

In God's love we believe and achieve



St. Michael's

Catholic Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

Educational visits policy

At St Michael's we value the role of educational visits and regard them as an important part of school life.

For any educational visit it is important that guidelines and policies are adhered to: -

The range of activities covered by this document includes: -

Residential visits

Day visits including transport

Day or part day visits on foot

After school sporting activities

Swimming visits

Farm visits

These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the following documentation:

- DFEE Health and Safety Responsibilities
- Halton Borough Council Policy Requirements and Guidelines for safe Practice, Educational visits and outdoor adventurous activities
- BAALPE Safe Practice in Physical Education

School visits benefit young people in many ways, including:

- Being able to apply a different range of skills than those used in the classroom
- Enabling, supporting and complementing the work of the National Curriculum with first-hand experience and memorable learning
- Assessing and managing safety risks
- Associating the work of school and teachers directly with the work outside school
- Developing talents, abilities and interests, which can be motivational and have lifelong learning benefits.

Staff, pupils and parents all have responsibilities during the course of any off-site activity in which they are participating.

Governing Body

The Governing body should satisfy itself that risk assessments are always undertaken and that appropriate safety measures have been put in place and training needs have been addressed.

Governing bodies ensure that:

- The Headteacher notifies the Governing body of all school visits
- Every visit has a specific and stated objective.

- That they are informed about less routine visits well in advance particularly visits of a residential nature.

Head Teacher / EVC should ensure:

- That visits comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the LEA, schools governing body and the schools own health and safety policy
- That the Local Authority is informed of the proposed trip through 'Evolve' making sure all supporting documents are added.
- That the group leader is competent to monitor risks throughout the visit
- That adequate child protection procedures are in place
- The risk assessment has been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place
- That the group leader has experience in supervising the age groups on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- The group leader or another teacher is suitably competent to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location/centre where the activity takes place
- That the group leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly
- Non Teacher helpers on the visit are appropriate to supervise children
- The ratios of staff to pupils are appropriate
- The Governing body has been informed of the visit
- Parents have given consent via school comms
- Arrangements have been made for the medical and special educational needs of pupils
- Adequate first aid provision will be in place
- The mode of transport is appropriate
- Travel times out and back are known in school
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- They have the address and phone number of visits venue and have a contact name
- A school contact has been nominated and the group leader has the details
- The group leader, helpers and nominated contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures
- The group leader, helpers and nominated school contact have the names of all adults and pupils travelling in the group and the contact details of parents and staff
- There is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments for school visits have 3 levels:

- *Generic activity risk assessments, which are likely to apply to the activity whenever it takes place.*
- *Visit/site specific risk assessments, which will differ from place to place and group to group*

- Ongoing risk assessments that take account of e.g. illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activities.

Pre-Visits

Pre visits can be made when visits are planned to venues that are being used by the school for the first time, or the visit leader is unfamiliar with. This is necessary to undertake a full and comprehensive assessment of risks. When undertaking a risk assessment, a number of variables need to be taken into account.

- The number of pupils involved
- The age of the pupils
- The previous experience of the group undertaking off-site visits
- The time of day and time of year
- The travel arrangements
- The hazards at the environment being visited
- The numbers, experience and quality of accompanying staff and volunteers
- The nature of the activities
- The special educational or medical needs of the pupils
- The quality and suitability of available equipment
- Seasonal weather conditions
- Emergency procedures
- Contingency plans for a sick/injured child
- The need to monitor the risks throughout the visit

Duties and Responsibilities

All staff should be aware of the expectations placed upon them and should appreciate the nature of their relationship to the pupils and other staff.

All staff must:

- Conduct themselves in a manner compatible with their own safety and the safety and well-being of the pupils
- Inform the visit leader if they are unsure of their ability to perform any supervisory function requested of them
- Recognise the limits of their responsibilities and act within those at all times
- Report to the visit leader any concerns they may have regarding pupil behaviour and wellbeing during the visit.

