

WHITEHILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

"...putting children first..."



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Reviewed: November 2021

Reviewed by: Rebecca Casey

Ratified by Governors: December 2021

Educational Visits Policy 2021

Whitehills Primary School has adopted “Outdoor Education Advisory Panel (OEAP) National Guidance” This guidance can be found on the following web site:

<https://oeapng.info/>

It is a legal expectation that employees should work within the requirements of their employer’s guidance; therefore, Whitehills Primary School employees should follow the requirements of “OEAP National Guidance”, as well as the requirements of this Policy Statement.

Amended Operational Guidance

for Educational Visits The latest updated guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schoolscoronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance#educational-visits>

Given the likely gap in COVID-19 related cancellation insurance, if staff are considering booking a new visit, whether domestic or international, staff are advised to ensure that any new bookings have adequate financial protection in place.

The school will undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits and ensure that any public health advice, such as hygiene and ventilation requirements, is included as part of that risk assessment.

Out of School Visits

Teachers who take pupils out of school on a school activity are responsible for all pupils in their care just as they are in school during school hours. The teacher's duty of care has been described as in *loco parentis*, the standard of care of a reasonably careful parent.

The Department for Education guidance on Health & Safety on educational visits recommends that schools look for the LOtC Quality Badge when choosing external providers of educational visits. The scheme is managed and developed by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom.

<https://www.lotc.org.uk/lotc-accreditations/lotc-quality-badge/>

Approval and Notification of Activities and Visits

OEAP National Guidance categorises visits as Standard and Enhanced – explanations of these categories can be found in following OEAP NG document “Risk Management – an overview”

<https://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/4-3c-risk-management/>

Standard visits are further classified as follows:

Category A visits

These visits are close to the school, done on a regular basis involving environments known to the staff. It would include normal daily life activities. Examples include walks and exploring the area near to the school site, visits to the local church, library, school sporting fixtures and other regular non-complex activity. It can also include transport if needed.

Category B visits

These visits are to areas beyond the local area involving more complex environments and activity, and will typically be a one off or irregular activity in the school year. The leaders will be approved to lead the visit by the EVC. There may be some specialist training attached to some activities in this area. Examples include visits further afield, farm visits, local parks, museum visits, swimming lessons in offsite pools, zoo visits, sporting festivals and larger tournaments and some basic outdoor education activity.

Category C visits

Enhanced visits are also known as Category C visits and include residential visits, overseas visits and adventure activities. All residential visits have to be authorised by the OEAP before the trip can take place. This has to be completed each time there is a visit to any venue, irrespective of how many times that venue has been used previously. Trips which involve adventures on water or field studies involving water and trips to London must have been authorised by the OEAP (E-visits) prior to excursion.

Whitehills Primary School delegates the responsibility for formal approval of category A and B visits to the Head and EVC coordinator. It is a requirement of this policy that the head and EVC coordinator carry out this function in accordance with OEAP National Guidance.

Category C visits should be approved by an Adviser who is an accredited member of the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel

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Risk Assessment

Current legislation demands that each visit be subject to a Risk Assessment. This involves all aspects of the visit including arrangements for getting onto the coach, any stops along the way, procedures for getting off the coach and a thorough investigation of the location and activity being undertaken. As with all trips, it is expected that a member of staff visits the venue in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the risks the trip may entail (with specific considerations for the cohort)

Whitehills Primary School has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed by requiring them to be reduced to an “acceptable” or “tolerable” level as elimination of risks may not be practicable. The risk management of an activity should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating.

Whitehills Primary School strongly recommends a “Risk-Benefit Assessment” approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes. This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is “acceptable”. HSE endorse this approach through their “Principles of Sensible Risk Management” and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves. There is no legal requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format; but there is a legal requirement for the process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual, or harm several people. Refer to OEAP NG document: “Risk Management – an overview”

<https://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/4-3c-risk-management/>

Forms for each of these specific elements are available from the Educational Visits Co-ordinator and on the ‘common’ network and must be filled in prior to the visit and signed by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator.

Pupil Teacher Ratio

In general terms, the Law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does requires that the level of supervision and group management is “effective”.

