



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

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New Road Academy Educational Visits Policy

Introduction

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our students with valuable experiences outside the classroom which enhance their learning within the school environment. Providing a variety of 'real life' opportunities for our students enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the work around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good school practice.

Purpose

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. Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the students are maximised.

Key Personnel

Key personnel within the school are:

Karen Burton	EVC (Educational Visits Co-ordinator)
David Hubbard	EVC, Health & Safety
Andrea Bell	Headteacher

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 students.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at New Road Academy

Educational Visits Co-ordinator

The EVC will endeavour to ensure that:

- 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 visit leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- The visit leader has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity
- The OEAP has approved the visit if necessary, this is applicable to all visits deemed adventurous and residential

Visit Leader

One member of staff, the visit leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have been appointed by the EVC / Headteacher.

The Visit Leader should:

- Appoint a deputy – if necessary
- Be able to control and lead students of the relevant age range
- Be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not

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- Undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents
- Undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment in the timeframe agreed with the assistance of David Hubbard
- Have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times
- Know all the students proposed for the visit to assess their suitability
- Observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below
- Ensure that students understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of students below)

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit

Teachers on school led visits act as employees of the Trust. 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 Headteacher and Directors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

Teachers and other adults on the visit must:

- Do their utmost to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- Care for each individual student as any reasonable parent would
- Follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline
- Consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the students in their charge is unacceptable

Responsibilities of students

The visit leader should make it clear to students 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 visit leader about it
- Should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous

Any students whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The safety of all members of the school is a priority. The curricular aims of the visit for these students 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, this information will be available on the website.

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.

Parents must complete the relevant Consent Form via Parent Pay, or manually if payment is via cash or visit is Free of Charge, and must include the following details:

- Emergency contact number(s)
- Relevant information about their child's health which might be significant to the visit

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Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out whilst planning an educational visit. The visit Leader will seek the assistance of the EVC when performing this task, the Risk Assessment will be signed once the necessary criteria has been met. If applicable, a risk assessment will also be required from the venue / establishment of the place to be visited.

The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- 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 students for this visit? (See section on Supervision)

The visit leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if students 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
- Students with special educational or medical needs
- The quality and suitability of available equipment
- Seasonal conditions, weather and timing

Exploratory visit

Wherever possible the visit leader should 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 students in the group
- Ensure that the visit 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 who have recently visited the venue.

Wherever possible, visits should be conducted out of school hours. If this is not feasible, cover impact needs to be minimal.

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Charging for Educational Visits

For visits that incur a financial cost in excess of £50, it is suggested that, depending on the level of expense, an expression of interest letter be sent to parents / carers. Once enough interest has been confirmed the usual procedures will commence.

It is important to ensure that all visits, unless exceptionally agreed, are self-financing. Also, it is imperative that any conditions relating to acceptance of a place are clearly stated in the introductory letter. If money, for example, cannot be refunded on withdrawal this must clearly be stated at the outset.

Remissions

New Road Academy has a Remission Policy regarding school visits. Those who meet the criteria could be eligible for up to 50% remission entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher. The amount of remission will be assessed for each visit. Parents and Carers will need to request a remission in writing and provide proof of eligibility. Further information can be found in the Charging Policy.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit, and best practice is for a First Aider to be present on every trip (though location and support at location can also be considered). For high-risk activities, visits which involve overnight stays, or visits abroad it is mandatory to have at least one first-aid trained member of staff in the group. The visit leader should have a clear understanding of how to access 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
- The designated First Aider is responsible for updating the inventory of items used

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. The visit leader 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 students for any off-site visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Sex, age and ability of group
- Special needs students
- Nature of activities
- Does the venue have the same Adult/Student ratio as NEW ROAD ACADEMY
- 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.

As general guidelines, the following minimum ratio of adults to students should be used:

- Medium risk visits/ low risk visits which are not local: 1:15
- High risk visits/ medium risk visits which are not local: 1:10

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

All adult supervisors must always understand their roles and responsibilities. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any students who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. The visit leader always retains responsibility for the group.

If the school is leading a high-risk activity, the LEA and OEAP must ensure that the visit leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity. Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of students should take place. The visit leader should establish rendezvous points and tell students what to do if they become separated from the party. A school mobile phone should be taken, and the number issued to students.

Preparing Students

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

Participation

Students 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.

Students 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 students will return home early.

Information to students

It is the responsibility of the visit leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the students understand key safety information. Students 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 students
- Who is responsible for the group
- What to do if approached by a stranger
- What to do if separated from the group
- Emergency procedures
- Rendezvous procedures

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Students with special educational and medical needs

The Headteacher will not exclude students 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 / Carers

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 students’ health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in letter to parents / carers prior to a visit:

- Dates of the visit
- Times of departure and return
- Mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company
- 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
- Clothing and equipment to be taken
- Money to be taken

Parental consent

A global consent form is completed by parents / carers during the Admissions Process, for parents / carers to authorise low risk visits local to the school or sporting fixtures that will take place at local educational establishments. It is the responsibility of the visit leader to ensure that any student attending the visit has a current general consent form on file. It is the parent’s responsibility to inform the school of any changes to their personal circumstances including current medical issues.

All other visits will require individual consent. The necessary forms and information will be published on Parent Pay.

Withholding Consent

If parents withhold consent absolutely the student should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the student in some other way, wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent the Headteacher will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not.

Residential visits within the UK and Overseas

The Headteacher, SLT and LCT support the utilisation of suitably qualified professional educational travel companies. To achieve this, the school will be responsible for liaising with these organisations ensure a sufficient audit trail and best value.

Coastal visits

Visit leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school students have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. 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 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

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- Some of a group's 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 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 group.

Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit should **NOT** be allowed. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Students 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 1:4 is a minimum.

Farm visits

New Road Academy recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking students 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 students:

- 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

N.B. All staff must adhere to the procedures set out in this policy. Failure to comply may result in the visit being cancelled.