

St John the Baptist Church of England (VA) Primary School



Loving learning, Building
Community, Growing in faith

Educational Visits Policy

Review

This policy was reviewed by the Resource Committee of the Governing Body in September 2021 and will be reviewed every 3 years.

.....

Signed: David Park, Chair of Governors

Contents:

Introduction:

At St. John's we believe that the education of children can be greatly enhanced by the opportunity to visit off-site venues, if this is deemed appropriate. Any trip, which means children leave the confines of the school perimeter, can be classed as an educational visit, and certain procedures will need to be followed to ensure the safety of the children.

We value the opportunity to take children off the school premises in order to offer them first hand experiences in different situations, which will broaden their outlook. It is important to allow children to meet others in a setting beyond the school and home situation.

We attempt wherever possible to include all children in these activities, overcoming financial difficulties, medical and physical issues where possible.

Activities:

Visits, which may fall into this category, could be:

- Short visits – e.g. church/swimming/visits to local shops & streets/inter school competitions (football, netball, athletics, cross- country, choir, theatre etc.) Some of these may involve travelling on foot, by bus or car.
- Day trips – farms/forts/museums/university etc.
- Residential Visits – where children stay away from home for at least 1 night.

Our Responsibility:

This policy covers aspects that need to be addressed while preparing, planning and carrying out a school off-site visit. It will include guidance on:

Our Responsibilities:

- All teaching staff have a responsibility to demonstrate a duty of care to the pupils.
- The Governors have a responsibility to ensure the head teacher and staff adopt an agreed policy for off-site visits and that the policy is fully and properly implemented each and every time a group of pupils leaves the premises. Certain trips (e.g. a residential trip) will require the Governing Body's approval before it can go ahead.
- Should there need to be an investigation of an incident or accident that has occurred during the course of an off-site visit, the way in which the school policy has been undertaken will form a substantial part of the evidence used to determine culpability.
- The Head teacher must ensure that the activity leader is competent to undertake the activity and understands the nature of the responsibilities related to the activity. Where a member of staff accompanies a visit and is not the activity leader, the staff member must follow the instructions of the activity leader.
- The activity leader has full responsibility for the safe running of the activity and must ensure all participants are aware of their roles.
- Teachers, volunteers, pupils and parents all have responsibilities during the course of any off-site activity in which they are participating.
- One nominated Governor will be responsible for annually overseeing that the policy is being adhered to
- The task of monitoring visits and activities is delegated to the Head Teacher supported by the EVC (Educational Visits Co-ordinator) The EVC at St John's is the Business Manager.

Planning and Risk Assessment:

There are 5 steps to risk assessment –

- Look for the hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
- Record your findings
- Review your assessment and revise if necessary.

Risk Assessments for educational visits can be usefully considered as having 3 levels

- Generic activity risk assessments which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place;
- Visit/site specific risk assessments which will differ from place to place and group to group;
- Ongoing risk assessments that take account of, for example, illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activity.

It is this latter category – ongoing risk assessment – is crucial if new dangers emerge during the visit. Changing circumstances can radically alter the safety of an activity, and staff should always err on the side of caution. All out of school trips must be completed on the EVOLVE system and submitted to the EVC at least one week before the visit is to commence. If the EVC is satisfied that the Risk Assessment is completed adequately, the EVC will pass the risk assessment and forward to the Head Teacher for ratification. Should the trip/visit be a residential or overseas trip, the LA has then to further endorse the Head teacher's decision.

Records/communication:

It is important to keep records and communicate with parents:

- Parents should be informed, by letter, of any activity (either generic or specific letter). In many cases permission will need to be given to the school;
- As much specific detail should be included in the letter, including voluntary contributions, timings, equipment children require, times of arrival/departure, and if there are any medical facts school needs to be aware of;
- In some cases, a meeting with parents to outline/discuss the trip will be essential (e.g. residential).
- The EVC needs to have a copy and check risk assessments before a trip/visit leaves the school premises, which is part of the EVOLVE process.
- If an incident occurs during a visit, details should be recorded on Evolve

Pre-Visits:

In order to undertake a full and comprehensive assessment of risks, it will be essential in most cases to undertake a pre-visit. Even where the visit is made regularly, risks should be reassessed from time to time. When undertaking a risk assessment, a number of variables need to be considered:

- The number of pupils involved;
- The age of the pupils, their gender, ability and general behaviour;
- The previous experience of the group in undertaking off-site visits;
- The time of the day and the time of the year;
- The travel arrangements;

- The hazards of the environment being visited;
- The numbers, experience and quality of the accompanying staff and volunteers;
- The nature of the activity.

