



Thistly Meadow Primary School EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

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Thistly Meadow Primary School Educational Visits Policy wholly complies with the Leicestershire County Council Policy for the Management of Outdoor Learning and Off-site Activities” document and the Department for Education Health and Safety Advice for Schools.

It has also been complied in line with the national online guidance resource OEAP National Guidance¹ (Guidance for the Management of Off-site visits and Learning Outside the Classroom) activities).

Our aim is that all visits from school should be:

- Safe
- Educational
- Enjoyable

Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of ‘real-life’ opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience.

Purpose

Educational Visits will have a clearly defined educational purpose and can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively, teachers may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the curriculum. Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised.

PLANNING EDUCATIONAL VISITS

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous planning, organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils. Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them. The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of Educational Visits organised at Thistly Meadow.

All visits will be logged on Evolve, the Leicestershire County Council’s electronic system for registering and approving of educational visits.

¹ <http://oeapng.info/>

Information

Parents should be given information about the purpose and details of the visit at least two weeks in advance including:

- Venue(s) and travel arrangements
- Dates and times of departure and return where visits exceed beyond the school day
- The nature of activities planned
- Kit list where appropriate
- Arrangements for supervision
- Financial contribution expected from parents
- Insurance arrangements
- Contact system in case of emergency
- Any expectations placed on parents, for example to resume responsibility for their child in the event his or her conduct requires sending home from a visit outside of school hours

For residential trips, parents will be invited to a briefing session.

Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place – ‘in loco parentis’ – and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would.

Parental consent

Routine visits in the locality of the school are covered by the parental consent on the Admissions Form.

Thistly Meadow will seek consent for all other visits. A parental consent form must be returned for each child in the group. Failure to return a signed slip will mean that the child does not take part in the visit.

Exposure to the weather should always be a consideration and parents will be advised to provide their children with suitable clothing, sunscreen and water.

Parents are responsible to ensure that their emergency contact details are always up to date and lists of emergency contact numbers should be taken on all trips.

If parents wish to withhold consent, they will be invited to meet with the Deputy or Head teacher to discuss their concerns. If consent is withheld, the pupil will not be taken on the visit but the curricular aims of the visit will be delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible.

If the parents give a conditional consent the Deputy or Head teacher will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not.

Risk Assessments

A Risk Assessment will be carried out at least two weeks in advance of the visit to identify hazards, who may be affected by them and the steps needed to reduce the risks to an acceptable level.

The Risk Assessment should also think through “Plan B” scenarios.

Risk Assessment forms and the Educational Visits Checklist are available from the Educational Visits folder in the School Office. Electronic versions are held on the main office computer and can be edited to suit individual trips. The Risk Assessment should be discussed with and authorised by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) and Head teacher. It should be signed by all the adults attending the trip and kept with the trip paperwork in the Educational Visits folder in the School Office.

Where the school uses a ‘provider’, for example accommodation or adventurous activities, we will contact them and obtain their Risk Assessments for these elements of our visit. These will form part of the overall Risk Assessment of the visit.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. At least one member of staff with a First Aid certification will be required. A decision based on the risks and children involved should be made for each visit. For adventurous activities and residential trips, approved centres will have fully trained first aiders in addition to the school’s trained staff.

A First Aid kit will be taken by the school on all trips. If the visit involves splitting into groups, a kit should be taken for each group.

For residential trips, individual medicines will be handed to the Group Leader and logged before leaving school. These will remain under the supervision of the leader. Medicines will be issued according to prescribed instructions and parent consent by the Group Leader or another member of staff. The medicines log will be completed each time medication is given.

Staffing Ratios

In general terms, the Law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is “effective”. It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils.

The following ratio of adults to children is recommended:

- Under-fives – as required in the Statutory Framework for Early Years²

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

- Under eights 1:6
- Over eights 1:15, rising to 1:10 if determined by the risk assessment

In practice, the ratio will be determined by factors such as type of activity, any SEND or medical needs, experience of the staff, venue, transport and weather conditions.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The Group Leader should establish rendezvous points and tell adults and pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit.

