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Educational Visits Policy

Approval Date: June 2022

Review Date: June 2024

Introduction

Educational visits are activities arranged by, or on behalf of the school, which take place outside the school grounds and serve an educational purpose. The visits usually take place within the school day, but sometimes take place after school. The governors and teaching staff of Dovecotes Primary School believe that off-sites activities both supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school.

In this policy, we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum for the health and safety of all pupils at all times.

We believe 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.

In addition to this Educational Visits Policy, Dovecotes Primary School:

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: 'Organisation and Management of Visits and Outdoor Learning Experiences, Guidance for Educational Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE' (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE).
2. Adopts National Guidance from www.oeapng.info.
3. Uses the City of Wolverhampton EVOLVE web-based system to plan, notify, approve, monitor and evaluate off-site activities.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this school policy and National Guidelines. Staff should be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance and agree to adhere by them.

Aims

The aims of our off-site visits 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.

Types of Visit & Approval

There are three 'types' of visit:

- **Visits/activities within the 'Local Area'** are entered on EVOLVE by the Group Leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then approves the visit.
- **Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity, e.g. visits to museums, farms, theme parks, theatres, etc.**

These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Head for approval.

- **Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.** These follow point 2 above, but the Head then submits the visit to the LA for approval.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Governors** will approve the Educational Visits policy and will ensure it is implemented within school and reviewed every two years.

The **Head Teacher** has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that educational visits follow the agreed procedures in the Local Authority's (LA) guidance document: 'Organisation and Management of Visits and Outdoor Learning Experiences'. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that there is an Educational Visits Coordinator and that this person has received the appropriate training and is competent in this role.

The **Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)** will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. The EVC is the first point of contact for advice on visit related matters and will check final visit plans on EVOLVE before submitting them to the Head. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE and uploads generic school documents. They ensure that risk assessments are completed; ensure that competent staff lead and help with trips;

The **Group Leader** is the member of staff who is leading the visit, who is responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on the EVOLVE system prior to the visit. The competence of the Group Leader is the single most important contributory factor in the safety of participants; they should be competent to run the intended activity or visit. They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher or EVC prior to planning, and before making any commitments. Group 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 Group Leader will make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained before the visit takes place, that the ratio of adult to children supervision is in line with the EVC Policy and that there is a nominated first aider. It is the Group Leader's responsibility to prepare the pupils before the trip on how to behave and how to keep themselves and others safe. They will need to inform the school when they have arrived at their location and when they leave to return to school. In the case of any delays, the school must inform the Headteacher and/or EVC who will inform the parents. After the visit, leaders must ensure they inform the EVC and Headteacher of how the trip went, record any significant issues to the EVC both for reference and to inform future visits and fill in an evaluation sheet on EVOLVE.

The Group Leader will share information such as risk assessments with all staff involved in the visit. The Group Leader will also share the risks with the children including how to manage the risks with a safety talk to the children prior to the trip taking place. The Group Leader is responsible for ensuring that a mobile phone is taken and for checking with the nominated first aider that sufficient first aid kits and pupil medication are taken on the visit.

Accompanying staff must follow the agreed risk assessments, policies and practice to ensure the safe running of the visit. They will ensure that they remain with those pupils allocated to them to ensure adequate supervision throughout the day including at lunchtime.

Prior to the visit, staff must ensure that they understand what is expected of them and have seen and read the risk assessment. The nominated first aider will ensure that there are adequate first aid boxes and supplies available for the trip and that pupil medication is taken.

Parents are responsible for completing and returning requested documentation and ensuring that they are contactable throughout the visit. No child may be excluded from an activity because of the inability of a parent to make a contribution.

Children need to follow instructions, the school rules, the behaviour policy and any additional rules that may be put in place for the visit to ensure their health and safety.

The **Local Authority** will adhere to the guidance issued by the LA and will use EVOLVE for all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

Risk Assessments

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the Group Leader before the proposed visit which will be signed by the EVC and/or the Headteacher in advance of the 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 who are 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 Group 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 risk assessment 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.

The risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue.

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 and why rules must be followed. Lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Prior to the visit taking place, pupils should be told by the Group Leader about any potential dangers and how they should act and behave in order to ensure their own and each other's safety.

