



The Federation of Bedenham and Holbrook Schools

Offsite Visits Policy

January 2015

“Experiences gained by pupils through off-site educational opportunities should not be seen as isolated opportunities but as a vital part of the progression of a pupil’s education. That they have a profound effect on pupils is an indication of their relevance within a broad and balanced curriculum”. (National Association of Head Teachers Professional Management Series).

Introduction

Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site 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 possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day (unless it is a residential trip).

Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum, there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). All these activities are in line with guidance published by the Local Authority (LA):

English – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;
science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens, INTECH in Winchester;
mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
history – castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums;
geography – use of the locality for fieldwork;
art and design – art gallery visits, use of the locality;

PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches;
music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, concerts for parents to hear;
design and technology – visits to local factories or design centres;
Computing – its use in local shops/libraries etc;
RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.
PSHE/PDL – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

Residential activities

At Holbrook, children in Years 3 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit.
At Bedenham, Year 3 have an overnight stay at school, Year 4 visit Stubbington Study Centre, Year 6 take part in an adventurous outdoor activity residential, in 2015 this is to PGL on the Isle of Wight. Please refer to the charging policy for advice on parental contributions and transport.

The residential visits enable children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work as well as developing skills in social interactions. We undertake this visit only with the written agreement of the LA. We ensure the centres provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

Those children who do not attend residential activities will continue a normal week back at school.

How visits may be authorised

The Head of School will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school.

The school's educational visits coordinator, who is usually the Head of School, will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

S/he will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed including pre-visits;
- support the Head of School and governing body in their decisions on approval;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks.
- insurance measures are in place and up to date.
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example a swimming facility).

Staff arranging, or otherwise involved in, off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LA (and available from the school office). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LA's instructions.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the Head of School before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made. This will include:

- the objectives of the trip,
- numbers of children and adults involved
- anticipated cost to the school/parents
- transport

When the trip has been authorised, it is the responsibility of the group leader to complete the information onto EVOLVE and submit the form to the EVC.

Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the Head of School will seek the approval of the governing body and the Local Education Authority before permitting the activity to take place. In the case of residential trips or trips involving activities near water, this needs to be at least 8 weeks prior to the trip taking place.

It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

Risk assessment

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve. The LA will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the Visit Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios: These ratios are for guidance only:

- 1 adult to between 10 and 15 pupils in Years 4 to 6;
- 1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 3;
- 1 adult to 3 pupils in Early Years.

If there are concerns raised over possible behaviour issues when completing the risk assessment, a decision will be made to ensure that risk is reduced to a minimum. This may mean that the child is accompanied 1 to 1 but in rare cases, may mean that the child is unable to go on the trip as the risk to their life or those around them is too great.

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are *minimum* requirements, and may *not* provide adequate supervision in all cases.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- proper vetting of the driver;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- on board first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown emergency procedures.

The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to police checks; List 99 or DBS. They are also made aware of the school's Child Protection Policy in relation to school trips and residentials.

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the Head of School, the governing body, the LA, our educational visits coordinator, and all adults supervising the trip.

Transport

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport
- entrance fees
- insurance – as per Hampshire guidance
- provision of any special resources or equipment
- costs related to adult helpers
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for

Please refer to the federated charging policy for further information.

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit. Wherever possible we procure three-point seat belts. Children may be required to use booster seats to ensure that seat belts fit correctly.

All adults who are involved in driving the minibuses are MIDAS trained with refresher courses completed on a regular basis.

Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks. The schools will not be responsible for any costs for the extra private insurance needed.

We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts.

Communication with parents

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. This will include the gender of children to gender of adult ratio. Parents need to be informed if only one gender of adult is on the residential trip. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities confirming that they have seen and agreed to the details. The appropriate medical forms must be completed for all residential trips.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental voluntary contributions. This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage. Please refer to the charging policy for further information.

No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus, website and letters sent home about intended visits.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Head of School to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

Further health and safety considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with the telephone numbers of all adults on the trip and an emergency telephone number but this information must be given back to the leader on return to school, as it is confidential information. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number or mobile number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

Before a party leaves school, the school office should be provided with a list of children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity as well as a copy of the risk assessment. The risk assessment should be read and acknowledged by all adults accompanying the children on the trip.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times. It is good practice to have a first aid trained member of staff present on the trip who is responsible

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the Head of School the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements can be obtained from the Local Authority's Off-Site & Adventurous Activities File (Pink) held in the school office.

Group leaders' planning

Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:

They must consult LA documentation detailing procedures and requirements, including guidance on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation, and must draw up a Visit Plan which records in writing (including standard forms where appropriate) the arrangements that have been made. The Head of School will brief the group leader of the Critical Incident Procedures and provide contact numbers to support any emergency.

Visit plan

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

- risk assessment;
- report on preliminary visit;
- applications for approval of visit;
- general information;
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- travel schedule;
- accommodation plan (if applicable);
- full plan of activities;
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;
- guidance for party leaders;
- guidance for the emergency contact and Head of School;
- medical questionnaire returns;
- first-aid boxes which includes an off-site record for accidents and incidents.

Monitoring and Review of Trips.

Individual staff reviews on the trips contribute to the feedback on the quality of the ventures and any recommendations for the future. All information about the trips can be reviewed by the Chair of Governors, the Head of School and the EVC.

The Head of School will report to governors on a regular basis as to the effectiveness of the trips.

Review of the Policy

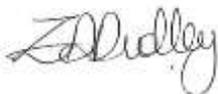
This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every three years or before if necessary.

Signed: Caroline Landon 1st December 2014

Reviewed at Policy Committee on 26.01.15

Ratified at FGB 09.02.15 minute ref: 9f

Date: Spring 2015



Review: January 2017

Heads of school

Chair of Governors