



Off-Site Visits and Outdoor Learning Policy and Practice

Approved by the Governing Body on
2nd December, 2019

Signed..... (Chair of Governors)

Dated.....

Signed..... (Headteacher)

Dated.....

Review Date: December 2022

Context

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every pupil to an effective and balanced curriculum. Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment, and so form a key part of what makes *Rushey Mead Primary School* a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits to pupils of taking part in visits and learning outside the classroom include, but are not limited to:

- Improvements in their ability to cope with change.
- Increased critical curiosity and resilience.
- Opportunities for meaning making, creativity, developing learning relationships and practicing strategic awareness.
- Increased levels of trust and opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves, them in each other).
- Improved achievement and attainment across a range of curricular subjects. Pupils are active participants not passive consumers, and a wide range of learning styles can flourish.
- Enhanced opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context' and the development of the social and emotional aspects of intelligence.
- Increased risk management skills through opportunities for involvement in practical risk-benefit decisions in a range of contexts. ie. encouraging pupils to become more risk aware as opposed to risk averse.
- Greater sense of personal responsibility.
- Possibilities for genuine team working including enhanced communication skills.
- Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding of a variety of environments.
- Improved awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability.
- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.

Application

Any visit that leaves the school grounds is covered by this policy, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time, or outside the normal school day.

In addition to this Educational Visits Policy, *Rushey Mead Primary School*:

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Guidance for Educational Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE**' (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE).
2. Adopts National Guidance www.oeapng.info (as recommended by the LA).
3. Uses EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this school policy, Local Authority policy, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

Types of Visit & Approval

There are three 'types' of visit:

- 1. Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day.**
These follow the 'School Learning Area' Operating Procedure (Appendix 1).
- 2. Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. Eg. visits to museums, farms, theme parks, theatres, etc.**
These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Head for approval.
- 3. Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.**
These follow 2. above, but the Head then submits the visit to the LA for approval.

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE (where required). They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher or EVC prior to planning, and before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements, and should seek advice from the EVC where necessary.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), who will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. The EVC is the first point of contact for advice on visit related matters, and will check final visit plans on EVOLVE before submitting them to the Head. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

The Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising all visits and for submitting those that are overseas, residential or adventurous to the LA for approval.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend' to ensure high quality visits and outdoor learning through support and challenge. They should make sure that:

- There is an Establishment Visits/outdoor learning policy and procedures – including emergency procedures.
- There are formal notification and approval procedures for Visits, and staff are clear about their role in these.

The Local Authority is responsible for the final approval (via EVOLVE) of all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

Staff Competence

We recognise that staff competence is the single most important factor in the safe management of visits, and so we support staff in developing their competence in the following ways:

- An apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced visit leaders before taking on a leadership role.
- Supervision by senior staff on some educational visits.
- Support for staff to attend training courses relevant to their role, where necessary.

In deciding whether a member of staff is competent to be a visit leader, the Head Teacher will take into account the following factors:

- Relevant experience.
- Previous Visit Leader training.
- The prospective leader's ability to make dynamic risk management judgements, and take charge in the event of an emergency.
- Knowledge of the pupils, the venue, and the activities to be undertaken.

Emergency procedures

A critical incident is any incident where events go beyond the normal coping mechanisms and experience of the visit leadership team.

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical incident during a visit (see Appendix 2). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan as it is on the risk assessments which they have signed to say they have read.

When an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, or where it involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention then assistance will be sought from the local authority.

Educational Visits Checklist

Rushey Mead Primary School's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities, a visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'.

Risk Assessments

Visit leaders will be responsible for writing and adhering to the appropriate risk assessments. Risk assessments will be needed for Group 2 and Group 3 visits. Group 1 visits are covered under the 'School Learning Area' Operating Procedure. Sports Fixtures are covered under 'Sports fixture Events' Operating Procedure. All offsite visits must sign out and inform the office on their return. Risk assessments will be shredded at the end of each academic year unless there has been an incident, then they will be kept until the child reaches the age of 25.

Parental Consent

Consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time (Group 1 visits). However, the school obtains blanket consent for children which lasts them the life of Rushey Mead Primary School which consents them to (Group 1 and Group 2 visits), With the exception to Nursery children and Group 3 visits (Residential) where a specific consent form will be used. Consent forms will be shredded when the children leave the school unless there has been an incident on that visit whereby they will be kept until the child reaches 25 years of age.

Inclusion

Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion. Necessary supervision will be available for SEN children who have additional needs. Children who require 1:1 supervision will be provided with support, including those children with an EHCP. The school has the right to not allow children to attend a school visit based on their behaviour and if the head teacher deems them to be a threat to other children or staff.

Charging / funding for visits

Rushey Mead Primary School asks for contributions for school visits and will only run visits if you get sufficient voluntary contributions to break even. Rushey Mead Primary School may substitute trips to keep costs to a minimum for parents. If a parent asks for a refund – a full refund will be given.

Transport

Rushey Mead Primary School uses trusted coach and mini bus companies and follow National Guidance. Use of staff cars to transport pupils – Staff cars will only be used if they have business insurance and the school has received a 'Private Car Form'

Dismissal of children

Teachers will dismiss their class on the school playground unless otherwise communicated to parents. If a child is not collected a member of staff will phone their parents and wait with the child until they are collected. If they are not collected and the headteacher feels necessary social services may be contacted.

Insurance

Rushey Mead Primary School has the LA's insurance for visits.

Appendix 1 - School Learning Area

General

Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits/activities:

- do not require parental consent
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- should be recorded on EVOLVE if regular, eg swimming lessons
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE if these are ad-hoc activities

Boundaries

The boundaries of the School Learning Area include, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues:

- *Rushey Mead Park*
- *Places of Worship in Leicester*
- *Soar Valley School*
- *Rushey Academy*

Operating Procedure for School Learning Area

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our School Learning Area:

- Road traffic.
- Other people / members of the public / animals.
- Losing a pupil.
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc).

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Head, Deputy or EVC must give verbal approval before a group leaves
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved. This is agreed with the headteacher.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'School Learning Area' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school, and is on the website.

- There will normally be a minimum of two adults – one being first aid trained.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practiced appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- All remotely supervised work in the School Learning Area is done in 'buddy' pairs as a minimum.
- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- Staff will deposit in the office a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route, and an estimated time of return.
- A mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, goggles)

Appendix 2 – Emergency Procedure

The school's emergency response to an incident is based on the following key factors:

1. There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit (during school hours this is the office).
2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager at all times.
3. For activities that take place during normal school hours, the visit leadership team will be aware of any relevant medical information for all participants, including staff.
4. For activities that take place outside normal school hours, the visit leadership team and the emergency contact/s will be aware of any relevant medical information and emergency contact information for all participants, including staff.
5. The visit leader/s and the base contact/s know to request support from the local authority in the event that an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention.
6. For visits that take place outside the School Learning Area, the visit leader will carry:
 - a) An LA Emergency 'Card'
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through Visit Leader Training and included in the risk assessment which staff sign to say they have read.

Appendix 3 – Sports Fixture Events

General

Activities within the ‘Sports Fixture Event’ follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits/activities:

- do not require parental consent – consent is obtained by blanket consent forms.
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- should be recorded on EVOLVE if regular, eg swimming lessons
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE if these are ad-hoc activities

Boundaries

The boundaries of the Sports fixture event include, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues:

- Soar Valley college
- Taylor Road Primary
- Sandfield Primary
- Knighton Park
- Ellesmere college
- Aylestone leisure centre
- Hamilton College
- Saffron lane athletics stadium
- Wyggeston college

Operating Procedure for ‘Sports Fixture Event’

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our Sports Fixture Event:

- Road traffic.
- Other people / members of the public / animals.
- Losing a pupil.
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc).
- PE kit/ equipment
- Muscle strains due to not warming up/ cooling down
- Exhaustion/ dehydration
- Foul play
- Misuse of PE equipment
- Transport break down/ accidents.

Transport

Where required transport will be arranged with an approved supplier. A visual risk assessment will be made on arrival of the vehicle to ensure it is fit for purpose, equipped with seatbelts and driver appears to be fit to drive.

- Trip leader to check driver’s ID, if this cannot be displayed trip lead to refuse transport.
- Trip lead to discuss ETA and route and drop off point.
- Trip lead to confirm pick up points and time of departure.
- In the event of a breakdown/ accident trip lead to follow national guidance.

- Trip leader to ensure children are sat appropriately and wearing their seatbelt before departure.

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Head, Deputy or EVC must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved. These are approved by the head teacher.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'Sports Fixture Event' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school, and a synopsis is on the school website.
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults – one being first aid trained.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practiced appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- All remotely supervised work in the Sports Fixture Event is done in 'buddy' pairs as a minimum.
- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- Staff will deposit in the office a list of all pupils and staff and an estimated time of return.
- A mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, goggles)