is to identify what went well and what could have been done better, in order to inform future planning.

Agreed by the staff team:

Agreed by the governors:

Date for review: