



Educational Visits Policy

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this document is to assist parents/guardians in understanding how we in St. Joseph's PS Slate Street plan and manage educational visits.

The term '**Educational Visits**' refers to:

'all academic, sporting, cultural, creative and personal development activities, which take place away from the young persons' school, and make a significant contribution to learning and development of those participating'.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Young children derive considerable benefit from taking part in educational visits, giving them opportunities to participate in activities and gain from experiences not available in the normal classroom setting. Such educational visits help children to develop a wide range of valuable personal and social skills.

The majority of educational visits take place without incident which is due to our high level of care, competence and safety awareness.

The following publications inform our practice:

Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection – DENI (1999), DENI (2001) and supplements (2002).

Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits - DFEE (1999) and DFES supplements (2002).

Supporting Pupils and Mediation Needs 2008.

Safeguarding & Child Protection – A Guide for Schools DE 2017.

3. LEGAL CONTEXT

The Education Authority (EA) is legally obliged, to ensure that the health and safety of our staff and pupils is safeguarded.

The board of governors of in St. Joseph's PS Slate Street has a statutory duty under Article 7 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003, to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils at the school at all times when the pupils are in lawful control or charge of a member of staff of our school.

The legal framework to protect children from harm is primarily provided by the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 which became law on 4 November 1996 and repeals virtually all pre-existing legislation concerned with child protection. The central thrust of the Order is that the welfare of our pupils must be the paramount consideration.

The basic principles of child protection must always be borne in mind when undertaking an educational visit particularly where it includes a residential element.

The pupil's welfare must always be paramount and this overrides all other considerations.

All pupils have the fundamental right to be protected from harm.

Data Protection

A range of information is required for the purpose of organising and reviewing an educational visit. This information is covered by the provisions of the Data Protection Act, 1998.

Amendments may be required to satisfy the general data protection regulations 2018 (GDPR).

CATEGORIES OF EDUCATIONAL VISITS

CATEGORY 1 Basic

Visits which take place on a regular basis and occur largely within establishment hours e.g. sporting fixtures, swimming pool visits and outings

CATEGORY 2 One-off day /evening excursions (non-hazardous) e.g. field study trips, theatre visits, business/education visits, regional sporting fixtures

CATEGORY 3 Residential visits of one or more nights within the UK or Ireland. (non-hazardous) e.g. visits to residential centres, field centres and school exchanges

CATEGORY 4 Residential visits outside the UK or Ireland (non-hazardous) e.g. international exchange visits, sporting events, cultural activities and international community work

CATEGORY 5 Hazardous activities – residential and non-residential as exemplified below:

- Hill walking
- Fieldwork
- Cycling/mountain biking
- Orienteering
- Rock climbing/abseiling
- Caving and potholing
- Kayaking/Open canoeing
- Windsurfing
- Dingy sailing
- Sub-aqua
- Skiing/snowboarding
- Horse riding
- Angling
- Water-skiing
- Rafting rowing
- Surfing
- Bouldering/gorge walking
- Swimming in open water
- Coastering
- Stand-up paddle boarding

Category 1 and Category 2 recurring and one-off (non-hazardous) visit

Step 1 Identification of Educational Visit - Objective

The school identifies an area or areas of the curriculum for which an educational visit(s) may be an essential or relevant component.

Step 2 Approval

Details of the proposed visit(s) are submitted, by the EVC and/or group leader, on the EVA Form to the principal for approval. They will be approved, and noted by the board of governors, before they proceed.

Step 3 Implementing Appropriate Risk Management

All visits will be organised in accordance with our relevant school policies (e.g. Health and Safety and Child Protection) and take cognisance of best practice.

Step 4 Informing Parents

Parents will be informed about the educational visits their children will participate in at the start of each term as much as possible.

Step 5 Maintaining Records

Copies of all forms (e.g. EVA and Consent Forms) and any other relevant information are filed at the school.

In the case of an incident/accident occurring, all appropriate documentation from the Employing Authority is also completed.

Procedures Step by Step for Visits in Categories 3, 4 and 5

Step 1 Identification of Educational Visit – Objective

The school identifies an area or areas of the curriculum for which an educational visit(s) may be an essential or relevant component.

Step 2 Initial Approval

Details of a proposed visit is submitted to the principal for consideration in consultation with the board of governors. It is the responsibility of the Miss Weir (Principal) in consultation with the board of governors, to decide whether a visit should proceed.

Step 3 Completion of Planning Checklist

Appropriate planning checklists are completed by those with key responsibilities for the visit.

Step 4 Briefings

Staff, volunteers, parents and pupils, will be briefed about all aspects of the educational visit. Once parents are fully aware of the visit details they should be asked to give their consent in writing.

Step 5 Information Collated

It is important that we gather together all relevant information about the pupils participating in the visit.

Step 6 Final Approval Secured

Visits can only proceed once final approval has been secured from the principal and the board of governors.

Step 7 Maintaining Records

Copies of all forms and relevant information are filed in the school.

Any changes to the original approved visit are agreed, as appropriate, prior to the event taking place.

An exemplar Educational Visit Incident/Accident Form will be used by accompanying staff to keep a record of any incident or accident that occurs during an educational visit.

Step 8 Evaluation

On return it is important to undertake an evaluation of the key aspects of the visit. The completed evaluation should be forwarded to the relevant personnel and maintained by the school for future reference. A Post Visit Review Form (page 38) may be used for this purpose.

5. Overview of Planning Process

Pre-trip planning takes place to identify the major issues that need to be addressed.

This involves considering the educational aims, the programme and itinerary to support these aims, the risks that may arise and the measures necessary to reduce these.

The terms **risk assessment** and **risk management** are used to describe the process of addressing the risks of any visit/activity and the steps taken to counter them. The process of risk management is paramount in the overall planning of any educational visit.

There are a number of major issues which we take into consideration when planning a visit:

Planning a visit

Identify/Propose Educational Visit

Submit and outline proposal to principal and the board of governors seeking approval in principle. Proposals include:

- purpose of the visit;
- proposed date(s), duration, venue and activities;
- group – size and age range, staffing;
- resources required, estimate of costs.

Adventure activities and demanding environments run by an independent provider require Board of governors approval.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

Educational visits cannot be entirely risk-free. However we aim to contain risks within acceptable levels.

Fundamental to the planning process of any educational visit is the process of risk assessment. Risk assessment enables us to make a reasoned judgement about the level of risk involved and what actions need to be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level which permits the visit to go ahead.

We do this by:

i) eliminating the identified hazards altogether: -

for example, by choosing not to use a water sports centre if the centre staff do not possess current life-saving qualifications or

ii) managing hazards by introducing effective control measures: -

for example, by ensuring that participants are led by competent and experienced instructors when participating in adventurous activities

Risk Assessment comprises the following steps:

- define the activity to be undertaken
- identifying the hazards associated with the activity
- identifying the people who may be at risk
- evaluating the potential risk
- establishing additional safety and/or control measures
- disseminating information to all relevant persons and compile information packs as appropriate

7. SUPERVISION AND STAFF RATIOS

Supervisory roles are closely aligned to the roles and responsibilities undertaken by staff on a visit. Supervision ratios relate to:

- the category of the educational visit;
- the specific educational objective(s) and;
- the outcome of a risk assessment.

Risk assessments also include the assessment of individual pupils as this will have a direct influence on our supervision ratios.

The following key factors are also taken into consideration in the establishment of appropriate ratios:

- nature and location of activities to be undertaken;
- age and ability of the group;

- pupils with special educational and/or medical needs;
- day visit or overnight stay;
- mixed or single gender group;
- experience of supervisory staff in off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey type of any accommodation;
- competence of supervisory staff, both general and in relation to specific learning activities;
- requirements of the organisation/ location to be visited;
- competence and behaviour of the pupils;
- prevailing weather conditions and time of year;
- duration and location of planned activities;
- first aid cover.

8. VETTING

All staff are vetted. In addition to this our Board of Governors need to be satisfied that places to be visited, particularly residential centres, have similar procedures in place for their own staff, who also have substantial access to pupils.

9. TRANSPORT

All transport arrangements made by the school meet the legal statutory requirements for the type of journey proposed.

Areas we consider:

- that the operator holds a valid Operator's Licence
- the mode of transport is appropriate to the needs of the pupils;
- there is adequate supervision during transit;
- those involved in driving hold the relevant licence to drive the vehicle;
- those involved are insured appropriately;
- guidance on the transport arrangements relevant to the particular group, e.g. age and/ or developmental needs.

Where school staff or parents transport pupils in their own cars, the Board of Governors must:

- be satisfied that the vehicle is licensed and insured for purpose – this could involve asking for a copy of the insurance details;
- seek the agreement of the parents of the pupils involved – this should be in writing;
- satisfy themselves that private car users do not carry more passengers than the number of seat belts available;
- do so in accordance with the schools Child Protection Policy.

10. INSURANCE COVER

The school ensures, well before the group departs, that adequate insurance arrangements are in place.

This document has been adopted by St. Joseph's PS Slate Street in the knowledge that we are following best practice guidelines.

Adopted on : 14/12/18

Date for Renewal 14/12/20

Miss Weir
Principal