



Thurlaston CE (Aided) Primary School
Teaching and living the Christian way of life

Off-site Visits Policy

January 2020

Signed

Thurlaston Primary School Off Site Visits Policy

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 staff believe that off-site activities enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would not otherwise be possible. 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 health and safety of 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 pupils with disabilities.

Please read this alongside the school's Charging Policy.

Aims

The aims of our visits are to:

- Enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils
- Provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than couldn't 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
- Develop personal qualities such as confidence, character and social and emotional awareness
- Broaden the horizons of children by giving new experiences
- Increase motivation and appetite for learning

Types of Visits

The school has three categories of visits:

- a) Regular visits
- b) One off visits
- c) Residential or visits with high levels of risk involved.

Regular visits

These are trips that are organised on several occasions during the school year. These will include visits to Thurlaston Church, the local park, sports events and swimming. These visits are characterised by the fact that staff are very familiar with the destination and procedures involved in

running these trips. Risk assessments still need to be in place for these visits, and a one-time authorisation will be given by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC). The risk assessments will be reviewed annually to ensure any changes are accommodated. Consent from parents/carers will also be sought for these trips once, not each time they take place. These are covered by the permission slip for visits completed on entry to the school.

If for sporting events, the school asks parents to organise transportation and supervision, this will mean that the sports event is not a 'school visit' and risk assessments and authorisation from the EVC will not need to be obtained; the school considers the parents/carers to be responsible for their child at this point.

One off Visits

A one off visits is a trip that takes place with a frequency of once a year or less. These are usually organised to enhance the learning of a particular topic, for example: to a museum, place of worship, theatre or walks in the locality. Each time a visit like this takes place, the member of staff organising the trip will need to ensure that: risk assessments are in place (both for transportation to the destination and for the venue itself); pre-visits have been undertaken; consent has been sought from parents/ carers and finally; the visit needs to be authorised by the EVC. These trips will be logged on the local authority EVOLVE system. These are covered by the permission slip for visits completed on entry to the school so long as parents have been informed of the visit. However they will usually be accompanied by a separate slip to encourage voluntary parental contributions. If insufficient contributions are made to cover the visit the visit may be cancelled in accordance with the school's Charging Policy.

Residential or visits with a high level of risk

These visits offer a unique opportunity for children to experience greater independence, outdoor and adventurous activities and calculated risk taking. When planning any residential or high risk visit, advice must be obtained via the Local Authority EVOLVE online service. This may mean the school needs authorisation from the LA or this may be devolved to the headteacher. More thorough risk assessments must be in place, and the school should consider carefully the providers that they use for these visits. Checks must be carried out to make sure that appropriate safety standards and liability insurance is in adequate.

Preference will be given to organisations which hold LOtC Quality Badge, however if the badge is not held by the organisation, the school must make thorough checks on such things as: insurance cover, legal requirements are met, health and safety and emergency policies are in place, their use of vehicles, staff competency etc. to ensure they are an appropriate provider to use.

Consent must be sought from parents for these trips, and due to the increased price, the school will seek to give as much notice as possible for parents/ carers to be able to pay for the visit. (See Charging Policy for further details.)

Health and safety considerations

Risk assessments are necessary to assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The use of generic risk assessments, particularly for coach travel can be used and adapted to suit individual children or circumstances and risk assessments may be obtained by the provider, however, during a pre-visit staff should also make additions on the risk assessment of 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 for example with a plan B?

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware by the party leader of the emergency procedures that may apply and should be given risk assessments to read. Each adult will be provided with an emergency telephone number, usually the school number. Staff should be given the number of the visit leader, especially when travelling in separate buses so they can stay in contact.

The safety of the children is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This includes taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns and ensuring that children are safe and well looked after at all times. This may also mean a party leader alters plans in respect of adverse weather or other unforeseen circumstances to ensure the trip is carried out safely. As part of the planning process group leaders will ensure there are sufficient first aid personnel present with a full medical kit and inhalers as appropriate.

Equal Opportunities

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 he/she 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.

Prior to a visit, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others, the party leader should discuss this with the Headteacher, with specific regards to these individual circumstances. Individual risk assessments may need to be written for children with certain medical conditions or behavioural needs in order to consider their safety or that of others in the group. In respect to residential trips, this could mean parents collecting their child and bringing them home.

Ratios

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults but an activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios based on children's ages;

- 1 adult to 4 children for Reception
- 1 adult to 6 children for Year 1 and 2
- 1 adult to 10 - 15 children for Years 3 - 6.

These are minimum requirements and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases depending on the activity and location.

There is an exception to having two adults for trips involving 6 or less pupils. These may take place with one adult providing that separate and specific permission is sought from parents.

Evaluating Visits

Once the trip has been undertaken staff should consider whether the trip has been worthwhile and good value for money. They should also keep a record of any incidents, accidents and near misses, and evaluate whether planning was sufficient and thorough.

Educational Visits Co-ordinator

The school will appoint an Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) and make sure they have the training that they need. The Head teacher will assume responsibility if there is no co-ordinator.

The coordinator should:

- Be an experienced visits leader
- Be confident in assessing the ability of staff to lead visits
- Be confident in assessing outside activity providers
- Be able to advise the Head teacher, governors and staff on matters relating to approval of trips
- Have the authority to stop or cancel a trip if they feel it is unsafe or doesn't provide sufficient value for the children