

Elmhurst School **Educational Visits Policy**

Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our boys with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our boys enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of the Elmhurst curriculum.

Purposes

Educational visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the Elmhurst 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 education 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 boys are maximised.

Official Guidance

This policy has regard to the DfES Guidance Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV) and includes reference to the following areas:

- (a) responsibilities for visits, including pupils' behaviour;
- (b) planning visits, including risk assessments and first aid;
- (c) supervision, including ratios and vetting checks (for example, CRB checks for volunteers on overnight stays);
- (d) preparing pupils, including special and medical needs;
- (e) communicating with parents;
- (f) planning transport;
- (g) insurance;
- (h) types of visit;
- (i) visits abroad (if applicable);
- (j) emergency procedures, including contact details and permission for emergency medical treatment if the parents cannot be contacted.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the boys.

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

Senior Management Team (SMT)

The Principal and his SMT will endeavour to ensure that:

- each trip has an appointed group leader;
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins (this applies even when a member of the SMT is not going on the visit.);
- any necessary risk assessments are complete and that it is safe to make the visit. The Principal will sign these off (see below)
- where necessary pre-visit checks have been undertaken
- training needs have been met;
- the group leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
- the group leader has the relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity;
- all adults on the visit are appropriate people to supervise boys;
- parents have signed consent forms;
- arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the boys including the provision of first aid equipment;
- the mode of travel is appropriate;
- travel times out and back are known;
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover;
- they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name;
- they have the names of all the adults and boys in the travelling group, as well as the contact details of parents and staff's and volunteers' next of kin in case of illness or accident.
- permission for emergency medical treatment is obtained if the parents can not be contacted

Group Leader

One teacher, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been approved by the SMT. The Group Leader should:

- be able to control and lead boys of the relevant age range;
- be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
- undertake and complete comprehensive risk assessments;
- have regard to the health and safety of the entire group at all times;
- know all the boys proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- ensure that boys understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of boys below);

Other teachers and adults involved in the visit

Teachers and other adults on the visit must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- care for each individual boy as any reasonable parent would;
- follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline;
- consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the boys in their charge is unacceptable;

Responsibilities of boys

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

- not take unnecessary risks;
- follow the instructions of the leader and other adults;
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly;
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader or other adult about it;
- should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous.

Any boys 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 boys should be fulfilled in other ways.

Parents

The group leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details and of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits.

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 and well-being 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 suitable plans to avoid them.

The Principal is responsible for planning all off-site visits. Staff planning a visit must seek permission from the Principal (see attached Request Form) In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the group leader, but the Principal must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience. All risk assessments are therefore passed to either the Principal for approval before a visit.

The organiser/group leader must agree all plans with the Principal. A request form should be submitted to the principal. A master request form may be found with this policy on the school computer system.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit. (See Master Assessment Forms and Sample Assessment Forms X:\POLICY DOCUMENTS\INSPECTION POLICY)

The risk assessment will decide the adult:child ratio for each visit (see Guidance under 'Supervision'). 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 boys for this visit? (See section on Supervision.)

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

The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- the location;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- boys with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

The risk assessment must be signed off by the Principal before the visit takes place.

Exploratory visit

Where possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and boys in the group;
- ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.

If it is feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. The group leader should have a working knowledge of first aid and all adults in the group should know how to contact emergency services.

The minimum first aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements;
- sick bucket, bag and tissues

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 boys. The SMT should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed. The contents of a first-aid kit will depend on what activities are planned.

Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to boys for any off-site visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- age and ability of group;
- special needs boys;
- nature of activities;

- experience of adults in off site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation;
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

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

Reception:	at least 1:5
Years 1 and 2 visits off-site on foot:	1:6
Years 1 and 2 visits off-site involving public transport	1:6
Upper School visits off-site on foot	1:10
Upper School visits off-site involving public transport	1:10

Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits that is detailed above. These ratios do not include residential visits.

Where there is more than one adult supervisor a group leader, who has authority over the whole party, should be appointed.

Where a high adult:pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. They should be carefully selected and 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 boys 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. All group members should be provided with a copy of relevant risk assessments.

For the protection of both adults and boys, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a pupil.

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the Principal must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity.

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

Preparing Boys

Providing information and guidance to boys is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Boys should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Boys must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. The lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Boys should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Boys should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

Participation

Boys should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities. During the visit they should not be coerced into activities they fear.

Boys whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such boys will return home early.

Information to boys

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

- the aims and objectives of the visit/activity;
- background information about the place to be visited;
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- why safety precautions are in place;
- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- what standard of behaviour is expected from boys;
- who is responsible for the group;
- what to do if approached by a stranger;
- what to do if separated from the group;
- emergency procedures;
- rendezvous procedures.

Transport and boys

Boys using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including;

- arrive on time and wait for the transport away from the road, track, etc.
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- wear your seatbelt and stay seated while travelling on transport;
- make sure your bags do not block aisles on the transport;
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- never throw things out of the transport vehicle's windows;
- never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- never run about while on transport is moving or pass someone on steps or stairs;
- never kneel or stand on seats or otherwise impede the driver's vision;
- never distract or disturb the driver;
- stay clear of automatic doors/manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport;
- after leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road;
- if you have to cross roads to get to the transport always use the Green Cross Code.
- If you feel unwell while travelling, tell a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group.

Boys with special educational and medical needs

The SMT will not exclude boys 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. The following information on matters that might affect boys' health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in a letter to parents/guardians prior to a visit.

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements of site;
- names of leader and other staff accompanying the visit;
- visit's objectives;
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- for residential visits only the insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation and medical cover. Any cover to be arranged by the parents, if appropriate, will be requested;
- clothing, kit and equipment needed;
- pocket money to be taken (if appropriate);
- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to.

Parents consent

Elmhurst School will seek consent for:

- visits involving boys;
- adventure activities;
- visits abroad;
- other residential visits.

If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should not be taken on the visit. If the parents give a conditional consent the Principal will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not. The School's parental consent form should be completed for each pupil on the group (see Appendix A).

Residential visits

Hostels and Hotels

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the young people's – we will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance;
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group;
- access by staff to student rooms must be available at all times;
- separate male and female sleeping areas for boys and adults;
- ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out of the accommodations, its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key personnel;
- security arrangements – where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors;
- ensure that locks/shutters etc work on all the rooms used by the group;
- storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables;
- adequate lighting – it is advisable to bring a torch;
- provision for sick, disabled boys or those with special needs;
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation/facilities for the group.

Coastal visits

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school boys have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. At Elmhurst, the group leader should bear the following points in mind in the risk assessment of coastal activity:

- tides and sandbanks are potential hazards so timings and exit routes should be checked.
- Ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags;
- Establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- Look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc;
- Some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to the path at all times. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe for boys to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

Swimming

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 Elmhurst boys. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance.

Boys 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 boys is a minimum.

Written by Claudia Lazell/Sandra Buckland - September 2008 (Updated January 2011 - CDL)

Farm visits/Wildlife Centres

Elmhurst recognises that farms and wildlife centres can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking boys 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 or wildlife centre 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.

The basic rules for a farm or wildlife centre visit will be;

We will never let boys:

- place their faces against the animals or their hands in their mouths after feeding them;
- eat until they have washed their hands;
- sample any animal foodstuffs;
- drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities);
- ride on tractors or other machines;
- play in the farm area.

Reviewed/Updated January 2011 – CDL

X:\POLICY DOCUMENTS\INSPECTION POLICIES\EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY.doc