



## Sturminster Newton High School Educational Visits Policy

### Overview

Safely managed educational visits with a clear purpose are an indispensable part of a broad and balanced curriculum. They are an opportunity to extend the learning of all pupils, including an enrichment of their understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. They can be a catalyst for improved personal performance, promote a lifetime interest and in some cases lead to professional fulfilment. Educational visits are to be encouraged.

This school recognises its duty of care and statutory responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of pupils, staff, volunteers, providers and members of the public in connection with educational visits for which it is accountable.

### Purpose

- To ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to benefit from educational visits
- To ensure that all visits are safe, purposeful and appropriate to meet the educational needs of pupils taking part
- To enable the school to identify appropriate functions, responsibilities, training, support and monitoring for governors, staff, volunteer assistants, pupils and providers involved in educational visits
- To ensure that whenever appropriate, further advice is sought from the LA and from other technically competent sources.

### Key Principles

#### Staff

- All visits will have a clear, recorded educational purpose and will be planned sufficiently well in advance in accordance with good practice and effective planning procedures detailed in the **DCC Policy of Safety and Guidance – Offsite Events and Adventurous Activities**. The governing body will include in its role the support of school policy and procedures for educational visits including the reporting of visits
- The Headteacher will be responsible for the approval of all visits, or may delegate this function to the Educational Visits Co-ordinator.
- A named and trained Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) will be appointed to support the governing body and Headteacher; In the absence of a suitably trained Educational Visits Co-ordinator the head teacher automatically assumes this role.
- There will be a named and approved Trip Leader (and where appropriate, deputy) on all educational visits. This Event leader will be specifically competent for the role as detailed in the **DCC Policy of Safety and Guidance – Offsite Events and Adventurous Activities**. If in any doubt confirmation will be sought from the Outdoor Education Adviser.

- Working with the EVC as necessary, the Trip Leader will be responsible for all aspects of the planning, risk assessment and organisation of the visit. The Trip Leader will assume full responsibility during the visit, including ongoing risk assessment
- The Trip Leader will ensure when purchasing goods and services that appropriate checks are made and that insurance and financial procedures have been followed
- Details of any residential visits at home or abroad or day visits involving activities of a hazardous nature will be submitted to the LA for assessment/monitoring through use of Evolve at least 1 month before the departure date.

### Parents and carers

- The school will provide parents and carers with information about policy and procedures relating to the safe management of educational visits
- Parents and carers will be given sufficient written and supplementary information about educational visits to enable them to make informed decisions and give written consent together with medical and emergency contact details
- Whenever appropriate for higher risk, residential and foreign visits a briefing meeting with parents/guardians will be arranged
- Expectations with regard to behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents/guardians. This information will include the necessity of meeting additional costs and making collection arrangements in certain circumstances.

### Pupils

- Wherever possible, pupils should be involved with the planning of an educational visit, establishing codes of conduct, assessing and managing risk and evaluating their own learning, development, attitudes and behaviour
- Pupils should be adequately briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all educational visits. Ongoing briefings are an important element of learning and safety.

### **Links**

#### **DCC Policy of Safety and Guidance – Offsite Events and Adventurous Activities.**

Access via your school Evolve log on.

## **Process and guidance for group leaders**

### **ORGANISATION**

All visits and activities, which take place in term time during school hours, must have clear educational objectives, and should involve preparatory and follow-up work.

*When planning such a visit, initial discussions to consider educational rationale, cost, staffing, etc. should take place with your Head of Department and the Deputy Head.*

The staffing ratio for each visit will be assessed on application.

For any activity, please consult the following websites for guidance:

[www.dorsetforyou.com/schoolsafety](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/schoolsafety) - then click on "offsite events and adventurous activities"

[www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info) click on "visit leader"

Please note guidance on the threat from terrorism- updated 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017

You should ensure that a properly qualified member of staff or instructor supervises any potentially hazardous activities.

If you are planning a visit abroad, or any other residential activity, the Head will need to be notified in very good time, so that the permission of the Chairman of Governors can be obtained.

Teachers organising visits abroad should be reminded that each pupil should obtain the E111/EHIC Card, and that it should be taken with them on the visit at all times.

Inform the canteen, if pupils will be missing lunch.

Arrange First Aid equipment.

Leave work for staff covering your lessons; in classroom or on staff noticeboard, copy

to Deputy Head. Ensure any duties you have are covered.

