

ST. HELEN’S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL



Educational Visits Policy

Written by	Date	Ratified by	Date
C. Morris	May 2021	Governors	May 2021

To be reviewed	Annually	Every 3 Years
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Reviewed on	Reviewed by	Next review date
May 2021	A. McAuliffe	May 2024
May 2024	C. Morris	May 2027

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Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good primary practice.

Purposes

Educational Visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively teachers may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the curriculum.

Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at St Helen's Catholic Infant School.

Parental consent

In Reception, at the beginning of the child's school time at St. Helen's Catholic Infant School, all parents are asked to sign a consent form which covers the child's duration of attendance at school. The consent form may cover walking to local places or short coach trips.

If parents/carers withhold consent, without question, the pupil should not be taken on any visits which could be detrimental to their learning.

Headteacher and Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC)

The Headteacher will endeavour to ensure that:

- they have appointed a suitable group leader
- the group leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
- the group leader has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity;
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins;
- the risk benefit/assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit;
- training needs have been met;
- all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate DBS clearance;
- the governing body has approved the visit, if necessary;
- parents/carers have signed consent forms;
- arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the children;
- if necessary the mode of travel is appropriate;
- travel times out and back are known
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover;

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- they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name;
- that they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents/carers and the staff's and volunteers' next of kin.

Group Leader

One teacher, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been appointed by the Headteacher. The Group Leader should:

- appoint a deputy;
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- be suitable qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- 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 (EVOLVE);
- have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities.
- The group leader will carry a mobile phone at all times.

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit

Teachers and teaching assistants on school-led visits will be employees of the Governing Body. On occasions parents, carers and grandparents will be asked to help during the visit but no younger siblings are allowed especially those in prams.

Teachers and other adults on the visit must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would;
- follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline. Non-teaching adults should generally not have sole charge of large groups of pupils except where risks to health and safety are minimal;
- bring to the attention of the group leader any concerns e.g. if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

Responsibilities of pupils

The group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- be respectful, responsible and honest;
- not take unnecessary risks;
- follow the instructions of the leader and other adults;

Parents

The group leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit.

The group leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit. Parents are encouraged to ensure that their emergency contact details are always up to date and lists of emergency contact numbers should be taken on all trips.

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Special arrangements may be necessary for parents who cannot speak English.

Parents must:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s);
- give the group leader relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.

Planning off-site visits

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

The Head teacher is responsible for planning all off-site visits. In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the group leader, but the Head teacher must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

The organiser / group leader must agree all plans with the Head teacher.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using EVOLVE.

The risk assessment will decide the adult: child ratio for each visit. (See Guidance under 'Supervision'). The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- What are the risks?
- Who is affected by them?
- What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?
- What is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit? (See section on Supervision.)

The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- the location;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.
- Exposure to the sun should always be a consideration and parents should be alerted to any potential dangers so that they can provide their children with suitable clothing, sunscreen and water.

Exploratory visit

If it is a new visit, wherever possible, the group leader (and if possible other teachers) should undertake an exploratory visit to:

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- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;
- ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue. Exploratory visits are always helpful for newly qualified teachers and for those that wish to increase their understanding of potential risks and benefits of the trip.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. The group leader only needs a working knowledge of first aid, as their focus should remain on the majority while delegating care of the minority to others.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first-aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The Head teacher should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed.

Medical Needs

All staff should be aware of individual medical needs. Where these needs may present a potential problem for the trip, all the possibilities should be discussed with parents before the trip can take place.

All medication for our children with medical needs, such as inhalers etc., should be clearly marked with the child's name and given to the group leader or other responsible adult. Medication will be administered if and when necessary on the trip and recorded in the Administration of Medicine to Pupils book on their return.

Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit.

The factors to take into consideration include:

- special needs and pupils with disabilities;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency.

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The local authority's policy provides the latest information on recommended ratios. However, regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits and we tend to 'over compensate'.

Wherever there is more than one adult supervisor, a group leader, who has authority over the whole party, should be appointed.

Where a high adult: pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Volunteers (including parents, carers, grandparents) should ideally be well known to the school and the pupil group.

All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties.

Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a pupil.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell the supervising adults what to do if they become separated from the party.

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. The lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

Participation

Pupils should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities. Pupils whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. It is not appropriate to organise a trip that a pupil cannot take part in and this would compromise our policies on equality and special needs.

Information to pupils

It is for the group leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information. Pupils should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit / activity;
- background information about the place to be visited;
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- why safety precautions are in place;

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- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- what standard of behaviour is expected from pupils;
- who is responsible for the group;
- what to do if approached by a stranger;
- what to do if separated from the group and rendezvous procedures.

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

The Head teacher will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Both boys and girls are encouraged to participate equally in the full range of activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Communicating with Parents / Carers

Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place – ‘in loco parentis’ – and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupil’s health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in letter to parents / carers prior to a visit:

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;
- names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- visit’s objectives;
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- Safeguarding procedures including a reminder about not photographing children

Transport and pupils

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- wear your seatbelt and stay seated while travelling;
- make sure your bags do not block aisles;
- never throw things out of the transport vehicle’s windows;
- never run about while transport is moving;
- never kneel or stand on seats or otherwise impede the driver’s vision
- never distract or disturb the driver;
- stay clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport;
- if you feel unwell while travelling, tell a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group.

Emergencies

The group leader should always carry a mobile phone.

If a serious accident occurs, at least one adult should remain with child or children concerned, whilst other adults continue to supervise the rest of the children.

As soon as the situation is under control, a telephone call should be made to the school to inform the Head teacher of the situation. The school will then inform other relevant parties.

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The school has taken account of the DfES practical guide entitled Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits.

Farm visits

St Helen's Catholic Infant School recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm will be very carefully planned, and the risks to be assessed should include those arising from the hazards associated with E coli, food poisoning and other infections.

The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare; and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas. An exploratory visit should be carried out.

The basic rules for a farm visit will be:

We will never let pupils:

- place their faces against the animals or their hands in their mouths after feeding them;
- eat until they have washed their hands;
- sample any animal foodstuffs;
- drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities);
- play in the farm area.

Conclusion

School trips are incredibly important and provide memorable experiences for pupils and teachers. We seek to continue to run safe and successful trips for pupils. It is not possible to eliminate all risk, nor would this be beneficial for children. However, risk needs to be managed and considered and careful consideration of this policy will help all of us to do this. The EVC will attend further training every three years and revisit this policy regularly in the light of any new advice. This policy supplements and compliments the Essex LA policy.

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