



Our Lady Catholic Primary School

Educational Visits Policy



The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust
A Catholic Academy

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Introduction

Educational 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, but on occasions, take place after school. Our school adopts the LA guidance and uses their risk assessment tool when planning Educational Visits.

Aims

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- provide a wider range of 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.

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 – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;
- Science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens, visits to STEM companies;
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
- History – study of local housing patterns, local museums, local military museums;
- Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails;
- Art and design – art gallery visits, use of the locality;
- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches, visits to sporting centres;
- Music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities;
- Design and technology – visits to local factories or design centres;
- ICT – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools etc;
- RE/RSHE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy;
- PSHE/RSHE and citizenship – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

Residential activities

Children in upper Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to take part in residential visits. Residential visits enable children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work, as well as having links with PSHE, Science and Geography. Qualified instructors are present for all specialist activities that are undertaken. Mixed groups of pupils on residential visits usually require the presence of a male and a female adult. Where this is not the case, the approval of the Headteacher, governors and parents/carers should be obtained.

How visits may be authorised

Staff must complete a Visit request form prior to a visit being booked (see appendix 2). Once it has been approved by the Headteacher the booking process can begin.

The EVC (Educational Visit Coordinator) will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school. The school's educational visits coordinator, who may be the Headteacher, will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits. They will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- support the Headteacher and governing body in their decisions on approval;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks, and that the letter from our coach company assures us their drivers too have had police checks;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- 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 a swimming facility).

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the EVC before any commitment is made on behalf of the school.

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.

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 emergency?

Staff planning an off-site activity should, when possible, 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 any 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 they lack the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

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 Visit Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the correct ratios (see Appendix 1). Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

The risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company used should provide a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts and booster seats (if required);
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures.

The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to police checks.

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the EVC and all adults supervising the trip.

Transport

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;
- admin costs.

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks.

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 or at payment point before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary except in the case of residential visits). This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle through correspondence about intended visits.

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.

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.

Before a party leaves school, the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, 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 making additional arrangements for that child following an individual risk assessment (OV5).

Educational visits procedures

The following must be considered when planning an educational visit:

- risk assessment;
- report on preliminary visit, when possible;
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- travel schedule;
- accommodation plan (if applicable);
- full plan of activities;
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;
- guidance for party leaders;
- guidance for the emergency contact and Headteacher;
- medical questionnaire returns (if applicable);
- first-aid boxes.

Monitoring and review

Visit leaders are encouraged to review visits, taking into account the successful and less successful parts of the visit, and considering ways in which the visit could have been improved. Informal conversations might take place between the visit leader(s) and the EVC or Headteacher regarding the outcome of the visit.

This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Appendix 1:
STAFFING AND STAFF RATIOS

The minimum ratio is as follows, but will be reviewed for each trip following the risk assessment.

YR	1:5
Y1	1:5
Y2	1:5
Y3	1:8
Y4	1:10
Y5	1:10
Y6	1:10

A minimum of two staff must accompany each offsite visit.

Appendix 2:

Year group	
Lead Teacher	
Venue	
Possible Dates (Please provide 3 alternatives)	
Mode of transport	
Pick up from school to venue time	
Pick up from venue to school time	
Accompanying staff members	
No of parent volunteers needed/names of parents attending (KS1 ratio 1:5, Y3 ration 1:8, Y4, Y5, Y6 1:10 including teachers and TAs) (Please let us know if you need the request for parent helpers added to the letter)	
Is the trip relating to a subject?	
Brief description of trip	
Risk Assessments required	
Any other relevant information	
Form completed by:	Date form completed: