

# Educational Visits Policy

This Policy Applies to Bruern Abbey School

Reviewed July 2017

by

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**Reviewed Annually**

**Associated Policies – First Aid, Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Critical Incidents, Curriculum and Behaviour**

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## **Educational Visits Policy**

This policy has due regard to the DfE Guidance, *Health and Safety Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies*.

It also draws on the previous guidance *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits* (HASPEV).

At Bruern Abbey School, we believe that learning outside the classroom is an essential component of our curriculum. It gives our pupils unique opportunities to develop their resourcefulness and initiative and to spend time together in an informed environment. Each trip is different. Some are directly related to the curriculum, some are designed to promote social awareness, or to enhance physical skills, self-reliance and team working. Others will extend their knowledge of the world. The common factor is that they all make an essential contribution to our pupils' development and education in the broadest sense of the word.

### **1. Basic Principles**

#### **Responsibility**

- The Head bears ultimate responsibility in ensuring staff meet the arrangements and follow the guidelines in this policy they will hold the role of nominated contact in the event of an emergency, the Deputy Head will be the second nominated contact in the event of the Head being unavailable
- The Educational Visits Co-ordinator, also the Head teacher, is responsible for the review of this policy and ensuring that staff are aware of its contents
- Teachers who plan a day or residential visit are designated as the group leader and, as such, have responsibility to make sure the visit is properly organised.
- The group leader is responsible for completing a full risk assessment of the trip. This must be approved by the Head before the trip can go ahead.
- Bruern Abbey School *Behaviour Policy* applies to all pupils on off-site visits. The group leader is responsible for good behaviour on all visits.
- The group leader (designated by the Head) will be responsible for co-ordinating and delegating tasks to all staff participating in the visit.
- Staff accompanying children on visits will have appropriately designated responsibilities and a clear itinerary of events.
- The group leader will complete a visit evaluation form after the visit, reporting back to the Head any problems/issues and particular successes.

#### **Health and safety**

- Safety is the prime consideration when planning or carrying out a school trip; all appropriate health & safety and child protection procedures must be followed.
- All risks will be assessed and reported prior to the event and any possible measures towards safety and welfare undertaken,
- Staffing will adhere to recommended supervisor: child ratios (see *Educational Visits Procedure Checklist* for details). The group leader will consider whether the nature of the activities requires the normal ratios to be exceeded.
- The staffing of every off-site visit must include an adult who has an appropriate first aid qualification.
- Appropriate first aid provision will be available at all stages of the trip.
- Teachers, assistants and volunteers accompanying school trips will be suitably record checked and appropriately trained in procedures.

- All transport arrangement and venues will be checked for suitability and safety beforehand.
- Risk assessments will be completed and approved for all aspects of the trip.

### **Educational Value**

- For curricular visits, a clear aim and objective must be identified by the group leader and clearly communicated to the other accompanying adults.
- Visits are not taken in isolation. Pupils are well prepared for the visit and, subsequently, put the experience to good effect as a stimulus for work in class.

### **Parents and information**

- At the start of each academic year parents are asked to sign a consent form for their child to participate in regular off-site activities such as visits to local sports amenities, churches and for sports fixtures against other schools. Such events do not then require further parental consent but are otherwise regulated by this policy.
- Parents will be notified of the details of all other school visits in advance and permission for any school trip must be received from parents/guardians in writing prior to the visit date. In practice, written parental permission is not a legal requirement for trips which occur entirely within the school day and do not require a higher level of risk management. However, on all occasions, parents must be told where the children will be and of any extra safety measures required.
- Parents will be told specifically if a day visit involves a return to school after the end of the normal school day.
- Parents will be required to notify the trip leader of their child's special or medical needs and of any other considerations affecting the welfare and safety the child and of staff and other pupils.
- Parents are also asked to sign a consent form for emergency medical treatment.
- For residential visits and trips overseas the school will offer/hold an information meeting for parents and pupils at the early stages of planning. An information meeting may be held for other visits as appropriate.
- Pupils' emergency contact details, medical information and any other relevant information will be collected prior to the visit. This information will be taken on the visit.
- Costs for visits will be calculated in advance, in line with the schools budget
- Parents will be notified of the cost of the trip well in advance where this is not absorbed by the school. Bruern Abbey School will not make profit on any curricular-based visits.

