



Educational Visits Policy

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EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Overview

The school acknowledges the great value of Educational Visits in broadening and enhancing both the learning and social experience of pupils. Learning outside the classroom is very important and all visits must be safe, fun and educational.

Under statutory guidance which came into effect on 1st March 2004, all schools are required to have a named Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC), who will ensure that the planning and supervision of all visits and adventurous activities meet the DCFS Requirements and Local Authority (LA) guidelines. This school's EVC is Verity Carter..

The role of the EVC is detailed in Section B of the publication 'London Borough of Waltham Forest - Requirements for Educational Visits 2008' (the booklet), a copy of which is in the school's green policy folder.

All Visit Leaders are required to read the booklet in conjunction with this policy. All forms referred to in this policy may be photocopied from the booklet.

Approval for Visits

All matters regarding each visit outside school – feasibility, planning, safety, organisation etc – will require the prior approval of either the EVC or the Head Teacher.

Approval of 'normal' day visits is at the discretion of the EVC or the Head Teacher. However, visits that are either:

- overseas
- residential or
- involving an adventurous activity (as defined in Section Y of the booklet)

will require the additional approval of the LA (Form EV2) or online through Educational Visits Online Virtual Environment (EVOLVE). This is an online service designed to help with educational visit notification, approval and database system (www.walthamforestvisits.org) . The governing body will also need to be informed about these visits prior to a commitment being made.

If an external provider or tour operator is being used, they must complete the detailed Form EV4 at the time of the provisional booking. The procedures to be followed in this case are outlined in Section AA of the booklet.

The expectation at George Tomlinson is that each class will have an educational visit or, if appropriate, a visit from an outside agency, once every term. Educational visits will be planned as part of the curriculum, Literacy, Maths, Science and non core Curriculum.

Competence to Lead

Any member of staff leading a visit will need to have their 'competence to lead' assessed before approval for the visit is given. For the majority of visits this will be assessed by the EVC. In assessing competence to lead, the EVC will take account of the factors stated in Section F2 of the booklet. In the case of the leading (i.e. instructing) of adventurous activities the assessment is undertaken by the LAA by means of Form EV3, using the procedures and criteria in Section Z of the booklet.

Inclusion

All children should be included in their class' educational visit. If a Visit Leader has concerns about a child's behaviour on the grounds of health and safety for themselves and/or other children, he/she is obliged to make reasonable adjustments to include that child. The number of staff can be increased or parents can be invited to help with supervision. If after these adjustments have been made, the health and safety of the child and/or other children cannot be guaranteed, evidence must be produced to support this claim, before a child can be considered for exclusion from the visit. The final decision will be the Head Teacher's.

Aspects of educational visits to be considered by the Visit Leader

- **Reason for visit:** Be clear about the purpose for the visit. All visits must have a sound and clearly stated educational purpose, with a clear learning intention and learning outcomes. Trips 'for the sake of it' will not receive approval.
- **Where to go:** Choose the best provider and venue that will help the children to meet the learning intention. Plan the day's programme thoroughly.
- **Approval:** Approval for the visit must be gained from the EVC/HT in line with the school policy. Overseas, residential or adventurous visits must be approved by the LA.
- **Parents and pupils:** Inform both parents and pupils about the visit: Parents must be told about the activities in which the children will participate. Parental consent is needed before children visit places of worship or the police.
- **Staffing:** Organise staff and let them know about the details of the visit. Parents can be asked to supervise a group, but they must have been police checked within the last 3 years. Teachers will organise the parents and the supervision of those groups at their discretion.
- **Finance:** Cost the visit per pupil.
- **Insurance:** All LBWF schools are already covered. If children are taken abroad they will need an E111 card.

- **Transport:** A decision must be made about the best way to take the children to the venue safely and that it offers good value for money. The TfL free pupil travel tickets should be used if possible and tickets booked within 2 weeks of the visit.
- **Emergency procedures:** Have a contingency plan if things do not go to plan. The EV7 and EV8 form must be accessible when the school is not open.
- **Follow up:** The outcome of the visit should be evaluated to aid future visits.

Assessment of Risk

'Risk assessment' is a careful examination of what could cause harm to pupils, staff or others, together with an identification of the control measures necessary in order to reduce risks to a level which, in the professional judgement of the assessor, is deemed to be acceptable (ie. low). Involve the children with the risk assessment. Show them where they are going; ask them to come up with issues that may arise and decide how it could be managed.

In considering risk, there are 3 levels of which visit leaders should be mindful:

- Generic Risks – normal risks attached to any activity out of school. These will be covered by careful completion of the 'Educational Visits Checklist'.
- Event Specific Risk – any significant hazard or risk relating to the specific activity and outside the scope of item 1 above. These should be recorded on Form EV5.
- Ongoing Risk – the monitoring of risks throughout the actual visit as circumstances change.

Further detail on risk assessment will be found in Section G of the booklet.

Plan B

Despite the most detailed pre-visit planning, things can go wrong on the day, e.g. parent helper is unavailable, member of staff is ill, transport fails to arrive, museum have lost booking, etc. To avoid having to make important decisions under pressure, it is important that some advanced thinking is done to cater for any foreseeable eventuality. This takes the form of **Plan B**.

