

Educational Visits Policy



Wistaston Academy
Primary and Nursery School
Together We Learn • Together We Achieve

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Responsible Governor's Committee	Quality of Education
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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 a residential visit in Year 6.

Residential activities

If the school organises a residential visit in school time or mainly school time, we ask for voluntary contributions towards the cost of the visit. All visits are regularly evaluated in order to offer the best value for money to our parents and children. Every visit is thoroughly risk assessed. Those children in receipt of the Pupil Premium are paid for by the school. We will always endeavour to assist families who are in financial difficulties so that all children can be included on residential visits. We encourage parents/carers to liaise directly with the school on such issues.

Rationale

We believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances. Educational visits are an essential element of good primary practice but the scope of this policy is wider still encompassing local walks, swimming lessons at the baths, away matches against other schools as well as enrichment activities at local colleges and universities. Educational Visits includes one-off day visits and a residential as well as weekly visits to the swimming pool or annual events at the local college or university.

Purposes

Educational Visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively teachers may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the curriculum. At other times, the learning may be part of an ongoing history unit with a focus on local study or a unit of the PE curriculum on orienteering. Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised and that children's safety and well-being is paramount.

Guidelines

The organisation of Educational Visits is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, time out of the classroom should provide a rich and safe learning experience for the pupils. Whilst we do not wish to be over-cautious, risk assessments of any proposed visit/learning are critical to pupil safeguarding.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits and Educational Visits organised at Wistaston Academy.

Planning off-site visits

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them. At Wistaston Academy, parents give permission for local visits of this kind but this does not mean risk assessments are not carried out with carefully designed objectives linked to lesson plans.

The Educational Visits Coordinator

The EVC at Wistaston Academy will, after adequate training, ensure that:

1. Full information on pupils is saved on the school database and parents are regularly asked for any amendments to these details. Teachers take this information with them on all visits.
2. Parents complete a form when registering their child at the school covering them for local visits and swimming.
3. All teachers planning visits which are not local must seek approval from the Head teacher first, and advise the EVC co-ordinator. A pre-visit is carried out and staff upload all relevant details to the Staff Shared Server as soon as possible before the proposed visit.
4. Necessary permission is obtained from parents/carers in advance of the visit.
5. All visits involving overnight stays and possible hazardous activities should be submitted as soon as possible where it will then be taken to the Governing Body for approval.
6. Liaison with the Administrative team is managed well so that finances and general organisation are completed on time and with a view to Best Value.
7. Contact and medical details for all pupils are printed from Arbor and taken with the Leaders on the visit.
8. All teachers must complete a visit plan on the SSS and submit the following details for approval:-
 - Risk assessment (which may contain some information about a pre-visit);
 - Application for approval of visit;
 - General information
 - Names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant information of ALL of those going on the trip (adults included);
 - Travel schedule;
 - Accommodation plan (if applicable);
 - Activity plan;
 - 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 principal;
 - Medical questionnaires returned (if applicable).
9. All teachers complete an evaluation after the visit and save this to the server assessing whether the visit met the objectives and whether any unexpected hazards were identified that might affect future visits.
10. All teachers communicate in a timely fashion with parents to meet the timescales of collection of funds (where necessary).
11. Where possible, visits are planned as a whole school at the start of the academic year to ensure even coverage throughout the terms.

12. All administration is conducted in as paper-free fashion as possible and information conveyed at briefings and through the school electronic diary.
13. Ensure that all trips are adhered to following the OEAP National Guidance.
14. Organise related staff training.

Visit Leader

One teacher, the visit leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been approved by the EVC. The Visits Leader should:

1. appoint a deputy;
2. be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
3. be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
4. undertake and complete the planning, preparation and assessment of the visit including the briefing of visits members and parents (See above);
5. Liaise with the EVC co-ordinator.

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the Academy. They will therefore be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours. They will be acting under an agreement with their Principal and Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

Teacher and other adults on the visit must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the visits;
- care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would;
- follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline. Non-teachers should generally not have sole charge of pupils except where risks to health and safety are minimal;
- consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

Responsibilities of pupils

The visit leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks;
- follow the instructions of the leader and other adults;
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly;
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the visits and tell the visit leader about it;
- should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the visits may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

Parents

The visit leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits.

