

HEATHCOTE

Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

This policy was written by Headteacher Lara Jeffries and based upon Warwickshire County Council's model. It will be presented in draft version to the full staff compliment for discussion and revision. The final version will be presented to Governors for consideration, approval and adoption.



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Primary School

Responsible: Lara Jeffries

Next review due: July 2018

Rationale

At The Heathcote Primary School we aspire to providing the best possible education for all of our pupils. It is our desire that Heathcote children are well rounded young people who have a range of exciting learning experiences to draw on; by the time they leave us and move forward to secondary school. We regard educational visits as a vital part of these aims.

Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with The Warwickshire County Council Learning Outside the Classroom and Educational Visits Policy and Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) National Guidance.

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/outdooreducationteachers>

<http://oeapng.info/>

Educational visits are activities arranged by the school and which take place beyond the school grounds. At Heathcote we believe that educational visits can supplement and enrich the school curriculum by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. We believe that off-site visits serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching children's learning experiences and opportunities.

This policy outlines our procedures for the planning and evaluation of educational visits, and seeks to ensure that risks are managed and, therefore, kept to a minimum. Within these constraints, we seek to make our visits open available to all pupils, and wherever possible open to those with disabilities. Visits will usually take place within the school day.

Aims

The aims of educational visits are:

- To enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- To provide a wider range of exciting, engaging experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site, alone;
- To promote the independence of our children both as learners and as responsible citizens; and to enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

Our visits range from short excursions, on foot, in the local area, to residential trips, in Key Stage 2, where the children spend several nights away from home.

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Educational Visits and our Curriculum

We believe that educational visits can support all areas of our curriculum. The following are examples of how visits might be used in different subjects:

- Literacy- theatre visits, cinema visits, visits by authors
- Science- visits to: museums, planetariums, engineering facilities, senior school science departments, wildlife habitats
- Numeracy- the creation of shape and number trails in the local environment
- History- visits to: museums, castles, historic properties, local towns and villages
- Geography- visits to local and contrasting environments
- Art and Design- visits to galleries, studios and local art installations
- P.E. – Sporting fixtures and competitions
- Music- extra-curricular lessons, performances etc.
- Design Technology- visits to local firms or academic institutions
- Computing- looking at use of technologies by shops, industry and other organisations
- RE- visits to local centres of worship
- PSHE- visits to police stations, fire stations, voluntary organisations etc.

At Heathcote much of our work is cross-curricular. Teachers use their professional judgement to plan visits that enhance and enrich our topics.

Residential Visits

At Heathcote we believe that residential visits provide unique opportunities for our children, promoting independence and life skills in addition to delivering substantial parts of The National Curriculum.

Authorisation, Planning and Assessment of Risk

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Experienced staff, with a history of planning and leading offsite activities, are defined as competent. Inexperienced staff may become competent by accompanying those with experience on not less than two trips or at such a time their skills are deemed to be at a sufficient level.

Competent staff are responsible for planning offsite activities and assessing risk (alongside members of staff, such as the EVC, who have a higher degree of training). A paper risk assessment is required for all visits and this must be agreed and countersigned by the Headteacher and/or Educational Visits Coordinator. This agreement and countersignature provides a final authorisation for the activity and therefore the risk assessment must be drafted, approved and signed in advance of the trip.

Where the trip is residential, the risk assessment should be approved by the Governing Body and signed by the Chair of Governors.

Planning should reflect the school requirements, legal requirements and good practice. You should ensure that:

- all staff (including any adult volunteer helpers) and the children involved have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk management process
- those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained. Refer to National Guidance document: Consent
- proportionate assurances have been obtained from any providers (making full use of national schemes that accredit that assurances have already been obtained by credible inspection regimes)
- designated emergency contact(s) have been identified that will work on a 24/7 basis where required
- all details of the activity provision are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity

The degree of complexity of a particular plan or policy (along with its supporting procedures) will need to reflect the nature and complexity of several variables that can impact on any given activity. These variables can be remembered as 'SAGED':

*S*taffing requirements – trained? experienced? competent? ratios?

