



# Educational Visits Policy



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## 1.0 Introduction

**Marcus Bailie (Head of the Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority) states:**

*'There are probably 3 million school children who are involved in adventurous activities and 7-10 million days of school visits per annum. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme have an accident rate of 1 serious accident (e.g. broken femur) per 1½ million overnight stays per annum.*

*The moral of this story should be very clear: let young people get on with activities that cause them very little harm but which are likely to prolong their lives and radically enhance their expected quality of life. To deny them these things would be to deny them the inalienable big three, Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.'*

**The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, spoke in September 2001, making particular reference to adventurous activities:**

*'I am happy to place on record that the government supports the role of adventure as part of active education, especially in helping young people to learn about assessing and managing risk, in offering them new and exciting challenges and in helping them to gain skills in leadership and team working that will be of huge value in their progression to adulthood.'*

### Introduction

This policy is written in line with Kirklees Guidance. It is important the Principal/Vice Principal and the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) are conversant with the contents. Group Leaders must be familiar with the aspects of the Handbook that affect their trip.

First hand experience forms an essential element in the curriculum of this school. As such the policy of school visits is important in the child's development. All the visits undertaken need to be subject to certain conditions:-

- 1) Visits must be relevant to the children, their age and their level of development.
- 2) The visits should relate directly to the curriculum.
- 3) All visits must be planned with clear educational objectives. Some visits, for instance to a theatre or exhibition, may be regarded as one off with relevance to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- 4) Visits should not be seen in isolation, but should have adequate preparation and follow up.

## **2.0 BENEFITS TO THE CHILDREN**

Visits, both day and residential, provide teachers and children with opportunities to work in an environment outside their normal classroom. The children can develop social skills and interact without many of the normal constraints and the personal and social development of the children can be as important as the more formal content within the National Curriculum.

Children benefit from visits by:-

- 1) Providing opportunities to manage themselves,
- 2) finding out about new places and new things,
- 3) developing personal and social skills,
- 4) presenting challenges and adventure,
- 5) Letting them discover and explore wild places.

Throughout the National Curriculum large emphasis is placed upon the importance of first hand experience. Visits to farms, country parks, theatre, the local village and to other areas gives children this invaluable experience.

### 3.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The school will adopt the procedures as laid out in Kirklees guidance.

The following procedure will be adopted when organising any visit outside the school grounds.

- 1.1. Proposals for visits will, as a minimum, state
  - the educational purpose of the visit,
  - its aims and objectives and
  - how it conforms to the school's curriculum aims.
- 1.2 The LEA planning checklist (EV1) will be used to provide assurance that each visit is methodically and suitably planned.
- 1.3 The school has adopted the 3 categories of visits as laid out in Kirklees guidance. They are as follows:- A) Local visits within normal school hours (not including proximity to natural water), visits further afield leaving or arriving outside school hours (not including proximity to natural water); B) Residential; C) Adventurous activities and/or proximity to natural water.
- 1.4 Approval of visits will be outlined within the arrangements section of this policy however in brief .
  - The Principal/Vice Principal and the Governing Body will approve all visits.
  - Kirklees LEA will be notified for all visits in categories B and C (Residentials, adventurous activities and where natural water is encountered eg coast, river, canal.
- 1.5 Staff competencies required for the nominated Group leader and for teaching and support staff will be clearly defined (see 2.4)
- 1.6 Where the school uses external providers, a risk assessment must be obtained from the provider. In the case of activity centres a copy of the AALA licence is all that is required.
- 1.7 Risk assessments and procedures for managing risks will be in place for all risks that are reasonably foreseeable. The risk assessments must be read and signed by all the adults accompanying the trip.
- 1.8 The timescales for the proposal, approval and departure of each visit will be included in the arrangements section of this policy.
- 1.9 Suitable and sufficient information will be provided to parents to enable them to make an informed decision as to whether their child should accompany the trip.
- 1.10 No child will be allowed to embark on any visit without producing a consent form signed by their parent/guardian.
- 1.11 Every trip or visit will be subject to a review.

## 4.0 Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are an integral part of the planning process. The Group Leader is responsible for producing risk assessments for all aspects of the visit. Ednet contains generic risk assessments for most types of locality. These must be amended to suit the specific location and group travelling. Ednet also contains some specific risk assessments, but, again, these must be amended to suit the individual group going. All adults accompanying the visit must read and sign the forms. For regular visits, such as swimming, or local church, need to be done perhaps once a term or once a year.

During the visit ongoing risk assessments need not be written down, but if any situation arises that impacts on future visits or affects any of the children in any way then a note should be made.

## 5.0 Organisation

Responsibility for educational visits rests with the Governing Body and Principal/Vice Principal. The respective roles of each are outlined within Kirklees Guidance.

