

Off site and Educational Visits

The school adheres to the Hampshire Outdoors Supplementary advice and guidance published in April 2019 which should be read alongside this policy to provide more detail.

"Memorable experiences equal memorable learning"

At Hatch Warren Infant School we believe that children learn best when they are actively involved in first hand, purposeful learning. It is our policy to use outdoor learning to enrich and enhance the curriculum and use the local environment as much as possible to support both learning and respect for Basingstoke. Visits are also arranged further afield to give children first hand experience of other areas or places of interest that will impact on topic themes. Outdoor and off-site learning is an important part of a broad and balanced curriculum. It offers staff the opportunity to enrich and enhance the children's learning in a safe and organised manner. It provides children with the chance to experience exciting and challenging activities outside the classroom, leading to more motivated and inspired learners.

The policy and procedures are formulated in conjunction with the advice, guidance and training provided by the Hampshire County Council Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service and their documentation and published guidance. As such, the regulations and guidance found in the green 'Off-site activities and educational visits' folder (available in school or online through EVOLVE) MUST be referred to when planning and organising any off-site activity or trip. The Law must be followed regarding the use of seatbelts, booster seats and paediatric first aiders.

The legal responsibility for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff lays with the LA. As a school we have adopted an agreed policy for off-site visits but in turn, the governing body requires that the Headteacher ensures that the adopted policy is fully and properly implemented when pupils leave the premises.

Aims and purposes of Educational Visits

The school has a strong commitment to the added value of learning 'beyond the statutory school day and beyond the school premises' by the use of carefully planned Educational Visits. This is part of the school's required role to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares young people for the opportunities and experiences of adult life. This enables the children to access contexts and experiences that cannot be achieved in school. Off site visits are fully integrated into the ethos and culture of the school and all key policies are considered for their relevance and adaptation's may be made as required. It is an expectation that the learning policy and behaviour policy will be explicit in all off site activities so that challenge to learning and agreed codes of conduct and behaviour are consistent.

Each year the school will arrange a number of activities that take place off the school site and/or out of school hours, which support the aims of the school.

We believe that the use of off-site visits promotes:

- Personal development, social skills and independence
- Health, fitness and a positive use of leisure time
- A sense of awe and wonder
- Learning in a fun way, with pupils using a variety of preferred learning styles (See the school's Teaching and Learning policy)
- Raised achievement by boosting self-esteem and motivation

The Governing Body has given its approval to the following types of activities being arranged in support of the educational aims of the school:

- Out of hours clubs (music, drama, art, science, sport)
- School teams
- Regular nearby local visits
- Day visits for particular year groups e.g New Forest Wildlife Centre, Milestones, Longdown Farm.
- Some visits are arranged for class groups, some depend on children's shared interests such as art and sport or membership to School Council and visits to the Houses of Parliament

Governors are kept informed of overall policy and programme as well as being given feedback on specific events and successful ventures.

Approval Procedure and Consent

The Governing Body has delegated the consideration and approval of educational visits and other offsite activities to the Headteacher and has nominated a governor as signatory, as necessary, on behalf of the governing body. The Headteacher is

nominated as the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) to ensure all visits are planned according to the guidance and regulations.

The Educational Visit Co-ordinator's role is to:

- Ensure educational visits meet the employer's and school's requirements
- Support the Governors with approval and other decisions relating to off-site visits
- Assess, with the Headteacher the competence and attitudes of prospective leaders and staff
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken to meet requirements
- Organise training and induction
- Ensure that all necessary authorities are informed well in advance of the visit for LA endorsement, insurance purposes etc
- Ensure parents are informed and give consent
- Keep records of visits, accident or incident reports
- Review systems and monitor practices

The Group Leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit including direct responsibility for the pupils' health, safety and welfare.

The group leader must be approved by the Headteacher to carry out the visit, and be suitably competent and knowledgeable about school / LA policies, procedures and duty of care.

