

TOBERMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Date Reviewed: November 21

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Educational Visits Policy

Pupils derive considerable educational benefit from taking part in educational trips. They have opportunities to participate in activities and experiences not available in the classroom; visits help to develop a pupil's skills and also encourage greater independence. They provide pupils with knowledge and awareness of the world around them and encourage personal and social development.

Planning

It is essential that formal planning takes place prior to any visit. This involves relevant risk assessment and strategies to reduce risk. The group leader and other supervisors should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action as necessary. The group leader/organiser should take the following factors into consideration:

- The type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.
- The location and modes of transport.
- The competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff.
- The ratio of teachers to pupils.
- Suitability of the activity to age group, competence and other factors.
- The special education or medical needs of pupils.
- The quality and suitability of available equipment.
- Seasonal conditions.
- The need to monitor risks throughout the visit.

Other considerations which should form part of the planning stage include:

- Communication arrangements.
- Contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return.
- Information to parents.
- Emergency arrangements.
- Arrangements for sending pupils home early.

Financial Planning

The group leader should ensure that parents have early written information about the cost of the trip. Parents should be given sufficient time to prepare financially for the trip. The principal should ensure that banking arrangements are in place separate from other school funds.

First Aid

On any trip the group leader should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that an adequate first aid box is taken on visits. Ideally one of the group leaders should be a fully trained first-aider.

The minimum first-aid provision for a visit is:

- A suitably stocked first aid box (taking into account the nature of the activity and numbers in the group).

- An appointed leader to be in charge of first aid.

Supervision – Responsibilities

Leaders must understand their roles and responsibilities and should be aware of any pupils who may require close supervision.

Day Trips

- Statemented SEN pupils, adult/child ratio 1:1,
- Non-statemented SEN pupils, adult/child ratio 1:2
- One teacher/adult for every 8 pupils in years 1 to 3
- One teacher/adult for every 10-12 pupils in year 4 upwards.
- Regular head counting should take place, particularly before leaving any venue.
- The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the group.
- For the protection of both teachers and adults, all leaders should ensure that they are not alone with a pupil wherever possible.
- The suitability of potential supervisors should be assessed by the group leader and school principal at an early stage of the planning process. Access NI must be verified for volunteers who take part in any visit.
- All adult helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities. Leaders should be aware of any pupils who require closer supervision. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.
- All supervisors should carry a list of pupils and adults involved in the visit.
- The teacher in charge remains responsible for pupils even when not in direct contact with them. Pupils, particularly in school years 1-3 should be easily identifiable, e.g. wearing school uniform. Pupils should not wear name badges.

Residential Trips

A risk assessment should be carried out prior to the trip. Adequate provision should be made for individual needs for SEN pupils or children with other specific needs.

Preparing Pupils

Pupils who are informed and well prepared for trips will make more informed decisions and will be at less risk. Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school trip. Pupils should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the trip will entail. Pupils must understand the standard of behaviour expected of them and why rules must be followed.

Participation

The teacher in charge should ensure that pupils can undertake the proposed activities. They should not be coerced into activities of which they have a genuine fear.

A pupil, whose behaviour is such that the teacher in charge is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. The teacher in charge should consider whether such pupils

should be sent home early. Parents and pupils should be told in advance of the visit procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a pupil will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

Information to Pupils

The teacher in charge should decide how information is provided but ensure that children understand key safety information.

Pupils 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 rules should be followed.
- Why safety precautions are in place.
- What standard of behaviour is expected from the pupils (specified on Code of Conduct form).
- Who is responsible for the group?
- What to do if approached from anyone outside the group.
- What to do in the event of being separated from the group.

Emergency Procedures

For all residential visits all group members should carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation in case an individual becomes separated.

- Pupils should be aware of who is responsible in any instances where the group leader has delegated responsibility to another leader or instructor.
- If at any time there is a change to the planned schedule new activities should be assessed and pupils provided with relevant information.

Transport and pupils

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

- Arrive on time and wait for transport in a safe place.
- Do not rush towards the transport when it arrives.
- Wear your seatbelt and stay seated while travelling.
- Never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or driving controls.
- Bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions.
- Never attempt to get on or off moving transport.
- Never lean out or throw things from the windows of the transport.
- Never kneel or stand on the seats.
- Never disturb or distract the driver.
- If you feel unwell, tell a teacher or supervisor.

Pupils with Special Educational and Medical needs

Every effort should be made to include pupils with special educational or medical needs. Special attention should be given to supervision ratios, and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

The following factors should be taken into consideration;

- Is the pupil capable of taking part and benefiting from the activity?
- Can the activity be adapted to enable the pupil to participate at a suitable level?
- Will additional/different resources be required?
- The teacher in charge should discuss the visit with the parents of SEN pupils to ensure that suitable arrangements have been put in place to ensure their safety.

Pupils with Medical Needs

All teachers supervising visits should be aware of a pupil's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures. If the pupil's safety cannot be guaranteed, it may be appropriate to ask the parent to accompany a particular child.

Parents should be asked to supply:

- Details of medical conditions.
- Emergency contact numbers.
- The child's GP's name, address and phone number.
- Written details of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times) and parental permission to administer.
- Information on any allergies or phobias.
- Information on any toileting difficulties.
- Parental home and daytime phone numbers and address.
- Special transport needs for pupils who require help with mobility.

Enquiries should be made at an early stage about access and facilities for securing wheelchairs on transport and at residential centres etc.

All teachers supervising the visit should be given the opportunity to talk through any concerns they have about their ability to support the child. Extra help should be requested if necessary.

If teachers are concerned about whether they can provide for a pupil's safety or the safety of other pupils on a trip because of a medical condition, they should seek general medical advice from the School Health Service or the child's parents.

Communicating with Parents

Before Residential visits parents should be provided with the written details of the proposed visit.

The following information on matters that might affect pupil health and safety should be given to the parents:

- Dates of the visit.
- Visit's objectives.
- Times of departure and return – parents must have agreed to meet their child on return.
- Modes of travel, including the name of the travel company.
- Size of the group and level of supervision.
- Details of the accommodation.
- If appropriate, details of provision for special educational or medical needs.
- Procedures for pupils who become ill.
- Names of leaders and/or other accompanying adults.
- Details of activities planned.
- Standards of behaviour expected (code of conduct sheet which parents should sign).
- Items pupils should not take on the visit.
- Clothing and equipment to be taken.
- Money to be taken

Parental Consent

Principals/group leaders should seek consent for all visits out of school involving pupils in years 1-7.

Adventure activities

If parents withhold consent, the pupil should not be taken on the trip but wherever possible be delivered curriculum aims in another way. If the parent gives conditional consent, the principal will need to consider whether a pupil should be taken on a trip or not. A parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

Some general issues to consider include:

- Allergies or phobias a pupil might have.
- Any recent illnesses suffered by a pupil.
- Whether any pupils suffer from travel sickness.
- Whether any pupil has any nighttime tendencies such as sleepwalking.
- Any other information the parent thinks should be known.
- Parental contact details.
- An alternative contact with their phone number and address.

Medical Consent

This should form part of the general consent form. Parents should be asked to agree to the pupil receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If parents do not agree to this permission the principal may decide to withdraw the pupil from the trip, given the additional responsibility this would entail for the group leader.

Early Return

The group leader should inform parents if they are expected to fund the early return of a pupil whose conduct gives cause for concern on a visit. A written agreement may be necessary.

Pupils' Contact with Parents

The group leader will contact parents when it is deemed necessary (medical or emotional well-being concerns). Parents will be provided with a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the visit or late arrival home. Parents should have destination details.

