



OFF-SITE VISIT POLICY Archibald First School

Introduction

Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

Aims

The aims of our off-site visits are to

- Enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils
- Provide a wider range of creative and cultural experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone.
- Promote the independence of our children as learners and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments

These visits begin with short excursions into the local area in the Early Years and progress to a residential experience in Year 4.

Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). All these activities are in line with guidance published by the LA.

- English – visits to the library, theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups
- Science – use of the school grounds including the pond area, use of middle school labs
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the environment

OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

- Humanities – castle visits and other historic buildings, study of local housing, local museums, use of the locality for fieldwork
- Art and design – art gallery visits, visits by designers and artists, use of the locality
- PE - a range of sporting and extra-curricular activities, participation in School Games and other sporting events, visits by specialist coaches
- Music - specialist music teaching, extra- curricular activities, local school band and choir, concerts for parents
- ICT – visits by GEM Education and to Newcastle University.
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy
- PSHE and citizenship – visits to local women’s group, local police officers and health workers

Residential activities

Children in Year 4 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is in school time and contributes to many curriculum areas. A charge is made for board, lodging, insurance and specialist instruction but not for education. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals are exempt from all charges. See Charging and Remissions policy.

The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work. We undertake this visit only with the written agreement of the LA we provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that are undertaken, and use the residential facility promoted by the LA.

EVOVLE

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must use EVOLVE to ensure all LA /Health and Safety criteria are adhered.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the Headteacher completing all necessary information using EVOLVE. Letters to parents must be approved by the Headteacher before information is added to EVOLVE

Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, via EVOLVE, the Headteacher will seek the approval of the governing body and the LA before permitting the activity to take place.

Inclusion

It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

How visits may be authorised

All proposed visits must be submitted to the Head teacher/Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) using EVOLVE.

The headteacher will agree a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed by the school.

The school's educational visits coordinator, who is the head teacher, will be involved in checking and approving off-site visits via the EVOLVE portal. They will:

- Ensure that risk assessments are completed.
- Make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained.
- Assign competent staff to lead and help with trips.
- Ensure staffing ratios.
- Organise related staff training.
- Verify that all accompanying adults, have had satisfactory police checks
- Oversee Health and Safety considerations.
- Ensure the use of bus/taxi companies from the LA approved list.
- Ensure that providers have the necessary certification as approved providers.
- Check emergency procedures are in place.
- Through EVOLVE: keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example Gosforth swimming pool)

Group leaders' planning

The group leader must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities. They must consult LA procedures and requirements including guidance on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation and must draw up a visit plan using EVOLVE, which records the arrangements that have been made. The Headteacher will brief the group leader of the Critical Incident Procedures and provide contact numbers to support any emergency.

Risk assessment

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergent?

OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment.

It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available with due regard to the proposed size of the group.

They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and particular needs of the children.

They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety.

Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve. The LA will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the Educational Visits forms must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

Transport

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue, including

- The provision and required use of seat belts
- Proper vetting of the driver
- Proper insurance for the driver
- On board first aid and emergency equipment
- Breakdown procedures

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. Where possible the school uses public transport, however if private transport is used, the school will only use transport providers registered with the LA and on the authorised providers list.

School insists that seatbelts are worn by all those participating in the visit. Adults will check that the seat belts of younger children are checked prior to departure.

Private cars are not used for visit transport.

Volunteers

The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip who will be alone with children have been subject to police checks; List 99 or DBS.

OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be submitted to the Headteacher (education visits coordinator) via EVOLVE and to the LA if the visit is a category C visit, and all adults supervising the trip.

Charging and Remissions

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- Transport;
- Entrance fees;
- Insurance;
- Provision of any special resources or equipment;
- Costs related to adult helpers;
- Any refreshments the school has opted to pay for.

Ratios

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

Ratios during outings will be determined by the risk assessment, which will be reviewed before each outing. The appropriate ratio on an outing is always likely to be higher than the legal minimum (for children aged three and over in early years settings either 1:13 and 1:30 in infant school reception classes in maintained schools).

Communication with parents.

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activity

When pupils join the school, parents are required to sign a form giving permission for all off-site visits within the locality of the school.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental voluntary contributions. This is made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

No child will be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents are informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits. **Please refer to the Charging and Remissions Policy.**

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Headteacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

Further health and safety considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

A register of children and adults attending the visit should be generated through EVOLVE and available to the school office and visit leader together with a programme and timetable for the activity.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the Headteacher the possibility of additional support or as a last resort, excluding that child from the activity.

It is crucial to identify a central meeting point and an emergency meeting point prior to any visit. All staff and volunteers must be aware of these points.

Visit plan

All visit information for intended educational visits must be recorded using EVOLVE and must include the following:

- Risk assessment;
- Applications for approval of visit;
- General information;
- Names, ages, contact details, medical information/risk assessment and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- Travel schedule;
- Accommodation plan (if applicable);
- Full plan of activities for residential visits;
- Intended arrangements for supervision;
- Insurance arrangements for all members of the group if residential visits;
- Emergency contacts and procedures;
- General communications information;
- Medical information;
- Named First Aid staff

OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every two to three years by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Last Reviewed: Autumn 2018

Next Review Date: Autumn 2021