Educational Visits

Draft Policy

2020

**Introduction**

Brownlow Integrated College acknowledges the immense value and many benefits of outdoor learning and is committed to supporting off-site visits and activities that enrich the learning opportunities for children. The School works within the requirements set out in the Education Authority’s Educational Visits Interim Guidance for schools 2017. All school staff will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when the policy is reviewed.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors has primary responsibility for the health and safety of employees and pupils. As a result, the Board of Governors is responsible for approving educational visits as part of its arrangements for monitoring the health and safety procedures in the school.

**Vice Principal**

The Vice Principal is responsible for ensuing off-site activities and visits comply with this Educational Visits Policy and are submitted for formal approval to the Board of Governors. The Vice Principal should ensure that all visits approved can be accommodated within the planned provision and that each visit is in keeping with the School’s overall ethos. The Vice Principal should check that appropriate planning, including risk assessments, has been undertaken for educational visits.

**Teacher in charge**

The teacher in charge will have overall operational responsibility for educational visits and will ensure the following steps have been taken:

* Ensure parents are provided with sufficient information in order to make an informed decision about providing their consent any medical information for the visit
* Obtain prior approval from parents before any off-site visit occurs
* Adhere to the requirements of the Educational Visits Policy
* Undertake and complete the planning and preparation for the visit including briefing any volunteer supervisors accompanying the pupils on the trip
* Where appropriate, involve pupils as much as possible in the planning process
* Ensure appropriate risk assessments have been carried out including becoming familiar with the location/establishment where the activity will take place
* Ensure the ration of adults to pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group i.e. One adult for a maximum of twenty young people. (Please see SAGED below).
* Clearly define the role of each adult accompanying and ensure that all tasks have been clearly assigned
* Have proper regard to the health and safety of the pupils and ensure that adequate supervision is provided at all times
* Ensure that the established code of conduct for staff/volunteers and pupils is followed at all times
* Ensure child protection procedures are followed
* Ensure that adequate first aid provision will be available
* Ensure that during the visit, staff have up to date emergency contact details for the pupils
* Ensure that any medicines required to meet individual pupil’s medical needs are available during the visit

Where no employer requirements are set, supervision should be determined through an informed risk assessment, taking account of the range of variables. There are a number of different approaches to such an assessment. The OEAP provides one example using the

acronym SAGED as a way of remembering the issues to consider:

**S**taff requirements – Training? Experienced? Competent? Ratios?

**A**ctivity characteristics – Specialist? Insurance issues? Licensable?

**G**roup characteristics – Prior experience? Ability? Behaviour? Special and medical needs?

**E**nvironmental conditions – Urban, rural, remote? Impact of weather? Ease of communications?

**D**istance from support mechanisms in place at the home base – Transport? Residential?

**Parents**

Parents should make an informed decision about whether their child will participate in the visit and provide their consent. They should ensure the school has up to date emergency contact details for their child. They should provide the school with relevant medical details including any medication currently being taken in writing (by means of a consent form) and any other relevant information about their child’s emotional, psychological, and physical health which may affect their participation in the visit. Parents should help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the school’s code of conduct.

**Pupils**

The pupils should act in accordance with the school’s Positive Behaviour Policy at all times. They should respond to all volunteer supervisors with courtesy and respect and comply with any instructions given.

# CATEGORIES OF EDUCATIONAL VISITS

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| **CATEGORY 1 Basic** |
| Visits which take place on a regular basis and occur largely within establishment hours e.g. sporting fixtures, swimming pool visits and outings |

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| **CATEGORY 2 One-off day /evening excursions (non-hazardous)** |
| e.g. field study trips, theatre visits, business/education visits, regional sporting fixtures |

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| **CATEGORY 3 Residential visits of one or more nights within the UK or Ireland. (non-hazardous)** |
| e.g. visits to residential centres, field centres and school exchanges |

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| **CATEGORY 4 Residential visits outside the UK or Ireland (non-hazardous)** |
| e.g. international exchange visits, sporting events, cultural activities and international community work |

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| **CATEGORY 5 Hazardous activities – residential and non-residential as exemplified below:** |
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| e.g. Hill walking, Fieldwork, Cycling/mountain biking, Orienteering, Rock climbing/abseiling, Caving and potholing, Kayaking, Open canoeing, Windsurfing, Dingy sailing, Sub-aqua, Skiing/snowboarding, Horse riding, Angling, Water-skiing, Rafting rowing, Surfing, Bouldering/gorge walking, Swimming in open water  **Procedures**  **Category 1 and Category 2 recurring and one-off (non-hazardous) visit**  **Step 1 Identification of Educational Visit - Objective**  The school identifies an area or areas of the curriculum for which an educational visit(s) may be an essential or relevant component.    **Step 2 Approval**  Details of the proposed visit(s) are submitted electronically on the EVA Forms [T:\Educational Visits\Forms\4a. EVA form - Education visit - category 1 and 2.docx](file:///T:\Educational%20Visits\Forms\4a.%20EVA%20form%20-%20Education%20visit%20-%20category%201%20and%202.docx) [T:\Educational Visits\Forms\4b. EVP form - Educational visit - category 3, 4, 5.docx](file:///T:\Educational%20Visits\Forms\4b.%20EVP%20form%20-%20Educational%20visit%20-%20category%203,%204,%205.docx) to the Vice Principal for approval. They should be approved, and noted by the Board of Governors, before they proceed.  **Step 3 Implementing Appropriate Risk Management**  All visits will be organised in accordance with relevant school policies (e.g. Health and Safety and Child Protection) and take cognisance of best practice, as set out in the EA’s Educational Visits Interim Guidance for Schools 2017. An appropriate risk assessment will be carried out by the class teacher(s) in advance of the visit.  **Step 4 Informing the Parents**  Parents should be informed as early as possible about the educational visits planned for that academic year. On occasions, further opportunities may arise for the pupils to participate in other off-site visits. Parents will be asked to provide their consent for these additional visits. Once parents have been informed of these visits they will be asked to inform the school if they DO NOT wish their child to participate in the visit.  **Step 5 Maintaining Records**  Copies of all forms (e.g. EVA and risk assessments) and any other relevant information should be filed electronically at the school.  In the case of an incident/accident occurring, all appropriate documentation from the Employing Authority must be completed.  **Procedures Step by Step for Visits in Categories 3, 4 and 5**    **Step 1 Identification of Educational Visit - Objective**  The school will identify an area or areas of the curriculum for which an educational visit(s) may be an essential or relevant component.    **Step 2 Initial Approval**  Details of proposed visit should be submitted by the class teachers on the Educational Visits Proposal form to the Vice Principal for consideration. Any relevant information should be attached e.g. details of the residential center to be used and risk assessment.  **Step 3 Completion of Planning Checklist**  The appropriate sections of the EA’s Educational Visits planning checklist should be completed by those with key responsibilities for the visit.  **Step 4 Briefings**  Staff, volunteers, parents and pupils, should be briefed about all aspects of the educational visit. Parents will be asked to give their consent in writing using the Consent Form. This will include providing any information about allergies or medical conditions.  **Step 5 Information Collated**  All relevant information about the pupils participating in the visit will be collated by the class teacher and retained by the school.  **Step 6 Final Approval Secured**  Visits in this category can only proceed once final approval has been secured from the Vice Principal. The EVP form will be signed by the Vice Principal.  **Step 7 Maintaining Records**  Copies of all forms and relevant information will be filed at the school.  Any changes to the original approved visit must be agreed, as appropriate, prior to the event taking place.  This form may be used by accompanying staff to keep a record of the pertinent information required of any incident or accident that occurs during an educational visit.  The group leader should also ensure that all documentation required by the Education Authority in relation to any incidents or accidents is completed as appropriate. This must be forwarded to the EA as soon as is practicable.    **Step 8 Evaluation**  On return it is important to undertake an evaluation of the key aspects of the visit. The completed evaluation should be retained by the school for future reference. |

**Risk Assessment**

Fundamental to the planning process of any educational visit is the process of risk assessment.

Risk assessment enables schools to make a reasoned judgement about the level of risk involved and what actions need to be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level which permits the visit to go ahead. This is achieved by either: a) eliminating the identified hazards altogether or b) managing hazards by introducing effective control measures. Risk Assessment comprises the following steps:

define the activity to be undertaken

identifying the hazards associated with the activity

identifying the people who may be at risk

evaluating the potential risk

establishing additional safety and/or control measures

disseminating information to all relevant persons and compile information packs as appropriate

The vital issue is whether the risk can be managed. If there are doubts that the risk is manageable, then the activity and/or the location should be changed. Where there is considerable concern that the children will be exposed to an unacceptable level of risk, the educational visit will be redesigned or abandoned completely.

