

BARTON PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS CENTRE.



Off-Site Visits Policy

Date: January 2012

To be reviewed: January 2014

Signed.....Chair of Governors

Date.....



Off-Site Visits Policy

Introduction

Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school and Early Years Centre and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school and Early Years Centre by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

Please also see the Safeguarding Policy and related policies in the Safeguarding File.

Aims

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;
- promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). All these activities are in line with guidance published by the LA: Early Years Foundation Stage:

- English - theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups
- science - use of the school grounds and visits to other schools
- mathematics - use of shape and number trails in the local environment; shop visits and organised activities at other schools
- history - castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums
- geography - use of the locality for fieldwork, town trails

- art and design - art gallery visits, use of the locality
- PE - a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches
- music - a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, local schools' orchestra, concerts for parents to hear and Global Rock
- design and technology - Carisbrooke toy museum
- ICT - its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools etc
- RE - visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy
- PSHE and citizenship - visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

How visits may be authorised

The headteacher will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher/senior member of staff employed at the school.

The teacher or Senior member of staff will:

Inform the Head Teacher of date and reason for trip;

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks, and that the letter from our coach company (see 6.5) assures us their drivers have had police checks
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained
- keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example a swimming facility).
- First Aid boxes are complete and with additional medication for named children that have specific needs.

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LA (and available from the school office and the LA Health & Safety dept.) All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LA's current instructions.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the headteacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the school.

It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. A separate risk assessment will be carried out for pupils with a disability.

Risk assessment

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the teacher before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve. The LA will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the Visit Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

Sites visited regularly by the school can be assessed at the start of the school year and a phone call made thereafter to establish if there are any changes to risk.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

1 adult to between 10 and 15 pupils in Years 4, 5 & 6

1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 3;

1 adult to 3 pupils in Early Years (3-4 years)

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are *minimum* requirements, and may *not* provide adequate supervision in all cases.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use on a regular basis has provided us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures.

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the headteacher, the governing body, the LA, our educational visits coordinator, and all adults supervising the trip.

Transport

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for.

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

Where private cars are used for transport, the teacher is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks (see 5.2).

Where any mini-bus is used, the named mini bus license holders only will be allowed to drive the bus. Availability and condition of the mini-bus will be arranged through Childcare Co-ordinator.

Communication with parents

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

Telephone permission will be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions. This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits.

However if not enough funding is received to make the trip viable the trip may be cancelled and existing payments returned. The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the headteacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

Further health and safety considerations

Mobile phones will be taken.

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number.

Before a party leaves school the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the teacher should discuss with the headteacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements can be obtained from the Local Authority's Off-Site & Hazardous Activities File held in the school office. The flowchart recommendations (LA Nov 2011) for planning a trip is attached to this policy and the school follows the current School Trips Policy from the LA Health & Safety Department (Schools)

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every two years or before if necessary.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS – FLOWCHART

Required Actions	Forms
<p>Start of each School Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain consent forms for new pupils• Review Risk Assessments for regular visits and update as required	<p>Consent form Health and Safety Policy</p>
<p>For each new planned visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For new Adventurous / Hazardous visit request information from Provider and consider initial visit• Complete Risk Assessments relevant to activities / location / travel• Obtain Information from volunteer drivers where appropriate• Complete Proposal for Approval by Head Teacher – for Adventurous / Hazardous activities seek <i>initial</i> approval and when full information to hand obtain final approval	<p>Questionnaire – provider Risk Assessment template Application and Proposal form Volunteer Driver form</p>
<p>Before the visit occurs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Leader to identify actions through use of Procedures Checklist and keep updated• Obtain relevant information for Contact List• Use Group Leader Checklist to confirm all actions have been completed	<p>Procedures Check List Contact List Group Leader Checklist</p>
<p>Paperwork to be taken on Visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact Form with Emergency information on reverse• First Aid / Incident Form• Risk Assessment(s)• Checklists• Any other relevant paperwork <p>Ensure copies of relevant paperwork provided to Home based Contact(s)</p>	<p>First Aid / Incident Form</p>

The reverse of this Flowchart provides guidance on the Risk Rating of visits / trips