



ST CHARLES'
CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL
VISITS
POLICY

<u>EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY</u>	
<u>AGREED: FEBRUARY 2016</u>	<u>NEXT REVIEW: FEBRUARY 2018</u>

St Charles' Catholic Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

This policy has been written with reference to the DFE guidance on Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits and the Local Authority Educational Visits Policy and Guidance. All offsite visits and activities that are organised and undertaken by the school are regarded as 'educational visits'. Whenever pupils leave the school site under the direct or indirect supervision of school staff, they are undertaking an educational visit.

Rationale

Well-planned and executed educational visits provide our children with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 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 school practice.

Aims

We aim to offer children a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for adult life. The Headteacher and governors recognise the value and importance of learning outside the classroom, and encourage staff to organise educational visits that enrich the curriculum and enhance the learning and development of our pupils. Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised. It is extremely important that educational visits are planned so that they can be made available to all children regardless of their individual needs.

Types of visits

We offer a wide range of educational visits, including:

- Swimming for Years 1 - 6
- Walks around the local area
- Day visits to locations such as Chester Zoo, local museums, art galleries and places of worship
- Residential visits to venues such as Colomendy

Compliance

The school's policy is to comply with the LA's guidance on educational visits. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the other relevant school policy documents, including the following:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Health and Safety

- Charging
- Equal Opportunities
- SEND
- Behaviour and Discipline

Access to Policies and Guidelines

Staff involved in the leadership and management of visits must be familiar with all relevant guidelines and policy documents, and should know how and where this information can be accessed. The LA Educational Visits Guidance is accessible via the Educational Visits page on Ednet.

Copies of these documents can be accessed in the following locations within school:

- The teachers' shared drive on the school server
- The School Office
- From the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) or Headteacher

Roles and responsibilities (see also LA Educational Visits Guidance)

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for all the school's educational visits. If the Headteacher is absent or unavailable, the Deputy Headteacher will act as the appointed deputy, and fulfil the same responsibilities regarding the leadership and approval of educational visits.

The Senior Leader who is the School's Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is Mrs M Walker, Deputy Headteacher

The EVC oversees the planning and organisation of the school's visits, and provides advice and guidance to staff and Headteacher, including recommendations regarding the approval of visits.

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator will ensure that:

- They have appointed a suitable Group Leader
- The risk assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit
- Training needs have been met
- The group leader has experience in supervising 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 adults on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance
- Parents have signed consent forms and written details of medical needs, capabilities etc. of pupils have been gathered
- Arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and additional educational needs of all children

- The mode of travel is appropriate
- Travel times out and back are known
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- They have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name
- That the school has the names of all the adults and children in the travelling group, including contact details of parents, staff and volunteers.

The EVC is supported in an administrative capacity by the Admin Officer, Mrs J O'Brien - this role may involve costing the visit, sending out parent letters, organising transport and insurance, obtaining medical details, consent forms, co-ordinating contact details etc.

The Governors Curriculum and Pupils Committee is responsible for overseeing educational visits, and for assisting with the approval of residential or high risk visits. This committee is chaired by Mrs T Wainwright.

Advice and Guidance

Staff should seek advice and guidance regarding educational visits from:

- the school EVC
- the Headteacher
- the LA Educational Visits Senior School Improvement Officer
- other experts with specialist/ local knowledge (e.g. park rangers, centre managers)

Monitoring

To assure quality of standards on educational visits the Headteacher or the EVC will accompany at least one visit per year to monitor real practice, and to assist with the review of policies and procedures.

Planning and approval procedures

Visits should be recorded, checked, and approved in accordance with the following procedures:

Category 1 - Day visits (routine): Visits that take place on a regular basis throughout the year, or over a specific period of time (e.g. a series of six weekly visits) e.g. visits to local library/ swimming pool/ away sports matches.

Category 1 visits:

- will be checked and approved internally by the Headteacher
- should be submitted for approval at the beginning of the academic year to obtain 'blanket approval' for the year and at least 2 weeks in advance of the first of a series of visits.

Category 2 - Day visits (non routine): One-off or occasional visits e.g. day visit to Chester Zoo or Liverpool Museum

Category 2 visits:

- will be checked and approved internally by the Headteacher
- In addition, the Governing Body will be informed when visits have taken place
- should be submitted for approval as early as possible, and at least 2 weeks in advance of the visit

Category 3 - UK residential visits: Visits that involve one or more nights away from home in the UK. Category 3 visits

- will be checked and approved in writing by the Headteacher and by the LA Educational Visits Senior School Improvement Officer
- Category 3 visits should be submitted for approval at least 6 weeks in advance of the visit

Category 4 - Overseas visits

The school does not usually undertake, and has no plans to introduce, overseas visits.

For visits with significant financial commitment, 'Outline Approval' should be obtained before firm bookings are made.

