



OFF-SITE VISIT POLICY

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OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

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OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

PURPOSE OF POLICY

As a school we value the role of offsite visits and regard them as an important part of school life. However, in order to ensure that pupils and adults are safe during off-site visits clear procedures, roles and responsibilities need to be enacted. It is the purpose of this policy to ensure that all offsite visits takes place with the minimal of risk to all participants.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To provide clear structures into the planning, preparation and organisation of all off-site visits.
- To clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of all members involved in the planning, preparation and organisation of all off-site visits.
- To identify the different activities involved in offsite visits.
- To identify methods of collecting and sharing information between all partners.
- To identify the different types of visits.
- To give direction to Risk Assessments.
- To provide information on procedures in case of emergencies.

TYPES OF OFFSITE VISITS

Day visits using transport.

Day or part day visits on foot that take place within the school local community

- Swimming pool visits
- Farm and park visits

CATEGORIES OF VISITS CURRENTLY OFFERED AT THE CHRYSALIS SCHOOL FOR AUTISM

Category 1 Visits:

All offsite educational visits and journeys that require young people to leave the school site during or outside the normal school day. Permission must be gained from the Principal before the visit can proceed.

VISIT OUTLINING PLANNING AND RISK ASSESSMENT

This must be completed before the visit is undertaken and passed to EVC for approval.

For category 1 visits, this should be completed at least:

- 1 week before the visit for visits within the community, no transport involved and local knowledge is clear.
- 1 month before the visit for visits outside the community, where transport is involved and local knowledge is not available.

DOCUMENTS INVOLVED IN ARRANGING OFFSITE VISITS

GENERAL CONSENT FORM

This is completed by all parents and carers at the start of each year and gives permission for children to participate on visits that do not involve transport. These visits take place within and around the school community.

OFFSITE EDUCATIONAL VISIT OR JOURNEY

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

This is completed by all parents and carers informing them of a visit that involves travel and seeks their permission.

MEDICAL CONSENT FORM

This is completed by all parents and carers to inform the school of any medical conditions that the child may have and emergency contact points for the family. It also requests permission for emergency medical attention if necessary.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Body

The governing body should satisfy itself that all procedures in arranging and managing off site visits take place and that risk assessments have been undertaken and that appropriate safety measures have been put in place and that training needs have been addressed.

Governing bodies have to ensure that

- they are notified of all school visits before they take place, this can be through the curriculum committee and/or the Principal's report
- every visit has a specific and stated reason for the visit
- that the Principal/ group leader shows how their planning comply with regulations and guidelines, including the schools health and safety policy document and the LEA policy documentation
- that the Principal/group leader reports back in written format after the visit
- that they are informed about less routine visits well in advance
- assess proposals for all visits of a residential nature
- monitor the planning and organisation of all off site visits
- ensures that visits comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the LEA, schools governing body and the schools own health and safety policy
- ensures that the group leader is competent to arrange the visit and make appropriate risk assessments and monitor risks throughout the visit
- is aware of their role on any visit they take part in
- ensures adequate child protection procedures are in place
- ensures all necessary planning action have been completed before the visit takes place
- ensures that risk assessment has been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place
- ensures training needs have been assessed by a competent person and the needs of the staff and pupils have been considered
- ensures that the group leader has experience in supervising the age groups on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- ensures that the group leader or another teacher is suitably competent to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place.
- ensures group leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly
- ensures that non teacher helpers on the visit are appropriate to supervise children
- ensures that the ratios of staff to pupils are appropriate
- ensures that the governing body has approved the visit
- ensures that parents have signed consent forms
- ensures that arrangements have been made for the medical and special educational needs of the pupils

- ensures that adequate first aid provision will be in place
- ensures that the mode of transport is appropriate
- ensures that travel times out and back are known in school
- ensures that there is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- ensures the school has the address and phone number of the visits venue and have a contact name as well as the transport company
- ensures that the group leader has a mobile phone and that the number is left in school
- ensures that a school contact has been nominated and the group leader has the details
- ensures the group leader, helpers and nominated contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures
- ensures that the group leader, helpers and nominated school contact have the names of all the adults and pupils travelling in the group, and the contact details of parents and the teachers and other helpers next of kin.
- ensures that there is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home.

Group Leaders

The proposed group leader is the identified leader of the visit who will undertake the following procedures.

