

# **Westbourne Primary School Educational Visits Policy**

## **Rationale**

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. These visits are an opportunity for children to develop life skills and prepare for the future. Educational visits are an essential element of good primary practice and are particularly valuable for pupils with limited experience beyond their own homes.

## **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 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 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, relevant learning experience for the pupils.

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

## **Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher 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.
- 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 signed consent forms.
- arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the children.
- that they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents and the staff's and volunteers' next of kin.

## **Group Leader**

One teacher, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit. The group leader should:

- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment.
- observe the educational visits guidance provided by the school.

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

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the LA or of the Governing Body. They will therefore be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours. They will be acting under an agreement with the Head Teacher and Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

### **Responsibilities of pupils**

The group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks;
- follow the instructions of the leader and other adults;

Any pupils 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 pupils 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 longer visits. It is good practice to give parents at least one week notice of any visit.

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.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language;

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 Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher.

### **Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using Westbourne's Risk Assessment Evaluation Form. The risk assessment will decide the adult: child ratio for each visit. 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?

The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

## **First Aid**

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit.

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 pupils. The visit leader should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed.

## **Supervision**

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit. There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency.

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

Nursery and Early Years:	1:2 -1:3
Key Stage One:	1:6
Years 3-4:	1:8
Years 5-6:	1:10-1:15

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 a high adult: pupil 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 pupil 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 pupils 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 pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a pupil.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

## **Information to pupils**

It is for the group leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information. Pupils should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit / activity.
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules.
- what to do if separated from the group.
- emergency procedures.
- rendezvous procedures.

### **Transport and pupils**

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

- wear your seatbelt and stay seated while travelling on transport;
- never distract or disturb the driver;
- after leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road;

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

The Head Teacher will not exclude pupils 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. Information about the purpose of the visit and matters that might affect pupils’ health and safety will be included in letter to parents / carers prior to a visit:

### **Parental consent**

Westbourne Primary School will seek consent for all educational visits. A general consent form may be used for regular local visits to nearby locations such as the park and library.

If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent the Head Teacher will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not. A parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

### **Coastal visits**

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 Westbourne children. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Pupils 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 children is a minimum.

### **Farm visits**

Westbourne recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children 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.