The group leader:

- Plans and prepares for the visit plus assesses the potential risks by carrying out a pre-visit assessment
- Shares information about the visit with parents and pupils in advance of the visit
- Ensures that all necessary forms are completed and returned by parents
- Defines clearly the roles and responsibilities of other staff (eg centre staff, teachers, volunteer helpers) and pupils and ensures effective supervision of what they do.
- Holds structured pre-visit meeting(s) with supervising adults in order that all are fully informed about the programme, expectations, potential hazards etc
- Ensures that the appropriate teacher:pupil ratios are in place, as stated in LA procedures

- Completes relevant forms for the LA in case of open country or hazardous pursuits activities
- Changes the programme in circumstances beyond control eg bad weather, ensuring that additional, unauthorized hazardous activities are not undertaken

A teacher or volunteer helper has the duty of care for the children under their supervision. Higher duty of care is expected of teachers as a result of their specialised knowledge. The age, maturity and physical capability of the pupil, the location and type of activity help to determine the degree of supervision required. All support adults should enforce the school's agreed behaviour management policy and practices.

Before a hazardous visit (eg close to water) is advertised to parents, the Headteacher, and / or the EVC must approve the initial plan. They will also approve the completed plan and risk assessments for the visit at a later date. Where external contractors are involved in organising all or part of the visit the contract will be made with the school on behalf of the pupils. All payments for the visit will be made through the school's accounts.

For out of hours clubs, school teams and nearby visits parents will be asked to sign a general letter of consent for participation in these activities when their son/daughter enters the school. Parents will be given information for the activities that pupils are involved in and will be informed through their son/daughter if an activity has to be cancelled.

The school has separate policies for 'Charging and Remissions' (in Finance policy) and 'Equal Opportunities', which applies to all educational visits.

Staffing

The school recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety on a school visit. Teachers and other staff are encouraged and supported to develop their abilities in organising and managing pupils' learning in a variety of environments through induction, coaching, shadowing visits and training.

The school will ensure that DBS screening is completed for volunteer adults assisting with educational activities and visits.

The appointed Group Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange the visit. This will include, as necessary, making time or finances available to conduct an exploratory visit, briefing teachers and other staff, accessing training courses, reviewing and evaluating the visit or identifying time when the leader and EVC might work in partnership to undertake planning and risk assessments.

Supervision:

Supervision strategies are taken from the "Offsite activities and visits HCC guidance" and includes agreements on ratios which are never exceeded and frequently improved. Hatch Warren Infant School has a minimum ratio of 1:6 adults to children for all trips off site and this may be increased depending on the off site activity. All children who have a high level of need will have 1:1 at all times.

Strategies used are dependent on typical risk factors of the group, individuals concerned, the site and location, the leaders present and other factors eg; weather. These are agreed as part of the planning process.

The headteacher will ensure the leader of any visit is appropriately experienced and has the skills to ensure effective supervision (see guidance)

Group leaders **MUST** have a charged mobile phone available and the number **MUST** be left with the office.

Where the visit is in the evening, the leader must hold the home telephone numbers of senior members of staff and parents of children.

Parents are welcome to support the group leader on trips and visits where their support is appropriate and by invitation. Parents and other volunteers, acting as responsible adults, must be clear about what is expected of them, their responsibilities, who to report to, how to communicate to children, how to manage their behaviour, what to do in an emergency with an understanding of their 'duty of care'. Parents of children taking part in the trip may also be asked to take responsibility for other children, unless asked specifically to accompany their own child. The group leader may also ask parents to supervise groups of children not including their own child.

Inclusion:

We are an inclusive school and we will make every reasonable effort to make sure that all children can access outdoor learning opportunities and off-site visits. Where visits are provided as part of the statutory National Curriculum, the inclusion of all is required. Where visits are an enhancement or enrichment activity, inclusion of all is desired but not required. Where enhancement or enrichment activities are a clear choice, as an 'extra' or 'optional', then choice and other factors may mean that not all attend. In addition to curriculum-focused decisions, we must also take into consideration the Health, Safety and Well-being of a child as well their effect on other children and staff. Where a child is at risk of not being able to attend an off-site visit, the child's parents will be alerted by the group leader as soon as possible and every reasonable step will be taken to enable that child to take part. Alternative supervised arrangements within school however will be made for children unable to take part in a trip or visit.

Safeguarding

The school's Child Protection Policy includes off-site activity, including residential activity. In particular, staff should be aware of guidance on:

- Acceptable behaviour and avoiding unnecessary contact
- Appropriate employment checks on volunteers and other responsible adults who support
- these ventures
- External providers. These can be drawn from the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service's vetted database, which confirms that safety management checks are in place. New providers should be referred to the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service using the appropriate form.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment for each off-site activity needs to be carried out when a pre-visit occurs. It may draw upon previous visits to the same location.

