



# Educational Visits and School Trip Policy

*Policy Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature of Principal:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Review Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Introduction**

During the school year it is important that the children in our school experience a wide range of learning environments. Visits out of school in the locality and further afield are a memorable experience for all children. They are enthused and motivated by the activity and their learning is enriched and enhanced. Taking children out of school is a major responsibility for staff and careful planning is essential to ensure that a visit is safe and enjoyable. The first principle is that *ALL* visits are *EDUCATIONAL*. They are intended to be a learning experience for the children.

## **Objectives**

To ensure that:

1. The planned visit is purposeful and relevant.
2. That preparations ensure that children gain maximum benefit from the activity.
3. Adequate procedures are in place to ensure children's safety.
4. Emergency procedures are in place.
5. A risk assessment is completed.

## **Guidelines**

All visits are planned with reference to 'Educational Visits – Best Practice Guide 2009.'

### **1. Legal Responsibility:**

It is our duty as staff members to ensure the safety and welfare of the children is a priority during all educational visits. The following gives a brief outline of the legal requirements we adhere to: (Taken from Educational Visits – Best Practice Guide 2009.)

*Common Law Duty of Care* It is...incumbent upon staff who are supervising young people to act reasonably in all circumstances so that the personal safety and well-being of those in their care are not jeopardised during the visit.

*Health and Safety at Work (Criminal Duty)*

...The manner in which such arrangements are developed is through the process of a **risk assessment**...the outcome of which acts as the basis for the organisation to establish that which needs to be put in place to allow the activity to proceed in a way which sufficiently manages the risks to which participants may be exposed.

*The Children's (Northern Ireland) Order 1995*

The central thrust of the Order is that the welfare of the young person must be the paramount consideration and it is this essential principle which underpins effective practice in the area of Child Protection.

The basic principles of Child Protection must always be borne in mind when undertaking an educational visit particularly where it includes a residential element. The young person's welfare must always be paramount and this overrides all other considerations. All young people have the fundamental right to be protected from harm. Young people have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Careful consideration must be given to young people who have special educational needs, as such children may be especially vulnerable.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities:**

### ***Principal***

- The principal is responsible for granting permission for a visit to take place.
- Ensuring a competent group leader is selected (For residential trips).
- Ensuring the ratio for adults to children is appropriate.
- Adequate insurance (if needed) for the visit has been identified.
- Ensuring child protection procedures are in place and teachers have been informed of any cause for concern.
- Ensuring group leader/teacher in charge has sufficient time to organise visit properly.
- Any necessary vetting of accompanying adults (Mainly parents) has been carried out.
- Ensuring a risk assessment has been completed by the teacher in charge of the visit.

### ***Teacher (Group leader)***

- Obtain prior agreement and approval before any off site visit takes place from the principal.
- Adhere to best practice.
- Undertake and complete the planning and preparation for the visit including class trip checklist and **risk assessment**.
- Carry out a pre visit where appropriate.
- Collect relevant information on children taking part in trip (Dietary and medical needs).
- Ensure the ratio of adults to children is correct.
- Ensure child protection procedures are followed.
- Ensure adequate first aid provision is available.
- Ensure emergency contact details are available to all adults on trip.

### ***Classroom Assistants (And volunteer supervisors)***

- Accept the authority and follow the instructions of the teacher (group leader).
- Endeavour to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group.

### **3. Categories of Educational Trips:**

Educational trips are arranged into five separate categories.

**Category 1** – Curriculum based activities that occur on regular basis within school hours e.g. swimming, park, autumn walk. Parents informed and permission sought at the beginning of each academic year (Or block of swimming).

**Category 2** – Day visits that may extend beyond school hours but are not overnight, E.g. Trip to W5, Titanic Museum etc. Parental consent forms sent prior to visit taking place and all relevant information given to parents.

**Category 3** – Residential visit of one or more nights away from home but within the U.K. or Ireland. (Non-Hazardous). Approval from Board of Governors. Parents fully informed of all relevant information and parental consent forms required.

**Category 4** – Residential visit of one or more nights away from home outside the U.K. or Ireland. (Non-Hazardous). Approval from Board of governors. Parents fully informed of all relevant information and details of trip, all relevant insurance and medical needs in place and parental consent forms required.

