

## Wilton and Barford Primary School



### Off site activities policy

*"Experiences gained by pupils through off-site educational opportunities should not be seen as isolated opportunities but as a vital part of the progression of a pupil's education. That they have a profound effect on pupils is an indication of their relevance within a broad and balanced curriculum".*

*(National Association of Head Teachers Professional Management Series).*

#### **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 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

#### **Aims and objectives**

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.
- ☉ These visits begin with short excursions into the local area in the Early Years and progress to residential experiences during Key Stage 2.

#### **Off-site visits may be categorised as:**

- ☉ Personal and Social Education. These skills are developed through such activities as problem solving, decision making and team work. Working and playing together, particularly in a residential situation, affords plenty of opportunity for development in these particular areas.
- ☉ Residential Experiences. This situation provides an opportunity for development of social skills through living and working together.
- ☉ Environmental Awareness. The cross curriculum theme of environmental education is catered for specifically when pursuing off-site activities. A rich variety of environments, both natural and man made can be experienced by pupils of all ages.
- ☉ Aesthetic and Creative Development. Project and topic work related to the vast range of activities available, give rise to a multiplicity of opportunities related to creative and aesthetic interpretation.
- ☉ Curriculum enrichment. Learning outside the classroom can be used to enhance children's skills, knowledge and understanding.

## Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum, there are a variety of activities. These include but are not exclusive to

- ⊕ English - theatre visits, visits by theatre groups;
- ⊕ Science - use of the school grounds, visits to the beach, visits to the sea-life centre
- ⊕ Mathematics - use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
- ⊕ History - castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local 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;
- ⊕ Music - specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, local schools' activities, concerts for parents and carers to hear;
- ⊕ RE - visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.
- ⊕ PSHE and citizenship - camping, residential trips, visits by local fire brigade, dental team, police officers and health workers.

## Residential activities

**Osmington Bay:** Children in year 5 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit at Osmington Bay, a PGL site near Weymouth. The residential visit runs from Friday until Monday. There is a charge for parents to cover the cost of accommodation, travel, insurance and the activities carried out and the qualified instructors to run them. During the trip children will have the chance to experience a range of activities that challenge them and encourage them to work as part of a team.

## Responsibilities for off-site visits

- ⊕ **Employers:** Employers are responsible for health, safety and welfare of employees when working both on and off premises. There is a requirement for all teachers to care for their pupils and to maintain good order and discipline.
- ⊕ **Governors:** The Governors require the Headteacher to implement this policy each and every time a group of pupils leave the school premises.
- ⊕ **Headteacher:** The Headteacher must ensure that the activity leader is competent to undertake the activity and understands the nature of the responsibilities related to that activity. Where the Headteacher accompanies a visit and is not the activity leader, the Headteacher must follow the activity leaders' instructions.
- ⊕ **Activity Leader:** The Activity Leader has full responsibility for the safe running of the activity including prior agreement for the activity to take place, following guidance laid down and ensuring that all participants are aware of their roles.
- ⊕ **Teachers, Volunteers, pupils and parents:** Teachers, volunteers, pupils and parents, all have responsibilities during the course of any off-site activity in which they are participating.

## How visits may be authorised

### The headteacher will

- ⊕ Appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school.
- ⊕ Approve all visits via the Evolve website before the visit can take place.

**The School's Educational Visits Coordinator,** Mrs Mandy Jones will be involved in the planning and management of all off site visits. She 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 that their drivers, too, have had police checks;
- ☉ Make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- ☉ Keep records of visits, and ensure that there are regular generic assessments of the risks (e.g. road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (e.g. a swimming facility).

### **Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities**

- ☉ Must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LA (and available from the school office). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LA's instructions.
- ☉ Seek and obtain the approval of the headteacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.

Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the headteacher will seek the approval of the governing body and the LA (through Evolve risk assessment) before permitting the activity to take place.

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 or carers to help us to 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**

The 5 major considerations for risk assessment are:

1. Identification of hazards
2. Who might be affected?
3. How can risks be reduced to an acceptable level?
4. Can these measures be implemented?
5. What contingency plans can be put into place if all else fails?

- ☉ Risk Assessments are carried out by the teacher in charge through the Evolve website.
- ☉ Members of staff acquaint themselves, staff and pupils of potential hazards and must make sure all adults accompanying the trip have a copy of the risk assessment with them throughout the trip.
- ☉ A copy of the Risk Assessment must be placed in the correct section of the risk assessment file in the School Business Managers Office.

**Staff planning** an off-site activity should 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. S/he should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. S/he 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 s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve. The LA will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures

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. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

- 👤 1 adult to 10 pupils in Years 4 to 6;
- 👤 1 adult to 6 pupils in FS2 and Years 1 to 3;

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases. The needs of individual SEND children should be taken into consideration when planning staff ratios. The trip leader should where possible not be responsible for an individual group as they are responsible for the whole group.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use on a regular basis has provided us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- 👤 The provision and required use of seat belts;
- 👤 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. If a volunteer has not had the relevant police checks completed they **MUST NOT** be left alone with children.

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

Please ensure all risk assessments are completed at least a week before the departure date to allow the EVC to check and the headteacher to approve. Some risk assessments need to be sent to the LA and require more time to process, these include:

**Category B** visits - walking in the countryside, camping, cycling on roads, horse riding, low level initiative challenges and any activity on, near on or in water (apart from swimming). These need to be submitted eight weeks in advance to Gary Burn via the Evolve website.

**Category C** visits - residential and trips abroad, trekking, beach and seaside visits and water sports. These need to be submitted eight weeks in advance to Gary Burn via the Evolve website.

### **Pre-visits**

In order to undertake a full and comprehensive assessment of risks, it will be essential in most cases to undertake a pre-visit. Even where the visit is made regularly, risks should be reassessed if the last visit took place more than two years ago. When undertaking a 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 in undertaking off-site visits;
- ⊕ The time of the day and the time of year;
- ⊕ The travel arrangements;
- ⊕ The hazards of the environment being visited;
- ⊕ The numbers, experience and quality of accompanying staff and volunteers;
- ⊕ The nature of the activity.

### **Cost**

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 that the school has opted to pay for.

### **Transport**

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.

Our minibus meets LA guidelines, and each seat has a belt. We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts. On occasions we may hire Sarum Academy's Mini Bus which also meets LA guidelines.

The school sometimes makes a charge to parents and carers if their children are transported in the school minibus to sporting fixtures. The charge covers the expenses of the journey only; we do not make any profit from this.

All children under 12 years must be seated in a booster seat, when being transported in a car, unless they are taller than 1.35 meters/4ft 5.

### **Communication with parents and carers**

The parents/carers of children taking part in an off-site activity should always be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents or carers must give their permission in

writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities. For general walks to church and around the local area the school offsite permission slips are sufficient, however parent must still be informed that their child will be off school premises.

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 and carers 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 and carers will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits. Children entitled to Pupil Premium funding will have the cost of residential trips subsidised.

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 excluding that child from the activity.

More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements can be obtained from the LA's Off-Site & Hazardous Activities File held in the school office.

In all cases it would be appropriate to ensure a first-aid box is readily available during the course of an off-site activity. The provision of an appropriate person to administer first aid will be in place whenever possible. Medicines may be administered with the school medicine consent form.

All risk assessments must be evaluated using the Evolve website once the trip is concluded.

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