

HASBURY C.E. (V.C.) PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR OFFSITE EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND JOURNEYS

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Aims

Offsite education, visits and journeys:

- enrich the curriculum by –
 - placing learning in a wider context
 - enhancing and reinforcing previous learning
 - enriching specific national curriculum requirements
 - promoting a beneficial use of leisure time through an awareness of community opportunities locally and, possibly further afield
 - contributing to the delivery of cross-curricular issues
 - encouraging a respect for and care of the environment and the community.

- promote the development of independent learning by –
 - the use of a broad range of teaching and learning styles
 - direct experience by the pupils
 - broadening personal horizons
 - learning the process of planning, carrying out and evaluating.

- contribute to the development of personal relationships between pupils, their peers and their teachers.

- promote well-being through –
 - challenge, achievement and enjoyment
 - broadening leisure time horizons
 - contributing to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle
 - contributing to community cohesion.

Context

The use of offsite education, visits and journeys should take place in a context which ensures:

- the pupils' entitlement to equality of access and opportunity to:
 - curriculum events as relevant to the age group/s concerned

- extra-curricular options according to the ability to cover any charges and assuming an acceptable level of behaviour by the pupils involved.
- a safe environment which:
- provides challenge and responsibility whilst eliminating danger
 - is based on a sound risk assessment
 - is led by appropriately experienced (and, where relevant, qualified) staff
 - is offered within guidelines which establish a high, national concern for health and safety.
- that all such events are:
- well-managed and organised;
 - financially secure;
 - within statutory requirements and accepted codes of practice;
 - appropriately insured;
 - with all directly or indirectly involved being fully informed.

The school's adopted guidelines provide detailed support in the organisation of off-site education, visits and journeys.

Dudley M.B.C. has created the 'Dudley Offsite Education Visit and Journeys Service' which provides a 24 hour 7 days a week service to Dudley Council.

Their mission is: -

"To support an active, vibrant and safe programme of offsite educational visits and journeys for Dudley young people."

Their functions are: -

- to comply with legal responsibilities
- to build upon best safe practice
- to reduce workload and bureaucracy
- to provide support, training and information

Dudley Council Policy Statement

"High quality, safe and secure educational off-site visits are an essential part of any young person's time at school. Dudley Council is committed to ensuring that pupils, parents, staff and governors are fully aware of the law and best practice, and that the Council has in place the necessary policies, procedures, guidance and advice to support staff in schools and other settings."

The Purpose and Value of Educational Visits.

- to raise achievement by boosting self-esteem and motivation
- to develop key skills
- to develop social education and citizenship
- to promote education for sustainable development
- to promote health and fitness.

The School Curriculum and the National Curriculum

Purpose, aims and values

- building pupils' strengths, interests and experiences and developing confidence to learn and work independently and collaboratively
- giving pupils the opportunity to become creative, innovative, enterprising and capable of leadership
- developing their physical skills and encouraging pupils to recognise the importance of pursuing a healthy lifestyle and keeping themselves and others safe
- developing pupils integrity and autonomy
- developing pupils' awareness and understanding of the environments in which they live
- helping pupils form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships
- enabling pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and cope with change and adversity

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities

DfES "Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers" 2001 applies to all educational visits.

The employer retains overall responsibility for health, safety and welfare. As a VC school the employer is the LA.

LA's may delegate tasks to schools.

Employees have significant responsibilities.

Key Roles:

- Government and the Courts
- Employer and the LA
- Outdoor Educational Advisor (OEA)
- Governing body
- Headteacher or centre leader
- Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)
- Group Leader

- Deputy Group Leader
- Teacher or Assistant
- Parent or Carer
- Pupil/Young person

The Role of the Group Leader

The **group leader** has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit including direct responsibility for the pupils' health, safety and welfare.

The **group leader** must:

- be approved to carry out the visit, suitably competent and knowledgeable about the school and dfes and la policies and procedures
- plan and prepare for the visit and assess the risks
- define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and pupils and ensure effective supervision of what they do
- complete the risk assessment on "offsite mag".

