

Educational Visits Policy

See also the following policies: Health and Safety; Curriculum; Health and Safety; Behaviour and Relationships; Safeguarding and Child Protection; Safe Code of Conduct; Emergency Plan

Rationale:

The staff at Bletchingley Village Primary School recognise the importance of providing a quality education and are committed to providing educational opportunities that enable all children to enhance and enrich their learning in many different ways. We recognise that the best way to learn is often by experiencing an event or action rather than by reading about or hearing it in a classroom.

We provide many opportunities for our children to have real life experiences through the use of our many outdoor and off-site educational visits. These visits include: residential activities, environmental studies, sporting activities and cultural visits.

Aims:

At Bletchingley Village Primary School, we see Educational Visits and Outdoor and Adventurous Activities as an integral part of the children's education. They offer opportunities to enrich the curriculum, enabling the children to have first-hand experience of a wide range of experiences and activities. On residential visits especially, there is opportunity to develop social skills which have a long-lasting beneficial effect.

The many benefits to the children include:

- Broadening Horizons
- Risk taking
- Enjoyment
- Experiencing different cultures
- Self-esteem
- Raising aspirations
- Decision making
- Responsibility
- Building relationships
- Motivation
- Inclusion
- A Chance to share
- Lifelong leisure activities
- Creativity
- Independence
- Citizenship
- 'Real' learning
- Team building

- Success
- Learning that actions and choices have consequences
- Coping with failure or adversity
- Living and working with others
- Bringing the curriculum alive
- Magic moments – memories for life

The Governors also value the many benefits and experiences that educational visits bring to our children and fully support them. It is understood by all adults that a culture of safety must prevail and there is a need for careful planning and adherence to statutory and best-practice procedures. All visits must be well managed, with everyone being clear about their roles and responsibilities. This policy covers all educational visits that occur outside the school building and away from school premises. This ranges from walks around the locality to residential visits of several days' duration. It includes also Outdoor and Adventurous Activities.

Nature of Educational Visits and Outdoor Learning

The school runs a Forest Schools programme for which the Premises Manager Ricky Ward has undertaken Level 3 training. We are also actively promoting the use of our excellent ground for learning outdoors across the curriculum and for gardening. There is a new "Right to Roam" for Year 6 pupils, giving them a wider area in which to spend break times.

The school runs a wide range of Educational Visits, most of which will be linked to the current topic whilst others will support learning in areas such as PSHE and citizenship. These may include:

- Walks around the village of Bletchingley, including to the local church.
- Day visits to places of historical, environmental, religious or other interest to support specific curriculum areas.
- A structured programme of residential visit for children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 with an introductory activity evening in Year 2. (See Appendix 1).

Practice:

The school's Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) is Phase 2 Leader, Miss Sarah Jowitt and she has had training for this role.

Set procedures are followed for all Educational Visits, although the nature of each visit will determine the nature of the preparation required. (See Appendix 2). These procedures are to ensure that the administration of each visit is clear and accurate and that parents/carers are well informed; they are also to ensure that visits are planned well in advance in order to allow sufficient time for health and safety measures to be put in place.

The identified Group Leader will, in partnership with the EVC, complete the Educational Visits Checklist (Appendix 3). A visit will proceed only when the EVC is satisfied that all reasonable preparations have been made.

Inclusion:

We want all children to be able to participate in educational visits, whatever their needs and background. Staff will make reasonable adjustments in line with the **Equality Act 2010** and best practice guidance to ensure that a visit is adapted to enable all children in the group to access it.

Health & Safety

The school follows the Local Authority 'Educational Visits' guidance. Reference is also made to three further more recent documents:

- A Handbook for Group Leaders

- Standards for LEAs in overseeing Educational Visits
- Standards for Adventure

The LA has an Outdoor Education Adviser, who is able to give support and advice, and who has the responsibility of approving listed Adventure Activities.

The school has two minibuses which are used where possible to keep costs down. Drivers are fully trained in line with requirements and there is a risk assessment for the minibus.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments are made for all Educational Visits (see attached Risk Assessment form). This necessitates that the Group Leader and/or others have made a pre-visit in order to be able to plan for the visit and to conduct a Risk Assessment appropriately. Risk Assessments are kept be simple, manageable, proportional, suitable and sufficient. The system must:

- Identify significant hazards;
- Assess the level of risk of harm;
- Put control measures in place;
- Check if anything else is needed;
- Use a simple assessment language – high/medium/low.

Risk Assessment considers the site and its environment, the group, the activity and the leaders. It also includes the needs of children who have social/emotional and/or medical needs.

Financing Educational Visits

The school complies with the Education Act 1996 (section 451), and procedure is outlined in the school's Charging and Remissions policy. No child will be excluded from a visit in cases of genuine hardship, and children eligible for the Pupil Premium are offered appropriate financial support. The school has to reserve the right to cancel visits if insufficient parents/carers agree to make the voluntary contribution.

