



Out of School Visits Policy and Procedures (part of our Safeguarding Children policies)

1 Introduction

1.1 Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The Governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.

1.2 We believe that school visits are an essential resource for the teaching of the School curriculum. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and school visits are one aspect of this. Each class secular teacher will aim to take their class on at least one visit each term. Each class Kodesh teacher will aim to take their class on at least one visit per year.

1.3 In this policy, we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits, we seek to make our visits available to all pupils and wherever possible, to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

1.4 There are bracketed references in this policy to LA (local authority) procedures. These will apply in school following a successful application to become a state school.

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;
- promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

These visits begin with short excursions into the local area in the Early Years, and progress to a residential experience towards the end of Key Stage 2.

3 Curriculum links

3.1 For each subject in the curriculum, there is a corresponding programme of activities, which includes visits to the school by specialists. All these activities are in line with guidance published by the LA. Examples of this programme of activities could include:

- English – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;
- Science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens and museums;
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
- History – castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums;
- Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails;
- Art and Design – art gallery visits, use of the locality;

- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches;
- Music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, local schools' orchestra, concerts for parents to hear;
- Design and Technology – visits to local factories or design centres;
- ICT – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools, etc;
- Kodesh (Jewish Studies) – visits to synagogues, visits by local Rabbonim (rabbis), sofer (scribe) etc
- PSHE and Citizenship – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

4 Residential activities

4.1 Children in Year 5 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is in school time and linked to the National Curriculum. We make a charge for this visit. Parents with financial difficulties can apply to the Treasurer for a reduced charge.

4.2 The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work. We undertake this visit only with the written agreement of the Local Authority. We provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

5 How visits may be authorised

5.1 The headteacher will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school.

5.2 The school's educational visits coordinator, who may be the Headteacher, will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

S/he will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- support the Headteacher and Governing Body in their decisions on approval;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks, and that the letter from our coach company (see 6.5) assures us that their drivers, too, have had police checks;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure that there are regular generic assessments of the risks (e.g. road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (e.g. a swimming facility).

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the school and the LA (and available from the school office). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LA's instructions.

5.3 Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the Headteacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.

5.4 Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the Headteacher will seek the approval of the Governing Body and the Local Authority before permitting the activity to take place.

5.5 It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us to adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

6 Risk assessment

6.1 A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

6.2 Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. S/he should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. S/he will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve. The LA will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

6.3 It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the Visit Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

6.4 An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

- 1 adult to between 10 and 15 pupils in Years 4 to 6;
- 1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 3;
- 1 adult to 3 pupils in Early Years.

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

6.5 A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use on a regular basis has provided us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures.

6.7 A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the Headteacher, the Governing Body, (the LA), our educational visits coordinator, and all adults supervising the trip.

7 Transport

7.1 The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments that the school has opted to pay for;
- preliminary visit.

7.2 Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

7.3 Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and that each driver, if driving without an accompanying member of school staff, has been subject to the normal police checks (see 5.2).

7.4 We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts.

8 Communication with parents

8.1 The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit, three weeks beforehand. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities. Verbal or telephone permission is not sufficient.

8.2 Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions with a limited subsidy from the parent-teacher association. This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

8.3 No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits. Parents with financial difficulties can apply to the Treasurer for a reduced charge.

8.4 The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Headteacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

9 Further health and safety considerations

9.1 All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day, the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

9.2 Before a party leaves school, the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity.

9.3 The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity, the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

9.4 Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the Headteacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

9.5 More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements can be obtained from the Local Authority's Off-Site & Hazardous Activities File held in the school office.

10 Group leaders' planning

10.1 Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:

- 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide' (DfES 1998) and its supplements;
- 'A Handbook for Group Leaders' (DfES 2002)
- 'Group Safety at Water Margins' (DfES 2002)

These publications are all kept in the school office in the school visits file.

They must consult the Local Authority's documentation detailing procedures and requirements, including guidance on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation, and must draw up a Visit Plan which records in writing (including standard forms, where appropriate) the arrangements that have been made.

11 Visit Plan

11.1 The Visit Plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

- risk assessment (Model forms 3 and 4 in the school visits file);
- report on preliminary visit (standard form available in the school visits file);
- applications for approval of visit (Model Form 1 in the school visits file);
- HT confirmation for visit to go ahead (Model Form 2 in the school visits file)
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit (Model forms 7 and 8 available in the school visits file);
- travel schedule;
- accommodation plan (if applicable);
- full plan of activities;
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group;

- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;
- guidance for party leaders;
- guidance for the emergency contact and Headteacher;
- medical questionnaire returns (standard form 7 available in the school visits file);
- first-aid boxes.

12 Planning visit checklist

When organising a visit, the visit leader should:

- Ensure that the safety of the children is the first priority
- Ensure that all adults in their charge expect children not to take any risks, to behave appropriately and to follow instructions at all times.
- Visit the proposed venue if at all possible, which will enable them to plan more effectively and check the availability of essentials e.g. toilets, eating areas etc.
- Ensure that they have completed a risk assessment with the Health and Safety co-ordinator.
- Provide a full costing for the educational visit to determine the level of payment/voluntary contribution that will be needed.
- Seek permission from the Headteacher for the educational visit, as he/she has ultimate and final responsibility for the children within the school (whether he/she is present on the educational visit or not).
- Organise for a coach or other transport to be booked, via the office, well in advance (at least a month before the educational visit). It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the coach or other transport has been booked. It is the office's job to book the coach or other transport.
- At least three weeks before the educational visit, a letter should be sent to parents, including all relevant details, venue, subject, justification, times, parental contribution, clothing and money for children to bring. The letter should include the following sentence:
- *"A contribution of £__ per child is required to cover the cost of the educational visit. Whilst this is a voluntary contribution, it should be stressed that if all parents involved do not contribute this sum, the activity may not take place for any of the children."* THIS WORDING WILL BECOME APPLICABLE ONCE WE TRANSFER TO STATE SCHOOL STATUS.
- Always seek parental permission in the form of written permission using a standard form before going on a visit. Verbal or telephone permission is not sufficient.
- Remind children of the maximum amount of money (if allowed) to bring for souvenirs, possibly include this in the letter to parents.
- Money brought in by parents for the cost of the educational visit should be sent to the office in an envelope with the child's name clearly marked. It is the office's responsibility to ensure and verify that a record is kept of parental permission slips returned and of money brought in by the children, and to ensure that all the children have permission and have contributed to the educational visit. It is also the office's responsibility to receive and collate permission slips and to collect in, keep a record of and bank all money.
- Ensure there is at least one adult for every ten children for Key Stage 2, one adult for every six children in Key Stage 1, and one adult for every three children in the Foundation Stage.

- ❑ Remind parent volunteers that they are required to comply fully with the instructions of the group leader at all times.
- ❑ Check parent volunteers know what they are doing, have a full understanding of their role and responsibilities, are briefed on the possible hazards and contingency plans for the trip.
- ❑ Ensure the parent volunteers have signed the parent volunteer form.
- ❑ Ensure children not going on visits are set appropriate work to do and prior arrangements are made.
- ❑ Ensure the method of transport chosen is safe and reliable. All minibuses and coaches are to have properly working seatbelts. Insurance and registration of companies booked for transport must be verified before confirming bookings. Drivers should have CRB checks.
- ❑ Prepare pupils for the educational visit by explaining the expected standards of behaviour and the importance of following any rules.
- ❑ Ensure a first aid box plus 'sick bags' are always taken on visits.
- ❑ Ensure that children always wear school uniform and the correct shoes, where appropriate.
- ❑ Take a complete summary class list with children's medical requirements and emergency contact numbers. A copy of each child's parental permission form is to be taken on the visit; the original is to remain in school. It is the responsibility of the office to compile the class list with medical requirements and emergency contact numbers.
- ❑ Ensure a suitable eating environment for the children.
- ❑ Ensure the Headteacher and/or Deputy have a contact phone number for the visit leader, and the visit leader has contact phone numbers for the Headteacher and Deputy.
- ❑ Ensure that the visit leader has mobile contact numbers of all the staff and adult volunteers on the trip.

13. Just before visit leader checklist

Have you got:

1. Children's medical records
2. All the permission slips
3. All the emergency contact numbers
4. The first aid kit
5. A mobile phone for emergency usage
6. Mobile phone numbers of all other adults participating in the trip.
7. Do all the adults know their duties?

After

1. Thank all the children, parents and helpers. Notes
2. Write a thank you to the venue (if applicable). Notes
3. Produce display photos and work (if applicable) Notes
4. Write up a visit evaluation (Model Form 5 in the school visits file).

14. CHECKLIST OF THE MAIN PRECAUTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS TO FARMS, OR INVOLVING ANIMALS

Preparation for the visit:

1. Ensure that those leading the educational visit are familiar with their own school/LEA guidelines on educational visits.
2. Check that the farm is well managed, e.g. has a good reputation for high standards and stock welfare, that the grounds and public areas are as clean as possible and that suitable First Aid arrangements are made. Animals should not have access to any outdoor picnic areas. A prior visit to the farm by a member of staff will be useful.
3. Check that the farm has suitable washing facilities, appropriately signposted, with running water (preferably hot and cold), soap and disposable towels or hot air hand dryer(s). Any drinking water taps should be clearly labelled in a suitable area.
4. Ensure suitable precautions are in place where appropriate e.g. clear signs or restricted access in areas such as near slurry pits or where sick animals are isolated.
5. Female visitors to farms should be warned that there is a possible risk of diseases being transmitted to pregnant women during lambing time.
6. Inform parents/children of the advantages of wearing footwear that can be easily cleaned. Wellington boots are ideal footwear, but any closed shoe is preferable to open footwear.
7. Explain that visitors should not eat or drink anything, including chewing gum etc. while touring the farm, because of the risk of infection and the risk of contact with toxic pesticides and other chemicals.

During the visit:

1. If visitors are in contact with, or feeding, farm animals, they should not place their faces against the animals or put their hands in their own mouths afterwards.
2. Before contact with animals, ensure cuts and grazes (especially on hands) are covered with waterproof plasters. After contact with animals and particularly before eating and drinking, ensure all visitors wash and dry their hands thoroughly. If young children are in the group, hand washing will need to be supervised.

15. Missing child

If a child goes missing from an outing where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the school ensures this procedure is followed:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.
- The Headteacher is informed. If s/he is not on the outing s/he makes his/her way to the venue (if possible) to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the school.
- The Headteacher contacts the child's parent(s) who make(s) their way to the school or outing venue as agreed with the Headteacher.

- The staff contact the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The Headteacher contacts the Chair of Governors who comes to the school as soon as possible.

The investigation:

- The Chairperson of the Governors carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.
- The outing leader writes an incident report detailing:
 - the date and time of the report;
 - which staff/ children were in the group/outing;
 - when the child was last seen in the group/outing;
 - what has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
 - the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Social Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded in the incident book; the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

15 Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the Governing Body and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Sara Harris (Headteacher)

Signed: *Sara J. Harris* (Headteacher) *Eddy Breuer-Weil* (Chair of Governors)

Date: June 2007