**Submit proposed dates, and details, to the Deputy Headteacher for consideration for the school calendar and approval – form "Preliminary Questionnaire"**

### **Process for approval of educational visits**

**See "Trips procedure-check list" in T/School Admin and OFSTED/Admin/Trip Forms**

### *Reminders*

- Pupils should wear school uniform, unless the Head has given prior permission for this not to be so due to the nature of the activity.
- Normal school rules apply.
- The Headteacher should be informed as soon as practicable of any incident of a serious nature which happens during an educational visit. This is particularly important if the visit is a residential one.
- Pupils whose behaviour in school is giving cause for concern will not be allowed to participate in a trip.
- Should a pupil behave badly on a trip, s/he may be banned from further out-of-school activities.
- On return to school, staff should ensure that coaches are left in a clean state, that pupils are able to get home and that no pupil is left to await a parent unsupervised. There should be two staff supervising.
- A statement of accounts should be prepared and submitted to the Bursar before the trip takes place. Please note – all trips must be self-financing. If a projected trip cannot meet its cost it will be cancelled.
- One teacher, **the group leader**, should have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have regard to the health and safety of the group.

### **Planning Visits - See Trips procedure check list for process and timing.**

1. It is essential that formal planning takes place before any visit. In practice, the Headteacher will delegate the detailed planning to the group leader.
2. Form 6 Safe System of Work should be carried out by the group leader, with the aim of preventing any risks, which may be met on the visit, or at least reducing them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations.
  - What are the hazards?
  - Who might be affected by them?
  - What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
  - Can the group leader put the safety measures in place? How?
  - What steps will be taken in an emergency?
  - Is there a Plan B?

**Staffing**  
**Activity**  
**Group**  
**Environment**  
**Distance (from school)**

A record Safe System of work form should be given to the staff on the visit as well as contact details.

Further details and advice on risk assessment can be found on the [www.dorsetforyou.com/schoolsafety](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/schoolsafety) under risk assessment as well as [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info)

3. An exploratory visit should be made if at all possible, if the group leader does not have prior experience of the venue or if there have been known significant changes to the venue.

Some categories of visits carry specific risks.

- Adventure activities using licensed providers
- Adventure activities using non-licensable providers
- School-led adventure activities
- Coastal visits/Field studies
- Swimming in the sea
- Swimming pools
- Farm visits
- Residential visits
- Visits abroad

Other factors which should be considered at the planning stage include the following

- Finance
- the facilities/equipment the group will need to take on the visit
- the facilities/equipment to be provided at the venue
- staff training needs
- transport arrangements
- insurance arrangements
- information to the provider if necessary
- first aid
- communication arrangements
- supervision ratios
- contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return
- information to parents
- preparing pupils
- emergency arrangements
- arrangements for sending pupils home early
- a return check in system with a member of SLT

This is summary only and staff should also refer to county documents e.g. minibus to ensure they are fully conversant with rules/regulations.

## **Risk Assessment**

An assessment of risk is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill.

Don't be put off by some of the words:

- 'Hazard' means anything that can cause harm (e.g. swimming pool)
- 'Risk' is the chance, great or small, that someone will be harmed by the hazard

The important things you need to decide are whether a hazard is significant, and whether you have it covered by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is small. You need to check this when you assess the risks.

### **Step 1            Look for the hazards/Anticipate the hazards**

Consider what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Ignore the trivial and concentrate only on significant hazards, which could result in serious harm. Ask your colleagues what they think. They may have noticed or thought of things which are not immediately obvious. Accident records can help you spot/anticipate hazards and put risks in their true perspective.

### **Step 2            Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done**

Even after all precautions have been taken, usually some risk remains. What you have to decide for **each significant hazard** is whether this remaining risk is high, medium or low. **First**, ask yourself whether you have done all the things that the law says you have got to do. For example, there are legal requirements regarding teaching qualifications for some activities e.g. trampolining, and outdoor pursuits. **Then**, think for yourself, because the law also says that you must do what is reasonably practicable to keep your workplace safe.

If you find something that needs to be done, ask yourself:

- a) Can I **get rid of the hazard** altogether?
- b) If not, how can I **control the risks** so that harm is unlikely?

Inform all colleagues involved in the visit about any risks you have identified and what precautions need to be taken. Also inform any other adults involved. You should also consult with those in control of any off-site facilities you use.

### **Step 3            Record your findings and in a Safe System of Work - Form 6**

**There is no need to show how you did your assessment**, provided you can show that:

- A proper check was made
- You asked **who** might be affected
- You dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved
- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low.

**Assessments need to be suitable and sufficient, not perfect. The real points are:**

- a) are the precautions reasonable;
- b) is there something to show that a proper check was made?

Keep the written document for future reference or use; it can help you if an inspector questions your precautions, or if you become involved in any action for civil liability.

It can also remind you to keep an eye on particular matters. It will help to show that you have done what the law requires.

