



### Educational Visits Policy

#### Rationale

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

#### 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 learning scheme; 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 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 students.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at Bournville School.

#### The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (as of September 2011 is Nicola Stapleton)

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

- they have appointed a suitable group leader;
- 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 and have appropriate clearance;
- the governing body has approved the visit if necessary;
- parents have been informed and the group leader has signed consent forms;
- 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 the group leader and emergency contact have the names of all the adults and students in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents and the staff's and volunteers' next of kin.



### **Group Leader**

The group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been appointed by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator. The Group Leader should:

- appoint a deputy leader;
- be able to control and lead students of the relevant age range;
- be suitable qualified or have suitable experience of instructing an activity/trip/visit and be conversant in the good practice for that activity/trip/visit if not;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents prior, during and after the trip/activity/visit;
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment involving all staff in that risk assessment;
- 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 and brief them regularly throughout the visit (see responsibilities of students below);
- have read and have knowledge of the critical incident plan and have knowledge of the procedures in an emergency situation.

### **Other teachers and adults involved in a visit**

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the LEA. 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 Teacher 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 group;
- care for each individual student 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 students except where risks to health and safety are minimal;
- have knowledge of the risk assessment associated with the trip/visit/activity;
- brief the students regularly throughout the trip/visit/activity with consultation of the group leader.
- 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 group 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 group 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 curricular aims of the visit for these students should be fulfilled in other ways.

### **Parents**

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

The group 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:

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

### **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.

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator is responsible for planning all off-site visits. In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the group leader, but the Educational Visits Co-ordinator must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

The organiser / group leader must agree all plans with the Educational Visits Co-ordinator.

### **Local Authority Forms:**

**All forms can be found on: [StaffShared/Admin/EducationalVisits](#)**

### **Forms to be approved by the Educational Visits Coordinator:**

- Check List 1 – to be completed for all trips (apart from trips overseas or adventure trips – see below).
- 9.3 Independent Providers Questionnaire (any establishment being used by students (museums, Cadbury World etc...) have to complete a provider questionnaire).
- Emergency Contact and Medical Information Sheet (model contact information sheet can be found on staff shares. All consent forms should be sent to the Educational Visits Coordinator for filing following the trip).
- Evaluation Form (evaluations have to be completed for all trips and information returned to the Educational Visits Coordinator).
- Parental letter – All communication with parents should be sent to the Educational Visits Coordinator and Line Manager before they are sent to parents.

### **Forms that MUST be approved by the Local Authority:**

- Approval Checklist 2 – Adventure Activities (forms to be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the visit).



- Form OE 2005: Section 8 - Notification of Adventure Activities (forms to be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the visit).
- Approval Checklist 3 – Overseas Visits (forms to be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the visit, for expeditions and visits to remote areas/countries at least 6 months notice is required).
- Form OSV 2005: Section 10 – Notification of Overseas Visits/Expeditions (forms to be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the visit, for expeditions and visits to remote areas/countries at least 6 months notice is required).

### **Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using Bournville's Risk Assessment and Risk Management Record sheet (found on: Staff Shared/ Admin / Educational Visits). The risk assessment will decide the adult:student ratio for each visit. (See Guidance under 'Supervision'). 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 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.)
- Should high visibility jackets be worn?

The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if students are in danger. Students should be briefed at regular intervals throughout the trip.

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;
- students with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing;
- it is recommended that high visibility jackets are worn when out with students and influenced by the associated risk.

Risk assessments are also required for activities within school; this includes activities such as those involving visiting speakers or activities that are outside the classrooms such as orienteering.

### **Exploratory visit**

Wherever possible the group 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 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 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 recommended that 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 and have knowledge of the emergency procedure (see the Critical Incidence Policy).

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 students. The Educational Visits Coordinator 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;
- 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 involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

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

Special Educational Needs, visits off-site may be as low as:	1:2
Visits off-site on foot/minibus	1:20
Visits off site involving public transport:	1:15
Visits for hazardous activities:	1:10

Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits. These ratios do not include residential 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:student 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 student group.

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 students who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

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

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the LEA or Governing Body must ensure that the group 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 group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell students what to do if they become separated from the party.

### **Final Approval**

The following information must be sent to the Educational Visits Coordinator for any trip/visit/activity to go ahead:

### **Preparing Students**

Providing information and guidance to students is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Students 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. Students must be briefed regularly throughout the visit.

Students 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**

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 group leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such students will return home early.



### **Information to students**

It is for the group 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.