The assessment should:

- identify significant hazards
- assess the risk of harm
- put control measures in place eg: adult : pupil ratio, first aid provision
- check if anything else is needed (eg medical needs)
- use a simple assessment language such as high / medium / low

It is a good idea to involve pupils also in the risk assessment before and upon arrival at the visit location. This is part of safety education and supports supervision decisions besides being an essential part of outdoor and beyond the classroom education.

Financial Considerations

Suggested voluntary contributions are requested from parents for educational visits taking place during school time in order to meet costs involved. When insufficient money has been contributed collectively to cover the cost of the visit, the school may cancel the visit and return all contributions made. All accounts relating to off-sites visits are accountable to the governing body on an annual basis.

Transport

Coaches and minibuses should only be booked from reputable companies. Coaches and minibuses **MUST** have seat belts and be used by all children and adults. There is no requirement to provide a 'booster seat' for such journeys unless the child is travelling in the front passenger seat, in which case one must be used. On organised trips, where a regular service bus is used and which is designed for standing passengers, a seat belt need not be used unless it is provided. Supervising adults should spread themselves throughout the coach and avoid seating children at the front, behind the driver. Advice for long coach journeys and other modes of transport (rail, air, ferries, boats and

ships) must be sought from the 'Off-site activities and educational visits' file. Drivers of minibuses engaged in school business must have completed the MIDAS training course successfully.

The group leader is responsible for making arrangements for the transport booking to be confirmed a week before departure. The use of private cars, driven by group leaders, other employees of the school or volunteers, may be permitted by the Headteacher. The vehicle must be appropriately insured and roadworthy. A 'car insurance confirmation' form must be completed beforehand and approved by the Headteacher in his absence. (Further details can be found on pp114-115 of the 'Off-site activities and educational visits' file.) All children, from the age of 3 and up to 135cm in height must, BY LAW, use appropriate child restraints (booster seats) where seat belts are fitted in the front and back seats of private vehicles. Booster Seats are advised for children 15kgs and up (from approx. 4 years) with Booster Cushions for children from 22kgs (from approx 6 years). Children must use an adult seat belt in a rear seat only if correct child restraint is not available for a short distance in an unexpected necessity, if two occupied child restraints prevent fitting a third in the back or when travelling in a taxi. It is strongly recommended however that all children travelling on a school trip have equal access to the appropriate safety equipment.

The expectations of Pupils and Parents

The school has a clear expectation of the conduct of pupils during school visits based on the school's 'Behaviour Policy'. This good conduct will be part of the condition of booking by the parents, and include the potential of withdrawal of a pupil prior to and during the visit if their poor conduct would have led to a fixed term exclusion from school. The school will state the implication for parents, where this occurs, particularly with regard to residential visits where greater costs are likely to be incurred. Deposits will not be refunded unless these can be reclaimed by the school.

Emergency Procedures

LA procedures outlined in 'Off site activities and educational visits: regulations and Guidance' are followed when on off site visits. The Children's Services Incident and Emergency 'Establishment Plan' has been used as the basis for all incident and emergency response.

A first aid kit should be taken on all off-site activities that are not within 5 minutes of school or First Aid station. Standard Health and Safety rules apply, wherever the visit. There **MUST** be at least one adult trained in Paediatric First Aid to accompany all trips with children from the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Group leaders should be familiar with the procedures to be followed in the event of a serious accident/ incident or fatality. Group leaders **MUST** have lists of names, telephone numbers and addresses of next of kin of all members of the group. Mobile phones should be carried. Similar lists **MUST** be kept at school, including any last minute amendments. A 'base contact person' **MUST** be nominated before the visit who can also be contacted 'out of hours'. In the event of a serious accident/ incident, the group leader and base contact person should follow the advice given on the 'HCC

Emergency Procedures' cards. No statements to the press/ media should be made in the event of an incident or emergency.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the quality and effectiveness of visits.

Teachers informally monitor the quality of off site visits in order to ensure that intended outcomes are met. The Group Leader with the EVC will evaluate all visits. The EVC will ensure that any risk assessments on the trip are dated as having been evaluated and/or modified as a result.