



Ashton CEVC Primary School

Visits Policy

1. Introduction

Off-site visits and Learning Outside the Classroom are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. At Ashton Church of England Primary School, the governors and teaching staff believe that these 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.

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 reasonably possible, accessible to those with disabilities. Unless residential, the visits usually take place within the school day.

The aims of our off-site visits and Learning Outside the Classroom 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.

2. Employer's Policy and National Guidance

This policy follows the Northamptonshire County Council Policy for the Management of Learning Outside the Classroom (June 2018) and the OEAP National Guidance.

In line with these policies, anyone commissioning a Learning Outside the Classroom activity on behalf of the school should ensure the provider has adopted the Northamptonshire or OEAP National Guidance or have systems and procedures in place where the standards are not less than those required by OEAP National Guidance.

3. Clarification of Role

The role of the Governors is:

- to monitor this policy and review it every 2 years, or before if necessary;
- to ensure the agreed procedures are followed;

The role of the Head Teacher includes:

- ensuring approval for visits is given, including liaising with the LA where appropriate;
- ensuring that arrangements are in place for the educational objectives of a visit to be inclusive;
- being aware of the need for Best Value;
- ensuring that all accreditation or verification of providers has been met;
- ensuring that visits are evaluated to inform the operation of future visits;
- ensuring that all teachers are aware of the LA guidance;

- ensuring that the school has an emergency procedure in case of a major incident, which has been discussed and reviewed by staff. This emergency procedure must include getting support from the LA's public relations unit. See also the school's Critical Incidents Procedures.

The role of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator is to:

- ensure educational visits meet the employer's and school's requirements;
- assess the competence of prospective leaders and staff;
- ensure that Risk Assessment meets requirements;
- organise training and induction;
- ensure parents are informed and have given consent;
- organise emergency arrangements;
- keep records of visits, accidents or incident reports;
- review systems and monitor practice.

The Group Leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit, including direct responsibility for the pupils' health, safety and welfare. **For each visit, of whatever duration, a Group Leader must be identified.** This does not need to be the most senior member of staff but should be the person with the most knowledge.

The role of the Group Leader includes:

- having overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit, including direct responsibility for the pupils' health, safety and welfare.
- being approved to carry out the visit, suitably competent and knowledgeable about the school and LA's policy and procedures;
- plan and prepare for the visit and assess the risks;
- seeking approval from the Head Teacher and EVC before financially committing the school;
- define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and pupils and ensure effective supervision of what they do.

The role of any other adult who is not a member of school staff is to:

- understand and agree expectations of them;
- understand their relationship to the pupils, teachers and visit leaders;
- recognise the limits of their responsibility;
- ensure that they are not left in sole charge of pupils unless this has been formally agreed through a risk assessment;
- follow instructions from teachers and school staff;
- raise concerns for pupil welfare with the Group Leader.

Guidance given to any Parent helper includes:

- please do not smoke, vape or use e-cigarettes;
- please do not use your mobile phone;
- please read the Risk Assessments for the trip – ask the Group Leader about any points you are unsure about;
- if any children in your group feel sick, please let a member of school staff know;
- please do not purchase gifts or food for any of the children as this would be unfair to others and some children have allergies;
- please do not give any children your own food/drink or money;
- please do not take your group of children to the toilet, see a member of the teaching staff who will advise you;
- please tell a member of the teaching staff if you have a problem with any of the children in your group. For example: medical, behaviour.

4. Procedural Requirements

A detailed procedure is followed for all Educational Visits although this may vary between a residential visit and a day visit. Each Group Leader will, in liaison with the EVC, complete the Educational Visits Checklist

(attached). A visit will proceed only when the EVC is satisfied that all reasonable preparations have been made.

The main forms along with their purpose are detailed below. All are included as an appendix. These must be completed by the Group Leader and are monitored by the EVC.

- Visit Check List – to ensure procedures are followed and timings are adhered to
- Visit Costings – to ensure best value for money and identify sources of funding
- Visit Approval Form – to ensure all parties are aware of the proposed visit
- Risk Assessment – to ensure all risks, as far as reasonably possible, are considered and minimised

Educational visits and opportunities for Learning Outside the Classroom are categorised as A, B or C. The following provides examples of each type of visit.

Category A

Straight forward activities covered by 'blanket consent' such as a walk to the local church or a walk around the village. It is not always necessary to complete the visit checklist for these visits as long as a specific class risk assessment for all children is kept up to date and the Head Teacher and EVC are aware of the visit. Consideration for any changes in the local area should be made to ensure an appropriate risk assessment has been carried out.

Category B

Visits which required enhanced planning such as a day visit. These visits will usually include some form of transport. The EVC will approve these visits.

Category C

Activities which require detailed planning that reflects challenging environments, locations and higher risk activities. This also includes any residential visits and any visit which includes the use of water. These visits must be submitted to Plumsun for approval.

5. Monitoring

The EVC will monitor opportunities for Off-site Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom. They will keep a record of any completed visits to ensure a range of curriculum foci.

To ensure adequate time for visits to be approved, all documentation must be submitted by the Group Leader to the EVC via the Plumsun portal at least 2 weeks before the visit or 4 weeks in the case of a residential visit.

The EVC will review all submitted documentation and provide any necessary feedback to the Group Leader prior to the visit.