This will mean that students will need to be briefed prior to the Educational Visit and students must be briefed throughout the Educational Visit.

### **Transport and students**

Students 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 group.

### **Students with special educational and medical needs**

The Educational Visits Coordinator 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 / 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 students health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in letter to parents / 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;
- 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 group 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.

For trips longer than one day, the Group Leader should arrange a parent meeting where details of the trip are explained further and parents should be given the opportunity to ask questions to clarify information.

### **Parental consent**

Bournville School will seek consent for:

- visits involving young children;
- adventure activities;
- visits abroad;
- other residential visits.

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 Head Teacher / Educational Visits Coordinator will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not. The School's parental consent form should be completed for each student in the group. (See model consent form in Staff Shared/Admin/Educational Visits).

Although, parental consent for local visits, activities and sporting activities have already been obtained through the enrolment process to School since – please see records held in Elgar Office. If unsure of consent, leaders should obtain additional consent from parents.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

The Group Leader or the member of staff responsible if the group has split must carry the contact details of all students at all times. All trips must have emergency contact, a member of the Leadership Team (preferably the line manager of the faculty). The emergency contact must have all of the contact details for the students on the Educational Visit. For Overseas Visits, there must be two emergency contacts, two members of the school Leadership Team – the line manager, Educational Visit Coordinator and/or the Head Teacher.

### **Student Emergency Information for Overseas Visits**

On Overseas Visits all students must carry laminated identity cards containing the following information:

- Accommodation Information



- Group Leader contact telephone number (school mobile phone number – see mobile phone information)
- UK Emergency Contact number (Head Teacher / Member of Leadership Team / Educational Visits Coordinator)

### **Role of the Leadership Team**

The member of the Leadership Team will be emergency contacts for all trips. Group Leaders must call the emergency contact whenever they feel that they need advice or if they need to inform the school and parents of an incident. The emergency contact will take the relevant actions required such as contacting parents, organising meeting places etc.

### **Residential visits**

#### Hostels and Hotels

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the group 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 group's use in advance;
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group;
- access by staff to student rooms must be available at all times;
- separate male and female sleeping areas for students 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 group;
- storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables;
- adequate lighting – it is advisable to bring a torch;
- provision for sick, disabled students or those with special needs;
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

### **Coastal visits**

Group 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 Bournville School, 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. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe for students 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 group.

Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit, will **not** be allowed for Bournville students. 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 adult:4 students is a minimum.

### **During the Educational Visit**

All consent forms and medical information must be with the staff responsible for students at all times. If the group is split at any time then information must be with the staff responsible for the students.

As stated throughout the policy, the Group Leader must brief staff regularly throughout the visit. The Group Leader must also brief students regularly throughout the visit.

Students should be in groups at all times, it is recommended that students should always be in a minimum group size of 3.

### **After the Educational Visit**

There must be a formal debrief of all Educational Visits with the Educational Visits Coordinator, this will involve an evaluation of the educational visit using the evaluation form that can be found on Staff Shared/Admin/Educational Visits. Any changes in arrangements or activities must be included within the evaluation. If there are any accidents or incidents of concern, the School Accident Form must be completed and sent to the Local Authority (Health and Safety Department). These forms can be obtained from the Educational Visits Coordinator.

All consent forms should be returned to the Educational Visits Coordinator for storage.

## **Other Guidance and Recommendations for Educational Visits**

### **Use of Mobile Phones on School Visits**

Mobile phones do offer an increased safety element to both group and personal safety, especially on school trips and visits. However, this is only the case when used appropriately and responsibly.

Staff should carry the school mobile phone as part of the emergency procedure for all trips and visits. It is advised that mobile phones are turned off during activities, visits and trips. However contingencies plans must be discussed and students must be briefed of plans. For example, extra phone or some other provision may be needed when parties may be separated or the technology fails, the signal or battery life of the phone runs out.

Staff are advised to brief students in the use of mobile phones at regular intervals. Staff are advised that students should only use mobile phones at agreed times by the lead teacher.

It is advisable for staff to be aware of the potential risks mobile phones pose. Some of these risks are outlined below:

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- Outdoor learning sessions may be compromised, on a safety and duty of care point of view, if staff phones are switched on during activities and contact time.
  - Students may contact home and pass on inaccurate information that may have media implications.
  - Photographic images could be posted on social networking sites so limited use is recommended.

Approved by: .....

Signature: .....

Position: .....

Date: .....

Review Date: January 2012