Visit objectives

All educational visits must have a defined purpose, with clearly stated, justifiable educational or developmental objectives - including rewards or incentives - otherwise they may not be approved, or it may not be possible to arrange appropriate insurance.

Selection of pupils

Every effort is made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special educational or medical needs. We will not exclude children with additional educational needs, disabilities or medical needs from school visits. Every effort will be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention must be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

The Group Leader

The Headteacher must be satisfied that the Group Leader is as suitable and competent to fulfil their role. The Group Leader should:

- Be able to supervise, support and lead children of the relevant age range
- Be suitably qualified if instructing an activity or be conversant in the good practice for that activity
- 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
- Have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times

- Know all the children proposed for the visit in order to assess their suitability
- Observe the guidance for teachers and other adults
- Ensure that the children understand their responsibilities

Residential visits require a Deputy Leader who is able to deputise for, and take full responsibility in place of, the Group Leader, if necessary.

Other adults involved in a visit

The school has a responsibility to ensure that all adults involved in the supervision of children during school-related activities are suitable to work with children. All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors must be aware of any children who may require closer supervision, such as those with individual needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

All adults have a responsibility to:

- Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- Care for each individual student as any reasonable parent would
- Follow the instructions of the leader and help with support and discipline
- Volunteers will not have sole charge of children except where risks to health and safety are minimal (and the Risk Assessments states this)
- Stop the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the children in their charge is unacceptable
- Staff and volunteers must take instruction from the group leader
- For the protection of the children, and for their own safety, all adults should ensure that, as far as is practicably possible, they are not alone in with a child.

All staff have a current Enhanced CRB disclosure, as do governor and student volunteers on visits. Other volunteers must sign the schools' Child Protection Screening Document. Only staff members will accompany pupils on residential visits. Concerns about poor practice by a member of staff, volunteer or other adult must be reported to the Group Leader immediately and to the Headteacher as soon as possible.

Educational visits must be attended by a competent adult who has an appropriate level of first aid training (for EYFS pupils this means at least one adult must have a current Paediatric First Aid certificate).

Staffing selection and supervision ratios

Effective supervision is of the utmost importance in maintaining the safety and welfare of the children on educational visits. The LA Educational Visits Guidance provides recommended minimum staffing ratios, but the choice of staff and the decision regarding ratios is a matter for the Headteacher. Regardless of any suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits. As general guidance the following ratios are used: Up to and including age 5 = 1:4 Age 6 - 7 = 1:6 Age 8 - 11 = 1:10

These ratios do not include residential visits or those involving hazardous activities. Other factors to take into consideration will include:

- Sex, age and ability of group
- Children's individual needs
- The nature of the activities
- The experience of the adults in off site supervision
- The duration and nature of the journey
- The type and layout of the accommodation
- The competence of staff, both general and on specific activities
- Professional instructors will be required for any high-risk activity.

Selection and suitability of accommodation or venues to be visited

As part of the overall risk assessment process, and in keeping with their legal duty of care, the Group Leader must take reasonable steps to check that any accommodation that is used, and any venues that the group plans to visit, are suitable, satisfactory, and safe. Many organisations have websites or supply information packs that provide all reasonable assurances regarding standards. If necessary, a request will be sent to the manager of the accommodation or venue, requesting written details of their safety management systems and operating procedures.

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- 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 children 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.

Risk assessments and risk management

The school has a legal duty of care for its pupils, and must, therefore, give careful consideration to the hazards involved during an educational visit, and ensure that risks are managed at reasonable and acceptable levels. The Group Leader will undertake an appropriate risk assessment for each visit, and this will be shared with the EVC and Headteacher before the visit takes place. Appropriate written evidence of this process will be provided on the school's Risk Assessment proforma. The process of risk assessment is a positive means of raising awareness of hazards and prompting constructive discussion regarding the best means of risk management - it should therefore be of real practical value to the leaders and group members, not just a paper exercise. A set of written generic risk assessments are available on the Local Authority's Educational Visits page on Ednet.

The risk assessment must 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?
- The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if children are in danger.

The Risk Assessment is a dynamic, working document - it is not 'carved in stone' once it has been written. The group leader should also 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
- Children with additional educational or medical needs and/ or disabilities
- The quality and suitability of available equipment
- Seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

All Risk Assessments must be approved and signed by the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher or the EVC.

Insurance and finance arrangements (including charging arrangements)

The Admin Officer will ensure that adequate insurance arrangements are in place for all educational visits, and the Group Leader and EVC will check that the scope and level of cover provided is adequate for each visit. Group Leaders must also check that any external service providers have sufficient public liability cover.