### **Getting help**

It is a legal requirement to assess risks. You might find the following publications useful:

Safety Guidelines for Dorset Schools and Youth Organisations providing their own Outdoor Education: Dorset Outdoor Education (1997)

Educational Visits by Julie Smart and Gill Walton: Campion Communications.  
ISBN 9000-00-8. £13.50

Essentials of Health and Safety at Work: ISBN 0-7176-0716X

Management of Health and Safety at Work: Approved Code of Practice, L21, 1992  
ISBN 0-7176-0412-8. £5

"Sport and the Law" : Butterworths Publishes (1995)

Writing your health and safety policy statement, 1989 (rev) ISBN 0-7176-0424-1. £2

The Waterways Code for Organised Parties, Advice for Leaders (free) 01923 226422

Safety of School Trips: A Teachers and the Law Booklet (free to PAT members)  
01332 372337

Educational Visits and Journeys: Advice to Members NASUWT 0121 453 6450

The School Minibus and the Law - ATL 01719 30135

Wise before the event: Coping with crises in schools. ISBN 0-903319-66-7

Marnie Shaw, Outdoor Education Service Manager 01305 224517.  
m.shaw@dorsetcc.gov.uk

## **A Finance**

1. All trips must be self-financing or costs met from Department capitation.
2. A charge cannot be imposed on parents for any visit that occurs during school hours. A voluntary contribution can, however, be requested.

Parents should be made aware that the contribution is not compulsory and that the children of parents who do not contribute may not be discriminated against. It is permissible to ask parents to contribute more than the minimum amount in order to subsidise others.

3. If a visit is deemed to be an 'optional extra', i.e.:
  - it falls mainly outside school hours
  - does not form part of the National Curriculum
  - is not part of a syllabus towards a Prescribed Public Exam
  - is not part of the statutory requirements relating to RE

then parents may be charged for board and lodging on a residential visit as well as the full costs.

Parents in receipt of some allowances may have board and lodging costs remitted.

## **B Transport**

1. The supervision of the party with regard to transport is the responsibility of the party leader. Factors which should be taken into account include:-

- Supervision levels (minimum of one supervisor on each deck of double decker coaches)
- Safety when crossing roads
- Behaviour and freedom to 'roam' on trains, boats, ferries
- Block booking of seats in order that the group can be seated together
- Safety at drop off and pickup points
- Safety while on stops or rests
- Safety of the group in the event of an accident
- Head counts
- Responsibility for the checking of seat belts

### **2. Hiring coaches and buses**

Coaches and buses should be hired from a company approved by the LA. The group leader should ensure that seat belts are available for pupils.

### **3. Private Cars**

Teachers and others who drive pupils in their own car must ensure their passengers' safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy, and that they have appropriate insurance cover for carrying the pupils. Vehicles without seatbelts should not be used. Staff must complete the Driver Risk Assessment Form on a Yearly basis and provide the necessary documentary evidence.

Parents' agreement should be sought (in writing or on the consent form) for their children to be carried in staff's or other parents' cars. Group leaders must ensure that those taking pupils in their private car are aware of their legal responsibility for the safety of the pupils. Advised that no teacher should have a single/unaccompanied child in his or her car.

### **4. School Minibus**

The minibus may only be driven by staff that have taken and passed the DCC training programme.

The minibus driver must

- Read "minibus risk assessment"
- Observe LEA guidance where appropriate
- Not drive if taking medication or undergoing treatment that might affect their ability or judgement
- Know what to do in an emergency
- Avoid driving for long periods and ensure that rests are taken when needed
- Clarify and comply with transport regulations and the requirements of insurance cover
- Take into account the effects of the working day
- Have regular checks e.g. eyesight



- Complete the Driver Risk Assessment Form and provide the necessary documentation evidence on a Yearly basis

Staff wishing to drive a minibus abroad must obtain the relevant licence.

#### **D Insurance**

1. The group leader is responsible for ensuring that adequate insurance arrangements are in place. Clarification of the existing cover should be undertaken and additional cover arranged as appropriate.
2. Parents should be informed of the scope of the insurance cover and copies of the schedule made available.

#### **E First Aid**

1. Provision for First Aid should form part of the risk assessment. The group leader should assess the level of first aid, which may be needed.
2. The group leader should ensure that an adult member of the party has a good working knowledge of basic first aid and that an adequate first aid box is taken on the visit.
3. For adventurous activities, residential visits or visits abroad it is advisable that one member of staff is a fully trained first aider.
4. All minibuses are required by law to carry a first aid kit.