## **2. Procedures for Organising an Educational Visit**

### **General Information**

Early planning is essential for any visit. Plans for residential visits and overseas trips are formulated well in advance. All off-site visits and activities must be approved by the Head, who is kept fully informed throughout the planning stages. Residential visits and trips overseas must be authorised by the Proprietor, who must be kept informed of progress in planning to facilitate continued approval. Activities of an outdoor pursuit or adventure nature must be within the ability of the children participating and the accompanying staff.

### **Preliminary Planning**

An outline plan is presented to the Head for approval prior to more detailed plans being made. Once outline permission has been granted and any particular conditions set, one or more meetings of the proposed staff involved will be held to formalise the administration and organisation of the visit. Specific duties, and the names of the pupils for whom each person is responsible, are identified if necessary.

Discussions will take place with the Head about any other school events or trips which may be occurring at a similar time in order to establish a balance.

Once the trip is approved, parents will normally be informed and provided with as much information as is appropriate. Greater detail will be expected for trips overseas or involving overnight stays. Preparing for such trips will include an information meeting for parents.

The provision of information to parents will normally include the following, as appropriate:

- Information about accommodation
- Itinerary
- Emergency Contacts/Medical Forms
- Staffing/Grouping Details
- Personal Items/luggage requirements
- Insurance Details
- Finance Arrangements
- Spending Money
- Information about the coach company and any other transport arrangements

### **Insurance**

The Head will liaise with the Bursar to check that insurance cover for all children and adults involved in visits is appropriate. Extra insurance cover may be needed for residential visits, trips abroad and any activities of a hazardous nature. If insurance cover is not provided by the commercial centre or Tour Company, it is arranged by the Bursar/Head and added to the cost of the visit. All parties are provided with precise details of the insurance policy, so that there is no doubt about the cover and, in particular, what eventualities fall outside such cover. In the event the Head and Bursar are unsure if a trip is covered by normal school insurance provision, they should contact the Finance Department at Bellevue Education to establish if this is the case.

### **Preliminary Visit**

Except in the case of repeated visits, an exploratory visit by the group leader or another designated member of the accompanying staff is usually made. In the case of repeat visits, the group leader should contact the venue(s) to establish that there have been no significant changes to the premises or arrangements, which may affect the organisation of the visit.

A preliminary visit should establish at first hand:

- that the venue is suitable
- that the venue can cater for the needs of pupils and staff
- an assessment of potential areas and levels of risk, completing Risk Assessment with details being given to the head teacher. This will incorporate any risk assessment provided by the venue/tour operator
- familiarity with the area before taking the children
- information concerning staff qualifications, if not already known
- suitable checking of staff at the venue to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

In certain circumstances, for example when all the activities are run by the centre's own staff, to whom the risks and area are well known, a preliminary visit is not always necessary. Nevertheless, a visit may be needed to establish such matters as a safe place for a picnic lunch, the safe use of toilet facilities, distances to walk from car parks etc.

If it is not possible to make a preliminary visit, every endeavour must be made to acquire information about the accommodation and the area, before the visit.

If a preliminary visit has not taken place, as a matter of priority when the party arrives, a member of staff inspects the facilities and accommodation and any areas where there might be dangers or potential hazards. Where necessary, risk assessments are then reassessed.

### **Staffing**

Pupil to staff ratios for school trips are not prescribed in law. Those planning trips, on the basis of risk assessment, should decide the ratios, taking into account the activity to be undertaken and the age and maturity of the pupils. The group leader will liaise with the Head/Bursar to ensure that the adult:pupil ratios for the visit are appropriate. These will take account of:

- Appropriate legislation
- The ages of the children involved
- Whether the nature of the activity and/or the pupils involved require the ratio to be exceeded. A common example is activities involving water.

#### **Adult – Child Ratios for Excursions**

The factors to take into consideration are:

A guide for visits to local sites, museums or local walks, in normal circumstances:

Normal Minimum Guidelines (group leaders should assess risk and alter accordingly), ratios will depend on the level of qualification of the staff involved, the activities being undertaken and the environment in which they are being carried out:

1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in Years 4 to 6

1 adult for every 15-20 pupils in Year 7 and above

For trips abroad 1 adult for every 8 pupils

In normal circumstances, all adults accompanying a visit will have enhanced DBS clearance. If an adult does not have such clearance, his or her participation must be approved by the Headteacher following a risk assessment. In such situations, the group leader must make necessary arrangements so that the adult does not have any unsupervised access to the children. In all trips involving an overnight stay, all adults must have enhanced DBS clearance.