Ratios:

With the exception of Foundation Stage, there are no statutory requirements for supervision ratios.

Ratios for early years are specified and must be adhered to, the ratio specification is at least 1:8.

To ensure effective supervision, St. John's has adopted the following ratios:

- Years 1 - 2 the ratio should be at least 1:8
- Year 3 – the ratio should be at least 1:12
- Year 4 – 6 the ratio should be at least 1:15

These ratios must be adhered to. The number of adults accompanying a visit will, to a large extent, depend on the specifics of that visit. e.g. if a party splits into smaller groups, more adults will be required

The gender of the accompanying adults should be considered carefully, particularly where there is a mixed group of pupils and toilet/changing facilities will be required.

Voluntary Help:

The success of an educational visit often relies upon the good services and willingness of volunteers to accompany the trip. The role of volunteers must be very carefully considered and their legal responsibilities clearly understood. To offer help voluntarily does not negate legal responsibility. DBS checks should be carried out on volunteers who have regular contact with pupils on school premises or on school activities outside. Volunteers in a residential setting or working on a 1:1 basis will need to be checked.

At St. John's we welcome voluntary help. It is important to remember that:

- Volunteers must have been asked specifically to assist by a member of staff or visit leader
- The school must always make the final decision as to which volunteers accompany a visit: not all volunteers are suitable
- All volunteers accompanying a visit should know precisely what their role is and understand they have a responsibility to ensure they carry out that role
- Where the school has been able to identify volunteers well in advance of a visit, opportunities should try to be found for those volunteers to meet the pupils and get to know their names
- Volunteers must be informed that they have a responsibility to follow the instructions of the group leader.
- Children of volunteers (other than the pupil attending the trip anyway) e.g. a younger sibling should not attend with the volunteer

First-Aid:

In all cases it would be appropriate to ensure a first-aid kit is readily available. It is essential to ensure at least 1 member of the team has the ability to administer first-aid and has a current, valid First Aid certificate. When there is one first-aider, thought should be given to the cover available for the other children while an incident is being dealt with.

Insurance:

When a trip is undertaken as a part of the normal school curriculum, even though it is off-site, the normal insurance arrangements for the school apply. The school also has specific off-site insurance.

Emergency Procedures:

Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation. If an accident happens, the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation;
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group;
- Attend to the casualty;
- Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident.

The person who will take charge in an emergency is the **Group Leader**. They need to ensure emergency procedures are in place and that back up cover is arranged or catered for.

The contact in school will be responsible for providing necessary assistance, informing parents, governors and the LA of any issues.

All those involved in the school trip, including parents and children, should be clear who would take charge in the case of an emergency.

At St. John's the line of communication for emergencies will be:

- The Head
- The Deputy Head
- The Business Manager
- The Chair of Governors

These can be contacted on 0116 270 9932 (It would therefore be wise to know you have easy access to a telephone, or take a mobile).

Out of school numbers would also need to be available to the Group Leader before any trip and carried with them. **(See appendix A)**

Staff should not become involved with the media. They should inform Crisis Line whose officers will assist with the situation. (Office hours: 0116 252 7790, Out of office hours: 0116 252 8899).

Any group leaders should be referred to "Leicester City Council Education Health and Safety Bulletin No 11– Crisis line and Emergency Planning for schools.

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

- Establishing the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible
- Ensuring that all the group are safe and looked after
- Establishing the names of any casualties and obtain immediate medical attention
- Ensure all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members follow the emergency procedures

- Ensure a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times
- Notify the police, if necessary
- Inform the school contact (the number should be accessible at all times during the visit);
- Details of the incident to pass on to school – nature/date/time/location/names/injuries/action taken/action yet to be taken and by whom
- Notify insurers
- Ascertain telephone numbers for future communication
- Write down accurately, as soon as possible, all relevant facts and witnesses and preserve any vital evidence
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident
- Complete an accident report as soon as possible
- No-one in the group should speak to the media. No names/details should be disclosed
- No-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties

Discipline:

Out of school activities undertaken during school time, or largely in school time, will always be conducted according to the school's disciplinary policy. The need to ensure appropriate behaviour during an activity will be assisted by preparation of the pupils, staff and volunteer adults. Clear standards should be identified and adhered to. The legal responsibility of teachers towards pupils (duty of care) is in no way diminished because the activity is taking place off the school premises. If activities are led by an outside body (e.g. an instructor) the staff present would still exercise an overall supervisory role.

