



Educational Visits Statement

At Watling Primary School, we promote the active involvement of all children in Forest School and opportunities for outdoor learning through our curriculum. We extend this further to include educational visits and journeys which take place beyond the school learning environment.

Off-site activities have a great potential for enhancing the educational, personal and social development of children and young people by enabling them to participate in experiences which are not available to them within the classroom or school setting.

We believe that every child should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.

These are often the most memorable learning experiences which help children to make sense of the world around them by making links between feelings and learning.

The benefits of educational visits and outdoor education include opportunities to:

- enhance learning and raise achievement
- develop the Watling Primary School learning characteristics by becoming better Communicators, Active learners, Problem-solvers, Team players, Achievers, Investigators and Nurturers
- develop independence and resilience
- support, extend and enrich our curriculum
- face and overcome challenges
- raise confidence and self-belief
- develop important social skills
- enhance appreciation of the natural world and improve environmental awareness

It is a priority of the school that all visits and off-site activities are safe, well-managed and educationally beneficial.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher will:

- ensure that all visits and off-site activities have specific and appropriate educational objectives
- ensure off-site programmes are led by staff who are appropriately experienced to assess the risks and manage the activity and the specific group of children
- check that appropriate levels of staffing are in place for each visit
- check that thorough risk assessments have been carried out and that any significant risks have been recorded and any appropriate safety measures have been put in place

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) has delegated responsibility from the Headteacher to ensure that all visits are prepared and conducted in accordance with the required standards.

The party leader will:

- take overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and monitor the arrangements for the duration of the trip to ensure the on-going health and safety of the group
- obtain the Headteacher's approval (or the EVC on his /her behalf) before any off-site visit or activity takes place
- assess the risks involved and amend as appropriate any previously recorded risk benefit assessment
- use the school planning checklist for trips to ensure all procedures have been followed
- inform parents fully about the visit and gain their consent, where appropriate
- reassess risks while the visit or activity takes place
- ensure there is a contingency plan should a significant change to the programme be necessary due to weather etc.

Members of staff, volunteers and parent or carer helpers will:

- work under the direction of the party leader and follow all guidance given
- assist the party leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of children on the visit
- be clear about their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in a visit or activity

Responsibilities of parents and carers

Parents and carers have an important role in deciding whether any visit or off-site activity is suitable for their own child. Prior to committing to the visit by paying a deposit, parents and carers will be invited to attend a visit information session at the school. This will provide an opportunity to ask any questions.

Subject to their agreement to the activity, parents should:

- confirm that they have understood the purpose, estimated cost and arrangements for the visit and give permission for their child to go on the visit
- support the application of any agreed code of conduct
- inform the party leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit
- provide all information requested prior to the visit, including emergency contact details
- sign the consent form

Closer to the time of the visit, detailed information packs will be shared with parents and carers, to include details about:

- medical and dietary arrangements

- travel itinerary and information about the journey
- overview of accommodation, including arrangements for food and meals
- emergency contact information
- suggested list of items to be packed for the trip
- guidance on spending money
- clarification on pupil mobile phones and contact home during a trip

Responsibilities of pupils

Whilst taking part in off-site activities, pupils also have responsibilities for their own health and safety and that of the group.

They will be made aware of these responsibilities by the party leader or other members of staff.

Children should:

- follow the instructions given to them by the party leader or any other member of staff or adult
- avoid unnecessary risks
- behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed rules

TYPES OF VISIT

Level 1 visits last up to one day and:

- do not involve an overnight stay
- do not involve adventurous activities
- take place within the UK
- include school sports fixtures and similar enrichment events
- include short visits within walking distance of the school
- include whole day visits needing transport

Level 2 visits include one or more of the following:

- an overnight residential experience
- a visit abroad (including day trips and overnight residential experiences abroad)

Level 3 visits involve adventurous activities.

Effective supervision on visits

Staffing arrangements for off-site visits must be sufficient to facilitate safe and effective supervision of children and young people. The level of supervision should be determined by a thorough risk assessment which includes proper consideration of:

- levels of staff competence and previous experience

- the nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, time of year and prevailing environmental conditions)
- the ability, age and nature of the group and young people, including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs
- the location and environment of the visit
- the distance away from the local area and means of transport or travel

Staffing ratios for visits will vary according to these aspects. In all cases, there must be a minimum of two accompanying adults, whatever the size of the group. The actual ratios required of adults to children and young people will be determined through the risk assessment process. The use of parents or other adult helpers may be appropriate provided any necessary checks are in place e.g. DBS

Pupils with SEND and/or Medical Needs

Every effort will be made to include and support children with SEND and/or medical needs, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Due attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios. Additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

If medication has to be given, staff will need to have received training in administering the medication. If necessary, additional training may be arranged.

Emergency Procedures

The school will appoint a member of staff as the emergency school contact for each visit.

All major incidents should immediately be related to this person, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.

The visit leader will ensure that full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit have been provided to the emergency school contact. This will include the home contact details of parents and carers and other emergency contacts, as appropriate.

Risk Assessment and Management

Effective risk management is a fundamental part of the planning and execution of all off-site visits and activities. The purpose of risk assessment and management is to help children to undertake activities safely, not to prevent activities taking place.

As educators, we have a statutory responsibility to teach young people how to recognise and manage risk as a fundamental life skill.

Risk assessments will be based on the following considerations:

What are the hazards and what level of risk do they pose?

What are the benefits and do they significantly outweigh the risks?

Who might be affected by them?

What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?

What steps will be taken in an emergency?

The risk benefit assessment will take into account:

The type of activity and the level at which it is undertaken.

The age, competence, fitness and temperament of the group members.

Any additional educational or medical needs of individuals within the group.

Supervision ratios.

The competence, experience and qualifications of the staff going on the visit.

The location of the visit, routes and modes of transport to it.

Security for residential or overnight stays.

There are three levels of risk assessment that should be undertaken:

Generic activity risk assessments, which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place. They are useful to cover activities which are likely to be repeated and that will not need revisiting unless the activity, the environment and/or the nature of the learners change significantly.

Visit or site-specific risk assessments are completed by the group leader and are unique to each occasion. They should take into account the site, learners' needs and activity specific needs (environment, group, accommodation, staff, transport, etc). Site specific risk assessments available from activity providers will be used when available.

Ongoing risk assessments involve professional judgements during an activity in response to changing situations, e.g. weather conditions or ill health of participants. This applies to all categories and is critical to the success and safety of any activity.

It is the responsibility of the visit lead to ensure that all accompanying staff are familiarised with the risk assessment and to continue to brief staff throughout the trip.

Visit Evaluation

Following any visit, the party leader and EVC will evaluate the experience. Any modifications to risk assessments or any other information that would support future trips will be considered, with appropriate modifications actioned.

This policy is written with regard to the DCSF guidance document; 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' (HASPEV) and 'Health and Safety, Department for Education Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head of Schools, Staff and Governing Bodies (2011)' and Outdoor Education Advisory Panel's guidelines for the Safe Practice of Offsite Visits/Educational Visits (OEAP).