Responsibilities of Nominated Group Leader

Group leaders have a common law duty of care towards the pupils in their charge. Group leaders must recognise their responsibilities:

- Obtain the Head Teachers prior agreement before any off-site visit
- Follow LEA and governing body guidelines
- Appoint a deputy
- Clearly define each helpers role and ensure all tasks have been assigned

- Be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age group
- Be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity and be familiar with the location/centre where the activity takes place
- Be aware of child protection issues
- Ensure adequate first aid provision is in place
- Undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents if deemed necessary
- Undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment
- Review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise the Head Teacher where adjustments may be necessary
- Ensure that all staff attending the trip are fully aware of what the proposed visit entails
- Ensure staff pupil ratio is appropriate for the group
- Be prepared to stop the visit if the risk to health or safety of the pupil is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an emergency
- Ensure all staff have details of the school contact and emergency procedures
- Ensure that all staff have details of the medical or special needs of the pupils
- Observe the guidance set out for teachers

Staff

School staff must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as a reasonable parent would in the same circumstances.

They should:

- Follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline
- Consider stopping the visit or the activity, notifying the group leader if they think the risk to the health and safety of the pupils in their charge is too great.
- Ensure that non-teaching staff are not left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment

Pupils

The group leader must make it clear to pupils that they must:

- Not take unnecessary risks
- Follow the instructions of the leader and other helpers including those at the venue
- Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly
- Look out for anything that might threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the leader or helpers about it
- Ensure that any pupil whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group are stopped from going on the visit.

Parents

Parents should be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should go on a visit.

The group leader should ensure that parents are given sufficient information in writing and invited to any briefing sessions if applicable.

The group leader should also tell parents how they could help prepare their child for the visit, e.g. reinforcing the school's code of conduct.

Parents will need to:

- Provide the group leader with emergency contact numbers
- Give consent and complete medical form (residential visits)
- Give the group leader information about their child's emotional and physical health, which might be relevant to the visit.
- Complete medication forms on day of departure with explicit instructions relating to dosage

Records and communications

Records and feedback of a visit can provide a very useful and informative way of demonstrating the accountability of the school towards its pupils.

Reports of any accidents should also be kept on file.

Parents should always be made aware when their children are leaving the school premises.

Parents may exercise their right not to allow their children to take part in a visit. Under these circumstances the school must make alternative arrangements to ensure that the National Curriculum work that was being developed during the visit is made available to the pupil in school. The refusal of a parent not to allow the pupil to go on the visit does not offer the opportunity for the child to be kept off school for the day.

Parents will obtain information regarding specific school visits through email providing details of proposed trip. This will be followed up by a more detailed letter a few weeks before the date in the case of residential visits.

Further information is available through the Educational Visits and Charging and Remissions policy on the school website.

First Aid

There should be qualified first aider on every visit.

The "mini accident book" should be taken on every visit and a slip completed for every incident,

A first aid kit and bucket should be available to staff at all times.

Staff/pupil ratios

Halton guidelines on staff pupil ratio should be adhered to on all school visits.

- Suggested guidelines are:
 - Foundation Stage 1 adult for every 5 pupils
- Years 1 to 3 - 1 adult for every 6 pupils
- Years 4 to 6 - 1 adult for every 15 pupils

These ratios should take into account

- Gender age and ability of group
- Pupils with special educational or medical needs
- Nature of activities
- Experience of adults in offsite supervision
- Duration and nature of the journey
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities
- Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited
- Competence and behaviour of pupils
- First aid cover

Where there is more than one teacher on the visit a group leader should be appointed who has the authority over the whole group.

The Head Teacher must assess the suitability of the staffing of the trip at a very early stage of the planning.

It should also be noted that for the protection of both adult and child, no adult should be left alone with a pupil.

All staff on a visit should clearly understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. It should always be clear that the group leader is responsible for the group at all times.

