



Educational Visits Policy

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Governor's Committee Responsibility:

**Curriculum & Student Welfare
Committee**

Date Approved:

Autumn Term 2017

Review Period:

Three yearly

Next Review Date:

Autumn Term 2020

The Limpsfield Grange Values:

At Limpsfield Grange we believe in working together to make a difference.

We are a tolerant community; we accept value and understand others.

We care for all members of our community without judgement.

We are responsible for our own learning, behaviour and actions.

We accept that sometimes things go wrong. We work together to take responsibility for our mistakes and for putting things right.

We are a respectful community and we treat others as we would like to be treated, even if they have different views and opinions to our own.

We understand that good behaviour helps us to prepare for life beyond Limpsfield Grange.

We are positive and resilient. We celebrate difference in everything that we do.

We are all proud to be part of the Limpsfield Grange community.

July 2017

Limpsfield Grange School Educational Visits Policy

Background & rationale

Limpsfield Grange acknowledges that students can derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits with the School.

Social skills developed through problem solving, decision making, teamwork and residential experiences at home and abroad can enhance the development of personal and social skills. Knowledge and experience gained beyond the classroom can consolidate and extend the taught curriculum within it.

The value of off-site educational visits is well recognised by the Governing Body and fully supported throughout the school. It is emphasised that a culture of safety must prevail and there is a need for careful planning and adherence to statutory requirements. Educational visits must be well managed, information communicated and responsibilities recognised.

Aims of the policy

Educational visits should:

- Enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for students
- Have significant educational and/or social value and be related to the school's established aims and curriculum
- Be suitable for the students involved, having regard to their ages, abilities, needs and aptitudes
- Aim to be inclusive

In order to do this the School will:

- Regularly monitor and evaluate existing and potential educational visits opportunities to sustain and develop a range of activities that benefit the students
- Seek to reflect the associated staffing and/or cover implications in calculating the cost of an educational visit, where appropriate
- Have appointed an Educational Visits Coordinator with responsibility for the implementation of agreed procedure and risk assessments

Scope

This policy applies to all adults who lead, organise or participate in trips involving students from Limpsfield Grange School, including students, staff, parents, Governors or volunteers.

Terms of reference

An educational visit is any activity that involves students leaving the school premises to pursue an activity organised through the School. Such an activity, which may take place during or after the school day, at weekend or in the school holidays, may be curricular, educational or recreational.

Work experience and attendance by students at link courses provided at partner educational institutions during the school day are not defined as educational visits in the context of this policy.

The policy has been developed in consultation with Governors and the Leadership Team, with the advice of the Local Authority and appropriate partner agencies and in recognition of statutory regulations.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Governing Body** satisfies itself that the appropriate procedures, risk assessments and control measures are in place and that the documented guidance notes are being followed. All educational visits that are residential, abroad, or hazardous need to be approved by the Governing Body and Local Authority. Such approval must be recorded in the minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting prior to the activity taking place.

The **Headteacher** is delegated by the Governing Body to approve all educational visits of a perceived low risk, local, daily or regular nature.

The **Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)** ensures that all educational visits follow the correct procedures. The person with these responsibilities, currently the Deputy Headteacher, will approve the group leader for every visit and monitor the written risk assessments to ensure good practice. In addition, the following responsibilities and duties are undertaken:

- Support the group leader in identifying the purpose for the visit and the selection, training and briefing of appropriate supervising adults and volunteer helpers.
- Ensure OEAP recommended safeguarding procedures are understood and followed.
- Ensure that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosures are in place where necessary.
- Arrange Emergency Contact Duty Officer and draw up proper procedures to be followed in such an event. The Duty Officer for all visits is either the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher (who is also the EVC) and both are Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Keep records and make reports of accidents and “near accidents”
- Review and regularly monitor procedures
- Liaise with the LA Outdoor Education Adviser to ensure the proposed visit complies with the LA regulations, and OEAP National Guidance.

The **Group Leader** is responsible for identifying the purpose of the visit and following the policy. A risk assessment is necessary for all educational visits. Significant risks and their control measures will need to be recorded and filed with the EVC.

This will take account of:

- Generic risks as published in this document.
- Event Specific Risks as identified from a pre-visit or thorough knowledge or experience of the environment, accommodation, the leader’s competence, the group and other factors such as transport.

- On-going risks identified by the professional staff responding to changing circumstances and the success of planned activity and procedures. The participants and staff will be fully briefed on the purpose and the risk assessment control measures
- The medical needs of the students involved and any emergency treatment plan where appropriate.
- Students are encouraged to consider risks involved in an educational visit and to assist in the design of appropriate risk management strategies that support their learning.

Appendix 1 is the school's guidance for the planning and organising of educational visits.

This policy will be monitored through:

- Weekly Senior Leadership meetings
- Regular monitoring by the EVC, Headteacher and Governors
- Headteacher reports to Governors

Related policies and documents:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years and additionally in the case of the following:

- Advice from the Department for Education
- Advice from Surrey County Council Risk Management Services
- Advice from the Police

Appendix 1

Guidance Notes for Educational Visits

To ensure proper good practice and compliance with the necessary regulations it is expected that all group leaders will familiarise themselves with the published advice and guidance (i.e. 'Surrey County Council Guidance for Offsite Visits and Related Activities 2017', OEAP National Guidance). Training for group leaders may be arranged and include aspects of supervision, ongoing risk assessments (including being prepared to stop an activity that has become too hazardous) and how to deal with an emergency.

In order to plan an educational activity the EVC should be involved in discussing plans at an early stage. This discussion needs to take place before students are informed of the visit and must also focus on the staffing requirements for the trip. Routine or local visits need to be planned ahead also. It may be possible to approve a series of regularly occurring and repeating events on a termly basis. No financial commitment should be agreed until all relevant approvals have been achieved.

Parental Consent: When students join the school, parents give consent for local visits. A local visit is within 30 miles of Limpsfield Grange and does not involve hazardous activities. For day visits, or those that take place during the residential provision, that do not involve hazardous activities and are within 30 miles of Limpsfield Grange, parental consent does not need to be sought. However parents should be informed of the intended visit through the tutor's Friday email or an email sent by Parentmail). Parental consent will be sought for residential visits, visits to London, visits to places of religious observance, visits that involve hazardous activities and visits that involve travelling a distance over 30 miles.

Evaluation Report: On return the Group Leader must report to the EVC and, where necessary, an evaluation report should be completed in order to achieve any learning about a 'near miss' or where an incident took place but fortunately did not require the completion of an Accident/Significant Incident report form. Perhaps such a form was completed at the venue, however, this does not remove the need to place such an occurrence on the record at the school. A general evaluation of the visit will inform future visits and may be a useful check on the value of the risk assessments undertaken.

Risk Assessment forms should be completed and lodged with the EVC when risks are perceived as significant. External providers will have their own risk assessment documents that can be used to help in this process. For certain activities an Adventurous Activity Licence is legally required. If this is the case their licence number need only be quoted, instead of actually requiring their documents. External residential providers should also be checked for accreditation through the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge scheme as being recognized as having appropriate safety management systems in place for all activities. A provider that does not participate will be asked to complete a Provider Questionnaire Form as evidence of compliance with key safety and quality provision, and then attached to EVOLVE for onward checking by the Outdoor Education Adviser.

Group Leader Checklist for planning an Educational Visit

Initial planning

1. Check the school diary for available dates.
2. Check the availability of the minibus/school car if required.
3. Discuss visit with EVC. The staff and students involved must be agreed at this stage. When deciding whether staff can be released for a visit, the EVC will give consideration to the needs of the students involved, but also the needs of the students that remain in school. When deciding whether students should be involved in a visit, the EVC will give consideration to behaviour and attendance.
4. Put the provisional date and information (i.e. who is involved) on the diary and provisionally book the minibus/car.
5. The group leader completes a visit form on EVOLVE and submits it to the EVC, along with a risk assessment. The risk assessment must contain details of all activities that will be undertaken on the trip, along with the associated risks and appropriate control measures.
6. For any residential or hazardous activity, the group leader must also have considered any physical or medical needs of the staff that will be involved. A staff medical questionnaire must also be completed by all staff participating in a residential visit. It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that this is done. These will be confidential and held with the group leader and in the emergency pack. They will be destroyed after the trip.

Once the visit is approved by the EVC, Head and LA and GB (for adventurous, hazardous, overseas, residential visits only):

1. Confirm the diary dates and vehicle booking.
2. The group leader informs parents. Parents must be able to give informed consent, which means giving them sufficient information to make a decision about whether they want their daughter involved.
3. The group leader must print a copy of their form and risk assessment from EVOLVE. They must ensure that all students and staff are familiar with the risk assessment prior to the visit.
4. The group leader must ensure that all staff are aware of the medical needs and appropriate treatment plan for students. These can be found on the school network.
5. Inform kitchen if you are out over lunchtime/teatime, either ordering packed lunches or letting the Chef know that a number will be absent for lunch/tea.
6. For all residential visits, an emergency pack must be with the EVC for checking 5 working days before the departure of the visit. Once it has been checked, the EVC will ensure that it is copied to the Headteacher and Head of Care.

On the day of the trip:

1. Leave visit form and risk assessment in the office.
2. Take any necessary medication and treatment/care plans.
3. Take school mobile from Deputy Head's office.
4. Consider taking first aid kit, if not using a school vehicle.
5. Sign out all students and staff.

6. Ensure all staff know the emergency school contact number (01883 713928 x188) and which member of SLT to contact in an emergency.
7. Take student and staff medical forms (residential and hazardous visits only).
8. Take Operation Duke cards.

Group Leader Guidance Notes

- Accidents do happen, but it is important that we do all we reasonably can to prevent them. Managing risks helps us to achieve our objectives and help prevent things going wrong. Group leaders must show what they have done to manage potential risk. We need to demonstrate that the potential risks have been considered and steps taken to minimise them.
- The group leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit including direct responsibility for students' health, safety and welfare.
- The group leader must plan and prepare for the visit and assess the risks.
- The group leader must define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and students and ensure effective supervision of what they do.

Guidance on Risk Assessments

Legal requirement

In practice, written risk assessments are required for every journey and visit. It is important that establishments build up a portfolio of risk assessments to which they can refer and update when a visit or journey is repeated.

Who should carry out the risk assessments?

It is the group leader's responsibility to complete the risk assessment, although they should be able to receive considerable support from the EVC. It is not necessary for group leaders to undertake the risk assessment of activities run by external providers; however, it is essential that the provider holds a valid AALA license (where the law requires), LOTC Quality Badge or that the LA check providers' risk assessments.

Frequent visits

Frequent visits, such as to the local library or swimming baths, do not need a new risk assessment each time; however, if the circumstances of the visit change at all then the risk assessment should be updated in the light of these changes.

How to carry out a risk assessment

A risk assessment is a considered evaluation of potential hazards and the level of risk associated with them. The aim is to identify how the hazard and risk can be controlled and reduced so that people do not suffer injury or illness. It is vital that, once identified, the control measures are understood and implemented by those involved.

The key elements of a risk assessment are:

Identifying significant hazards

Consider the activity and look for what could reasonably cause harm. Bear in mind that what is a safe situation for one person may be extremely dangerous for another. Below is a list of points that should be considered when looking for hazards:

- (i) The nature and location of the journey or visit;
- (ii) Transport and route issues;
- (iii) Equipment standards and their suitability;
- (iv) Special educational or medical needs;
- (v) Staff ratios, qualifications, experience and competence;
- (vi) The composition of the group, including age, sex and ability;
- (vii) Weather conditions;
- (viii) How changing circumstances will affect the risk assessment.

A risk assessment should not contain trivial or highly unlikely risks, only those that are reasonably likely to happen and cause harm, and over which you have control. To do this, try to look afresh at the situation and gain the views of both the experienced and inexperienced. Lastly imagine how the hazards may change as circumstances alter.

Establishing who is at risk

Consider who could be affected by the activity:

- (i) Young people;
- (ii) Visitors;
- (iii) Leaders and supervisors;
- (iv) The general public.

