

Whittingham C of E Primary School Policy for Off Site Visits

Introduction

This document was developed during the Spring Term 2020

It was approved by the governing body in the Spring Term

This policy will be reviewed in the Spring Term 2024 or sooner if guidance changes

A schedule for the review of this, and all other policy documents is set out in the school's five year cycle of policy reviews.

Currently due to the current COVID 19 Pandemic off site visits may not go ahead depending on government guidelines and/or restrictions.

School Aims

- To provide an open, secure and welcoming Christian environment for each pupil. This is expressed through daily worship which acknowledges the presence of God in our lives.
- To further develop and value the partnership that exists between school and the local churches, in particular, through sharing weekly worship and to encourage an appreciation of the Christian faith and a familiarity with the local Christian heritage.
- To care for each pupils' safety, happiness and well being.
- To value our pupils as individuals, developing their ability to take responsibility for themselves and their actions, promoting confidence and self-esteem, and respect for others and their environment.
- To equip our pupils with the knowledge to make informed choices about having a safe and healthy lifestyle.
- To offer opportunities for our pupils to become involved in the daily life of the school and to prepare them to play an active role as citizens locally and in the wider world.
- To provide a learning environment, which is challenging and stimulating yet ordered and disciplined.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum, setting realistic targets for each pupil.
- To extend and reinforce our pupils learning, making expectations clear, and raising achievement levels.

Rationale

Whittingham C of E Primary School believes 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.

Policy Aims

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;

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- 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 in Key Stage 2.

Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). All these activities are in line with guidance published by the LEA and NCC Guidance Documents – Including the NCC Education off Site Visits Code of Practice and OEAP National Guidance (both have links on the Homepage of our EVOLVE Risk Assessment and Outdoor Visit:

- English – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;
- science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens;
- 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 – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, I
- design and technology – visits in locality as a stimulus
- Computing – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools etc;
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.
- PSHE and citizenship – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

Residential activities

Children in Years 3&4 and now we are a Primary School in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit (as long as there is sufficient interest to make the experience viable). This activity is not solely school time and we do make a charge for board and lodging, insurance and specialist instruction for certain activities. Parents in receipt of state benefits (free school meals) are exempt from payment.

The residential visit enables children to take part in a field study as part of their work in geography and outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work. We undertake this visit only with the written agreement of the LA.

How visits may be authorised

The headteacher will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will be a teacher employed at the school.

The school's educational visits (EVC) coordinator will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

S/he will:

Work in partnership with the Headteacher and school teaching staff to -

- 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;

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- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks, and that the letter from our coach company (see 6.5) assures us their drivers too have had police checks;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example a swimming facility).

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LEA (and available from the school office). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LEA's instructions. We use Evolve for all these risk assessments.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must 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 Adventurous Activity the headteacher will seek the approval of the governing body and the Local Education Authority (LA) before permitting the activity to take place. We are aware that residential activities which do not have an adventurous activity do not need to be submitted to the LA for approval but we do continue this as good practice.

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 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.

Risk assessment

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on 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?

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. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children.

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 Event Specific Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. All information must be input onto EVOLVE.

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An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios. See National Guidance for up to date information:

In addition, we generally use the following ratios but may change them depending on the type of activity, experience of the teacher in charge and cohort of the children.

1 adult to between 7 and 12 pupils in Years 3-6

1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1&2;

1 adult to 3 pupils in Early Years.

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are *minimum* requirements, and may *not* provide adequate supervision in all cases.

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 (DBS). We generally always have helpers who have a DBS but if this is not possible and a trip does have helpers who are not DBS cleared the EVC/ Class teacher and HT will carry out a Risk Assessment and they will not be in unsupervised activity

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be uploaded to EVOLVE where it will have final approval from the Headteacher. No trips must go ahead until approval has been sanctioned and is noted on EVOLVE.

Transport

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 the school has opted to pay for.

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.

Any minibuses we use meet LA guidelines, and each seat has a belt. We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts.

The school makes a charge to parents 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.

Communication with parents

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary except in the case of residential visits), sometimes with a limited subsidy from the PTA. This must be made clear to parents 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 will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits.