Class teachers must complete a risk assessment and retain it for future review if required. The class teacher should understand that risk assessment is a dynamic process and therefore, they must carry out on-going risk assessments during an educational visit and ensure that appropriate action is taken as necessary e.g. transport break downs, pupil or staff illness, closed venue, adverse weather conditions. The ability to re-assess and manage changing risks whilst the visit is taking place is vital.

Exemplars of the school’s risk assessments are contained in the appendices.

**Supervision and Staff Ratios**

Pupil to staff ratios for educational visits will be decided taking into account the range of variables which are determined through the risk assessment. It is likely that additional supervision may be required for any category 3, 4 or 5 visits. Arrangements should be made to ensure that appropriate ratios are maintained if a member needs to leave the group e.g. to accompany a pupil to hospital, escort a pupil home, personal illness or attend to a personal emergency.

Under normal circumstances at least one male and one female staff member should accompany mixed sex groups, where an overnight stay is involved. Where this is not possible, parents must be made aware and give their consent to the proposed arrangement prior to the visit.

One teacher to a maximum of twenty young people.

**Vetting**

The requirement of the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be adhered to at all times in relation to educational visits. The school will adhere to the requirements of DE Circular 2012/19 with regards to vetting checks for volunteers working in school. All adults accompanying children on educational visits will be operating under the supervision of school staff.

In exceptional circumstances should volunteers be required to accompany children on residential visits with a residential element which may provide substantial access to children, such volunteers would require and enhanced disclosure check to have been completed in advance of the visit commencing.

**Transport**

Only transport operators who hold a valid Operator’s Licence issued by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency NI will be engaged by the school to provide transport. The school will also determine that those involved hold the relevant licence to drive the vehicle and are appropriately insured.

The class teacher will also assess that the proposed mode of transport is appropriate to the needs of the pupils and that adequate supervision will be provided during transit taking account of the potential for any unforeseen situations arising.

In exceptional circumstances, where staff members or parents choose to transport pupils in their cars, the school will ensure that a) the vehicle is licensed and insured for the purpose; b) seek the agreement of the parents of the pupils involved; c) ensure that private car users do not carry more passengers than the number of seat belts available; d) the Code of Conduct for staff is adhered to at all times

**Inclusion**

Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification. The school will seek to address any potential issues at the planning stage and will modify arrangements including rearranging venues/activities to ensure pupils with disabilities or special needs are able to participate fully in the visit.

The class teacher will liaise with the child’s parents and will agree a programme and supervision arrangements for the visit that are acceptable to all parties. This could include the implementation of specific arrangements where the health and safety of an individual or other group members could be significantly compromised. Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them to include any child with disabilities, is within their competence.

**Insurance**

The Education Authority will cover the legal liability of the schools in respect of personal injury claims sustained whilst the child/staff member is participating in an educational visit.  The school does not generally arrange educational visits outside of Northern Ireland however, should reason for such a trip arise, school will take out additional travel insurance in relation to educational visits outside of Northern Ireland.

No person acting on behalf of the school will sign an indemnity for any outside body against liability without it first being checked and approved by the Education Authority.

**Use of Independent Providers**

The term independent providers refers to other organisations or companies which provide service that is outside the direct control of the Education Authority e.g. tour operators, specialist activity providers, residential centres etc. Where the school opts to use the services of an independent provider the Principal must ensure that:

* Education Authority policy and procedures are followed in relation to the use of such providers;
* providers are reputable and have the necessary insurance in place for the services they provide;
* staff involved in the delivery of the service are competent and are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the group and child protection;
* risk assessments are available for the activities the group will partake in;
* adequate emergency and contingency plans and procedures are in place in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

These prerequisites will be ascertained from the external provider as part of the school’s risk assessment.

**Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be kept under review as part of the school’s procedures for monitoring the implementation of its policies and procedures. The policy will also be amended as required to reflect new guidance issued by the Department of Education/Education Authority or any new legislative requirements.