Educational Visits Policy

Approved by:	**Date: December 2022**
Last reviewed on: December 2022	
Next review due by: December 2024	

Introduction

At Hillary Primary School, we support offsite educational visits and believe they enhance learning and improve attainment. This policy applies to any visit that leaves the school grounds, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time, or outside the normal school day, including weekends and holiday periods.

Purpose of this policy

This policy provides information and expectations about educational visits and expectations of staff. As employees of Walsall council, our school will follow Walsall Council's Educational Visits Standards, and the detailed National Guidance provided by Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) and adopted by the council. School employees must follow Walsall Council's Standards and the National Guidance, as well as the requirements of this Policy. Should there be any conflicting advice, clarification should be sought from the school's Head Teacher or Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

Lead members of Staff

Whilst all staff are responsible for writing the risk assessments and submitting them, there are lead members of staff that must approve them, they are:

- Mrs Taylor – Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mrs Maynard – Educational visits co-ordinator (EVC)

Competency, training, and succession planning

We will ensure that all staff involved in visits are competent; to this end, the school will appoint an EVC to coordinate educational visits. In line with best practice, and with council policy, our EVC will attend an EVC training course, and appropriate refresher every three years. This training is provided by Walsall Council's health & safety team.
All staff involved in offsite visits will receive an induction so that they are familiar with the school's systems for managing visits (Evolve). No member of staff will lead a visit unless they have served an "apprenticeship" i.e. they will have participated in a range of visits and acted as assistant leader on a number of occasions.
We will ensure that we have a healthy pool of visit leaders by appropriate succession planning.

Visit Planning

All visits must be appropriately planned. We will ensure that:

- All leaders and participants, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk-benefit management process
- Parents have been fully informed and, where necessary, consent has been obtained
- Any third party providers or facilities have been appropriately selected, and are competent
- Contingency arrangements (Plan B) have been prepared, where needed
- An effective emergency plan and designated emergency contact(s) are in place and will be available 24/7 (as appropriate)
- All details of the visit/activity are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity.

The aims and benefits of the visit should be clear – we will ask the What, Who, Why, Where, When and How questions – the answers will inform the planning process.

Risk Assessment

We will ensure that all visits have appropriate risk assessments in place, using Evolve. Normally, the aim is to eliminate risk wherever possible; however, with educational visits eliminating all risk could also remove many of the benefits associated with the activity and hence would be counterproductive. Consequently, whilst risk should be managed, and should be at 'acceptable levels', there needs to be a careful balance between the risk of the activity and the benefits of participation and the learning outcomes.

Risk assessments will be recorded; but concentrate on significant risk, ignoring the trivial. The assessments will identify appropriate controls to minimise the risk of serious harm to students or staff. Routine visits, with everyday levels of risk, should only require minimal planning; whereas higher risk visits will require a more detailed approach.
Educational visits risk assessments can be at three levels:

- **Generic** – assessments and procedures that apply across a range of visits and cover the basic risks relevant to visits involving similar activities
- **Visit specific** – assessments covering any visit specific risks not already covered by generic assessments
- **Dynamic/on-going** – carried out continuously during the visit and not necessarily recorded

Visit approval – School roles

Walsall Council has delegated the responsibility for formal approval of all educational visits to establishment Head Teachers and EVCs. Within our school, the following applies:

- Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits. They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head teacher or EVC prior to planning, and before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements, and should seek advice from the EVC where necessary.
- The EVC will support and challenge colleagues over educational visits and is the first point of contact for advice on visit related matters. The EVC will check final visit plans before submitting them to the Head Teacher.
- The Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising all visits.
- The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. (Describe how governors fulfil their responsibilities in terms of challenging and supporting visits)

Visit notification

The council's Resilience Unit (Emergency Planning) no longer needs notification in advance of any visits; however, for all visits, the school/establishment must have visit and participant details, including emergency contacts and any known health issues of participants, readily available in school/the establishment.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring compliance with this Policy and for the monitoring of visits organised by our school. Monitoring includes checks on procedures, checks on training, reviews following visits, and sampling (field observation) to check that procedures are followed during visits.
The EVC is often best placed to carry out routine monitoring (the National Guidance includes a document on monitoring).
All visits will be reviewed after the event, particularly with regard to any accident, incident or other significant occurrence during the visit. We will also review the learning outcomes to ensure the visits meet their intended objectives. If appropriate, we will review our procedures and/or risk assessments.

Supervision

We will ensure active and effective supervision on our educational visits, based on risk assessment. The assessment will take into account:

- The nature and duration of the visit and the planned activities, including any "free time" activities
- The location and environment in which the activity is to take place
- The nature of the group, including the number of young people and their age, level of development, gender, ability and needs (behavioural, medical, emotional and educational)
- Staff competence – all staff should be competent to carry out their roles
- The consequence of a member of staff being indisposed, particularly where they will be the sole leader with a group for any significant time

Our minimum supervision arrangements are:

- 1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3
- 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in school years 4 to 6

For other trips, with more significant risks, the starting point should be:

- 1 adult for every 10 pupils
- Note The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (updated 3rd April 2017) no longer sets out different requirements for minimum ratios during outings from those required on site. As with other age groups, ratios during outings should be determined by risk assessment, which should be reviewed before each outing. The appropriate ratio on an outing is always likely to be higher than the legal minimum (for children aged three and over in Early Years settings either 1:8 or 1:13 and 1:30 in infant school reception classes in maintained schools). It is not unusual for a ratio of 1:1 to be necessary.

