

Educational Visits and Activities Policy

1 Aim

The aim of this policy is to sustain and promote a broad and balanced range of off-site educational visits from Holy souls Catholic Primary School, whilst ensuring safe practice and competent supervision.

2 Background Information

Benefits to providing educational visits

Ofsted's key finding from its most recent report on 'Learning Outside the Classroom' (Oct 2008) states that when educational visits are planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributes significantly to raising standards and improving pupils' or young people's personal, social and emotional development.

Benefits from educational visits include:

- Raising achievement through organised, powerful experiences and opportunities.
- Participating in challenging physical activity and encouraging a healthy lifestyle.
- Raising self-esteem, confidence and independence.
- Appreciating landscape diversity through exploring natural environments.
- Experiencing a range of built environments, extending their cultural awareness and widening horizons.
- Being involved in teamwork and problem-solving through residential experiences.
- Engaging pupils or young people and making learning 'real' and relevant.
- Supporting national agendas and initiatives.

Definition of an educational visit:

Any organised, off-site visit involving pupils or young people that requires the permission and approval from the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC), Head Teacher and the parents/carers of the pupils attending. A visit may take place at any time during the academic year to support the children's learning.

Joint educational visits:

Joint visits by establishments are entirely acceptable and offer many educational benefits. A Birmingham City Council establishment's involvement in the organisation of such a visit may vary in terms of contribution to planning, selection of pupils or allocation of accompanying staff, however full application of approval and record keeping procedures must be made by each establishment's EVC regardless of the number of pupils attending. The Visit Leader, on joint visits, must be specifically known and approved by the EVC/Head Teacher/Senior Management from each participating establishment, and each establishment must be satisfied, approve and record all the agreed arrangements.

Key points for all visits:

- All educational visits must have clearly identified aims and objectives.
- All educational visits must have an approved, competent Visit Leader who is employed by Birmingham City Council (supply cannot be a Visit Leader, unless long-term, contracted supply)
- Approval for an educational visit and for the designated, competent Visit Leader role is made by the Head Teacher/EVC.
- All visits must provide evidence of a prepared written risk assessment.
- Visit Leaders must carry copies of all supporting documentation on the visit, e.g. parent/carer and school emergency contact details, staff/volunteer emergency contact details, itinerary, names and group details.
- EVCs must retain and record all supporting documentation centrally.
- Parents must be fully informed of all arrangements.
- Well planned visits lead to successful visits.

Inclusion and entitlement

Educational visits are an integral part of the curriculum. All pupils are entitled to participate irrespective of social background, culture, race, gender or differences in ability and disabilities.

Each pupil has an entitlement to experience:

- Effective learning opportunities
- Success in learning
- Achieving as high a standard as possible
- A residential experience.

Teachers will set appropriate learning challenges, responding to pupils' diverse learning needs. Holy Souls Catholic Primary School will make provision, with well planned reasonable adjustments made to support pupils, enabling them, where possible, to participate effectively in educational visits.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

Head Teacher/Senior Manager:

- Must be consulted on any educational visit being organised and kept informed of arrangements, as necessary.
- Ensures that the EVC is aware of their duties and that a clear line of responsibility is established.
- Must have evidence of recent EVC training if they sign an approval form for a visit.
- Ensures that the EVC is competent, trained and is revalidated/accredited through LA top-up courses every three years, as a minimum.
- Makes sure that governors are kept informed of the nature and progress/success of educational visits.
- Ensures adequate staff INSET, Visit Leader training, First Aid and CPD for Educational Visits.
- Ensures that medical and personal/address details for all pupils/parents/carers are updated yearly.

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- Considers insurance matters.
- Ensures the Birmingham City Council policy for transporting children in cars is adhered to, or parents are informed when they have responsibility for transporting their own children to and from venues.

Educational Visits Co-ordinator:

- Promotes and ‘champions’ educational visits from Holy souls Catholic Primary School and takes lead in policy development, monitoring, INSET and other training.
- Approves all visits and notifies the LA for ‘Adventurous Activities’.
- Ensures that the approval of educational visits includes approving the competency of the Visit Leader and all accompanying staff.
- Ensures the Visit Leader is a BCC employee.
- Ensures compliance with requirements of Birmingham’s Policy and Guidance document for ‘Learning Outside the Classroom’.
- Ensures approval, notification forms, checklists and ‘Provider Questionnaires’ are completed appropriately.
- Supports and advises colleagues in planning visits.
- Ensures that appropriate risk assessments are completed and appropriate control measures are in place, reducing risk to an acceptable level.
- Ensures a collective discussion regarding the risk assessment takes place prior to the visit, resulting in ownership of the risk assessment by the Visit Leader and accompanying staff.
- Ensures parents are kept fully informed of visit arrangements and details.
- Ensures accident and emergency procedures are in place and understood by all staff. Records of accidents and near misses are held by the EVC.
- Records of all visits are held by the EVC, including a list of participants, risk assessment, itinerary and programme information.
- Ensures appropriate staff records are kept – car insurance with business use if transporting children in own cars.
- Ensures regular reviews of generic risk assessment.
- Ensures the appropriate member of staff writes and fully informs parents/carers regarding regular and repeated activities that are either on or off-site (e.g. sporting fixtures).
- Ensures all Visit Leaders are competent.

