



Hopelands Preparatory School

Educational Visits Policy

Hopelands Preparatory School believes that school visits are an essential resource for the teaching of a broad and balanced curriculum. Each year group will go on at least one visit each year linked to an aspect of their topic work. Alongside visits off-site, the school will invite in speakers, groups, artists or other adults into Hopelands to enrich and extend experiences.

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 all 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.

When planning for a visit, teachers should consult with Mrs S Bradburn to ensure correct procedures are followed.

Aims

The aims of our off-site educational 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.

Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which can include visits to the school by specialists). Examples of educational visits or visitors include:

- a) English – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;
- b) science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens;
- c) mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
- d) history – castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums;
- e) geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, town trails;

- f) art and design – art gallery visits, use of the locality;
- g) PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches;
- h) music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, local schools' orchestra, concerts for parents to hear;
- i) design and technology – visits to local factories, design centres or model plane making groups;
- j) ICT – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools etc;
- k) RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.
- l) PSHE and citizenship – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.
- m) French – residential trip to France

How visits will be authorised

The Head teacher will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will be a teacher employed at the school.

Mrs Bradburn will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

She will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues.

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the *DCSF Health and safety of pupils on educational visits (reference HSPV2)*. All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the agreed instructions.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the Head teacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A special event form and risk assessment should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.

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.

Risk assessment

A comprehensive risk assessment will be carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit is put forward to the Head teacher. 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 is the hazard rating?
- What safety and control measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- What is the probability of the hazard occurring?
- The overall risk factor.

What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Staff 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 party 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 Governing Body 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 Visit Plan 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.

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

- 1 adult to 8 pupils for children aged 3 - 7 years
- 1 adult to between 10 pupils aged 7 - 11;

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are *minimum* requirements, and may *not* provide adequate supervision in all cases.

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

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the Head teacher.

Transport

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

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance (*if applicable*);
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for.

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

Where private cars are used for transport, the group 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.

We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts.

Communication with parents

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

Funding for off-site activities is provided by parental contributions. This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

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.

Further health and safety considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which 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.

Before a party leaves school the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity, the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking

note of any information provided by medical forms and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

Prior to an activity, 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 party leader should discuss with the Head teacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements can be obtained from DCSF documentation held in the school office.

Group leaders' planning

Group leaders must liaise closely with the Head teacher and read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:

- *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide* – (DfES 1998) and its supplements:
 - *A Handbook for Group Leaders* (DfES 2002)
 - *Group Safety at Water Margins* (DfES 2002)

Visit plan

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

- appropriate risk assessment;
- any relevant general information;
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- travel schedule, importantly arrival and departure times;
- accommodation plan (if applicable);
- full schedule of activities;
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures (if supplied by visit centre);
- intended arrangements for supervision;

The teacher(s) leading the educational visit must take with them:

- appropriate risk assessment;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- guidance for the emergency contact and headteacher;
- first-aid boxes.

Monitoring and review

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

S Bradburn
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