Headcounts

- Whatever the length of the visit regular head counts should be taken of the children, particularly before leaving any venue.
- All adults should carry a list of all the pupils and adults involved in the visit.
- Pupils especially R to Year 3 should be easily identifiable by wearing hivi vests if deemed necessary.
- Pupils should not wear name badges but badges with the school name may be worn.
- The group leader should identify rendezvous points and tell children what to do if they get separated from the group.

Insurance

The school's Educational Visits Insurance is provided by the Department of Education.

Emergency procedures

Teachers in charge of visits have a duty of care to make sure that their pupils are safe and healthy.

They will:

- Assess the situation
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- Attend to the casualty
- Inform the emergency services if necessary

- Inform the school and/or home contact
- Ensure that a teacher accompanies any casualties to hospital and the rest of the group are supervised.
- Record accurately all relevant facts and witness details and preserve as vital evidence
- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible
- Never speak to the media

In an emergency the group leader would take control of the situation.

The home contact's main responsibility is to link the group with the school and to provide assistance as necessary.

This named person should have all the information about the visit.

Transport

The group leader should consider:

- Passenger safety
- Type of journey
- Traffic conditions
- Insurance cover
- Weather
- Journey time and distance
- Stopping on longer journeys
- Supervision

Supervision on visits

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk assessment

Level of supervision on coaches should include a supervising teacher

Safety when crossing roads

Safety of pupils at dropping off point

Head counts when getting on and leaving transport

Responsibility for checking seat belts

Travel sickness pills should only be taken when previous authorisation has been received from parents.

Use of cars

This should generally be discouraged but if used the following should be adhered to

- The driver should ensure that the office have a copy of their driving licence, MOT and car insurance showing business cover before transporting children.
- Drivers ensure pupils wear seat belts
- Staff should not be in a position where they are left alone in a car with a single child

Swimming Pools

A minimum supervision level of 1 adult to every 12 pupils is recommended

The following checks should be made

- Is there constant pool supervision by a sufficient number of qualified staff
- Is the water temperature appropriate
- Where there is no life guard the leader should stay on the pool side at a raised location and the group leader should have the relevant life saving award
- Is the water clear
- Are there signs indicating depth of water
- Does the pool cater for children with disabilities
- Does the deep end allow for safe diving
- Is there a resuscitator and other pieces of first aid and rescue equipment and is there someone trained to use them
- Is there a changing room for each gender
- Are the changing and showering facilities safe and hygienic
- Can clothes be stored safely
- Have the pupils been instructed how to behave around water.

Residential visits

Staff ratio should be at least 1 member of staff for every 10 pupils.

- The group should ideally have adjoining rooms - the leader should obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the groups use in advance.
- Ideally there should be at least one teacher from each gender for mixed groups whenever possible.
- There must be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for pupils and adults
- The immediate accommodation should be exclusively for the groups use
- There should be appropriate and safe heating and ventilation
- The whole group should be aware of the layout of the accommodation. Its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routines and everyone can identify key personnel
- Security arrangements where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors
- By using accredited Educational Visit centres we can ensure that all staff employed at the centres are checked on their suitability for working with young people
- Locks on doors should work in the groups rooms but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times
- There should be drying facilities
- There should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage and equipment
- There should be provision for children with special needs and for those who fall sick
- The fire alarm must be audible throughout the whole accommodation
- There should be recreational facilities for the group

- There should be an appropriate number of supervisors on duty during the night

Farm visits

Farms can be very dangerous places even for the people working on them. Risks to be addressed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E-coli food poisoning and other infections.

The farm should be well managed and have a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public spaces.

Pupils should not

- Place their faces against the animals or put their hands in their mouths.
- Eat until they have washed their hands.
- Sample any animal foods.
- Drink from any farm taps
- Ride on tractors or other farm machinery
- Play in the farm area.

The Educational Visits Policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

The Educational Visits Policy has been reviewed by the Governing body and signed by Mike Volynchok, Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing body.

Signed copy available from school office.