*A*ctivity characteristics – specialist? insurance issues? licensable?

*G*roup characteristics – prior experience? ability? behaviour? special/medical needs?

*E*nvironmental conditions – like last time? impact of weather? water levels?

*D*istance from support mechanisms in place at the home base – transport? residential?

Refer to National Guidance document: Planning Basics

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Where visits incur costs, for such things as transportation, admission or equipment, the visit should be planned by teaching staff in conjunction with staff in the administration office. Administration staff should obtain relevant invoices and calculate the amount to be requested from parents by way of a voluntary donation. (Where the trip is residential, the school will charge parents for board and lodging with the exception of those parents who are in receipt of Free School Meals or who are in financial hardship. In these circumstances, parents should be referred directly to the Head Teacher).

Our policy on charging and donations is in line with the OEAP National Guidance; the relevant document can be found at the following link : <http://oeapng.info/head-manager/>

Assessment of risk is not merely a paper based exercise. It involves competent staff using their professional judgement to institute control measures that provide a reasonable level of safety for all children and adults who are involved in an activity. Examples of such control measures are:

- good toileting procedures
- selecting a safe and sensible site for eating lunch
- safe road crossing procedures

When planning an activity, competent staff are responsible for completing an assessment of risk, (alongside staff with a higher degree of training, such as the EVC) and planning the necessary control measures to keep risk to a minimum. A paper risk assessment should be completed on the Warwickshire County Council template available on the staff shared drive. This assessment is a working document which needs to be shared with all responsible adults involved and acted upon. Competent staff must assess risk during the activity and institute new control measures where necessary and immediately communicate the new control measures to all other adults and children as appropriate.

Where necessary, for instance if the activity is to take place at a venue unknown to the school, the lead member of staff should make a pre-visit to the site to assess possible risks. Where a preliminary visit is not reasonably practicable, staff should consider how sufficient information to make an adequate assessment of the risk-benefit management issues will be gathered and, in those circumstances, should refer to the EVC.

Where the venue for a visit provides a generic risk assessment, this assessment should be used, as an assessor from the venue will have a better understanding of the inherent risks and control measures needed to negate them. Where this is the case, a separate paper risk assessment need not be completed. However, the generic venue risk assessment should be attached to a risk assessment for the journey which staff must complete. This document can be adapted to include any additional control measures such as medical needs.

A copy of the paper risk assessment(s) should be taken on visits by the lead teacher, as an aide memoir. Any changes to control measures should be written on the document to evidence decisions made and for future reference. Copy documentation should be kept on file in the administration office for the duration of the trip. Original signed documentation should be handed to the School Manager for the record.

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For local trips, (defined as trips within the town/area) which do not include encountering roads, traffic or close contact with members of the public ie the risks are minimal, a specific risk assessment does not need to be carried out. However, if the trip does involve crossing public roads, traffic, members of the public within the town etc then a risk assessment must be carried out. Staff can access generic risk assessments for walking around the town/travelling by coach on the staff shared drive.

WCC delegates the responsibility for formal approval of all offsite educational visits and LOtC activity to schools. It is a requirement of this policy that the Headteacher and Managers carry out this function in accordance with the policy.

Although approval is delegated, establishments must notify WCC's Educational Visit Advisor in advance of any higher risk visits and activities, which involve any of the following:

- an overseas visit
- a residential or overnight stay (at home or abroad)
- the provision of an adventurous activity

For higher risk visits and activities (Category C), the notification procedure requires an 'Offsite Activities Notification Form' (OSA1) to be emailed to educationalvisits@warwickshire.gov.uk

Notification forms are available from: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/outdooreducationteachers

Discipline and Conduct

The teaching staff are responsible for the good conduct of the pupils who are representing our school. Children are expected to treat all adults, including volunteers and site staff, with the same respect. Staff should refer to the behaviour policy.

Volunteers are encouraged to positively reinforce discipline but seek advice from teaching staff where situations cannot be resolved quickly.