#### **F Supervision ratios**

1. In deciding in conjunction with the Deputy Head, the necessary staff/adult ratio for a visit, the following must be taken into account:-
  - Sex, age and ability of group
  - Pupils with special needs
  - Distance from School
  - Nature of journey and activity
  - Environment of activity
  - Experience of accompanying staff/adults
  - Type of any accommodation
  - Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited
  - First aid cover

Residential or adventurous activities will require a higher ratio. In addition to the teacher in charge there must be sufficient adults to cope with an emergency.

2. Parents/Volunteers may be used to supplement the supervisor ratios. They should be carefully selected and well known to the school and ideally to the pupil group. Anyone who has not had a criminal conviction check should never be left in sole charge of pupils.

All adult supervisors must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times and should be aware of any pupils requiring special attention.

The responsibility for the group remains at all times with the group leader and the teaching staff.

3. During the visit all supervisors should carry a list of the pupils and staff involved.
4. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the group.
5. Remote supervision may be necessary during visits with older students. Parents should be made aware of this before any visit takes place.

Before allowing students to work under remote supervision the group leader must ensure that pupils are aware of the ground rules and are adequately equipped to be on their own in a group.

As a minimum, pupils should have the following:-

- telephone and emergency contact numbers
- money
- information, maps etc to enable them to act effectively
- knowledge of how to summon help
- knowledge of out of bounds areas or activities
- identity cards and a rendezvous point

## **G Preparing Pupils**

Preparing pupils for a visit will both minimise the risks involved and ensure that they gain maximum benefit.

Prior to the visit pupils should understand: -

- the nature and purpose of the visit
- what standard of behaviour is expected of them and the rules to be followed
- potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others
- the background information about the place to be visited
- appropriate social and personal conduct
- rendezvous procedures
- emergency procedures

For visits abroad they should be also aware of

- basic foreign words
- relevant foreign culture and customs

For residential visits all group members should carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation.

## **H Informing parents**

1. Parents should be informed *in writing* of any offsite activity or visit unless it is a regular part of the curriculum of which they have already been informed e.g. offsite PE

Annual consent for routine visits may be appropriate e.g. Sports fixtures permission.

2. Details of the proposed activity or visit should be given to parents and a Parental Consent form returned (Form 2). These consent forms must be held for a minimum of three years. The group leader should ensure that all details are communicated to the school reception and Deputy Head.
3. Information given to parents should include, as a minimum:
  - Date(s) of visit
  - Visits objectives
  - Time of departure & return
  - Location of return
  - Mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company
  - The size of the group and the level of supervision with the names of staff
  - Any remote supervision periods
  - Details of the activities planned
  - Standards of behaviour
  - Dress and equipment required
  - Details of insurance cover (see “Synopsis of cover for educational visits/school journey insurance”)
  - Cost

Information for residential visits should also include:

- procedures for pupils who became ill
  - details of accommodation
  - money to be taken
  - details of the host family on exchange visits
  - emergency contact details
  - procedure for the early return of a pupil whose conduct is causing concern.
4. If parents withhold consent absolutely the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way wherever possible.
  5. The Parental Consent forms must be returned fully complete before the visit can take place. Contact numbers for day and night use must be provided.
  6. Group leaders organising a residential visit should hold an information evening for parents and pupils at which the visit can be discussed in further detail and concerns aired.  
Good practice would also involve a booklet of useful information which pupils could discuss with their parents prior to the visit. See Ski Trip example.

#### **I Emergency arrangements**

1. Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would.  
  
Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation.
2. If an accident happens, the priorities are:-

- Assess the situation
  - Safeguard the uninjured members of the group
  - Attend to the casualty
  - Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident.
3. Prior to the visit all emergency contact details should be obtained and the information recorded on the Pupil Off Premises Sheet. This information must be retained by the group leader and copies given to the school office and the Deputy Head.
4. If an emergency occurs on a school visit the main factors to consider include:
- Establish nature and extent of the emergency quickly
  - Ensure that the group are safe and looked after and kept together
  - Obtain immediate medical attention for the casualties
  - Ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital if possible
  - Notify the policy and British Embassy/Consulate if abroad
  - Inform the school contact giving full details
  - Notify insurers
  - Notify provider/tour operator if appropriate
  - Make notes on the incident with facts and witness details
  - Complete accident report form
  - DO NOT speak to the media or discuss legal liability
5. The school contact should ensure that:
- The group leader is in control of the situation and that additional support from the school base is given
  - Parents are as well informed as possible
  - The LA is informed and media issues are dealt with by the LA contact through the LA Emergency Planning telephone number.
  - The incident is reported using the appropriate forms.

**Member of staff with Lead Responsibility for this policy: Mr D Harris (Deputy Head)**

**Adopted By: Governing Body**

**Review completed Oct 2021**

**Review due: October 2023**