Visit Leader, Teaching and Support Staff:

- Ensure that there are clear educational aims for the visit.
- Ensure that parents are informed when they have responsibility for transporting their own children to and from venues when transport is not provided.
- Have an up to date knowledge of the Educational Visits Policy and procedures.
- Understand the importance of collective discussion when considering the risk assessment process.
- Must have a clear understanding of accident/emergency procedures.
- Must carry emergency contact details for parents/carers including the base contact number/out of hours numbers and who to contact. The list must include names, addresses and phone numbers of each child and adult. Also special needs (medical, behaviour, SEN, EAL and dietary requirements) and groups that the children will be in.

- Ensure parents are kept fully informed of visit arrangements, details and itinerary.
- Plan the trip carefully and carries out a risk assessment prior to the trip which is given to the EVC a week before the trip.
- Brief the children at all stages of the visit, they should be part of the ongoing risk assessment.
- The Visit Leader is responsible for the whole group and must ensure all relevant pupil medical and consent information, risk assessment including a Plan B, itinerary details, emergency contact details and emergency phone numbers are taken on the trip.
- The Visit Leader must ensure adequate first aid kits are taken, along with individual children's medical equipment.
- Transport arrangements for drop offs and pick ups must be carefully considered and agreed prior to leaving school.

4 Notes on 'Risk Management' and the planning and preparation for Educational Visits

Thorough preparation for a visit must be undertaken. The EVC and the Head Teacher should be consulted regarding the arrangements, nature and purpose of the visit. The visit should have clear educational aims. The following must be addressed in further planning:

- Supervision, provider checks, content of the day's activities, first aid, transport – all to be organised in advance.
- Parents to be advised of details of any visit and kept fully informed.
- All necessary consent /permission slips must be obtained in advance.
- Charged mobile phones to be taken – network coverage to be checked in advance, where possible.
- An emergency Plan B to be put into place, detailing alternative arrangements (perhaps due to illness, transport issues, weather etc).
- Planning support, notification forms, provider questionnaire, checklists and generic risk assessments can be accessed through resources and information on the Outdoor Learning Service website pages 'Planning Ed Visits' and EVC pages. Birmingham's Policy and Guidance document 'Learning Outside The Classroom' is located on the EVC page and is broken down into sections, which are all downloadable. The web address is www.outdoorlearningbham.org.uk

5 How to undertake a risk assessment and who to submit it to

In addition to the above planning, a written Risk Assessment (a statutory requirement) must be made for any proposed educational off-site visit. It should:

- Identify any significant risks which pupils or young people, staff and helpers may be exposed to and outline any control measures that will be put in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level.
- Be passed on to the EVC for consultation and approval.
- During the visit, be kept with the Emergency Contact List and other planning and risk management documentation.
- Check if the venue and/or provider have their own risk assessments.
- Ensure a suitable 'Collective Discussion' takes place regarding the 'risk assessment' prior to the visit, ensuring ownership of the 'risk assessment' by the Visit Leader and all accompanying staff. Any 'Generic' risk assessments

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must be changed, adapted or modified to suit the specific considerations and needs of the group during this discussion/meeting.

The seven main considerations in undertaking risk assessments are:

- Staffing (ratios and competency – see guidance)
- Type of Group
- Equipment
- Venue/Activities
- Travel
- Emergency Procedures
- Assembly/Dispersal

More detailed prompts under each consideration, to help in undertaking risk assessments, may be obtained from the EVC. **With more hazardous or unusual visits, close contact between school/establishment and the venue/provider is an important safeguard. A preliminary staff visit should be made if necessary. Seek advice of Head Teacher/Senior Manager/ EVC.**

Risk Assessments must be passed on to the EVC/ Head Teacher/Senior Manager at least five days in advance of the trip (The LA will require at least one month's notification for Adventurous Activities).

During the visit, in addition to measures documented on the Risk Assessment, staff should – ensure driver has school/establishment contact details, carry a class list/register. This is to be called before starting a trip and departing from any visit. In addition, a head count should be done. Ensure adequate supervision and check children are always given suitable briefings in their group with their group leader and staff take regular head counts. Be prepared to make 'ongoing' professional judgments related to assessment of risks.