Planning Transport

The group leader must give careful thought to transport planning. The main factors to consider include:

- Passenger safety.
- Type of journey – local or long distance.
- Traffic conditions.
- Weather.
- Journey time and distance.
- Stopping points for toilet and refreshments on long journeys.
- Supervision.
- All minibuses or coaches which carry 3 or more children must be fitted with seatbelts for every child.

Supervision during transport

The group leader is responsible for the party at all times, including maintaining good discipline. All group leaders should be made aware of the position of the emergency door, first-aid and fire extinguishing equipment on transport.

Factors which the group leader should consider include:

- Safety when crossing roads – pupils should observe Green Cross Code under supervision of the group leaders.
- The group leader should make clear to pupils how much or little freedom they have to 'roam'. Appropriate supervision and discipline should be maintained at all times.
- Drivers of buses and coaches must comply with legislation covering maximum periods of driving and minimum rest periods.
- Head counts, by the group leader or other delegated teacher, should always be carried out when a group is getting on or off transport.
- Leaders should ensure that seat belts are worn.
- Travel sickness tablets should only be administered to a pupil with previous authorisation from the parents.

Hiring coaches and Buses

All transport should be hired from a reputable company. Operators must have the appropriate public service vehicle (PSV) operator's licence. When booking transport availability of seat belts should be

checked. If any of the group uses a wheelchair transport used should have appropriate access and securing facilities.

Emergency Procedures Framework during the Visit

If an emergency occurs on a school visit, the main factors to consider are:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that all of the group are safe and looked after.
- Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.
- Ensure that all group members who need to know, are aware of the incident and that all group members are following emergency procedures.
- Ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and that the remainder of the group are adequately supervised.
- Notify the police if necessary.
- Inform the school contact.
- Details of the incident to pass on to school should include nature, date and time of the incident, location of the incident, names of casualties and details of their injuries, names of others involved so that parents can be reassured, actions taken so far, action to be taken yet (and by whom).
- Notify the tour operator and insurers if medical assistance is required (may be done by the school contact).
- Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details preserving any vital evidence.
- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible.
- No one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incidents should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to their families.
- No one in the group should discuss liabilities with other parties.

The main factors for the school contact to consider include:

- Ensuring that the group leader is in control of the emergency and establishing if any assistance is required from the home base.
- The school link is the contact between the group and parents. Parents should be kept informed as well as is possible at all stages of the emergency.
- The school contact should act as link between the group, the Education Authority and the Chair of the Board of Governors and arrange for the group to receive assistance, if necessary.
- Liaison with media contact.
- The reporting of the incident using appropriate forms.

Media Contact

Education authorities have a designated person to deal with media enquiries. The media contact should liaise with the school contact, the group leader and where appropriate the emergency services. In the event of an emergency all media enquiries should be referred to the EA via the Principal. The name of any casualty should not be given to the media.

After a Serious Incident

It is not always possible to assess whether uninjured pupils have been traumatised or whether pupils and staff in school have been affected. In this situation the school may find it helpful to contact local community support services and to seek professional advice.



TOBERMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL **Appendix 1**

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

I consent to my son / daughter* _____ (name in full)

taking part in the educational visit to be held on _____

I confirm that he / she* is medically fit to participate.

***delete as appropriate**

Please give details of:

1. Any current medical condition / any medication being taken

2. Any other relevant information which may affect his / her* participation in the visit (including allergy or dietary requirements)

3. Emergency contact numbers:

Home: _____

Work: _____

Mobile: _____

Other: _____

I accept the established code of conduct for the educational visit and agree to the arrangements (including costs) relating to my son/daughter* being sent home early from the visit.

I agree:

- **Not to hold the school or staff responsible for any loss of personal effects or money incurred by my child.**
- **To authorise members of staff on the trip to approve such medical treatment for my child as deemed necessary in an emergency and / or upon advice of a qualified medical practitioner.**
- **To authorise members of staff on the trip to administer current medication.**

Signed: _____ (Parent / Guardian)

Date: _____