For visits which involve children working with staff at another venue or organisation, the group leader must obtain written confirmation from the organisation that it has undertaken all appropriate checks on its staff and that they are appropriately qualified and suitable to work with children. The centre may make a statement to this effect in its publicity materials.

When planning an activity involving caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports, the group leader must check that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 (for England, Scotland and Wales).

On trips involving both boys and girls, the staff must include both men and women. The Headteacher has the discretion to waive this requirement in the case of the youngest pupils, depending on the nature of the trip. Staffing must be appropriate, in terms of ratios and qualifications, to cope with any child on the trip with special or individual medical needs.

The group leader should liaise with the Headteacher to discuss cover arrangements back at school as necessary for all adults involved in the visit; classes to be covered in the absence of staff, work set, duties needing cover etc.

### **Financial Arrangements**

Records of all payments by individual pupils are kept by the leader and Bursar. At the Bursar's discretion, residential visit payments may be made in stages. All payments should be made by

cheque or bank transfer. Payment by the school in advance for trip costs will be made by the **Bursar**. For payments and other sundry expenses during the visit, including, if appropriate, issuing of pocket money, the group leader should make appropriate arrangements with the **Bursar**. Similarly the group leader should liaise with the **Bursar** when foreign currency is required. The group leader must ensure maximum security for money, passports and other valuable documents before and throughout the visit.

### **Calculating Costs**

Factors to be taken into account in calculating the cost of the trip include:

- travel, transport and parking
- entrance fees for staff and pupils
- hire of equipment (for activities)
- insurance
- preliminary visits
- extra staffing and supply cover at school
- meals
- materials
- rewards, incentives, prizes for pupils' work, conduct etc.
- spending money
- contingency fund

### **Further Liaison with Parents**

(in some cases it may be more appropriate to combine this stage with the provision of information, noted to parents, above)

It is imperative that parents are given full and complete written details regarding the organisation and administration of a visit. This will normally include:

- activities and venues
- specialist equipment and/or clothing necessary for activities
- packed meal requirements
- teachers/leaders, their experience and expertise when required
- total costs and methods for payment
- insurance cover, including medical cover and exemptions
- passport requirements, if any

A signed parental consent form must be obtained for each participating pupil, agreeing to emergency treatment and medication to be given if needed and for staff to act in loco parentis.

### **Pupil Behaviour and Supervision**

The group leader has responsibility for the good conduct of pupils on the trip. All accompanying adults have a duty of care. Teachers should be briefed that they are in loco parentis at all times on the visit and thus are legally responsible for the well-being and safety of the children and also for their behaviour, which should be impeccable at all times.

Children should never be on their own, but always remain in a group, and must be supervised by an adult at all times. Groups and their leaders should be decided in advance and well publicised.

On residential visits, close supervision of the pupils in the hostel, centre or hotel during the night must be maintained. Adults' rooms must be located in close proximity to the children's rooms. Staff should be allocated "on call" responsibilities on a rota basis and those adults should refrain from the

consumption of alcohol in order to be able to perform their duties properly in the case of an emergency.

## **Risk Assessments**

The school's arrangements for risk assessments on off-site visits are as follows:

For the peace of mind of all staff involved, and that of the school management, trips and visits will only be approved after an assessment of the risks involved has been carried out.

Risk assessment is the normal day to day activity which we undertake without conscious effort, such as crossing roads, driving etc. The risk assessment forms enable the group leader to apply the same thought processes to the trip being planned. What is required is an understanding of the potential risks involved and the actions required to minimise those risks. Completing the forms will better enable the school to safeguard the children, thus giving the group leader peace of mind. If you, as group leader, feel unsure about anything, please ask.

The group leader will prepare written risk assessments for individual visits and activities. The given pro-forma, and the bank of risk assessments for repeated activities (travelling by public transport, crossing the road, escorting children along a footpath at a roadside etc.) are available from the school office should help group leaders to consider the 'risk factor and plan contingency measures to prevent or deal with such eventualities. (Where necessary, staff training will be provided).

Final authorisation for each visit will be made by the Headteacher and only then if he is satisfied that an adequate risk assessment has been carried out.

In order that the safety of pupils and staff can be as thorough as possible, the following time scales must be adhered to.

**At least 1 week prior to the trip;** Risk Assessments, including those from the place to be visited, handed to Educational Visits Coordinator (also the Head) with a completed Off Site Visits Form, list of pupils involved, details of any particular requirements for pupils with special or medical needs, parental consent forms and all letters sent to parents. This will form part of the information file detailed under "information and final arrangements" below.