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. Wherever possible this person should also be the Designated Safeguarding Lead or if this is not able to happen the Emergency Contact should be briefed in the relevant procedures.

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 (Event Specific Plan with timings as succinct as possible).

The safety of the whole party, including the children and adults, 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 and (where we have knowledge) adults 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 or changing the ratios accordingly if the school is able to do this.

More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements can be obtained from the NCC Education off Site Visits Code of Practice and OEAP National Guidance (both have links on the Homepage of our EVOLVE Risk Assessment and Outdoor Visit:

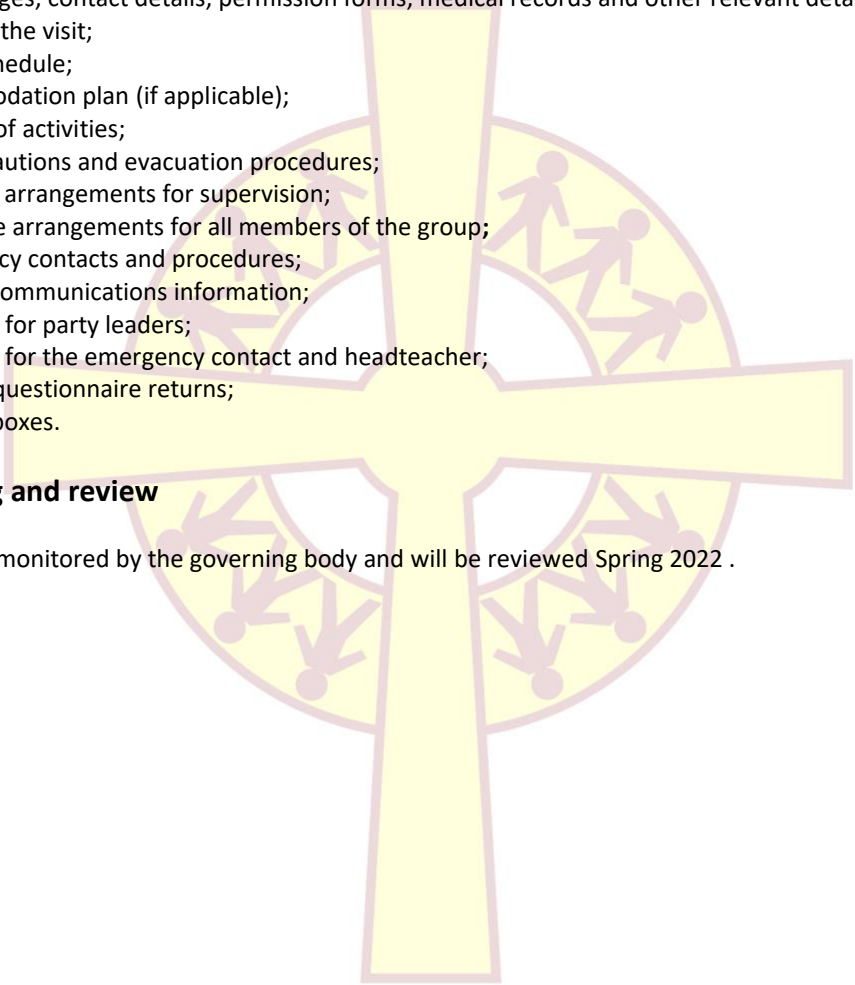
Group leaders' planning

Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities: NCC Education off Site Visits Code of Practice and OEAP National Guidance (both have links on the Homepage of our EVOLVE Risk Assessment and Outdoor Visit:

They must consult LA documentation detailing procedures and requirements, including guidance on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation, and must draw up a Event Specific Plan which records in Evolve(including standard forms where appropriate) the arrangements that have been made.

Visit plan

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following and be entered on EVOLVE:



Event specific plan;
risk assessment;
report on preliminary visit;
applications for approval of visit;
general information;
Letters to parents/ including consent;
names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
travel schedule;
accommodation plan (if applicable);
full plan of activities;
fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
intended arrangements for supervision;
insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
emergency contacts and procedures;
general communications information;
guidance for party leaders;
guidance for the emergency contact and headteacher;
medical questionnaire returns;
first-aid boxes.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed Spring 2022 .

Whittingham
C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL