

Hurworth School Maths and Computing College

Off-site, Educational Visits Policy

Accepted by: Governing Body – January 2009

Senior Leadership Team Lead Reviewer: Ann Kennedy

Review Cycle: 3 Years

Date for Review: January 2012

1.0 Introduction

1.1 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.

1.2 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 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, but we also offer a range of residential visits, trips abroad and Duke of Edinburgh's Award opportunities.

1.3 All visits will comply with the Darlington Borough Council's 'Code of Practice and Guidelines for Off-Site Educational Visits', upon which this policy is based. Further advice will be sought from the LA and other technically competent persons where necessary. Copies of these guidance documents are available on the 'EVOLVE' electronic system or from the school. All staff going on a visit are required to have read the relevant sections of the Guidance and Visit Leaders are required to have read all of it and signed to say this is the case.

2.0 Aims

2.1 The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- Enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our children;
- 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.
- These visits begin with short excursions into the local area in the Years 7 and 8 and progress to longer residential visits during years 9, 10 and 11
- The visits are carefully planned to enable our children to progress in skills and knowledge of the curriculum and of life skills. **Guidance for Off-Site**

**Educational Visits March 2008 Darlington Borough Council Children's
Services Department 182**

3.0 Curriculum Links

3.1 For each subject in the curriculum there are opportunities for off-site visits. These are some examples of the types of visits carried out at our school.

- English – theatre visits and revision sessions at local universities;
- Science –visits to Life centres, ponds;
- Mathematics – , Q.E Sixth Form College, local industries, local schools;
- History – Hurworth visit, Eden camp;
- Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, Yr 10 coursework in Stockton;
- Art and design – art gallery visits, use of the locality for drawing,etc;
- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities;
- Music –extra-curricular activities, local schools’ orchestra, concerts, recording studios;
- Design and technology – visits to local factories or design centres, museums;
- Modern foreign languages – visits abroad, local languages events;
- ICT/Business studies – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools etc, business plans in action
- RE – visits to local places of worship;

4.0 Residential Activities

4.1 Children in Years 9/10 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is in school time and linked to the National Curriculum. This visit is either to Barcelona or Poland.

4.2 GCSE P.E students are given the opportunity to attend an orienteering weekend.

4.3 The annual ski trip to Aosta, Italy gives students the opportunity to learn / develop either skiing or snowboarding skills

5.0 How visits may be planned and approved

5.1 The school has a named **Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)**, who is involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

She will:

- Assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- Ensure that risk assessments are completed by competent trained staff;
- Check visit plans and risk assessments
- Organise related staff training;
- Identify and record qualifications, training, development, induction and apprenticeship arrangements for all Visit Leaders.

- Verify that all private car drivers, have had satisfactory CRB checks, and that the letter from the coach company assures us their drivers too have had satisfactory CRB checks;
- Ensure that regular volunteers and those assisting with overnight/residential stays have had satisfactory CRB checks carried out. Volunteers used for one off activities, who are not left alone at any time (out of sight/ear shot of a member of staff) to supervise children, do not necessarily need CRB checks completing. The Head Teacher's discretion under these circumstances is used.
- Make sure that all necessary consent and medical forms are obtained;
- Support the Head Teacher and governing body in their decisions on approval and pass all visits to the Head Teacher for formal approval through the 'EVOLVE' electronic system; **Guidance for Off-Site Educational Visits March 2008 Darlington Borough Council Children's Services Department 183**
- Ensure that **all** visits are recorded in the EVOLVE system;
- Keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example a swimming facility).

5.2 The Head Teacher will appoint/approve a competent **Visit Leader** to be responsible for running the visit. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school, with an appropriate level of experience, training and qualifications.

5.3 Visit Leaders and staff arranging or otherwise involved in off site activities must read thoroughly the procedures published by the LA, 'Code of Practice' and 'Guidelines for Off-Site Educational Visits'.