Parental Consent

We are not required to obtain consent from parents for pupils to participate in offsite activities that take place during school hours and which are a normal part of a child's education; however, in line with good practice, we will inform parents that a visit or activity is to take place.
Consent is needed by schools for visits taking place outside school hours and also for activity taking place both during and outside school hours where it is perceived to involve a higher level of risk, such as a visit involving a long journey or adventure activity.

Curriculum visits involving religious education or sex and relationship education – Parents have a right to withdraw their children from RE lessons, from collective acts of worship and from some elements of Sex and Relationship Education, but not from the National Curriculum. This means that parents do not necessarily have the right to withdraw their child from a visit to, for example, a place of worship, if this visit forms part of the school's delivery of the National Curriculum. It is therefore important for visit leaders to be clear about the purpose of the visit, including the wider personal, social and cultural benefits and its link to the curriculum.

Inclusion

In line with the Equality Act 2010, all our activities will be available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs or protected characteristics. When a visit or activity is being planned, all reasonably practicable measures will be taken to include all young people. Every reasonable effort will be made to find a venue and activities that are both suitable and accessible and that enable the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.
The principles of inclusion will be promoted, ensuring:

- an entitlement to participate
- accessibility through adaptation or modification, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services.
- integration through participation with peers

Further information on inclusion, including circumstances where it is reasonable to exclude a young person, e.g. on grounds of behaviour, is available in the National Guidance.

Behaviour

Where a young person's behaviour presents a significant, unmanageable and unacceptable risk to the health and safety of themselves, or other persons on a visit, it may be reasonable to exclude them. When a young person is excluded on these grounds, we will consider providing alternative ways of achieving the same learning outcomes.
Where there is doubt about excluding a young person on the grounds of behaviour, the following points will be considered; we will:

- identify the issue at the earliest planning stage
- involve all interested parties
- establish a behaviour management plan with agreed action points that may enable inclusion
- establish behaviour targets/timescales to be met to allow inclusion, or trigger a decision to exclude
- consider providing an additional adult, such as a parent or support worker, with a specific brief to manage behaviour issues
- ensure that what is expected of staff is reasonable and within their competence
- record the process

We have a behaviour policy in place that will be followed during educational visits for consistency.

Minibus driving and Transport

We will ensure that our risk assessments pay particular attention to transport arrangements; including – driver competence, maintenance of vehicles, insurance, seat belts, weather conditions, journey times, comfort stops, and driver fatigue. Only reputable companies will be used.
With regard to our own vehicles, the school's policies/procedures regarding minibus operation must be followed.

Using external providers and facilities

When planning an off-site visit, we will thoroughly research the suitability of the venue and check that facilities and third party provision will meet our needs and expectations.
Wherever reasonably practicable, we will carry out a preliminary visit.

Where a preliminary visit is not reasonably practicable, we will obtain sufficient information to allow us to assess the venue; if appropriate, we will take advantage of nationally accredited provider assurance schemes that are available., including:

- The Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge (which covers both quality and safety)
- Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) licence (see below)
- Adventuremark
- Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres – AHOEC Gold Standard
- National Governing Body (NGB) centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

If the provider holds such an accreditation, there should be no need to seek further assurances about the areas that it covers. If a provider does not hold a suitable accreditation which covers all aspects of their provision, then we will use other means of gaining assurances about relevant aspects of their operation.

Emergency Planning and Critical Incidents

For all visits, we will have visit and participant details, including emergency contacts and any known health issues of participants, readily available in school.
Where visits take place out of school/office hours, a base contact(s) will be nominated who will be available 24/7 and will have ready access to these details "out of hours". All staff involved in the visit must have contact details for the base contact(s) in case of emergency.
In the event of an emergency the school's Emergency and Business Continuity Plan will come into play.
In the case of a critical incident; that is an incident where any participant in a visit:

- has suffered a life threatening injury or fatality
- is at serious risk
- has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period

We will contact the council's Resilience Unit (Emergency Planning) for support, without delay.
The council's Resilience Unit can be contacted on:

- 01922 652026 – Normal office hours
- 01922 650000 – Outside normal office hours.

These numbers should be carried by all staff members at all times during an educational visit but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. **Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians**.
Any accidents that occur during visits will be reported, as appropriate – e.g. to HSE (if RIDDOR applies), and to the council's health & safety team. All incidents, including "near miss" incidents, will be investigated and procedures/risk assessments reviewed as appropriate.

Insurance

We have **Employer's Liability** and **Public Liability Insurance** in place, via Walsall Council, to indemnify the school against all claims for compensation for injury suffered by any person employed by it; by persons acting in a voluntary capacity; and by persons not in our employment (e.g. pupils). The indemnity covers activities including offsite visits.
Some level of **Personal Accident Insurance** is provided for council employees in the course of their employment, providing predetermined benefits in the event of an accident. However, visit and activity leaders

are advised that they may wish to consider taking out more comprehensive personal accident cover privately, or obtain cover through a professional association.

Educational Visits Advice

Walsall Council's health & safety team act as our educational visits adviser and can be contacted on 01922 65 5793 or via email safetyandfire@walsall.gov.uk.
Normally contact with the team should be via the EVC or Head Teacher.
Note Walsall Council does not approve visits – this task is delegated to schools, which know their staff and pupils and are best placed to judge the adequacy of arrangements; however, the local authority will advise schools and answer any specific queries related to educational visits.