**Category 5:** - Hazardous activities – residential and non-residential. Due consideration should be given to the legal context outlined previously. Permission sought from parents.

### **4. Planning:**

- Visits should be planned into the curriculum at the beginning of the school year.
- Teachers must have a clear view of the purpose of the visit.
- Arrangements for each visit should be made well in advance.
- Collect a copy of the visits checklist from the Principal /School Secretary. (See Appendix 1)
- Complete a risk assessment of the visit.
- Collect parental consent forms for each visit.

### **5. Preliminary Visit:**

A preliminary visit may be necessary, unless regular visits are made and the location is well known to staff. A letter on school headed notepaper should enable staff to visit free of charge. Consider the dangers and difficulties that might arise during the visit. Your knowledge of the location will inform the risk assessment. At this stage inform the Principal of your intentions. Complete School Trip checklist form.

- At least six weeks prior to the intended visit (Where possible) inform the Principal of the time and place of visit and ensure that it does not clash with any other school events. Also add this to the electronic staff calendar. At the same time notify the school secretary, who makes bookings, including transport, (but she must be given adequate time).
- The cost of the visit should be calculated and should be discussed with the Principal.

#### **6. Notifying Parents:**

- A letter should be drafted to parents. It should contain details of the visit including; cost, purpose, travel arrangements, date and times of departure and arrival.
- Parents should be able to make an informed decision as to whether their child should go on the visit.
- The group leader should ensure parents have sufficient information in writing and are invited to a briefing session if deemed necessary.
- Parents should be informed how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the rules for behaviour.
- It is important that parents are informed of any hazardous activities they are consenting to.

#### **7. Funding:**

A charge cannot be imposed on the parents, but they will be asked to make a voluntary contribution. They should be made aware that payment is not compulsory. This may also include the cost of transportation.

#### **8. Parental Permission:**

As part of the parent consent form given out at the start of each school year parents are asked for permission for visits to the local community, e.g. park, church, village etc. this covers permission for the whole school year.

- Parents must be informed of every occasion when their child will be taken off school premises.

- In certain circumstances parents may exercise the right to refuse to allow their child take part in the visit. This does not offer the opportunity to allow a day off.
- For other day visits an additional permission slip must be given to all parents.
- Permission slips should be returned a few days prior to the visit.
- Ensure that parents have as much information about the visit as possible.

## **9. Supervision:**

- Ensure that enough adults are available to enable children to gain as much as possible from the visit.
- School staff should supervise potentially difficult children.
- It is a good opportunity to involve parents in the work of the school.
- You need to consider how you will select parents if there are too many volunteers. This must be fair.
- Each parent should supervise no more than 4 children and fewer if possible.
- They need to know that they must keep the group with them at all times.
- Organise groups so that parents are linked to a member of staff and that they stay close to each other
- Give parents information so that they know what to do.
- Children should never be allowed to wander from the group.
- Frequent head counting is essential.

## **10. Staff Ratios:**

The minimum requirements for the number of escorts, set out in 'Educational Visits Best Practice 2009' document is as follows:

Department	Year Groups	Ratio
Foundation Stage	P1 & P2	1:10
Key Stage 1	P3 & P4	1:15
Key Stage 2	P5 to P7	1:15

## **11. First Aid:**

- Before undertaking an educational visit or class trip teachers should complete a risk assessment form of their destination.
- Adequate first aid equipment must be brought and carried. There are first aid kits available in school.

- These kits should be checked well before the date of visit to ensure they are adequately stocked.
- Fully complete the Class Trips checklist and send to school secretary.
- Make a list of all children who need medication.
- All those children who require inhalers or epi pens should bring their medication inhaler with their name on it. Depending on age of children this will be kept by the member of staff with their group or by the child themselves.
- A list of contact numbers for all children on the trip should be printed and brought by the teacher in charge.
- The schools mobile should be brought to make calls to parents. If this is not possible staff may use their own mobile phones but make their number appear as private.
- Be prepared for travel sickness and sit any children likely to be travel sick near the front of bus.
- Travelsick children should be cared for by teacher or other school staff.
- Follow the schools normal first aid procedures as outlined previously in this policy.