Northamptonshire County Council will initiate regular Educational Visits Audits to monitor schools' compliance with the requirements outlined in their employer policy.

6. Induction, Training and Succession Planning

The EVC will lead initial staff training to ensure all members of staff, including support staff, are made aware of and fully understand the necessary procedures involved in an Off-site visit including their role and responsibility. This will include carrying out a risk assessment and recording the thought process.

In collaboration with the Head Teacher, the EVC will facilitate Visit/Group Leader training for all teaching staff.

7. Risk Management Including Ratios, Staffing, Transport and First Aid

Before a visit can take place, all of the necessary risk assessments must be completed to manage any identifiable risks. A risk assessment is the thought process and not the document; the document is the evidence that the thought process has taken place. Any generic risk assessments, such as those available on the Plumsun website, must be personalised for the specific visit. The school format must be used for risk assessments completed by the school. **This is a legal requirement.**

Once the risk assessment has approved by the EVC, it must be shared with all adults attending allowing sufficient time for it to be read, understood and any questions answered if necessary.

It is possible to use a generic risk assessment for repeated activities such as walking to church and walking around the village. This is to avoid the need for writing event-specific risk assessments for every such visit. Visits which are subject to this type of risk assessment must be approved by the EVC and a specific risk assessment will need to be carried out if the event of environmental changed such as building and roadworks which may increase the risk as well as the type and volume of traffic in an identified location.

The Health and Safety Executive can hold individuals to account and prosecute if they are to be found to have deliberately put people in harm's way.

Ratios

While both OEAP and Northamptonshire County Council do not identify specific ratios for schools, other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage, consideration must be given to ensure the level of supervision and group management is effective. To ensure effective group management and level of supervision, a minimum of 2 adults must attend every visit.

Staffing

There is no requirement for children to be accompanied by staff of the same gender, even on residential visits. There should be a sound plan to manage any potential issues involved.

If a leader or helper is the parent of a young person taking part in a visit, there is the potential for them to be distracted by the needs of their own child when their responsibility extends to all or some of the group. This could compromise group management, particularly if there is a serious incident. The potential to be distracted can be avoided if a parent is not allocated a leadership role with direct responsibility for their own child. Sometimes this may not be possible (e.g. when a class teacher has their own child in their class). In this case, consideration should be given to other ways to manage the risk, for example by ensuring that other leaders are available.

Transport

Careful thought will be given to planning transport and travel to support off-site visits. The Group Leader should ensure coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company.

If school is using a mini-bus to provide travel, a Section 19 Permit must be held by the school for each minibus.

First Aid and Medication

There is no requirement for a first aider to go on a trip if there will be one on site at the venue. All teaching staff have a duty of care to provide first aid even if a qualification is not held. Teaching staff are covered by employer insurance. A paediatric first aider must be with EYFS at all times even if half on-site and half off-site.

The school policy for administering medication must be followed. Where possible, 2 members of staff should be present for the administration of any medication to safeguard against maladministration.

It is the Group Leader's responsibility to ensure an adequate first aid kit is available during a visit.

8. Assessing Venues and Providers

Wherever possible, the Group Leader should complete a preliminary visit to enable the completion of any risk assessment. If appropriate, school will make use of the already established national approval schemes ensuring they provide the best value for money.

It is not necessary to ask for copies of an establishments risk assessments but the Group Leader should request any information specifically aimed at managing group visits.

Even when using outside providers, the school retains a non-delegable duty of care. If the Group Leader or member of staff is unhappy about anything, they must step in a challenge appropriately.

9. Emergency Procedures and Incident Reporting

The school's critical incident form is included as an appendix. It details both the circumstances which are considered to be a critical incident and the necessary procedures to follow. Following a critical incident, the Group Leader will make contact with the school at the earliest opportunity. The details of the incident will only be shared with the Head Teacher, Senior Teacher, EVC or the most senior Teacher. Details will not be shared with other members of school staff due to possible conflicts of interest.

The person at school receiving the information will complete the incident form to ensure they have all of the necessary information such as the time and location of the incident, the current situation and whether there are any injuries.

All Group Leaders will download the Plumsun App to their school iPad as this gives contact information for Plumsun as well as electronic copies of all current trip documentation.

10. Inclusion and Behaviour

All children, regardless of Special Educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion must be planned for. All **reasonable** steps to ensure inclusion for all must be taken. It is unlawful to treat a disabled person less favourably or fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage **without justification**.

If a whole school off-site visit has been planned, there must be on-site provision made available for any non-attendees.

Expectations for behaviour should be shared with all children and staff prior to the visit. Any additional needs must be catered for and individual risk assessments carried out if necessary.

11. Insurance

Northamptonshire County Council holds Employer's Liability Insurance as detailed in the Policy for Managing Learning Outside the Classroom.

12. Finance and Costings

If 50% of the Visit occurs within the school day, schools are not able to charge. They are able to ask for voluntary contributions with the caveat that if not enough voluntary contributions are received, the visit may have to be cancelled.

Children who are in receipt of Pupil Premium funding should be provided with financial support to ensure they are not at a disadvantage.

13. Data Protection

To meet current GDPR requirements, the following points will be considered:

- Share limited copies of trip paperwork with staff;
- Sign out and sign in each copy with the Group Leader;
- Consider any lost paperwork a data breach and report to the Head Teacher.