Best practice is set within a context of:

- pupils entitlement to equality of access and opportunity (disability discrimination act)
- a safe environment
- good management and organisation
- financial security
- statutory requirements and accepted codes of practice
- appropriate insurance
- all directly or indirectly involved being fully informed

Key Issues:

➤ **Group Leader Planning and Risk Assessment**

- supervision and competences
- preparing pupils, especially those with additional needs
- communicating with parents and gaining consent
- planning transport and use of minibuses and private cars
- insurance
- types of visit (coastal, swimming, farm, and residential)
- visits abroad
- emergency Procedures and media management

The Role of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

- ensure educational visits meet the employer's and school's requirements
- support the Head Teacher and Governors with approval and other decisions
- assess competence of prospective leaders and staff

“The EVC may act on the LA’s behalf, if competent to do so, and arrange for the assessment of staffs competence to lead, manage, and control pupils on an educational visit.”

- ensure risk assessments meet requirements
- organise training and induction
- ensure parents are informed and give consent
- organise emergency arrangements
- keep records of visits, accident or incident reports
- review systems and monitor practice

The Tasks of the EVC

At Hasbury the EVC is the head Teacher, Ms P Rogers.

The EVC is required to:

- implement effective monitoring procedures communicate within school, with the LEA and with parents and pupils
- identify and meet training needs
- develop effective emergency procedures
- ensure accident procedures are in place
- review systems and practice

Competence of the EVC

“The member of school staff designated as the EVC should be specifically competent. The level of competence required will relate to the size of the school and the types of the educational visits proposed.”

What the “Competent” EVC Needs to know

- the school and LA procedures for approving visits
- the school procedures for making contracts with external providers
- the school procedures for financial accounting
- the school procedures for keeping parents informed
- good local knowledge
- a good knowledge base
- where and when to get help

The LA, Governors and Headteacher must have realistic expectations of the EVC.

Monitoring procedures

Monitoring through approval procedures:

- Forms
- Categories
- Checklists
- Offsite mag
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Informing and receiving comment from the Head and Governors

Monitoring specific programmes:

- Observation, formal and informal
- Reports and feedback
- Leading to targeted support

Responding to comments from the LA

Acting on comments from OFSTED

Review

This Offsite Educational Visits and Journeys Policy will be reviewed annually, as per plan, by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator in consultation with the Head Teacher and Governing Body.

Appendices

- A The Legal Framework
- B Approval for visits
- C Role of the LEA
- D Role of the Governing Body
- E Role of the Head Teacher
- F Role of the Group Leader
- G Role of the Teacher
- H Role of the Adult Volunteers
- I Responsibilities of Pupils
- J Parents

Appendix A The Legal Framework

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. act 1974 employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employers are also under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health

and safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. This includes participants in off-site visits. Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council is identified as the employer referred to in this document.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, made under the 1974 Act, require employers to:

- assess the risks of activities;
- introduce measures to control those risks;
- tell their employees about these measures.

Also under the Health and Safety legislation employees must:

- take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety;
- co-operate with their employers over safety matters;
- carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions;
- inform the employer of any serious risks.

These duties apply to all school visits. Teachers and other staff in charge of pupils also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

Appendix B Approval for visits

Employers should have a written procedure for arranging visits which teachers should follow. This will normally include procedures for the approval of certain types of visit. At Hasbury all visits are informally discussed with the EVC. No visit goes ahead without the EVC's approval of the risk assessment.

Although the employer is responsible for health and safety, decisions about visits are usually delegated to the head teacher. The head teacher's agreement must be obtained before a visit takes place.

Appendix C Role of the LEA

LAs have the following main roles:

- provide written guidelines for governors, head teachers and teachers including advice on risk assessment;
- assess proposals for certain types of visit;
- provide emergency telephone contact for the duration of the visit where necessary;
- ensure training needs have been addressed;
- provide access to named staff for advice;
- maintain appropriate insurance cover;
- have in place procedures to monitor and review safety during off-site and activities.

Appendix D Role of the Governing Body

Where the governing body is the employer the governors' role will be the same as that suggested for and LEA above. They should satisfy themselves that the risk assessment has been carried out, that appropriate safety measures are in place and that training needs have been addressed.