Effective supervision should be determined by proper consideration of:

- The nature of the group, including the number of young people and their age, level of development, gender, ability and needs (behavioural, medical, emotional and educational);
- Staff competence;
- The consequence of a member of staff being indisposed, particularly where they will be the sole leader with a group for any significant time. However, as an exception to the above, DfE prescribes ratios for early years in the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf

Whitehills Primary School follows West Northamptonshire County Council’s recommendation of, in general, **Early years and Key Stage 1 - Maximum number of children to 1 adult = 6, Key Stage 2 one adult to every 10 pupils.** However, other factors to be taken into consideration will include:

- Particular activity
- Experience of the group involved, and the needs of individuals within the group including those with special educational needs
- Environment and conditions in which the activity will take place
- Experience of the staff
- Nature of the venue

As far as the educational content of the visit is concerned, the following considerations should be taken into account:

- a) how the visit fits into your programme of work and enhances learning
- b) the amount of time which can justifiably be spent on the visit in view of its educational value
- c) how follow-up activities can be fitted into the school's arrangements when pupils return from a visit
- d) the value for money of the trip

Communication is an important part of preparation. The Headteacher needs to be fully informed of the date of the proposed visit, the location and the facilities on offer prior to a letter being sent home to parents. (Eg: relatively little information is needed from the local museum, whereas the extent of information and the standards expected from outdoor activity centres is now a matter of general public concern - the OEAP guide-lines must be followed exactly in these circumstances.)

A checklist will be provided to all staff

<file:///C:/Users/r.casey/Downloads/3.3e-Checklist-Visit-Leader.pdf>

This list is designed to be a prompt for visit planning, and a final check.

THE HEADTEACHER MUST APPROVE THE LETTER.

Parents need to be informed of the trips and whilst in the trip falls within the school, permission will have already be granted when the child joins Whitehills. Out of school hours will need permission from the parents and slips must be returned to the class teacher.

The First Aid Travel Bag (kept in the Medical Room and in Year groups) should be checked for contents and always be taken on a visit regardless of the venue and distance travelled similarly a sick bucket should always be taken. A list of children who are on medication, and the dosage required, must be taken by the Teacher EG: Inhalers for Asthma sufferers. If medicine is given, LA forms should be completed – especially for residential trips and these should be listed on individual risk assessments for the condition.

Details of any children with dietary requirements/allergens should also be taken, and the teachers should ensure their duty of care for these children is observed. This should include checking that any meals or snacks provided are suitable for the child, and that details of the dietary requirements are provided in advance to any residential location. These requirements should also be considered with regard to snacks that are provided on the trip. Those children who require 'epi-pens' should have 2 in-date pens accessible for all trips.

Coronavirus

The Department for Education (DfE) advise on whether or not Educational Visits can be undertaken must be followed but when visits are allowed, schools should;

- Review their standard operating procedures for Educational Visits to ensure that they follow the current Public Health England advice regarding the measures needed to reduce the risks from Covid-19 - Refer to the latest OEAP National Guidance:

<https://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/4-4k-coronavirus/>

- Consider avoiding activities which have a high likelihood of minor injuries, so as to reduce the need for first aid, close contact with participants or visits to hospital. If the planned activity is in an area open to the public, consider carefully how social distancing with members of the public can be achieved.

- Take the current government guidance into account as part of the process of risk assessment when planning a visit and then check it regularly in the days and weeks leading up to the visit (as well as during it if it's a residential visit) and make any necessary changes to their plans.
- If planning to use one or more providers, schools should check that they have assessed the risk of coronavirus and implemented control measures to prevent infection. It should be noted that some providers may not have had the benefit of the advice and support available to education establishments and so may not be fully aware of the measures that are expected.
- Consider making a preliminary visit to check the Covid-19 measures in place and to discuss with the provider any issues that are identified.

Travel

Coaches / minibuses

When travelling using coaches the number of children and staff should be presented to the driver and a copy should also go to the school office.

Private car travel

Staff are insured through the school's business insurance. The relevant forms from the EVC must be completed and returned to the office. Children should have access to a backed booster seat in accordance with legislation. Staff should not travel alone with children for safeguarding reasons.