Children who it was considered should not attend an off-site visit, due to indiscipline in school, and thereby be a potential danger to themselves or others can reasonably be prevented from attending the trip. Parents would need to be informed of this and the reasoning behind the decision. The evidence provided could well be related to the risk assessment.

SEN/Medical Needs:

At St. John's we attempt to include, as far as possible, any child in an off-site visit/trip. If, however, following the risk assessment, it was deemed inappropriate to include a child due to their Special Educational Needs, then it would be reasonable to not allow that child to attend, providing there was sufficient evidence to substantiate this.

Children with specific medical needs may also not be able to attend an off-site trip (e.g. no wheel chair ramps/long walk across rough terrain). If the medical reason was the child required regular medicine, then signed permission would need to be obtained from the parent/guardian to allow a designated member of staff to administer it.

When organising a residential trip, parents should be asked to give their authorisation to the leader of the party to act for their child should the need arise for emergency medical treatment. If parents are unable to give this authorisation, the Head may decide that the resultant risk to that child precludes them from taking part.

Registered disabled persons will require an individual risk assessment and a 1:1 ratio of support.

Transport:

In many instances transport will be needed for the off-site visit.

Coaches:

The visit leader should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable, licenced and approve company, and that seatbelts are fitted.

The driver of the coach will have no responsibility for the conduct and behaviour of pupils. The school will provide sufficient supervisory staff to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pupils.

Private car:

Extreme caution should be exercised over the use of private cars, belonging both to parents and staff.

Where a private (staff or parent) car is to be used to transport young people then this must be approved by the Head Teacher and the following must be in place:

- A Volunteer drivers form must be complete and retained by the establishment on an annual basis
- Current Insurance is held and Business Use (staff) is included
- Car is taxed and has a current MOT and is roadworthy
- Seatbelts must be worn and legal requirements relating to child restraints and booster seats must be complied with. No child should sit in the front seat.

Parents should always be informed whether their child is to be transported by a company or private vehicle.

Swimming

Children at St John's will have the opportunity to have swimming lessons in Year 5.

St John's uses a swimming facility that has trained life guards. However, staff do retain a pastoral role for participants at all times either through direct or remote supervision.

Licensed Activities:

Certain visits and trips may well involve "adventurous" activities. Certain activities (e.g. water sports, fencing, abseiling, climbing etc.) may be provided by a licensed company. This company may only provide these activities if they have achieved certification. It should be ascertained before any such activity is undertaken that the provider does have the necessary certification and this should be recorded on the risk assessment. The school should be satisfied that the safety standards are appropriate and that where specialist staff are used, they have the sufficient experience and qualifications. The school staff (and designated volunteers) accompanying the activity retain overall responsibility for the pupils throughout the visit even when a member of the provider's staff is instructing the pupils.

Voluntary Contributions:

The principle for this lies in the 1988 ERA whereby education should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours. This does however, have implications for off-site education. Costs such as – transport, board and lodging, admission, materials and equipment,

insurance, releases of staff costs etc. – may mean the activity cannot continue unless voluntary contributions are forthcoming.

Schools cannot insist upon payment and may not exclude a child because they have not paid, but trips may be cancelled if there are insufficient voluntary contributions to cover the cost of the trip. In certain circumstances, the school may be able to assist with payment (e.g. if a family is receiving Family Credit).

Residential Visits:

Mixed parties engaged in visits involving an overnight stay should be accompanied by at least one adult member of staff (over the age of 18) of each sex.

Appendix A: Emergency Contact Directory

Contact	In school hours	Out of school hours
Head Teacher	Andrew Marshall 07576566819	Andrew Marshall 07576566819
Deputies	John Pibworth 07855068558	John Pibworth 07855068558
Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)	Marie Green 07545373007	Marie Green 07545373007
Premises Officer	Sandra Peach 07761234244	Sandra Peach 07761234244
Administration	Anita Mistry 0116 2709932	Marie Green 07545373007
Crisis Line/Helpline	0116 3737599	0116 3737599
Education Psychology	0116 4545470	
Welfare Officers	Jo Brown 0116 4545510	
Chair of Governors	Ian Jones 07771961962	Ian Jones 07771961962
Other Governors	Fiona Aldridge 07775699181	Fiona Aldridge 07775699181
Religious/community leaders	Sami Lindsey 07850326991	Sami Lindsey 07850326991