### 5.1 Governing Body

Approval of all visits must be obtained by the governing body **before** the visit takes place.

**The Governor named below will oversee and monitor this policy.**

The Principal/Vice Principal's report outlining visits planned and the results of the reviews of visits undertaken will be submitted to each full Governing Body meeting.

A copy of each visit's review report will be sent to the following meeting / Governor-

### 5.2 Principal/Vice Principal

The Vice Principal will be responsible for ensuring that school trips are planned, organised, undertaken, controlled, monitored and reviewed. The Principal/Vice Principal will agree, with the named EVC, the duties delegated to the EVC.

The Governors will authorise all visits, in writing.

The Principal/Vice Principal will report the results of the reviews of visits undertaken to the Governing Body.

### 5.3 Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

The school's Educational Visits Co-ordinator is :

They will undertake duties as agreed between them and the Principal/Vice Principal.

The EVC will be fully conversant with the Kirklees Guidance as well as the DfES Health and Safety for Pupils on Educational Visits and the subsequent supplements (available on Ednet)

## 5.4 Group Leader

The Group Leader will comply with the requirements outlined in the Kirklees Guidance. As such every Group leader must be conversant with Kirklees Guidance.

The group leader must demonstrate the following:-

1. **Awareness of potential hazards and dangers.**
2. **Sound judgement of what constitutes a dangerous situation.**
3. **Preventing access to dangerous situations for those ill-equipped to cope.**
4. **Adequate supervision**
5. **Knowledge of how to help oneself and those in danger**
6. **Knowledge of where to get information on the area they are travelling to including tide tables and weather forecasts.**

The Group Leader will ensure that the planning checklist is completed and that any activities or events that may place staff or pupils at significant risk are assessed and that safety measures are in place prior to the trip taking place.

The Group Leader will ensure that all parents of children on their trip are provided with all information required and that any questions raised are answered prior to the trip taking place.

Any activities which may include the child entering water must be made clear to the parents. or any activities which leave interpretation open e.g. river walking . does this mean a walk along the banks of a river or does it mean walking in the water?

The Group Leader named for each visit will have overall responsibility for the visit whilst it is underway.

The Group Leader will liaise with the EVC throughout the planning and preparation of their trip.

The Group Leader will review their trip and provide details of their review to the EVC.

## 5.5 Supervisory staff

All staff assisting with supervision on any trip will be conversant with the Kirkleesq Guidance.

All staff will ensure that the requirements of any risk assessments, risk control procedures and safe systems are followed.

All staff will ensure that once the trip has started, where any previously unforeseen hazards or risks are identified they are brought to the attention of the Group Leader.

Staff will feedback information to the Group Leader to enable a full review of the trip to be completed.

## 6.0 Arrangements

### 6.1 Proposals

The Group Leader will submit a proposal to the Principal/Vice Principal within the following timescale for each category of visit

Category	Latest date for submission to Principal/Vice Principal
A	
B	
C	

Kirkleesq proposal and notification form EV1 must be completed.

The means of complying with the requirements outlined in Kirkleesq planning checklist must be outlined.

Proposed visits should be clear as to insurance arrangements and the financial procedures that will be used including charging and remissions.

Parents should be given sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision as to whether their child should participate in the visit. They must sign the relevant consent form(s), and provide emergency contact number(s) and all relevant medical details.

Forms V1 (Parental consent) and V2 (medical) apply to residentials only. These must be sent out at least four weeks prior to the visit.

Form V3 should be sent home just before the visit as this covers the children currently on medicines.

Where coach or minibus travel is to be used it must be in accordance with Kirkleesq regulations.

### 6.2 Notification

Notification will be made using proposal and notification form EV1.

Notification to Kirklees team will only be allowed after the Governing Body and Principal/Vice Principal are satisfied that the form has been fully completed and that any requisite additional information is attached and they have signed all relevant documentation.

The Group Leader is responsible for sending the notification to Kirklees for visits in categories B and C. This must be at least **six weeks** prior to the visit.

The Principal/Vice Principal will ensure that the Group Leader carries out this task.

### 6.3 Undertaking the visit

Once the notification has received approval the visit will commence in accordance with the itinerary and activities planned. Any deviation from the itinerary or planned activities must be considered by the Group Leader and a risk assessment made prior to the alteration taking place.

A record must be kept of all such instances for evaluation and review purposes.

Any accidents that result in a pupil or member of staff having to go to hospital must be telephoned to the school contact immediately. Upon receipt of any such calls the school contact will immediately inform the Health and Safety team in Kirklees.

### 6.4 Monitoring

The school will monitor the implementation of this policy by ensuring that the documentation required has been produced to a satisfactory standard.