Visit Leaders will:

- Ensure all off site activities take place in accordance with the LA's procedures;
- Check to ensure sufficient staff and helpers of the right experience are CRB checked (as detailed above) and briefed throughout the visit;
- Conduct risk assessments and ensure management to reduce risks including site specific, general and dynamic risk assessments are undertaken and recorded;
- Ensure that Best Value principles are used when selecting providers, appropriate checks are made, insurance and financial support procedures are followed;
- Ensure a named person, emergency procedures and systems for recording and sharing information on accidents and near misses are in place before briefing pupils and parents;
- Will undertake exploratory visits or seek references from other schools if using new venues; and reassess from time to time;
- Ensure appropriate transport arrangements are in place i.e. reputable coach company, driver insurance, following specific LA and legal requirements;
- Will enter the details of the visit into the 'EVOLVE' system and pass on to the EVC with standard forms attached where appropriate to show the arrangements that have been made;
- Ensure any accidents / incidents are reported;

- Feedback any learning points from visits to the EVC/Head Teacher.

5.4 Where staff, are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the initial approval of the Head Teacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the school, staff should e-mail or tell the Head Teacher that the basic details have been completed in EVOLVE to enable a decision to be made. When initial approval is granted, the other sections of EVOLVE should be completed for submission to the EVC and on to the Head Teacher.

5.5 Governors will be informed of **all** visits but delegate **Formal Approval** of visits to the Head Teacher. After the Head Teachers approval, adventurous activities, residentials and visits abroad, will be (submitted to/discussed at a Governors' meeting) before sent to the LA for their **Formal Approval**.

5.6 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.
Guidance for Off-Site Educational Visits March 2008 Darlington Borough Council Children's Services Department

6 Risk assessments

6.1 Competent trained staff (usually the Visit Leader) must carry out a comprehensive risk assessment, before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks that 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 and follow LA procedures:

- Look for the hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
- Implement safety measures needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level
- Include the SEN/medical needs of the specific children participating
- Plan for emergencies
- Identify alternative arrangements or "Plan B" if the risks change and activities cannot be completed
- Record findings
- Review assessment and revise it if necessary.

6.2 Staff planning an off-site visit should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments should be considered to ascertain if they are of an appropriate standard and can be adopted.

6.3 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 show the extent of any hazards involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate the risks. 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.

6.4 An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios;

- 1 adult to 20 – 25 pupils in Years 7 to 13

We will normally have at least two adults accompanying any off-site visit, and wherever practicable one male and one female. The Visit Leader will usually be a teacher and the other may be a responsible and competent adult.

These ratios are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases. Higher levels of supervision may be required or determined by the risk assessment, National Governing Body (for the activity) guidelines or at the request of the Provider.

6.5 A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue and must include provision for:

- Appropriate level of supervision
- The required use of child restraints;
- Vetting of the driver by the police;
- Insurance for the driver;
- Details of first aid and emergency procedures;
- Breakdown procedures. **Guidance for Off-Site Educational Visits March 2008
Darlington Borough Council Children's Services Department**

6.6 The Visit Leader will double-check with the Head Teacher through our safeguarding procedures that all regular volunteers and those assisting with overnight/residential stays on the trip have been subject to satisfactory CRB checks. Those volunteers used for one-off activities, who are not left alone at any time (out of sight/ear shot of a member of staff) to supervise children, do not necessarily need CRB checks completing. The Head Teacher's discretion under these circumstances will be used.

6.7 The Risk Assessment form RA 10 – 'Initial Risk Assessment for Off-Site Educational Visits must be completed and attached to EVOLVE to gain initial approval by the Head Teacher.

Further General Risk Assessments, as indicated from the initial assessment, will be reviewed, supplemented and adjusted for the particular visit and included with the documentation attached to EVOLVE and paper copies will be taken on the visit.

For any activities that initially fall into the Medium-high or High Risk on the RA 10 form, then the risks will be reduced to an acceptable level before the visit will be approved by the Head Teacher (or the LA if applicable). Advice will be sought from the LA where required.

6.8 A copy of the completed risk assessments will be given to the Head Teacher, our Educational Visits Coordinator and all adults supervising the trip and will be available to parents and governors. It will automatically be forwarded to the LA through EVOLVE and will be scrutinised particularly if the visit requires LA approval (i.e. if residential, abroad or involves adventure activities).

6.9 It is important that the risk assessments are communicated and understood by everyone involved in the trip (staff, volunteers, pupils and parents) before it takes place. This includes risks, control measures, emergency arrangements and contingency plans.