Record Keeping

Records of all trips, including invoices and copy risk assessments should be kept on file in the administration office. Teachers should carry with them all necessary documentation, on the day of the trip, in the form of a suitable pack, the contents of which should be made available to other accompanying adults, where necessary and appropriate.

All accompanying adults should be given the opportunity to read and sign the original copy of the risk assessment before the trip and should be offered a duplicate copy for them to keep to hand and to refer to during the trip if they prefer.

Insurance

As the school subscribes to the WES School Insurance Service, the following insurances apply to off-site visits to the same extent as they do on school premises:

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- Employers' liability which indemnifies the school in respect of claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any employee. For the purposes of this insurance, persons acting in a voluntary capacity as assistant supervisors are classed as employees
- Public liability which indemnifies the school and employees in respect of claims for compensation for bodily injury and third party property damage
- Personal accident. Limited cover for teachers and volunteers

Cover is not provided for the following risks, whether off-site or on-site, and will require separate insurance cover, as required:

- Personal accident for pupils: provides specific benefits in the event of an accident and should not be confused with public liability insurance, which indemnifies the school should it be legally liable for damages
- Loss of, or damage to, personal effects
- Cancellation or curtailment: should be considered where significant non-refundable deposits or costs are incurred if the trip is cancelled or a pupil cannot travel.
- Medical expenses and repatriation costs: should be considered essential for non-UK trips
- Personal liability.

The EVC or trip leader should contact the Council's Insurance Team (tel: 01926 418160 email: rogerlinney@warwickshire.gov.uk) if they need clarification on any of the above or advice on any circumstances requiring early notification of specialist activities to the council's insurer.

Insurance for those risks not included in the standard WES insurance cover, should be sourced. Three quotes should be obtained from Warwickshire County Council together plus two other quotes from leading insurance companies. The Head Teacher, governing body and the EVC should determine which quote is the most appropriate in respect of that specific trip.

Supervision Ratios

Except in Early Years, the law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; however, it does require that the level of supervision and group management is 'effective'. Our supervision ratios are calculated dependent on:

- the nature of the activity (including its duration)
- the location and environment in which the activity is to take place
- the age and gender (including developmental age) of the children and young people to be supervised
- the ability of the children and young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs)
- staff competence

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This is in line with recommendations in the OEAP national guidelines. Increased supervision is a way of decreasing the level of inherent risk for many activities.

For normal low-risk activities, we consider these ratios to be appropriate:

Adults : Children

Early Years/Foundation 1 : 6

Key Stage 1 1 : 8

Lower KS2 1 : 10

Upper KS2 1 : 15

Be aware that these ratios are a minimum! Consideration should be given to the specific needs of the pupils in the group eg a child with medical needs or SEN.

The Early Years and Foundation Stage Statutory Framework sets out specific legal requirements for minimum ratios in this age group, which apply both indoors and on outings.

For further guidance, consult the EVC and the OEAP national guidelines.

First Aid

Trips should be accompanied by a qualified first-aider and a suitable first-aid kit should be carried.

All trips in the EYFS must be accompanied by a member of staff with a paediatric first-aid certificate and this is also desirable for trips involving older children.

Costings and Charges

Costings should be calculated by the administration office staff. The school policy on charging and donations is in line with the OEAP National Guidance; the relevant document can be found at the following link :

<http://oeapng.info/head-manager/> .

The school retains the right to cancel trips where an insufficient proportion of costs is likely to be recovered in the form of charges or donations.

Consents and Communication with Parents

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Parents should be given as much notice as possible for offsite activities. This notice should include information about the trip and, where necessary, a request for written consent. Written permission is not required for local trips within the town as this consent is obtained from all parents at the beginning of the school year.

Medical consent is not required for local trips or trips within the school day as medical consent is given by parents annually at the beginning of each year. However, within the letter to parents informing of the trip, they should be invited to confirm that there are no changes to the medical consent/add recent changes to the medical consent.