The visit leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

Where parents have English as a second language, we endeavour where possible to translate communications regarding trips.

Parents must:

- provide the visit leader with emergency contact number(s);
- consent to the trip on Arbor
- give the visit leader relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit using the form saved on our server.

A number of questions need to be asked:

- what are the risks?
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the visit leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit for effective supervision?

The visit leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The visit leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- the location;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
- the visit members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

Exploratory visit

The visit leader will undertake an exploratory visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the visits;
- ensure that the visit leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities, visits which involve overnight stays, or visits abroad it is sensible to have at least one trained first-aider in the visit. The visit leader should know how to contact emergency services.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first-aider is attending to one member of the visits, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The EVC should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed. The contents of a first-aid kit will depend on what activities are planned.

Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of visits;
- special needs pupils;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation;
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

Each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits. A number of factors will be taken into account. For example, the risks inherent in the visit and the nature of the children attending.

Where a high adult:pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents with appropriate clearance may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the pupil visits. In certain circumstances, where parent volunteers may be supervising changing for swimming or are asked to accompany children on residential visits, it is our policy to seek an enhanced DBS check.

All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers retain responsibility for the visits at all times.

For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a pupil.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The visit leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. The lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

Participation

Pupils should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities. During the visit they should not be coerced into activities they fear.

Pupils whose behaviour is such that the visit leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the visit leader should consider whether such pupils will return home early.

Transport and pupils

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- arrive on time and wait for the transport away from the road, track, etc.
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- wear your seatbelt and stay seated while travelling on transport;
- make sure your bags do not block aisles on the transport
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- never throw things out of the transport vehicle's windows;
- never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- never run about while transport is moving or pass someone on steps or stairs;
- never kneel or stand on seats or otherwise impede the driver's vision
- never distract or disturb the driver;
- stay clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport;
- after leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road;
- if you have to cross roads to get to the transport always use the Green Cross Code
- if you feel unwell while travelling, tell a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the visits.

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

The Head Teacher will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Communicating with Parents / Guardians

Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place – 'in loco parentis' – and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupils health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in a letter to parents / guardians prior to a visit. In most cases, pre-meetings will be held in school too.

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- visit's objectives;
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;

- insurance taken out for the visits as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation and medical cover. Any cover to be arranged by the parents, if appropriate, will be requested;
- clothing and equipment to be taken;
- money to be taken;
- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to.

Parental consent

Wistaston Academy will seek consent for all visits. If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible.

Residential visits

Hostels and Hotels

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the visit leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the young people's – we will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the visits' use in advance;
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the visits;
- access by staff to student rooms must be available at all times;
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults;
- ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions / exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key personnel;
- security arrangements – where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors;
- ensure that locks / shutters etc. work on all the rooms used by the visits;
- storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables;
- adequate lighting – it is advisable to bring a torch;
- provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs;
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the visits.

Coastal visits

Visit leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. At Wistaston Academy, the visit leader should bear the following points in mind in the risk assessment of a coastal activity:

- tides and sandbanks are potential hazards so timings and exit routes should be checked;
- ensure visit members are aware of warning signs and flags;

- establish a base on the beach to which members of the visits may return if separated;
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc;
- some of a visits' time on a beach may be recreational. Visit leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school visits even during daylight. The visits should keep to the path at all times. Visit leaders should consider whether it is safe for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

Swimming

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school visits.

Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit, will **not** be allowed for Wistaston Academy children. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One teacher should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.

Where paddling is to be allowed on a visit, a ratio of 1 adult:4 children is a minimum.

Such visits to the coast or to rivers would require governing body and LA approval.

Farm visits

Wistaston Academy recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm will be very carefully planned, and the risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections.

The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare; and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas. An exploratory visit should be carried out.

The basis rules for a farm visit will be:

We will never let pupils:

- place their faces against the animals or their hands in their mouths after feeding them;
- eat until they have washed their hands;
- sample any animal foodstuffs;
- drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities);
- ride on tractors or other machines;
- play in the farm area.

