



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

At Hilldene Primary School we acknowledge the great value of Educational Visits in broadening and enhancing both the learning and social experience of pupils.

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 DfES Requirements and LA guidelines. Our school's EVC is our Deputy Head teacher, Mrs Georgina Delmonte.

The role of the EVC is detailed in Section 2 of the publication 'London Borough of Havering, Educational Visits Policy and Guidance', a copy of which is in the Deputy Head teacher's room. This has been compiled by the LA's Educational Visits Adviser.

All Visit Leaders are required to read the booklet in conjunction with this policy. All forms referred to in this policy are available from the EVC, or may be photocopied from the booklet.

Approval for Visits

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

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

- overseas
- residential or
- involving an adventurous activity (as defined in Section 25 of the booklet)

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, they must complete the detailed Form EV4 at the time of the provisional booking. The procedures to be followed in this case are outlined in Section 27 of the booklet.

Competence to Lead

A 'competence to lead' risk assessment must be undertaken, in relation to the member of staff proposing to take responsibility as leader, before approval for an educational 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 factors stated in Section 6.2 of the booklet. In the case of the leading (ie instructing) of adventurous activities the assessment is undertaken by the LA Adviser by means of Form EV3, using the procedures and criteria in Section 26 of the booklet.

Reasons for Visits

It is essential that all visits have sound and clearly stated educational aims. Visits '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 (ie. 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 recorded on Form EV5.
- Ongoing Risk – the monitoring of risks throughout the actual visit as circumstances change.

Further detail on risk assessment will be found in Section 7 of the booklet.

Plan B

Despite the most detailed and thorough pre-visit planning, things can go wrong on the day, eg a 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 be shown the completed Form EV5.

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 (name); 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 LBH test for the driving of council vehicles or the equivalent Community Transport test.

If any pupils are to travel by car, the driver must complete Form EV6. This is also relevant to sports fixtures, and applies to both staff and parents' cars. A new form must be completed every academic year.

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 DfES '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 is in Mr Robson's room.

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 the Visit

- 1a) Fill in the school's preliminary form at least 2 months in advance. Copies should go to the office and EVC.
- 1b) In the case of residential, overseas, or adventurous activities, complete relevant forms as detailed in 'Approval for Visits' above.

If approved:-

- 2) Complete Form EV5
- 3) Book Visit
- 4) Book Transport
- 5) Send letter home
- 6) Complete Educational Visit Checklist and copy to EVC

On the Day of the Visit

Be sure to:-

- Collect first aid kit(s)
- Collect 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'.

The mobile phone(s) should be switched on during the entire 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.

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