The group leader will be the senior person on the visit and will undertake the following procedures:

- Initial Planning before AUTHORISATION
- Request outline permission from the Principal for the visit to take place
- Make arrangements to find out all costings for the visits to include:
 - Coach costs
 - Entrance fees
 - Sundry expenses
 - Decide on the clear purpose of the visit and its aims and objectives
 - Work out the ratios necessary to ensure correct care of the children
 - Liaise with other school members who will participate in the visit.
 - Make a pre-visit to ascertain appropriateness of visit, assess resources and activities and undertake risk assessments.
 - Decide on the category of the visit

Seeking Permission to Proceed

Once the above has been undertaken, the group leader is to approach the Principal with the information above who will then make a decision as to whether the visit is to proceed or not.

Planning Visit Details

Transport and visit centre arrangements can be made once the Principal has given permission to proceed:

Group leaders must ensure that:

- A letter is prepared and sent to parents and carers indicating clearly:
 - the date and times of the visit
 - the purpose of the visit
 - the venue and transport methods
 - a breakdown of the costs involved
 - a clear request for voluntary contributions
 - the need for special equipment
 - food requirements

The necessary documentation, according to the category of the visit is sent home and returned completed correctly.

All pupils who have clear medical needs are identified and systems introduced to allow a safe visit.

All children with AEN needs are identified and systems introduced to ensure a full and safe inclusion in the visit. NO CHILD IS TO BE EXCLUDED FROM AN ACTIVITY DUE TO AEN

The school Bursar is aware of the visit and is informed how monies are to be collected.

Undertake Risk Assessments

“Pupils must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained then the visit must not take place.”

Paragraph 39 DFES Health and Safety of Pupils on educational Visits - A good practical guide

A risk assessment is an examination of what, in the course of a visit, could cause harm to the people on the visit. You are looking for Hazards and assessing their potential risk, then seeing what can be done to minimise the risk. For example a hazard like crossing a busy road has its risk minimised by using a subway.

A risk assessment should be carried out before all visits to a destination. If you are making a repeated visit with the same group of young people (like a trip to the local library) then additional risk assessments are not necessary. If you are aware that something at the destination has changed like a new attraction, new pathways etc, then it is advisable to do another risk assessment. Likewise if your group has changed to include younger children or those with disabilities then the hazards and risks may be different and will require reviewing.

The risk assessment process follows a simple set of considerations:

- What are the hazards
- Who can be affected by them
- What procedures can be put in place to minimise the risk
- Can these procedures be put in place by the staff on the visit
- In an emergency what happens

It is essential that the group leader visits the destination before the visit takes place. Use the risk assessment template here to note down your thoughts when you visit the destination. Put yourself in the position of a child; where would you go, what can you see as potential hazards. If you are walking on a route make sure you walk it yourself and be aware of your surroundings. If the destination is one with hazards that you do not feel able to assess you should ask for copies of their own risk assessments, or ask to be put in touch with schools that have used the destination and who will have done a risk assessment.

Risk assessments for school visits have three levels:

1. Generic activity risk assessments, which are likely to apply to the activity whenever it takes place eg road hazards, park areas
2. Visit/site specific risk assessments, which will differ from place to place and group to group eg water hazards, physical hazards
3. Ongoing risk assessments during the visit that take account of e.g. illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activities.

Pre-Visits Risk Assessments

In order to undertake a full and comprehensive assessment of risks, it will be essential in most cases to undertake a pre-visit, even when the visit is made regularly, risks should be reassessed from time to time. When undertaking risk assessment, a number of variables need to be taken into account.

- the number of pupils involved
- the age of the pupils, their sex, ability and general behaviour
- 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
- how to cope when a pupil becomes unable or unwilling to carry on
- the need to monitor the risks throughout the visit

AN ADEQUATE RISK ASSESSMENT MUST TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE VISIT TAKES PLACE AND RECORDED ON THE OFFSITE VISITS WEB SITE. NO VISIT WILL BE AUTHORISED BEFORE THIS TAKES PLACE.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT A RISK ASSESSMENT MUST TAKE PLACE AT THE SITE ON THE ACTUAL DAY OF THE VISIT IMMEDIATELY ON ARRIVAL TO ENSURE THAT ANY CHANGES TO THE AREA HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT eg buildings erected, muddy slopes, etc..

ONGOING RISK ASSESSMENTS MUST BE A FEATURE OF ALL VISITS, STAFF ARE REMINDED THAT THE SAFETY OF THE CHILDREN IS PARAMOUNT eg toileting, meeting other children/adults

In addition group leaders must recognise their responsibilities as follows:

- 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
- Undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment
- Review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise Principal where adjustments may be necessary
- Ensure that teachers and helpers are fully aware of what the proposed visit entails
- Have enough information on the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed
- Ensure staff pupil ratio is appropriate for the group
- Consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the pupil is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an emergency
- Ensure all helpers have details of the school contact

- Ensure all helpers have copies of the emergency procedures
- Ensure that all helpers have details of the medical or special needs of the pupils
- Observe the guidance set out for teachers

Roles and Responsibilities of Other Parties on the Visit

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 well being during the visit.