Pupils should:

- Have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail
- Must understand what standard of behaviour is expected and why rules must be followed
- Should be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety

Lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

The risk assessment process should facilitate planning so that all pupils can be safely included. However, there are some circumstances, particularly in relation to pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour, when their exclusion may be justified.

If there is the possibility that a pupil may be excluded from the visit due to behaviour issues, a meeting would be arranged with the Group Leader, Head teacher, EVC and Governor with responsibility for Health and Safety to discuss concerns and agree what action is to be taken.

Thistly Meadow reserves the right to exclude a child from a trip if it considers his/her behaviour presents a significant, unmanageable and unacceptable risk to the health, safety and welfare of that pupil or others on the trip, including the adult leaders.

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

The Head teacher will consider the needs of pupils with special educational or medical needs. Every effort will be made to support them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage. Parents of a child with

special educational and medical needs will be contacted at the planning stage of the trip to discuss their child's participation and the individual arrangements that may be required.

Please see the Educational Visit assessment for SEND pupils at Appendix A for further details.

If there is the possibility that a pupil may not be able to take part in an educational visit, a meeting would be arranged with the Group Leader, Head teacher, EVC, SENCO and Governor with responsibility for Health and Safety to discuss concerns and agree what action is to be taken.

Thistly Meadow reserves the right to exclude a child from a trip if it considers the safety risks would still be unmanageable after all reasonable adjustments and control measures had been considered and the health, safety and welfare of that pupil or others on the trip, including the adult leaders, will be at a significant and unacceptable risk.

TYPES OF VISITS

Adventurous Activities

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the LA (via the A1 form) must ensure that the Group Leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity.

Usually adventurous activities take place at approved centres and are led by suitably qualified instructors.

Pupils should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities.

During the visit, they should not be coerced into activities they fear. Pupils whose behaviour is such that the Group Leader is concerned for theirs or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity.

Residential Trips

Residential trips will be planned well in advance and arrangements will be overseen by the EVC and Health and Safety Governor.

Parents will be invited to a briefing session to discuss the details of the trip and to meet the staff attending.

The Group Leader should be an experienced, senior member of staff.

Residential trips will be approved by the Governing Body and by the LA via the A1 authorisation form which will be signed by the Head teacher and EVC.

Coastal visits

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group. Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit will not be allowed.

Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity and only in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One teacher should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.

Water Margin Activities

Where pupils might participate in learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along the riverbank, collecting samples in ponds or stream or paddling in shallow water, then the guidance contained in the DFES 'Group Safety at Water Margins'³ will be followed.

Farm visits

Thistly Meadow recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work there. Taking children to a farm will be very carefully planned. The risks to be assessed include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli food poisoning and other infections. The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare and that it maintains good washing facilities, clean grounds and public areas. An exploratory pre-visit should be carried out.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Group leaders must have a means of making emergency contact with other adults in the party and the school at all times.

All staff must have a means of making contact with the emergency services if required, plus access to first aid equipment and a nominated person with first aid knowledge.

If the visit extends beyond school opening hours, two emergency home contacts must be identified, normally members of the school's leadership team. The emergency home contacts must have means of contacting the LA officers in the event of a serious incident that requires additional support.

A list of pupils with parental contact and medical information must be held by the Group Leader. A copy must also be left at school. Outside school opening hours, the emergency home contacts must have access to this list. A list of internet and photo consents should also be taken if the school plans to publish photographs of the visit on social media.

³ <http://www.rospea.com/leisure-safety/water/advice/>

The Group Leader should always carry a mobile phone.

If an accident occurs, at least one adult should remain with the child or children concerned, whilst other adults continue to supervise the rest of the children. As soon as the situation is under control, a telephone call should be made to the school to inform the Head teacher of the situation. The school will then inform other relevant parties.

In the event of a critical 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

The Head teacher/Deputy Head will contact the LCC Major Incident Line.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body

The Governing Body will approve the Educational Visits policy and will ensure it is reviewed annually.

The Governing Body will approve residential visits.

Head teacher

The Head teacher will ensure a suitable EVC is appointed and has completed the LA training for Off-site visits. They will ensure necessary refresher training is completed.

