

CURZON CRESCENT & FAWOOD CHILDREN'S CENTRES PARTNERSHIP



Educational Visits Policy

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Policy Lead – Premises Manager

**Approving Committee – Curriculum
Committee**

Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our children with valuable experiences which enhance their learning. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good Early Years practice.

Purposes

Educational Visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively practitioners may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the curriculum.

Wherever or whatever the venue, practitioners should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the children.

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator for Curzon Crescent, Fawood Children's Centres is Mauranne Newby.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at Curzon Crescent, Fawood, and Challenge House Children's Centres.

The Executive Head Teacher

The Executive Head Teacher has overall responsibility for the safety of all children attending off-site Educational visits.

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator will endeavour to ensure that:

- there are suitable group leaders for each group;
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins;
- the risk assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit;
- training needs have been met;
- the group leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
- the group leader has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity;
- all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children;
- parents/carers have signed consent forms;
- parents/carer helpers have signed agreements;
- arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the children;
- the mode of travel is appropriate;
- travel times out and back are known;
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover;
- they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name;
- that they have the names, contact details and next of kin information of all children, parents/carers, staff and volunteers in the travelling group.

The group leader is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit.

The Group Leader should:

- appoint a deputy;
- be able to control and lead children of the relevant age range;
- be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- take an active part in the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents/carers;
- take part in the completion of a risk assessment;
- have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- know all the children proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- ensure that parent/carer helpers understand their responsibilities.

Other Staff or adults involved in a visit

Staff on school/centre-led visits act as employees of the LEA or of the Governing Body. 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 Head and Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

Staff and other adults on the visit must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- care for each individual child as any reasonable parent/carer would;
- follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline. Non-teachers should generally not have sole charge of children 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 children in their charge is unacceptable.

Responsibilities of children

The group leader should make it clear to children 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 group and tell the group leader about it;
- should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous.

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

Parents/Carers

The group leader should ensure that parents/carers are given information about the purpose and details of the visit.

The group leader should also tell parents/carers how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct and discussing the use of technology. Special arrangements may be necessary for parents/carers for whom English is a second language.

When accompanying children on visits, parents/carers must:

- provide the group leader with next of kin details and emergency contact number(s);
- sign the consent form;
- inform the group leader of relevant information about their own or their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.

Planning off-site visits

Whether the visit is to a local park or museum, etc. it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

The Executive Head Teacher is responsible for planning all off-site visits. In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the Educational Visits Co-ordinator, in liaison with the Deputy Head, but the Executive Head Teacher must be satisfied that these people are qualified to do so and have the necessary experience.

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator must agree all plans with the Deputy Head.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit. The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- what are the risks? – take into account specific risks for the type of visit/place you are visiting. (e.g. During a Farm visit, a pregnant woman may be at risk of coming into contact with Chlamydia abortus, Toxoplasma, Listeria and Q fever from lambing Ewes);
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group 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? (See section on Supervision.)

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

The group 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 group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- children with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

Exploratory visit

Wherever possible the Educational Visits Co-ordinator and group leader(s) should undertake an exploratory visit to:

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

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools and centres who have recently visited the venue. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards.

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 group. The group leader should have a working knowledge of first aid and all adults in the group 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 group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other children. The Head Teacher 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 children for any off-site visit. Across all three sites within the Partnership, the ratio of adults to children for all off-site visits is 1:1 for children aged under 3 years and 1:2 for children 3 - 5 years. The ratio for children aged 3 -5 years may reduce if there are other factors to consider. The factors to take into consideration include:

- gender, age and ability of group;
- children with special needs or disabilities;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- 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 involved in hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the centre's risk assessment procedure for educational visits.

Where there is more than one adult supervisor, a group leader who has authority over the whole party, should be appointed.

Where a high adult:child ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use centre staff alone. Parent/carers may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to staff and the class group.

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

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

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

Preparing the Children

Providing information and guidance to the children is an important part of preparing for an off-site visit. They should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. They 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. Children should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Participation

Children 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.

Children whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity.

Information to Children

It is for the group leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the children understand key safety information. Children should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit/activity;
- background information about the place to be visited;
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- why safety precautions are in place;
- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- what standard of behaviour is expected from them;
- who is responsible for the group;
- what to do if approached by a stranger;
- what to do if separated from the group;

- emergency procedures; and
- rendezvous procedures.

Transport

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

- arriving on time and road/rail safety (waiting for the transport away from the road, track, etc.);
- not rushing towards the transport when it arrives;
- wearing a seatbelt (where applicable) and staying seated while travelling on transport;
- making sure bags/legs/feet etc. do not block aisles on the transport;
- never attempting to get on or off moving transport;
- never throwing things out of the transport vehicle's windows;
- never getting off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- never running about or passing someone on steps or stairs while transport is moving;
- never kneeling or standing on seats or otherwise distracting the driver's vision/attention;
- staying clear of automatic/manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport;
- after leaving the vehicle, always waiting for it to move off before crossing the road;
- using the Green Cross Code while crossing roads; and
- telling a teacher or the person who is responsible for the group if they are feeling unwell.

Children with special educational and medical needs

The Head will not exclude children with special educational or medical needs from 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/Carers

Parents/carers 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/carer would. The following information on matters that might affect children's health and safety is useful to parents/carers, and will be included in a letter to parents/carers guardians prior to a visit:

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;
- names of group 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;
- money to be taken (if applicable); and
- the information to be given by parents/carers and what they will be asked to consent to.

Coastal Visits

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting children have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. The group 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 group members are aware of warning signs and flags;
- establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc;
- some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to the path at all times.

Swimming

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

Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit, will **not** be allowed for children. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Children 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:1 child is a minimum.

Farm Visits or Farm Animals visiting the Centre

The Partnership 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 basic rules for a farm visit will be:

We will never let children:

- 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);
- play in the farm area.