## **12. Journey:**

Manoeuvring a group of children along streets and across roads is a task that carries enormous responsibility.

- Children should be kept under constant supervision.
- When walking in the street, children should walk two abreast and holding hands.
- There should be a teacher at the front and another at the back. Other helpers should walk at intervals along the line.
- Keep children away from kerbs and pavement edges. Always use the safest crossing places available. Look for: subways, footbridges, zebra or pedestrian crossings and traffic lights. If you cannot find any of these, find a safe spot away from bends, corners and the brows of hills. Avoid crossing between parked cars.
- If the group is very large consider taking them across the road in smaller units.
- When resuming the responsibility to get children across the road we must discharge the activity as a 'reasonable person' and to the best of our ability.
- We are accepting a risk that is not completely within our control. For this reason, it is essential that a safe crossing point is chosen.
- On the coach, children must have their own seat and every person must wear a seatbelt.
- An adult should sit at the front and near the emergency exit.
- There should be no eating or drinking on the coach.

- Ring school if the return journey is delayed and you expect to return later than the expected time.

### **13. Lunch:**

Packed lunches should be in a plastic bag that can be thrown away. The cook will provide a packed lunch for children entitled to free school meals.

### **14. Preparing children for the visit:**

- Discuss safety rules with the children.
- Discuss behaviour rules.
- Discuss the purpose of the visit with the children. Explain to them what they will see and do.
- Some children become anxious about visits, because they do not know what to expect.

### **15. Risk Assessment:**

- The underlying basis of health and safety care is to control risks. This is effectively achieved through risk assessment.
- When planning a visit all potential risks to children and adults should be assessed. A record must be kept of the risks identified.
- Consideration needs to be given to:
  - Identification of hazards
  - Who might be affected?
  - How risks might be reduced to an acceptable level
  - Can measures be implemented?
  - What contingency plans can be put into place if all else fails.

### **16. Communication with School:**

A mobile phone should be carried whenever possible and school should be notified of any problems and if the time of return has been delayed.

### **17. Use of Private Cars:**

- Where parties travel by private car the head teacher is responsible for ensuring that drivers and vehicles are covered by valid insurance and MOT. The parents of children should be informed in advance.
- Teachers intending to use their cars to transport children must contact their insurance company to ensure that cover is in place.

### Trip Check List (Appendix 1)

	Yes	No	N/A
Risk Assessment completed by teacher/leader.			
Relevant trip planning documentation taken.			
Supervising adults are all vetted.			
Signed permission slip from parents/carer regarding trips.			
Take list and contact details for each pupil.			
Member of staff brings mobile phone and School I pad/camera.			
Ensure medical supplies, i.e. epi pens, inhalers, bags for sickness, wipes etc. are brought.			
Ensure to bring appropriate clothing/long sleeved tops /trousers / footwear.			
Ensure packed lunches are brought.			
Coach hired from an accredited coach			

company.			
First Aid Kit and trained staff taken on bus and to venue.			
Sun screen to be applied by parent/carer at home prior to school day.			

**General Trip Risk Assessment Format (Appendix 2)**

### Planning Checklist for Residential Visits (Appendix 3)

Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Class involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

Leader/Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

		YES	NO	N/A
1	The proposed visit has clear educational objectives			
	The nature of the visit has been established			
	The target group (Class) has been identified			
2	All relevant information regarding proposed visit has been presented to the principal			
3	Principal has approved the visit			
4	Risk assessment has been completed			
	Hazards have been identified			
	Appropriate control measures have been put in place			
	People who may be at risk have been identified			
5	Emergency procedures have been agreed			
6	Supervising adults have been identified			
	All adults have been Police checked			
7	Leaders are aware of their roles and responsibilities			
	Leaders are aware of the staff code of conduct			
8	Pupils and parents/guardians have been informed about the visit			

9	Parents/guardians have given their written consent			
10	All relevant information (Medical, dietary, contact details etc.) has been obtained			
11	Transport has been arranged that is appropriate for the nature of the journey.			
12	Adequate insurance is in place to cover all aspects of the educational visit			
13	The overnight accommodation is appropriate			
14	Appropriate management structures are in place in relation to child protection and health and safety			
15	Staff are competent to provide the activities			
16	Final approval has been obtained			