In the event of consent forms not being returned by the specified time, the pupil will not be allowed to travel.

**At least 2 full days before the trip;** The risk assessments and forms noted above, having been checked and signed by the Educational Visits Coordinator should be copied for the staff on the trip and the school office.

In the case of residential visits and trips taking place outside term time, these should also be copied to the nominated contact at school (if this is not the Headteacher). Staff on the trip (excluding the Leader who should be in possession of them all) need only the consent forms of the children in their care for the trip.

It is the responsibility of the group leader to check that all the consent forms and medical details for each child have been successfully collected by the deadline. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to give final consent to the trip going ahead after reading the Risk Assessment.

If there are any worries or uncertainties, the group leader should always ask the Headteacher, Educational Visits Coordinator or Bursar for help.

## **Information and final arrangements**

Final details of the visit, including the final version of the risk assessment, must be submitted to the Headteacher and **Educational Visits Coordinator** for approval one week before the visit. This

information will be retained for future reference. The group leader holds the same information for the duration of the visit and checks immediately prior to departure for any late changes, for example due to pupil illness or absence. Such changes are noted and an amended copy submitted to the Headteacher. As a minimum, the information should include details of:

- itinerary
- contact points
- pupils' and staff emergency contacts
- contact information for staff while on the trip
- copies of Parental Medical Consent Forms
- specific information about any children with individual special or medical needs, including their medical plans as appropriate
- copies of any insurance documents, contracts, etc
- emergency procedures
- risk assessments

### **Special Educational Needs & Disability**

The Headteacher and Educational Visits Coordinator will ensure that all reasonably practicable efforts have been made during the course of risk assessment to include disabled pupils in educational visits. This will usually entail discussion with the pupil, parents, group leader and other supervisors, the manager of the venue to be visited, the tour operator etc.

### **Ongoing Risk Assessments and Reassessments**

The group leader, or other adults with responsibility, should reassess risks while the visit is taking place. Ongoing risk assessments normally consist of judgements and decisions made as the need arises. They should be informed by the site specific risk assessments and take account of local expertise on: e.g. tides, potential for flooding etc. They are not usually recorded until after the visit and should be reviewed to inform future planning. Examples of the need for ongoing risk assessment:

- Changing weather, tiredness or illness within the group, behaviour, issues with other groups at same venue etc. Control measures may include deciding to change to the pre-assessed plan B or swapping activities on the itinerary so that the activity can be carried out on a different day
- Emergencies. Control measures would include establishing the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible; ensuring that all the group are safe and looked after; establishing whether anyone has been hurt and getting immediate medical attention for them; ensuring that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures; ensuring that if a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital, the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together; and informing the emergency contact in the school
- Group leaders are always in charge. They should trust their own knowledge of pupils and use their own professional judgement. This may include challenging an activity leader where the group leader's knowledge of the group is superior, or intervening to prompt a change of plan, including stopping an activity if it has become too hazardous

## **3. On Departure and During the Visit**

### **Communication**

The group leader must take a working mobile phone (one can be provided by the school if notified in advance) and must ensure that the school has all the necessary contact information for each stage of the trip.



In advance of the trip, pupils should be given clear safety instructions based upon the nature of the activities and the associated risks.

### **First Aid**

All accompanying adults must be familiar with the school's first aid and medication policy, a copy of which should be included in the group leader's information file.

On departure the group leader must collect the First Aid kit for school visits from the Medical room. This must be returned to the Bursar after the visit together with details of any items used.

The group leader must also ensure that any special medical equipment or medication to meet individual pupil needs, such as inhalers, Epi-pens, etc, are taken on the trip.

The regulations for the reporting of accidents (RIDDOR) apply to educational visits and can be found in the school's first aid and medication policy.

When the trip involves the use of a venue which provides first aid facilities, the group leader must ensure that all adults are aware of the arrangements and the location of first aid points.

In the event of a minor incident

- organise first aid treatment so that a member of staff stays with the pupil
- call for help if necessary
- see that the remainder of the group is safe
- telephone the nominated school contact number

### **Transport**

It is the school's policy that only coaches with seat belts are booked. Vehicles used should comply with the current requirements on seat belts. All seats should be forward facing and seat restraints should comply with legal requirements. Occasionally a trip may be organised to a country where legislation does not require coaches to be fitted with seatbelts and such a coach may not be available. In such circumstances the group leader must endeavour to book a coach fitted with seat belts and must do everything possible to ensure the safety of staff and pupils. Parents must be made aware of such circumstances.