When arranging an Educational Visit the following information should be given to the administration staff:

1. Risk Assessment form/s completed.
2. Date of proposed visit plus one alternative.
3. Consideration of Learning Support Staff hours.
4. Proposed Venue.
5. Time of arrival and departure at venue.
6. Numbers required for coach and venue (including children and adults).
7. Private use of cars for transport – necessary insurance forms should be completed.
8. Lead teacher / deputy lead teacher has access to charged mobile phone.

Once all this information has been received the administration staff will:

1. In consultation with the EVC check that the Risk Assessment is viable.
2. Contact venue and check availability on proposed date/s.
3. Contact 2/3 coach companies for availability and prices of coaches. (Seat belts MUST be fitted to all coaches/mini-buses.)
4. The business manager will work out a price per child for the proposed visit, taking into consideration the costs for accompanying adults.

5. Once a price has been worked out, it has to be given to the Head Teacher for approval. Once the venue and cost has been approved the venue and coach company must be contacted and details finalised. All coach companies must sign a coach company booking agreement sent to them by the school.
6. The cost of the visit will then be passed to the Class Teacher who will compose a letter containing full details and cost of the visit, following the standard letter attached to the policy. **This letter must be approved by the Headteacher before sending it to parents.**
7. Once the visit is over, the organising lead teacher should let the administration staff know if everything was satisfactory and instructions should be given to pay the necessary bills.
8. A deputy lead should have access to all the information in the result of the lead teacher falling ill.
9. All correspondence between the school and the venue MUST be kept, together with any relevant notes/comments. A copy of the letter sent to parents, coach confirmation and booking agreement, all receipts and the Financial Statement balance sheet MUST also be kept in the school office for audit purposes.

10. **Voluntary Contribution**

Whitehills Primary School must take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996 and the DfE guidance document 'Charging for School Activities' (2014). All trips will be paid through Parentmail.

If any parent has any difficulty in meeting the cost of any Educational Visit, they should contact the Head Teacher or the school business manager. Charging will be in accordance with our charging policy.

Critical Incidents

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has: either suffered a life-threatening injury or fatality is at serious risk; or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

In the unlikely event of a critical incident staff must NOT speak to any press but should contact the LA for advice and the Head teacher. Lead teachers should have the school's insurance and the critical incidents number – available from the EVC.

Refer to OEAP NG document: "Emergencies and Critical Incidents – an overview"

<https://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/4-1b-emergencies-and-critical-incidents-overview/>

To activate support from West Northamptonshire Council, the following telephone numbers should be used: Emergency Planning. Normal office hours: 01604 236844 Outside normal office hours: 07885 292851 These numbers should be carried by leaders at all times during an off-site activity but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.

Monitoring

The EVC and Head will monitor:

- The planning and approval process. Check that staff are routinely following establishment requirements
- The quality and detail of visit plans and that they are inline with establishment and employer requirements.
- Reports, reviews and evaluations of visits
- Accidents and incidents for regularity and/or patterns
- Monitoring of health and safety should be done in such a way that it is a positive experience for leaders, with supportive feedback to enable them to reflect upon and improve their practice. It can be integrated with appraisal and with observation of teaching and learning – in this case outside the classroom.

Inclusion

Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender, religion or sexual orientation. If a visit needs to cater for young people with special needs, every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved. Establishments should take all reasonably practicable measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion should be promoted and addressed for all visits and reflected in establishment policy, thus ensuring an aspiration towards: an entitlement to participate accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification integration through participation with peers Employers, Heads/Managers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit Leaders should be aware of the extent to which Inclusion is or is not a legal issue. Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to: treat a disabled young person less favourably; fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification. Refer to OEAP NG document: "Inclusion"

<https://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/3-2e-inclusion/>

Additional Supporting Materials

Guidance

<http://oeapng.info/> The National Guidance website that forms the basis of NCC's Learning Outside the Classroom policy

The DfE issued renewed guidance about Educational Visits in November 2018 which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>

The DfE guidance on Character Education issued in November 2019 can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/character-education-framework>

The DfE charging policy for School activities can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>

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Reviewed by: Rebecca Casey

Ratified by Governors:

