

HOLY ROSARY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

OUTDOOR LEARNING, OFF-SITE VISITS AND LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The governors and staff of Holy Rosary School acknowledge the great value of educational visits in broadening and enhancing both the learning and social experience of pupils. We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every pupil to an effective and balanced curriculum.

School visits and learning outside the classroom benefits children in many ways, including, but not limited to:

- Increased critical curiosity and resilience
- Increased levels of trust and opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves and them in each other)
- An ability to apply a different range of skills than those used in the classroom
- Enabling, supporting and complementing the work of the National Curriculum, experimental (first hand) and memorable learning
- Assessing and managing risks (safety)
- Developing talents, abilities and interests, which can be motivational and have lifelong relevance
- A greater sense of personal responsibility

To enable children and staff to gain a full and enjoyable educational visit it is essential that this policy is adhered to. These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the regularly updated information provided by Sefton LA on the intranet.

APPLICATION

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

In addition to this policy, Holy Rosary Primary School

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document '**Guidance for off-site visits and adventurous activities**' (All teaching 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 school policy (i.e. this document), Local Authority policy, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Visit Leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits and for entering these on EVOLVE. They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Headteacher or EVC prior to planning, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) in Mrs Stevenson (Deputy Headteacher), 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.

The Headteacher has responsibility for authorising all visits and for submitting all residential or adventurous activity visits to the LA for approval, via EVOLVE.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. Individual governors may request 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

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

PROCEDURES

Types of visit

There are three types of visit:

1. Routine local visits
2. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.
3. Visit that are overseas, and/or residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

Approval

The approval process is as follows for each type of visit:

1. Local visits and walks are risk-assessed in the same way as day trips. Staff must complete a risk assessment form and attach it to the Evolve risk assessment. This is then sent to the EVC as with all trips.
2. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. These are entered on EVOLVE, and must be submitted to the EVC for checking at least 5 days in advance, and then forwarded to the Head for approval.
3. Visits that are overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity (see LA guidance for definition of 'adventurous') are then submitted by the Head to the LA for approval.

Educational Visits Checklist

Holy Rosary Primary School uses the EVOLVE Checklist to form part of the risk management process for visits. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'.

Parental Consent

The school obtains blanket consent for activities that fall within the Local area. Parents sign a paper consent form permitting children to go on local walks.

Specific, (ie. one-off), parental consent is obtained for all other visits. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents (via letters, meetings, etc), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. As above, parents sign a paper consent form.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk assessments for school visits have three levels:

1. Generic activity risk assessments, which are likely to apply to the activity whenever it takes place.
2. Visit/site specific risk assessments, which will differ from place to place and group to group.
3. Ongoing risk assessments that take account of e.g. illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activities.

Pre-visits

In order to undertake a full and comprehensive assessment of risks, it will be preferable in most cases to undertake a pre-visit, even when the visit is made regularly, risks should be reassessed from time to time. When undertaking risk assessment, a number of variables need to be taken into account.

- The number of pupils involved
- The age of the pupils, their Gender, ability and general behaviour
- The previous experience of the group undertaking off-site visits
- The time of day and time of year
- The travel arrangements
- The hazards at the environment being visited
- The numbers, experience and quality of staff and volunteers
- The nature of the activities
- The special educational or medical needs of the pupils
- The quality and suitability of available equipment
- Seasonal weather conditions
- Emergency procedures
- How to cope when a pupil becomes unable or unwilling to carry on
- The need to monitor the risks throughout the visit

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:

- Offering support for staff new to visits 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 relevant 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

Staff / Pupil Ratios

Ratios should be considered on an individual trip basis with support from the EVC and Headteacher. They should take into account:

- Gender, age and ability of the group
- Pupils with special educational or medical needs
- Nature of activities
- Experience of adults in offsite supervision
- Duration and nature of the journey
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities
- Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited
- Competence and behaviour of pupils
- First aid cover

Where there is more than one teacher on the visit a group leader should be appointed who has the authority over the whole group.

Transport

Day trips from School will either use public transport or coaches. The coach company will always be one that we have used before and are happy with their service and provision.

On the rare occasion that public transport is used staff will keep all children together where possible on the lower deck of a bus or in the same train carriage. The trip leader will ensure that all children are on the transport before it leaves and that all children are off before it continues its journey.

The use of cars is generally discouraged but if used, the following should be adhered to:

- The car should be roadworthy
- The driver has the appropriate licence
- The driver has the appropriate insurance
- Drivers ensure pupils wear seat belts and sit in booster seats if necessary.

VOLUNTEERS

Adult Volunteers

Additional adults on the visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit. When parents are taken on visits they should be carefully selected.

All adults must:

- Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- Not be left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and teacher supervisor and help with the control and discipline
- Speak to the group leader or teachers if concerned about the health and safety of the pupils at any time.

It should always be clear that the teacher is responsible for the group at all times

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Teachers in charge of visits have a duty of care to make sure that their pupils are safe and healthy. 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 lifesaving 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
- Inform school or the home contact

- Ensure that a teacher accompanies any casualties to hospital if necessary and the rest of the group are supervised.
- Notify the police if needed
- Ascertain telephone numbers for any future calls
- Write down accurately all relevant facts and witness details and preserve all vital evidence
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident
- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible
- No one in the group should speak to the media and no names should be provided
- No one in the group should discuss any legal liability with other parties

In an emergency the group leader would usually take control of the situation. The home contact's main responsibility is to link the group with the school and to provide assistance as necessary. This named person should have all the information about the visit.

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.

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.

BEHAVIOUR

Any pupil whose behaviour may be considered a risk to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. If the group leader feels that such action may be necessary they must seek advice from the EVC and Headteacher.

INCLUSION

At Holy Rosary we will risk assess each visit and consider the ratio of adults to pupils and any extra support we may need to put in place for particular pupils. We will make every effort to ensure that all pupils attend educational visits and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the safety of all pupils.

If a child has mobility difficulties or is a wheelchair user alternative activities may be planned to ensure that the child is included in the visit, the activities may be modified for the child but may not be changed for the whole class.

INSURANCE

At Holy Rosary Primary School we are covered by the Local Authority blanket insurance for visits and trips.

FINANCE

We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum. There are some circumstances when the school may make a charge for some activities.

The Charging Policy details the full range of activities where a charge can be made.

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