Staffing Ratios

A professional judgement must be made by the Visit Leader, Head Teacher and Deputy as to the appropriate ratio for each visit. At George Tomlinson, the ratio should be **at least** 1:10, but this will be determined by:

- type, duration and level of activity
- age of pupils
- needs of individuals within the group (SEN)
- experience and competence of staff and accompanying adults
- nature of the venue
- weather conditions at the time of year
- nature of transport involved

Supervision

Pupils must be supervised throughout all visits. However, there are circumstances when they might be unaccompanied by an adult (remote supervision). The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on risk assessment and must take into account factors such as:

- prior experience of pupils
- age of pupils
- responsibility of pupils
- competence/experience of staff
- environment/venue

Role of Supervising Parents

Supervising parents must have a police check on the I.S.A. children's barred list. This is a police check that informs the police whether the person is on a list of known offenders. It is valid for three years. They must also be fully briefed on the programme, venue, activities, supervision arrangements and their responsibilities, along with the completed Form EV5. A written list of the names of the pupils in their immediate care must also be given to them. It is the teacher's discretion on how the parent helper is used and which children are in their group.

First Aid

The level of first aid provision should be based on risk assessment. On all visits there should be a member of staff who has a good working knowledge of first aid. The Appointed Person First Aid Certificate is the minimum requirement for residential visits.

First aid kits are available from the school office. If the visit involves the party splitting up by any distance, a kit should be taken for each group.

Transport

Travel arrangements should be included in the risk assessment. If public transport is to be used, all pupils and supervisors must be fully briefed as to procedures on platforms, at bus stops, on busy streets etc.

If travel is by coach or minibus, all pupils must wear a seat belt. Staff must ensure that pupils comply with this rule; pupils may also be asked to check the seat belt of their neighbour. If a minibus is being borrowed or hired, the driver must have passed the LBWF test for the driving of council vehicles or the equivalent Community Transport test.

If any pupils are to travel by car, the driver must complete Form EV6. If the use of the car is for the occasional visit, permission must be granted from the driver's insurance company. Parental consent **must** be sought beforehand. Private cars need booster seats if the child is less than 4ft 5". This is also relevant to sports fixtures, and applies to both staff and parents' cars. A new form must be completed every academic year.

Water Margin Activities

Where pupils might participate in learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along a riverbank or seashore, collecting samples in ponds or streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow water, then the guidance contained in DCFS 'Group Safety at Water Margins' is relevant. All staff, including parents, should be provided with a copy of this guidance prior to the visit.

Educational Visits Checklist

This checklist is an essential part of the risk management process and is applicable for all visits. It may be photocopied from the booklet.

Costs

As far as is possible costs for trips must be kept to a minimum and free transport should be used. However, if a trip does incur some cost, parents must be notified via letter. Parents must be informed that all contributions are voluntary and that if insufficient funds are received then the trip may have to be cancelled. They must also be informed that voluntary contributions once paid are non refundable, unless their child is sick.

Seeking Parental Consent

Parents should be made fully aware of any likely risks of the visit and their management, so they may consent or refuse on a fully informed basis (known as 'Acknowledgement of Risk').

The letter to parents should therefore give full detail of the visit, the reason for the visit (educational aims), supervision arrangements and the transport arrangements. Ensure that detail of other incidental activities is included, together with Plan B if appropriate. The letter should also state the cost of the visit per child. There will only be a cost assigned to the visit if there are costs involved e.g. entrance or transport. All permission slips must be signed by the parent with 'parental responsibility'.

The reply slip should read:-

Child's name _____ **Class:**

I do / do not give permission for my child to go on the Year ... to on..... .

*** I enclose a voluntary contribution of £.... Yes/ No**

***If your child is entitled to a Free School Meal, would you like a packed lunch to be provided?
Yes / No**

Your name: _____ **Contact Number:** _____

***I would/would not like to help with the supervision of a group.**

***I have/have not been police checked.**

Signed by person with parental responsibility _____

Relationship to child _____ **Date:** _____

In the case of sports fixtures, the reply slip should read:-

My child _____ **is able to play in the match (at) on**

I have read and understand the information in the letter, and give permission for my child to take part.

Signed by person with parental responsibility

Before the Visit

- 1) The class teacher completes the school booking form (appendix 2) and emails it to the School Business Manager. The SBM then books the visit and arranges lunch if appropriate. Transport is organised and the cost of the trip per child is calculated. A letter is then compiled using the sample letter (appendix 3).
- 2) All parental contributions should be sent to the office, where a note will be kept of which child has contributed.
- 3) Teacher must conduct a pre-visit, even if it is a venue that has been visited before. Changes may have been made to the venue or accessibility to stations / platforms may be impeded due to closure / engineering works.
- 4) Teachers complete an 'Educational Planning form' at least 2 weeks before the visit and pass to EVC or Head Teacher
- 5) Teachers complete the ESRA (EV5) form. (Both these forms are on the computers in the PPA room.)

On the day of the visit

Be sure to:-

- Collect first aid kit(s)
- Collect sick bags, if appropriate
- Ensure that children who suffer from asthma have their inhalers
- Brief supervising parents about travel arrangements and the day's itinerary
- Give supervising parents their lists of pupils
- Ensure that a minimum of one mobile phone is working, and that the office has the number(s) and names of the adults accompanying the visit.
- Count pupils

During the course of the visit, pupils should be counted regularly as appropriate, and always when changing locations. **Always 'double-count'**.

The mobile phone(s) should be switched on during the entire homeward journey.

After the Visit

It is important that after each visit a proper debrief takes place. This should take place within a week of the visit date, and should involve the Visit Leader, accompanying staff and, if appropriate, the supervising parents. The purpose of this is to identify what went well and what could have been done better, in order to inform future planning.