

Stoke Park Infants



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Definition

The term 'off-site' visit is used to describe any activity that involves the children being taken out of the school grounds. This may be a short walk to the local church or a residential visit.

Different types of visits require different levels of approval.

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all pupils have access to safe, well-planned off-site visits. These visits will be conducted in accordance with DfE and Hampshire County Council guidelines.

It is recognised that organising off-site visits places additional responsibilities and duties on staff. This policy is intended to support staff in ensuring that visits are conducted in line with accepted good practice.

The schools are committed to providing a range of educational visits during the school year to enhance and extend the curriculum. Such visits provide children with valuable first hand experience and opportunities to develop their personal and social skills.

Roles and Responsibilities

- *The Headteacher*, together with the governing body, is responsible for ensuring that this policy is fully implemented. The Headteacher must approve all off-site visits.
- Where a residential visit or a hazardous pursuit is involved, governors will need to give their approval and the Local Authority must also give permission for visit to take place.
- The Headteacher and the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC), will ensure that staff qualifications for off-site activities are up to date.
- The EVC is involved in the planning and management of off-site visits, and must be satisfied that all off-site activities are being efficiently and safely organised, that supervision levels are acceptable and all aspects of planning & risk assessments are in place and appropriate.
- Class teachers will have read the relevant documentation and will plan visits in accordance with them. Additional support and advice is available from the Educational Visits Co-ordinator.
- Parents will be informed of the visit, before giving their permission. They are responsible for notifying staff of any significant issues affecting their child's welfare.
- Children will be responsible for behaving appropriately whilst off-site, since they are representing the school.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

We need to ensure that every effort is used to include all pupils in educational visits. The challenge is to make the activity accessible in some form to all who wish to participate or who are required to take part. This is irrespective of their special educational or medical need, disability, ethnic origin, sex or religion.

A child cannot be excluded from a trip for any of the above reasons. Some activities may require modification to ensure accessibility for all. If staff have concerns about a specific child, this needs to be discussed with the EVC, as discussions with the parents and the child need to be held well in advance of any planned trip.

A child should not be excluded from a visit on medical grounds unless their condition requires a higher level of supervision than would normally be expected from a parent. If this is the case all efforts should be made to include the child as long as it does not compromise their safety or that of the rest of the group.

Considerations when taking pupils off-site

When planning to undertake either a hazardous pursuit or residential visit, LA approval is required (see '*Hazardous Pursuits*' and '*Residential Visits*' section of this policy).

Points to consider are as follows:

- Purpose of the visit
- Staffing and any other adults involved (parents helpers should not be accompanied by any children other than those involved in the visit)
- Staff 'off-site' qualifications
- Children involved
- Adult/child ratio (see guidance) & current CRB checks for adult helpers in place
- Any costing/financial requirements
- Date and timings
- Meal arrangements
- Mode of travel/coach details and insurance information. If staff and parents are using their own cars then this needs to be noted and they have to have the appropriate insurance cover - recorded on County form)
- Details of intended pre-visit for risk assessment
- Draft letter to parents
- Briefing meetings/all communication to staff, parents and children concerned.

Visits and activities should have significant educational value and be suitable for the children in terms of age and ability. They should be linked to their curriculum either by preparatory or follow up lessons.

- The teacher (group leader) in overall charge of the visit must hold a recognised 'off-site' qualification if visiting a site deemed open country. These are obtained on L.A run courses.
- A pre-visit to all intended sites is compulsory and must be carried out in accordance with recognised risk assessment procedures. A written risk assessment report of the pre-visit must be given to the E.V.C/Head teacher at least one week prior to the actual visit taking place.
- Parent consent must be obtained for all the children who are involved in the visit.
- Staff need to clarify with the E.V.C/Head teacher the extent to which the costs of any visit can be met from school funds or other sources. Parents may be asked to contribute voluntarily towards the cost of a visit. If a visit is cancelled then any contributions already collected must be refunded.
- Emergency contacts must be arranged before leaving the school site. The teacher in charge of the visit must carry a mobile telephone. All adults must know the contact number for the school, each others mobile' phone numbers', and any other emergency contact numbers that are deemed necessary, for example, local hospitals or doctors.
- An up to date list of children and adults involved in the visit must have their medication available to them. Their group leader should nominate a member of staff to take charge of items such as inhalers just in case the children mislay them. First Aid Kits are also to be carried by participating teachers.

Hazardous Pursuits

Any visit which involves a hazardous pursuit must have L.A approval. The county online approval system, EVOLVE, must be accessed by the EVC (www.hampshireoutdoors.com) and an online form completed and submitted by the group leader, at least eight weeks prior to the intended visit. Staff should be aware that taking children off a recognised road and into open country constitutes a hazardous pursuit as does any activity involving water. A full list can be found in the Hazardous Pursuits file. If there is any doubt about the nature of an intended activity advice must be sought from the *County Inspector for Outdoor Education at The Castle, Winchester.*

Residential Visits

In addition to the above considerations there are additional considerations for residential visits. All residential visits (involving an overnight stay), including on site, must be approved by the LA and governing

body. As above the county online approval form (via EVOLVE) must be completed and submitted to the L.A at least eight weeks prior to the intended visit. Hazardous pursuits must be specified. A medical questionnaire is required for all children and adults participating in a residential visit. The schools will ensure that all guidelines relating to child protection and safeguarding, are strictly followed. On residential visits, the group leader must ensure that there is one teacher of each sex for mixed groups. In addition, there must be separate male and female sleeping and bathroom facilities for both pupils and adults.

Behaviour Considerations

Children who might compromise the group's safety because of their inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from visits. Whenever possible they should be given a chance to prove that they can be trusted to behave appropriately. It is therefore important that these children are identified prior to the visit and spoken to.

Parents should be informed that there is a possibility that their child/ren will be excluded and what the child/ren have to do in order to be allowed to participate. In some cases a behaviour agreement can be drawn up whereby parents agree to collect their child/ren from the visit if problems arise.

Support for teachers planning visits.

Teachers with queries should initially refer to the relevant documentation. If this does not provide the support they are seeking they must approach the *Educational Visits co-ordinator* or the Head teacher for advice. Further advice may be obtained from the *County Inspector for Outdoors Education*.

Related Documentation

HCC Off-site Activities and Educational Visits (2003)

HCC Safety in Hazardous Pursuits (1997)

HCC. Critical Incidents-Guidance for Schools (1998)

DfES A Good Practice Guide: Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (1998)

DfES Five Steps to Risk Assessment.

All of this documentation is held on the school office/staffroom. Further advice is available from the Educational Visits Co-ordinator.

Policy Monitoring and Review

The Governors will review this policy every two years. However, if new guidance or legislation is introduced the review will be moved forward. In addition should any problem occur with an off-site visit then the policy will be reviewed.

A record of all off-site visits and how they support the curriculum will be held by the *Educational Visits co-ordinator*.

The drafting or review of documentation will be delegated to appropriate members of staff prior to wider consultation and discussion.

Date approved by Governing Body: January 2023

Date of next review: January 2023