### **Supervision on Transport**

- At least two members of staff should supervise the pupils getting on and off the coach – one on the coach and one by the steps.
- A roll call must be taken at regular intervals, including each occasion when pupils embark and disembark.
- Pupils should not sit on the first two seats facing the front window or next to the emergency exit.
- Staff should sit at intervals spaced through the coach to ensure proper supervision
- All pupils must be settled before setting off and must wear their seat belts throughout the journey, unless told to remove them in an emergency.
- The group leader should delegate an adult to check for lost property and litter when the group leaves the coach.
- At least one qualified teacher should be on each coach or minibus and have a mobile phone with them.

### **Other Transport:**

- If school staff use their own cars to transport children they must have appropriate car insurance. Staff concerned must liaise with the Bursar to establish whether such transportation is covered by the school's or their own insurance. If the latter, documentary proof must be provided to the Bursar. Specific written permission must be obtained from parents. Other than in exceptional circumstances, a teacher should never use his or her own car to transport a single pupil.
- If parents are transporting children, their cars should be fully insured; relevant legislation relating to pupils sitting in the front and the use of booster seats must be followed. Seatbelts must be worn. Specific written permission must be obtained from parents and documentary proof of insurance must be provided to the bursar.
- Parents should be fully informed of the time and place to collect the children.
- A staff mobile phone should be taken to the event in case of emergency.
- It is the responsibility of the group leader to look after pupils not collected after a visit. The pupils must not be left unsupervised and appropriate efforts should be made to contact parents if no information has been received about their late arrival. Reference should be made to the school's policy for the failure of a parent to collect a child.
- For transport by other means (train, ferry, aeroplane etc.) detailed risk assessments must be included in the overall risk assessment for the trip.

### **Emergencies**

Despite the best planning and organisation, emergencies that require immediate response by the leaders sometimes occur. Whilst still controlling and supervising the rest of the group, leaders should contact the appropriate emergency/rescue service immediately. The Headteacher/Educational Visits Coordinator should be contacted as soon as possible.

### **Emergency Procedures**

If an accident or other emergency occurs, the group leader or supervisor should do the following:

1. Assess the situation.
2. Safeguard the uninjured members of the group.
3. If there are injuries, establish immediately the names of the injured people and the extent of their injuries.
4. Attend to the casualty/ies, liaising with the group's trained first aider.
5. Inform the emergency services, and everyone who needs to know, about the accident.
6. Follow the school's first aid and medication policy as appropriate including, when possible, the procedures for recording the accident and contacting parents.
7. Notify the police if necessary.
8. Share the problem; advise all other group staff that the accident/emergency procedure is in operation. Make sure every member of the group is accounted for.
9. Ensure that the injured are accompanied to hospital, preferably by an adult whom they know.
10. Ensure that the rest of the group understands what has happened, is adequately supervised and kept together.
11. Inform Headteacher and Educational Visits Coordinator and pass on all the details, including names of casualties, their injuries, action taken and names of others involved. If abroad, contact the British Embassy/Consulate, if advisable.
12. Notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required.
13. Notify tour operator.
14. Ascertain telephone number for future calls.
15. As soon as possible, write down accurately relevant facts and witness details.
16. Preserve any vital evidence.

17. Keep a written account of subsequent events, times and contacts after the incident.
18. Complete accident forms.
19. No-one in the group should speak to the media. All media enquiries should be politely referred to the Headteacher.
20. No-one in the group should discuss legal liabilities with other parties.
21. As soon as possible, liaise with the school's appointed lead first aider to fulfil the school's legal requirements in relation to reporting of accidents (RIDDOR).
22. Refer also to the Critical Incident Policy, which should be included in the documentation taken on the trip.

#### **4. After the Visit**

After the visit the group leader must complete a visit evaluation form, which is submitted to the Headteacher. The views of other adults accompanying the visit should be taken into account. This should identify any area for improvement, including the guidance on organising trips, and should also highlight the successes of the trip.

The risk assessment for the visit should be reviewed to enable any necessary improvements to be made for future visits. Where relevant, the experience of the trip should be used to improve the school's bank of generic risk assessments.

It is expected that the majority of trips are organised to stimulate and motivate pupils in aspects of the curriculum. Follow-up classwork should therefore be undertaken.

It may also be appropriate to organise an assembly or a meeting for parents after the trip enabling the pupils to share their experiences and their follow-up work and for photography and video footage to be displayed.

Reviewed May 2018

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Reviewer: John Floyd