On occasions the EVC, Principal/Vice Principal or member of the Governing Body will accompany a group.

The school may also request Kirklees Education Visits Advisor to undertake a monitoring visit of a planned trip. This will be used for the school's own monitoring purposes.

### 6.5 Evaluation and Review

Every visit will be reviewed by the Group Leader.

The results of the evaluation and review process will be provided to the Principal/Vice Principal.

The Principal/Vice Principal's report to the Governing Body will include details of the evaluations and reviews for visits undertaken.

The evaluation and review report will be maintained in the school's educational visits file for reference.

#### **Insurance**

All staff, pupils and adult helpers are covered by the LEA's insurance. Reference should be made to the Neil Heppenstall, the insurance officer.

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## 7.0 General Guidance

When a teacher, or any other party leader takes a group away they have the same health and safety responsibility that he/she has during a normal teaching day i.e to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure:

- The health and safety of pupils in their charge
- The health and safety of others
- His/her own health and safety.

The difference is that educational visits are not usually a normal and therefore require specific planning and organization.

### Supervision

There is no legal requirement or direction as to supervisory ratios on educational visits. The following are recommendations:-

- 1:15** where risks are normal (museum visit, local church, local study)
- 1:10** Outdoor activities (summer); residential where teachers are not involved in activities i.e. pastoral care only.
- 1:8** Residential where teachers lead activities; hill walking in winter.
- 1:6** For children less than 8 years of age.

These are the minimum recommended and the smaller the ratio the better.

### Leading a Trip

No formal qualification is required to lead groups on most off-site visits. This includes hilly terrain and moor land below 600m and in summer conditions where activities take place less than 30 minutes from the nearest road or habitation. Other comfort and safety factors will, of course, need to apply as appropriate, in terms of clothing and equipment, manageable group size, communications and control of the group for example.

### Adventurous Activities

The adult leading the group on any adventurous activities (climbing, mountain walking above 600m and in remote areas, sailing, canoeing, caving etc) must have a recognised National Governing Body. If a commercial centre is being used then that centre must be licensed by the Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority (AALA). A copy of the licence will suffice as evidence of suitable risk assessments for the activities only. Any down time and evenings need to have separate risk assessments from the group leader.

## Food and Drink

Children must take enough food and drink for the time they are out. In summer teachers must ensure that enough water is taken. It is suggested that no vacuum flask or glass bottles are taken.

## Bags

Children must take an adequate bag to carry any food, drink and/or spare clothing in. It must be comfortable enough to carry around with them for the duration of the visit. Ideally this should be a rucksack, but other bags may be suitable.

## Travelling

Good discipline is essential. The following guidance is given concerning the management of groups when travelling.

## Walking

- Pupils should walk in controlled groups.
- One member of staff should be at the front or in control of the front of the group, another at the back aware of any individuals who are behind.
- The degree of control required will primarily depend upon the nature of the group and location.

## On Roads

- Avoid walking on roads wherever possible.
- Pavements should be used.
- Encourage pupils to be considerate of other pedestrians.
- Where there is no pavement, walk on the right hand side of the road, facing oncoming traffic.
- When approaching dangerous corners on unpaved roads, the whole of the party should be halted. The leader should move forward. If safe passage is ensured, the pupils move forward. If the safe passage is compromised the leader or assistant leader should call a warning. This could be a whistle.
- When walking in darkness or semidarkness, the leaders should wear light clothing or fluorescent markers and should have a white light for the front and a red light for the rear of the party. The school possesses fluorescent jacket which should be worn by the leader and the accompanying adults.
- Particular care should be taken when groups are crossing a road. Leaders should always seek a Pelican or Zebra Crossing. If one is not

available a safe place should be sought and the group cross in waves. This should be practiced before the trip.

**NB** Teachers have no legal right to stop traffic, but most drivers are obliging.

## Coach

- On boarding any large vehicle one adult should enter the coach and supervise the children into their seat.
- A second adult should stand outside the coach ensuring children are orderly.
- A count should be taken as they board the coach.
- When all the children are seated a second adult counts the children again and ensures all seat belts are being worn.

## Public Bus

- Children should be counted on to the bus and again when seated.
- It is important that the staff ensure the children remain seated at all times, until told to disembark.

In either of the above, if a double Decker is used then there must be at least one adult on each level.

## By Rail

- Where possible reserve the seats in advance so that the group can be kept together and supervised during the journey.
- Ask the station officials about the stopping position of reserved coaches so that the students can be gathered in a place near the carriage.
- Make it clear to the pupils that unnecessary movement in corridors and gangways will not be allowed and give clear outlines of a toilet and buffet procedure.