Emergency Procedures

It is the responsibility of the EVC/Head teacher to ensure that emergency arrangements are in place for all Educational Visits. This includes:

- Ensuring that all involved know who is the emergency contact point in the school and in the LA (Operation Duke card).
- Having access to an emergency (Critical Incidents) plan appropriate to the visit;
- Ensuring that the contact point – or rota – is effective throughout the visit;
- Ensuring that parental contact information is up to date and accessible

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that guidance is available to inform the school policy, practices and procedures relating to the health & safety of pupils on educational visits;
- Ensuring that the head teacher is supported in matters relating to educational visits and that she has the appropriate time and expertise to fulfil her responsibilities;
- Asking questions about a visit's educational objectives and how they will be met;
- Ensuring that visits are approved as necessary by the LA before bookings are confirmed;
- Ensuring that the head teacher has taken all reasonable and practicable measures to include pupils with special educational needs or medical needs on a visit;

- Ensure that they review procedures with the head teacher on an annual basis.

The Head Teacher:

- Has responsibility delegated by the Governors to approve all educational visits that are local, regular or carry a low-level risk. (N.B. any visit where water is involved is considered to carry a higher level of risk and will need Governor approval as well as that of the Local Authority.)

The head teacher is responsible for the following, but may delegate some of these to the EVC:

- Ensuring approval for visits is given, including liaising with the LA where appropriate;
- Ensuring that the Governing Body is made aware of visits;
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place for the educational objectives of a visit to be inclusive;
- Being aware of the need for Best Value;
- Ensuring that all accreditation or verification of providers has been met;
- Ensuring that visits are evaluated to inform the operation of future visits;
- Ensuring that each visit has an appropriately competent Group Leader;
- Ensuring that all teachers are aware of the LA guidance;
- Ensuring that the school has an emergency procedure in case of a major incident, which has been discussed and reviewed by staff. This emergency procedure must include getting support from the LA's public relations unit. See also the school's Critical Incidents Procedures.

The EVC is accountable to the head teacher and must:

- Ensure educational visits meet the employer's and school's requirements;
- Support the governors with approval and other decisions;
- Evaluate each visit to ensure that it is making a positive contribution to the children's education;
- Assess the competence of prospective leaders and staff;
- Ensure that risk assessment meets requirements;
- Organise training and induction;
- Ensure parents are informed and have given consent;
- Organise emergency arrangements;
- Keep records of visits, accidents or incident reports;
- Review systems and monitor practice.

Group Leaders have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit, including direct responsibility for the pupils' health, safety and welfare. The Group Leader must:

- Be approved to carry out the visit, suitably competent and knowledgeable about the school and LA's policy and procedures;
- Plan and prepare for the visit and assess the risks;
- Define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and pupils and ensure effective supervision of what they do.

Other school staff are responsible for:

- Contributing to the planning, organising and preparation of any visit involving their own class, and any for which they have agreed to accompany;
- Follow all agreed procedures when on the visit
- Follow any instruction given by the group leader
- Be responsible for the safety and good conduct of the pupils in their charge
- Contribute to the evaluation of the visit afterwards, to inform future practice

Adult volunteers who are not staff at the school must:

- Understand and agree the expectations of them;
- Understand their relationship to the pupils, teachers and visit leaders;
- Recognise the limits of their responsibility;
- Ensure that they are not left in sole charge of pupils unless this has been formally agreed through a risk assessment;
- Follow instructions from the group leader, and other staff where this has been delegated to them;
- Raise concerns for pupil welfare with the group leader.

Parents/carers:

- Support the school's programme of outdoor learning and educational visits
- Ensure that the school has accurate and up-to-date information about their child's needs (e.g. Health and dietary needs) and emergency contact details for themselves;
- Complete and return any necessary documentation within the allotted time;
- Pay promptly, or speak to office staff in confidence in case of hardship.

Pupils:

- To engage with and participate in outdoor learning and visits;
- To be good ambassadors for the school through good behaviour and manners;
- To follow all instructions to help ensure their own safety and that of others.

Policy Review

It is the responsibility of the Governors to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and the practice that it describes. On a day to day basis this responsibility is delegated to the head teacher who will report back to the governing body as appropriate.

The policy is reviewed annually as part of the governors' policy review and will be amended/updated when necessary, in line with changes to national/local requirements and/or the school's practice.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS – CHECKLIST 1

Note: ‘Completed’ means that all measures taken comply with guidelines contained in the fuchsia folder ‘Educational Visits’.

Focus	Completed	Comment
Pre-visit completed		
Accreditation of activity leaders gained (if applicable – see fuchsia folder)		
LA approval gained (if applicable – see fuchsia folder)		
Risk Assessment form completed		
Parents and Governors informed		
All parental consent received for all activities		
Payment contributions sought according to LA guidance		
Accommodation, security and fire certification checked		
Transport arranged and parents informed		
Dietary requirements forwarded (where applicable)		
Group Leader informed of all relevant medical conditions/special needs		
Emergency procedures in place		
Appropriate number of other adults arranged and briefed		
Insurance arranged where necessary		

DBS checks completed on personnel		
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EDUCATIONAL VISITS – CHECKLIST 2

This checklist is to be completed by the Group Leader for every Educational Visit, and a copy given to the EVC before the visit is undertaken.

Place/Activity	
Date(s)	
Time of Visit	
EVC (state if accompanying)	
Group Leader	
Additional Group Leader*	
Purpose of Visit	
Children (numbers and classes)	
Accompanying adults	
Transport arrangements	
Evaluation (to be completed on return)	

*The designated Group Leader may change during the course of a visit if the visit requires specialist leadership – this is especially the case for Adventurous Activities.