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 Group Leader should discuss with the headteacher in advance of the visit the possibility of making additional arrangements for that child.

Parental Consent

Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activity. Parents should be given information about the purpose and details of the visit at least one week in advance. Consent for visits in the local area that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time will be obtained as one-off consent when children are inducted into the school. Sufficient information about each visit must be made available to parents- via letters, meetings, etc. so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. Parents should be told where their child is at all times and of any extra safety measures required. Written request is only requested for activities that are outside of the local area or those that take place outside of school hours, for example: for adventure activities, off-site sporting fixtures outside the school day or residential visits.

Supervision and Staffing Ratios

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils to ensure the safety of all pupils. Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

The following ratio of adults to children should be used:

Nursery	1:2-3
Reception	1:3-6
Years 1 to 3	1:6
Years 4 to 6	1:10-15

Children who need support (i.e. children with Special Educational Needs) 1:1

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, **regular head counting of pupils should take place including before leaving the classroom or venue and once having boarded the transport.** The Group Leader should establish rendezvous points and tell adults, groups and pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

Additional support

Parent helpers are welcome on educational visits and will attend a briefing with the teacher before the visit. Helpers who are not DBS checked will not be alone with children and must be guided by school staff at all times.

Mobile Phones and Social Network

- Under no circumstances should any adult use their mobile phone for personal use whilst on a school visit and in the presence of pupils whether that be to take photographs or make phone calls. The Group Leader should ensure that a school IPAD is always taken for the purpose of taking photos.
- No photos of the visit should be posted on social media such as 'Facebook' and 'Twitter' and instant messaging services such as 'WhatsApp'.
- The Group Lead or class teachers will use their phones to communicate with the school and in case of any emergency. If unable to contact the Group Lead or classteacher, the school will try to contact other accompanying staff members.
- If accompanying staff need to make an emergency call they must seek permission from the Group Leader.
- The Group Leader will co-ordinate time for staff at lunchtime to ensure that there remains adequate supervision for all pupils as well as allowing a 10 minute rest break for staff to toilet and check phones (if absolutely necessary) whilst away from pupils.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For all trips, a member of staff with a first aid qualification must be present. A decision based on the risks and children involved should be made for each visit. Trips for the Early Years must have at least one qualified Paediatric First Aider.

Inclusion

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled participants because of their disability, without material or substantial justification. The school is required to make reasonable adjustments to avoid participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage. However, the Equality Act does not require responsible bodies to place employees or participants at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises. It is also the case that the adjustments made to include a disabled young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

At Dovecotes Primary School we will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort will be made to support them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage. We will work with families to find ways so that all children can attend educational visits.

Farm/Animal Visits

Staff should ensure that the intended outcomes of the activity are balanced with all reasonably practicable safety precautions. Refer to EVOLVE National Library: 'Preventing or controlling ill health from animal contact at visitor attractions- Advice to Teachers' and associated documents. Refer to: Farming & Countryside Education: www.face-online.org.uk; 'Farm Visits' in National Guidance www.oeapng.info

Water Margin Activities

Where pupils might participate in learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along the canal, riverbank, collecting samples in ponds or stream or paddling in shallow water, then the guidance contained in the DCFS 'Group Safety at Water Margins' will be followed.

Transport

On coaches seat belts must be provided and all children must wear a seat belt whilst travelling at all times. The Group Leader is responsible for the conduct and behaviour of children whilst they are travelling.

Where private cars are used for transport, the EVC 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. Staff transporting pupils must have personal business use insurance and must ensure that they do not chauffeur children on a 1:1 basis.

Accident/ Incident Reporting

The Council's Incident Reporting Procedure must be followed i.e. all accidents or near-misses involving employees or service users are reported on an IR1 form and/or the Health and Safety Portal. Serious incidents must be notified immediately to the Health & Safety Team. After any significant incident, schools/services must undertake an investigation of the incident, and review their risk assessments and emergency procedures. It is also good practice to record and learn from 'near misses'.

Policy Monitoring and Review

A copy of this policy is available to all staff and parents and is published on the school website. This policy is reviewed every two years by the Governing Board of Dovecotes Primary School.