Greater levels of responsibilities will normally be assigned to tutors than to adult helpers and a higher standard of care is expected of them.

Tutors

Teachers must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any 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

Adult Volunteers

Non-tutor adults on the visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit.

They must

- Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- Not be left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and teacher supervisor and help with the control and discipline
- Speak to the group leader or teachers if concerned about the health and safety of the pupils at any time.

Pupils

Children should be involved in the planning and preparation of the visits as much as possible. They should be made aware of:

- The clear limitations of the area to be visited
- The type of activity that they are to be involved in

- Safety aspects that they are to adhere to

The group leader must support pupils to understand 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

NO CHILD WILL BE LEFT WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION AT ANY TIME.

Any pupil whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on activities during the visit or in extreme cases excluded from other future visits.

RECORDS AND COMMUNICATIONS

All money collected for the visit must be accurately recorded.
Reports of any accidents or incidents should also be kept on file.

PARENTS

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 the 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.

Communication with parents regarding school visits will be included in

- the school prospectus
- Information about visits during school time
- Voluntary contributions
- Trips outside school hours
- Details of children's medical needs #
- Meetings with parents
- Consent forms

MEDICAL AID

There should be a qualified first aider on every visit. A first aid kit should be taken on every visit. Travel sickness pills should only be taken when previous authorisation has been received from the parents. Medical needs of pupils should be known in advance and supervision of necessary medication undertaken to a dedicated person

HEAD COUNTS

Whatever the length of the visit regular head counts should be taken of the children, particularly before leaving any venue and joining a coach after a toilet stop.

All adults should carry a list of all the pupils and adults involved in the visit.

Pupils should not wear name badges but badges with the school name should be worn with the group leaders mobile and school telephone number

INSURANCE

The school is covered under the School's insurance policy.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Persons in charge of visits have a duty of care to make sure that their pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. They should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life saving action in an extreme situation.

If an accident happens the priorities are

- To assess the situation
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- Attend to the casualty
- Inform the emergency services
- Inform school based contact
- Ensure that a responsible adult accompanies any casualties to hospital if necessary and the rest of the group are supervised.
- Notify the police if needed
- Ascertain telephone numbers for any future calls
- Write down accurately all relevant facts and witness details and preserve all vital evidence
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident
- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible
- No one in the group should speak to the medias and no names should be provided
- No one in the group should discuss any legal liability with other parties

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

The school based 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 points on longer journeys
- Supervision

The group leader must give careful thought to planning transport. The main factors to consider include:

- passenger safety;
- the competence and training of the driver to drive the proposed vehicle and whether the driver holds the appropriate valid licence;

- number of driving hours required for the journey and length of the driver's day (including non driving hours);
- capacity and experience of driver to maintain concentration - whether more than one driver is needed to avoid driver fatigue;
- type of journey - will the visit take place locally or will it include long distance driving ie motorways?
- traffic conditions;
- contingency funds and arrangements in case of breakdown/emergency;
- appropriate insurance cover;
- weather;
- journey time and distance;
- stopping points on long journeys for toilet and refreshments;
- supervision.

SUPERVISION ON VISITS

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk assessment. **CHILDREN MUST BE SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES AND NOT LEFT TO WANDER.**

Extra supervision concerns should be undertaken when:

- Crossing roads
- Safety of pupils at dropping off points
- During head counts when getting on and leaving transport
- Checking seat belts
- At all toilet stops
- In all areas where young children might be at greater risk eg built up areas with lots of people-shops, theme parks etc..
- Near water- sea, lakes, pools etc..

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 after feeding animals
- Eat until they have washed their hands
- Sample any animal foodstuffs
- Drink from farm taps
- Ride on tractors or other machines
- Play in the farm area

Further guidelines are in DFES letter dated 9th June 1997: Pupils visits to farms; Health precautions and HSE's Avoiding ill health at open farms advice to teachers.

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

- The Chrysalis School for Autism Safe Transportation of Children Policy
- The Chrysalis School for Autism First Aid Policy

- D.F.E.E. Health & Safety Responsibility & Powers - DFES.0803/2001
- Standards for Adventures - DFES 0565/2002
- Handbook for Group Leaders - DFES/0566/2002
- Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits - DFES HSPV 2 1998
- BAALPE Safe Practice in Physical Education; Part 1 Section 1,4,5,5.7,6,6.1,6.2.7,8,9,10
Part 2 Section 17, Appendices 3 & 6

Other Links:

- <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits>
- <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/growingschools/support/detail.cfm?id=3>