Governing bodies of all types of school should:

- ensure that the visit has a specific and stated objective.
- ensure that the head teacher/group leader shows how their plans comply with regulations and guidelines, including the school's health and safety policy document and, where applicable, the LEA's; and that the head teacher/group leader reports back after the visit;
- ensure that they are informed about less routine visits well in advance;
- assess proposals for certain types of visit, which should include visits involving an overnight stay or travel outside the UK, and submit these proposals to the LEA if appropriate.

Appendix E Role of the Head Teacher

Head teachers should ensure that visits comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the LEA or governing body and the school's own health and safety policy. Head teachers should ensure that the group leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

Head teachers should be clear about their role if taking part in the visit as a group member/supervisor. They should follow the instructions of the group leader who will have sole charge of the visit.

Head teachers should ensure that:

- adequate child protection procedures are in place
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins
- the risk assessment has been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place (offsite mag)
- training needs have been assessed by a competent person and the needs of the staff and pupils have been considered
- the group leader has experiences supervising the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- the group leader or another teacher is suitably competent to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location/centre where activity will take place
- group leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly
- non-teacher supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children
- the ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate
- the LA or governing body has approved their visit, if appropriate
- parents have signed consent forms
- arrangements have been made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the pupils
- adequate first-aid provision will be available, including a sick bucket

- the mode of travel is appropriate
- travel times out and back are known including pick-up and drop-off points;
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name
- a school contact has been nominated (this may be the head teacher) and the group leader has details
- the group leader, group supervisors and nominated school contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures
- the group leader, group supervisors and nominated school contact have the names of all the adults and pupils travelling in the group, and the contact details of parents and the teachers' and other supervisors' next of kin
- there is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home.

Appendix F Role of the Group Leader

One teacher, the group leader, should have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have regard to the health and safety of the group. The group leader should have been appointed or approved by the head teacher or the governing body. The group leader should:

- obtain the head teacher's prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place
- follow LA and/or governing body regulations, guidelines and policies
- appoint a deputy
- clearly define each group supervisor's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range
- be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity and be familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place
- be aware of child protection issues
- ensure that adequate first-aid provision will be available
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment
- review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise head teacher where adjustments may be necessary
- ensure that teachers and other supervisors are fully aware of what the proposed visit involves
- have enough information on the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed
- ensure ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group
- consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the pupils is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality
- ensure that group supervisors have details of the school contact

- ensure that group supervisors and the school contact have a copy of the emergency procedures
- ensure that the group's teachers and other supervisors have the details of pupils' special educational or medical needs which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively. This may include a separate risk assessment for special needs pupils.
- observe the guidelines set out for teachers and other adults below.

Appendix G Role of the Teacher

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the LEA or of the governing body, whether the visit takes place within normal hours or outside those hours, by agreement with the head teacher and governors.

Teachers must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances. They should:

- follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline;
- consider stopping the visit or activity, notifying the group leader, if they think the risk to the health and safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

Appendix H Role of the Adult Volunteers

Non-teacher adults on the visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit. Non-teacher adults acting as supervisors must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- not be left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment;
- follow instructions of the group leader and teacher supervisors and help with control and discipline;
- speak to the group leader or teacher supervisor if concerned about the health and safety of pupils at any time during the visit.

Appendix I 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 supervisors including those at the venue of the visit;
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly;
- if abroad be sensitive to local codes and customs;

- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the group leader or supervisor about it.

Any pupil whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curriculum aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways wherever possible.

Appendix J Parents

Parents consent to local visits by completing form <??> at the start of each school year. Less local visits, often involving transport, a specific VJ... form is issued.

Parents should be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should go on the visit. The group leader should ensure that the parents are given sufficient information in writing and are invited to any briefing sessions.

The group leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct. Parents should also be asked to agree the arrangements for sending a pupil home early and who will meet the cost.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language.

Parents will need to:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s)
- sign the consent form (VJC/ VJE)
- Give the group leader information about their child's emotional psychological and physical health which might be relevant to the visit (usually by means of the consent form).