The Head teacher and EVC will sign off all Risk Assessments for residential trips.

Educational Visits Co-ordinator

The EVC has been trained by the LA and is responsible for ensuring visits comply with the Leicestershire County Council Management of Outdoor Learning, August 2016.

The EVC will ensure that all off-site visits organised by Thistly Meadow Primary School meet the requirements of the LA guidance and the requirements of this policy.

The EVC will keep appropriate records of all visits in the Educational Visits folder. The EVC should:

- Ensure that there are establishment procedures for visits
- Complete the trip checklist with the Group Leader
- Lead on assessing competence of appointed leaders
- Organise training and induction of Group Leaders and Assistant Leaders

- Ensure that there are administrative audit trails and confirm their agreement to the trip on Evolve, for approval by the Head teacher/LCC as required
- Ensure that systems and procedures are reviewed
- Determine the nature of any visit monitoring (e.g. sample field monitoring, governor monitoring, peer monitoring etc)
- Which visits, if any, require consultation/approval from the LA Off-site Visits / Outdoor Education Adviser and this is obtained within the required timescales

The EVC and Class teacher will sign off all Risk Assessments for day trips. The EVC, Head teacher and Group Leader will sign off Risk Assessments for residential trips.

Group Leader

There will be a named Group Leader who is responsible overall for the supervision of the visit and who will be appointed by the Head teacher. This will usually be a senior Teacher. The Group Leader is responsible for:

- Ensuring a pre-visit is carried out
- A Risk Assessment is completed and approved by the EVC at least two weeks in advance of the visit
- The Risk Assessment includes the ratio of adult to children supervision and the number of first aiders or appointed persons needed
- Assessing the competency and briefing all staff and helpers involved in the visit and ensuring they have all read and signed the Risk Assessment
- Ensuring the parent consent and medical forms are completed, parent and staff emergency contact details are held, at least two mobile phones, first aid kit(s) and pupil medication are taken on the visit. Medication will be issued in line with the school's policy Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions.

Other teachers and staff involved in a visit

Teachers and staff on school-led visits act as employees of the Leicestershire County Council and will, therefore, be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours. They will be acting under an agreement with their Head teacher and Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

Parent Helpers

Parent helpers are welcome on Educational Visits and will attend a briefing with the Group Leader before the visit when they will sign the Risk Assessment and be given a written list of the children in their group. A letter setting out the school's expectations for the trip should be issued to all volunteers.

Those helpers who are not DBS checked will not be alone with children and must be guided by school staff at all times.

For more information regarding Educational Visits please refer to Evolve and the LTS Health and Safety pages. The Educational Visits folder which is kept in the School Office contains:

- Thistly Meadow Primary School Educational Visits Policy
- Risk Assessments and other forms
- Educational Visits Checklist
- Leicestershire County Council Management of Outdoor Learning, August 2016
- DFEE's "Health and Safety: advice for schools"
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools>
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy (including Administration of Medicines)

Appendix A

Educational Visit assessment for SEND pupil

Pupil name..... Class.....

Venue..... Date.....

Action	Date completed	Comments
Educational visit proposed, plan of activities and risk assessments obtained		
Pupils with SEND/Pupil Premium/Vulnerable identified		
Medical report/opinion requested from health professional/support agency and parent consent to discuss with visit centre obtained		
Contact LCC Educational Trips Advisor for guidance and record		
Individual risk assessments are carried out with the SENCO, Group Leader, EVC and Head teacher		
Discuss the individual needs of the child with the centre staff		
Consider reasonable adjustments and alternative options		
Contact parents to discuss RA and adjustments required for pupil		
If there is the possibility that a pupil may not be able to take part, meeting arranged with the Group Leader, Head teacher, EVC and Health and Safety Governor		
Letter issued to parents confirming reasonable adjustments		
If parent attending, letter issued setting out expectations		
If pupil unable to attend, letter to parent setting out reasons for decision		

Signed.....Group Leader Date.....

Signed.....Head teacher Date.....

Version	Date	Comment
V2	Date created: 8/11/2024 Review date: Nov 27	A Gordon