Parents should give separate medical consent for residential trips, providing authority for their child to receive emergency treatment, including administration of an anaesthetic or blood transfusion. This will be in the form of an OSA form available on <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/outdooreducationteachers>

Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support

The Lead Teacher is responsible for safety of pupils and adults accompanying the visit. If in their opinion an emergency has or is occurring, they or another suitable adult should contact The Emergency Services by ringing 999. The school should then be informed, as soon as reasonably possible. Staff must, at all times, follow the instructions of the emergency services where they are present at an incident.

Staff should carry mobile telephones with which to contact the school office. The school office hold emergency contacts for all pupils, staff and volunteers accompanying a trip.

For residential trips there should always be a nominated base contact who is available at all times for the duration of the visit. Staff will also have copies of the OSA2 forms containing emergency contact details.

A critical incident is defined when any member of a group

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

If a critical incident does occur, the Visit Leader will contact their Emergency Base Contact, usually the Headteacher or EVC. The Emergency Base Contact will then contact the CSW Resilience team for further support and advice, using the 24 hour duty telephone number. CSW - Warwickshire Guidance & Advice

Refer to National Guidance document: Off-site visits emergencies - an establishment's role

Safeguarding

All adults involved have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people during outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom. Visit Leaders should ensure that they are informed of any children who may be particularly vulnerable or have specific safeguarding needs, and ensure that other staff/adults are made aware as necessary.

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Reporting

Allegations, disclosures and other child protection issues should be dealt with via the normal school and WCC procedures. When any concerns about a young person are identified these should be raised with the establishment's designated safeguarding lead.

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, you should make a referral to children's social care and/or the police immediately. Where referrals are not made by the designated safeguarding lead, you should inform the designated safeguarding lead that a referral has been made as soon as possible.

Overnight stays

Where activities and visits involve overnight stays, careful consideration should be given to sleeping arrangements, taking into account issues of privacy and child protection. Children, staff and parents should be informed of sleeping arrangements prior to the start of the trip. Careful attention should be given to ensuring safe staff/participant ratios and to the gender mix of staff.

Relationships and professional behaviour

Adults are in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

Staff should be aware of the more informal nature of outdoor learning and offsite visits and should not:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games or horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching in any form
- allow children or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person, even in fun

Mobile communications and social media

Mobile phones and Twitter can be very useful in organising visits. For example, they can be used for keeping parents informed about the progress of a residential visit, about changes in arrangements such as travel times, or in the event of an emergency.

Staff should communicate with parents via the school office and the administration staff will contact parents where necessary and tweet out messages.

Pupils will not be allowed to take their own mobile phones on day trips or residential visits.

Transport

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A number of factors should be considered as part of a transport risk assessment including, but not limited to, driver competence, suitability/maintenance of vehicles, insurance, seat belts, weather conditions and driver fatigue.

The level of supervision necessary should be also considered. The driver of a vehicle transporting children cannot drive and supervise at the same time. Therefore a key judgement needs to be made about the likely behaviour and individual needs of the passengers. In the interests of safeguarding, it is strongly recommended that a minimum of two adults travel in each vehicle.

The visit leader should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company.

Transporting children and young people in private cars requires careful consideration. Where this occurs, there should be recorded procedures.

Staff should refer to the School's driving policy.

DBS Checks and Volunteers

Where volunteers accompany a visit, a DBS check is not normally required. However, this check is required if the adult concerned is accompanying a residential trip or they spend time alone and unsupervised with the children. As employees, all staff will have an enhanced DBS check.

Volunteers should be treated with respect. They should be informed of the plan for the visit and asked to read and sign risk assessments. Staff should thank, and ask the children to thank, all volunteers on behalf of the school at the end of the trip as our visits would not be possible without them.

Children with Special, Medical and Differing Needs

Where children have specific needs which may impact upon the visit, every effort must be made to accommodate them. The group risk assessment should contain additional control measures and, if necessary an individual risk assessment and action plan should be written and acted upon. Where necessary, staff should liaise with staff at the visit site to communicate the needs of these children and an action plan should be put in place and acted upon.

Staff may need to liaise with parents to identify the needs of the child and, where necessary, appropriate permissions should be obtained with regard to medicines etc.

Reviewed March 2017

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Next review due: July 2018