

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School



Educational Visits Policy

Date: December 2021

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Educational Visits Policy

We strive for excellence within a caring and diverse community, nurturing the Catholic faith, respecting each other, living, working and growing together as part of God's family.

Overview

The school acknowledges the great value of Educational Visits in broadening and enhancing both the learning and social experience of pupils.

Under statutory guidance, 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 DfES requirements and LEA guidelines. In our school, the named EVC is M. Fahey.

The role of the EVC is detailed in Section B of the publication **'London Borough of Waltham Forest- Requirements for Educational Visits'** (the booklet), a copy of which is held by the EVC

Approval for Visits

All matters regarding each visit outside school- feasibility, planning, safety, organisation- will require the prior approval of the EVC.

However, visits that are either:

- Overseas
- Residential or
- Involving an adventurous activity will require the approval of the Governing Board.

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

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 means of Form EV3, using the procedures and criteria in Section Z of the booklet.

Reasons for Visits

It is essential that all visits have sound and clearly stated educational aims. Trips 'for the sake of it' will not receive approval.

Assessment of Risk

'Risk assessment' is a careful examination of what could cause harm to pupils, staff or others, together with the 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 (i.e. low).

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

- **Generic Risks** – normal risks attached to any activity outside school. These will be covered by careful completion of the 'Educational Visits Checklist' (Section AA of the booklet).
- **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 and careful 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 has lost the booking, etc. To avoid having to make important decisions under pressure, it is important that some advanced thinking is done to cater to any foreseeable eventuality. This takes the form of **Plan B**.

Staffing Ratios

There are no statutory limits regarding ratio of adults to children on visits outside school.

However, DfE guidelines state that 'as a general rule for local visits in normal circumstances the staff pupil ratio **might** be 1:6 for Y3 and 1:10-15 for Y4-Y6'. In practice, the ratio should be determined by factors relevant to the visit, e.g.:

- Type, duration and level of activity
- Needs of individuals within group
- Experience and competence of staff and accompanying adults
- Nature of the venue
- Weather conditions and the time of year
- Nature of transport involved

A professional judgement must be made by the Visit Leader, EVC and Headteacher as to the appropriate ratio for each visit.

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

Parents who accompany school trips are there at the invitation of the Visit Leader. Their role is to supervise a group **not** to accompany their own child on the visit. In this school each supervising parent must sign a code of conduct(see Appendix 1).

Supervising parents must be fully briefed on the programme, venue, activities, supervision arrangements and their responsibilities. They must also be given a list of the pupils in their immediate care and shown the completed Form EV5 (Event Specific Risk Assessment)

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. Kits are available from the Welfare Assistant. If the visit involves the party splitting up for any distance, a kit should be taken for each group. **Supervising adults will be informed if a child in their care has specific needs.**

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 and on busy streets.

If travel is by coach or minibus, all pupils must wear a seat belt. **Staff must ensure that all pupils comply with this rule.**

If any pupils are to travel by car, the driver must complete form EV6. 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 DfES 'Group Safety at Water Margins' is relevant. All staff, including parents, should be provided with a copy of this guidance prior to the visit.

Seeking Parental Consent

Parents should be made fully aware of any likely risks and their management, so they may consent or refuse on a fully informed basis. The letter to parents should therefore give full details of the visit, the reason for the visit (educational aims), supervision and 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.

Before the Visit

- Advise Headteacher and EVC at least a term in advance of any visits being planned
- Check that your dates do not clash with another year group (only one year group is permitted off site on any given day) or any school activity such as sports day
- Complete form EV5 (Event Specific Risk Assessment) and give a copy to EVC
- Book Visit
- Book Transport
- Send letter home and give a copy to EVC/Office Manager
- In the case of residential, overseas or adventurous activities, complete relevant forms as detailed in 'Approval for Visits' above
- Advise Kitchen and Office staff

On the Day of the Visit

Be sure to:

- Collect first aid kit(s)
- Collect bucket if appropriate
- Ensure pupils have asthma inhalers
- Remind supervising parents of arrangements
- Give supervising parents their lists of pupils - highlighting pupils specific needs
- Ensure that a minimum of one mobile phone is working, and that the office has the number(s)
- On all visits, including residentials, ensure that all medication is clearly labelled with child's name and is the responsibility of one of the adults going on the visit.
- Count pupils

During the course of the visit, pupils should be counted regularly as appropriate, and always when changing locations.

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 happen within a week of the visit, and should involve the Visit Leader, accompanying staff and, if appropriate, the supervising parents. The purpose of the debrief is to identify what went well and what could have been done better, in order to inform future planning.