6.10 Dynamic risk assessments will be required during the visit if changes occur e.g. weather, illness or an unforeseen hazard. These involve professional judgements in response to changing circumstances. It is critical that control measures are monitored and confirmed or adapted as required.

6.11 On completion of the visit the risk assessment must be reviewed and any learning points and recommendations for improved control measures documented and communicated to relevant staff.

6.12 Any accidents that occur to employees, volunteers or pupils during the visit must be investigated and recorded following normal school and LA Accident Reporting procedures.

7.0 Transport

7.1 When hiring coaches and minibuses, it is our policy only to use reputable companies with vehicles fitted with appropriate child restraints (seat belts), and to insist that all those participating in the visit wear them.

7.2 The school's minibus will be operated following LA Guidelines and School Policy, with the Head Teacher and Governing Body responsible for the management and use of vehicle. The Driver is responsible for the vehicle during a journey and must observe all legal requirements.

7.3 Where private cars are used for transport, the Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring:

- Suitability of driver;
- Parent's written agreement;
- Appropriate licence, insurance, roadworthy and child restraints for vehicle;

- That each driver has been subject to CRB checks. **Guidance for Off-Site Educational Visits March 2008 Darlington Borough Council Children's Services Department**

7.4 Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party and appropriate child restraints will be used, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach.

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

- Transport;
- Entrance fees;
- Insurance;
- Provision of any special resources or equipment;
- Costs related to adult helpers;
- Food and refreshments
- Accommodation
- External providers.

7.6 The school follows the legal requirements and LA guidance about charging for visits. Where the visit takes place in school time, no charge will be made to parents, but they will be asked for a voluntary contribution. If the visit is not viable for financial reasons, it will not run and any money collected will be repaid. Where a visit takes place mostly out of school time, parents will be asked to pay.

8.0 Communication with parents

8.1 The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity will be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit to make an informed decision.

8.2 Parents must give their written permission, medical and contact details, before a child can be involved in any off-site educational visits. (If there is any question about parents providing this information, the Head Teacher will meet with them in order to assess the risks.)

8.3 Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary except in the case of residential visits), with a limited subsidy from the Parent-Teacher Association. This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

8.4 No child may be excluded from a visit taking place in school time because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits.

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

8.6 Where appropriate for residential, foreign or adventure activity visits, information meetings with parents will be arranged.

8.7 Expectations of behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents. This will include the need to meet the cost and make arrangements for collecting children in certain circumstances.

9.0 Pupils

9.1 Pupils should be briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all visits. Training and careful briefing on activities will be given, particularly for unfamiliar ones. Ongoing briefings are an important part of learning and safety and will always be provided whilst on the visit. **Guidance for Off-Site Educational Visits March 2008**
Darlington Borough Council Children's Services Department

9.2 Where possible pupils should be involved with planning, developing codes of conduct, assessing/managing risk and evaluating their own attitude, behaviour, development and learning.

10.0 Further health and safety considerations

10.1 All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the Visit Leader, of the emergency procedures that will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

10.2 Before a group leaves school the Head Teacher and emergency contact should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the group, together with the emergency contact information for every individual, programme and timetable for the activity.

10.3 The safety of the group, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the group 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.

10.4 Prior to a visit, 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 Visit Leader should discuss with the Head Teacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

10.5.1 Children whose medical/health complaints cause particular concern will be referred to the LA for advice.

11.0 Visit documentation

11.1 The documentation for educational visits must include the following where applicable to the visit. The required documents will be attached to EVOLVE, where they can be accessed by the Head Teacher, EVC and LA if required. Paper copies should be taken on the visit by the Visit Leader.

- Risk assessments
- Report on preliminary visit;
- General information;
- Names, ages, contact details, consent and medical fitness forms, and other relevant details of **all** those going on the visit;
- Travel schedule;
- Accommodation plan;
- Full plan of activities;
- Contingency plan details
- Fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- Intended arrangements for supervision;
- Emergency contacts and procedures;
- General communications information;
- Guidance for group leaders;
- Guidance for the emergency contact and Head Teacher;
- First-aid arrangements;
- Accident report forms. **Guidance for Off-Site Educational Visits March 2008
Darlington Borough Council Children's Services Department**

12.0 Monitoring and review

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