The EVC and Admin Officer will ensure that:

- each visit is accurately costed and budgeted for
- adequate allowances are made for additional unforeseen costs and changes in circumstances
- financial plans - especially for more complex and committing visits - are checked over and agreed first by the EVC and Headteacher (and Governors, if appropriate) before financial commitments are made
- for visits that involve substantial commitment financially, no firm bookings or financial commitments are made until the visit has been agreed and received 'Outline Approval' by the relevant officers
- the costs of the visit are made clear to all concerned (including parents), including how much will come from school funds, and how much each parent will be charged or asked to contribute
- money collected for visits is recorded separately, and secure systems are in place to ensure that money is accessed and accounted for correctly

Charging arrangements (for more details see Charging Policy)

The school will not charge for:

- any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum , or part of Religious Education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip

The school may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of educational visits, but it must be clear that any contribution is genuinely voluntary. The costs of the visit should be clear to all concerned.

Transport

As part of the overall risk assessment process, the Admin Officer and Group Leader must take reasonable steps to check that any transport used during the visit is suitable, satisfactory, and acceptably safe, and that any specific Local Authority or legal requirements are met.

Leaders should refer to the school and Local Authority's generic risk assessments that give detailed recommendations for all standard forms of transport.

For the safe supervision of pupils on coaches and buses, adults are required to:

- sit in various locations, spread throughout the vehicle to ensure adequate supervision during the journey
- sit near the emergency exits
- carry a first aid kit and the school mobile phone

Parent information and consent

The Group Leader and Admin Officer must ensure that parents/ guardians are provided with appropriate and sufficient information about all visits. The amount of information and method of provision will depend upon the type of visit planned and the assessed level of risk involved. Parents/ guardians of each pupil on a visit are asked to complete and sign a written consent form, whether it be an annual 'rolling' consent for routine visits, or specific consent for a particular visit or activity. Medical information and other needs of pupils are collated by the Group Leader and supervising staff are briefed accordingly. Parents are asked to give written consent to the administration of first aid, if deemed necessary. Medical information and consent forms can be obtained from the school office. Parents will be clearly informed of the arrangements and responsibilities for collecting a pupil after a visit. The Admin Officer must retain parent contact details for all pupils on the visit.

Staff briefing and emergency procedures

It is important that all staff (including volunteers) involved in the visit are fully briefed about each visit. Staff should be made aware of their expected roles and

responsibilities before, during and after a visit. Group Leaders must be aware of emergency procedures and how to obtain outside assistance or contact the emergency services if required. Part of the planning for emergencies must involve the recording of one or more Emergency Home Contact who will be available at any time during the visit. The Admin Officer must ensure that group leaders have immediate access to the emergency contact details of the SLT and the parents of those on the visit. A properly equipped first aid kit is always available to staff during school visits and must be checked and taken on all visits. All staff should be made aware of the conduct and behaviour expected of them during the visit, particularly in regard to issues such as smoking and alcohol use.

Briefing and preparation of young people

Providing relevant information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for all school visits. Pupils should be briefed about safety arrangements and what clothing/ equipment should be brought. Group Leaders must ensure that pupils clearly understand what will be considered unacceptable behaviour or conduct, and the consequences of non-compliance. It is good practice to teach pupils how to recognize dangers and manage risks sensibly. It is for the group leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the children understand key safety information.

Documentation

Copies of documents required by the LA are available on Ednet. Hard copies of all supporting documentation (eg. risk assessments) are stored and retained in the school's central 'Educational Visits' file. This information is stored until such time that the Headteacher decides that all issues and incidents arising from the visit have been dealt with fully. If no significant incidents occurred during the visit, the school disposes of the paperwork after a period of 5 years. If a significant incident occurs during a visit that could be investigated at a later date, all relevant details are retained by the Headteacher until the young person reaches 21 years of age.

Visit approval status and feedback

If a visit is not approved by a Senior Leader, they must give reasons for their decision and state clearly any changes that would be necessary

If a visit does not obtain the correct level of approval, it may not be covered by LA support and/ or insurance and will, therefore, not take place.

Amendments to visits

If there are significant late changes to visit plans that have already been approved or submitted for approval, the Group Leader must notify all relevant approving authorities (EVC/Headteacher/ Governors/ Local Authority) of these changes, and ensure that their additional consent is given.

Post visit review and evaluation

Group Leaders, on return from a visit, will review the visit with the EVC and/ or Headteacher, and record any examples of good practice and lessons learned that might assist with the planning and leadership of future visits. In particular, it is important to record and review any accidents, incidents, or near-misses (i.e. dangerous incidents that nearly happened, but fortunately didn't). It is important that details are recorded as soon as possible after an incident whilst they are still fresh in the memory, preferably with signed witness accounts. Serious incidents must be notified to the Local Authority using the procedures and standard forms. Residential centre managers will advise and support on this process.

If any major incidents do occur, the school will undertake a review of both the incident and their emergency procedures, and will share their findings with the Local Authority for the benefit of other schools.

Staff are encouraged to express any concerns regarding the organisation and management of visits in writing to the Headteacher, and these will be taken seriously and dealt with in confidence. If necessary, issues will be considered further by the Governing Body.

Significant incidents and issues of concern will be brought immediately to the attention of the LA Educational Visits School Effectiveness Officer.