## By Underground

- Plan well in advance for travelling by underground.
- Obtain tickets in advance to avoid delay and congestion.
- Organise pupils in groups each group with a supervising adult.
- Set up clear procedures if a pupil gets left behind or boards a train without the others.
- It is easy to become separated in the busy stations.

## **Countryside Visits**

Comfort and safety factors will apply to this environment. The party leader should have:-

- a recall procedure
- Consider footwear and clothing likely for the best and worst conditions which it is likely you may face
- Negotiate or plan route bearing in mind of rights of way and access.
- Bear in mind the Countryside code.
- Beware of the unexpected.

## **Lakes and Rivers**

Activities or fieldwork undertaken in or adjacent to rivers or lakes require additional care and adequate supervision (such visits need to be authorised by Kirklees at least 6 weeks prior to the visit).

- Risk assessments must state whether or not the child is likely to enter the water (e.g. to study water flow or the bed of the stream).
- Letters to parents must state if the child is likely to enter the water.
- Swollen rivers present a particular hazard. Jumping from boulder to boulder can also be hazardous.
- Spare clothing should be taken.
- Leaders need to ensure blue-green algae are not present in any still waters (contact the Environment Agency).

## **Beach and Coast**

The beaches and coastal areas offer a wide range of opportunities for both study based and activity based use. However, whilst presenting many challenges and interests, these areas present their own inherent dangers.

A high level of vigilance and supervision is needed when close to any stretch of water. The sea needs extra care and attention. When planning activities in coastal areas bear in mind the following points:-

- Tides, swell, wind, currents and sandbanks may present difficulties. Exit routes **MUST** be checked well in advance and at times during the visit.
- Swimming should not take place as rip tides may be unknown. Swimming is allowed if there are qualified life savers/ beach patrols on duty.
- Paddling is permissible, but should be strictly monitored. N ongoing risk assessment must be made bearing in mind state of tide and weather. Strict guidelines must be adopted with adults in the sea.

- Beaches present their own problems, particularly when large numbers of the general public are present. Establish a base to which members of the group must return if separated from the rest. Look out for warning notices and flags.
- Climbing on rocky beaches and cliffs should not be allowed. Do not base groups under such sites or allow pupils to throw stones down.
- Be aware of the possible presence of dangerous debris such as glass, syringes, sewage, barbed wire and marker flares as well as oil.
- Cliff tops- remain on the path. If the route is new to the leader a responsible adult should be at the front. Cliff tops are exposed areas and may experience rapid changes in weather conditions. Clothing, route choice and group management should reflect this.

Advice is available from the Coastguard, local authority and the Meteorological Office,.

### **Canoeing and Kayaking**

Canoeing and kayaking should only be supervised by suitably qualified staff.

### **Caving**

Caving covers pot-holing as well.

Leaders must be assessed in the particular cave where they are leading the children.

N.B. Caving is currently under review as there are insurance issues. Check with the licence holder and/or the authority.

### **Climbing**

Climbing is defined as negotiating a rock face using ropes and other protection.

No climbing is to be done unless the leader has a suitable qualification - Single Pitch Award (SPA), Mountain Instructors Award (MIA) . multi-pitch climbing, Mountain Instructors Certificate (MIC), or higher.

### **Mountain Walking**

Mountain walking is defined as areas above 600m, remote from roads and where terrain may be rough.

Such areas may include the High Peak of Derbyshire, Yorkshire Dales (including Malham), the Lake District and North Wales.

- Leaders must be familiar with the terrain to be encountered.
- The leader must have a National Governing Body award such as the Walking group Leaders Award (WGLA), summer Mountain Leader (ML).
- The leader must be competent in navigation and must hold a valid first aid certificate.

## Farm Visits

Visits to private working farms, agricultural college farms, local authority farms, rural study centres etc are a valuable feature of education to young pupils in particular. Children are often invited to touch farm animals, to help bottle-feed calves and lambs. This should not be discouraged, but sensible precautions must be taken such as washing hands thoroughly.

These visits carry very small risks of acquiring infection. Several micro-organisms (Campylobacter, salmonella, cryptosporidium etc) are commonly present in livestock and may cause gastroenteritis in humans. They may be found in faecal remains and elsewhere. It is vital children do not touch the soles of their shoes and then putting their fingers near their mouths - a problem on a long coach journey home.

- Children must be told to keep their fingers away from their mouths and not to eat until they have washed their hands.
- Do not sample, taste or take away any animal feed stuff, raw milk.
- Do not drink from farm taps.
- Children always to wash their hands after the farm visit.
- It is advisable for the Group Leader to check with the farm that they have hand washing facilities with anti-bacterial soap.

There are many other dangers associated with farms, particularly farm machinery both static and moving. It is obvious not to let children near any machinery.