Pay particular attention to:

- (i) The very young;
- (ii) The inexperienced;
- (iii) Anyone with a medical condition;
- (iv) People with special needs;
- (v) Those alone or remote;
- (vi) Anyone who might be vulnerable.

Evaluating and implementing control measures

Consider if the hazard is likely to cause harm, The aim is now to decide what control measures can be put in place to reduce the risk as much as possible. Control measures should be considered based on these two questions:

- (i) Can I get rid of the hazard altogether either by removing it or the group from it?
- (ii) How can I control the risks so that harm is either unlikely or reduced to an acceptable degree, given the nature of the activity?

NB: It is important to be honest when answering these questions. For example, an activity such as skiing carries with it certain inherent risks, some of which cannot be removed.

Consider the following control measures:

- Referring to existing guidance.
- Ensuring information is shared and understood.
- Specific training.
- Good active supervision and appropriate ratios.

- Proper emergency procedures.
- Appropriate ethos.
- Suitable first aid provision.
- Site-specific controls.
- Cancelling or cutting short or moving to a 'Plan B'.
- Reducing risk as far as reasonably practicable.

Recording risk assessments

It is a legal requirement to record and keep risk assessments. It needs to be shown that:

- (i) A proper check was made.
- (ii) Those who might be affected were considered.
- (iii) Action was taken to deal with all the significant hazards.
- (iv) The precautions were reasonable and the remaining risk was acceptable

Ultimately this information must be available, as it could be required by a court of law.

Reviewing risk assessments

A risk assessment needs to be a 'living' document, constantly being improved and updated in the light of new experiences and practice. The risk assessment should be reviewed:

- (i) Every time there is a change to the activity, type of group, location, etc.
- (ii) Every time a group returns from a journey or visit. The assessment need not be extensive but should cover any safety aspect of the visit or journey that could be reasonably improved.
- (iii) Every time there is a 'near-accident'. A 'near-accident', can be simply defined as an incident that almost happened and which would have resulted in injury or harm.

Involving young people in risk assessments

Young people involved in risk assessments are likely to have a safer, more responsible approach to off-site activities and will have improved the risk management skills essential for adult life.

- All risk assessments that young people undertake should be finally checked and agreed by an appropriate adult competent to do so.

- Care must be taken to make parents and carers completely aware of the real risks young people will be involved in.

It is sound practice to involve all young people in risk assessment and risk management to a degree that is appropriate to their age, experience and abilities.

Young people should learn to identify risks and be encouraged to decide on ways to manage those risks. As an example, very young children are taught about the dangers of traffic and crossing the road and learn about the Green Cross Code. Similarly, they learn about germs and hygiene and should be encouraged to apply this knowledge to off-site activities such as farm visits.

Older students involved in off-site activities should identify risks relevant to their situations and be encouraged to develop risk-control measures. Examples of this might include getting lost or separated and being in remote locations with distant supervision (such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme).

In short, risk assessment and risk management is not done *to* participants, but *with* them.

Three levels of risk assessment

A good risk assessment consists of three levels: a generic assessment, a site-/visit-specific assessment and an on-going assessment. These are covered in detail below.

Generic risk assessments

All providers or venues will have risk-assessed a comprehensive list of the activities or amenities it offers and will have produced operating procedures covering the general safety management issues of each. The procedures identified are appropriate to the activities whenever and wherever they take place, and are for group leaders to use as a basis for running or participating in the activity. It is recommended, however, that group leaders do not rely solely on the generic operating procedures: rather they should undertake their own risk assessments to become familiar with the activities' risks as they might affect the staff and young people attending.

Generic risk assessments apply to the particular activity wherever it takes place. For example, there will be some potential risks associated with an urban study such as roads, getting lost or separated, being approached by strangers, etc. that will apply in all cases. A generic risk assessment identifies these and their control measures. Similarly, adventure activities such as rock-climbing involve potential risks that are common to any rock-climbing event.

Event Specific risk assessments

This type of assessment should be undertaken by a person trained and competent to assess risks. This is usually the group leader. By their very nature, generic risk assessments cannot take into account the individual risks and hazards of every situation. Therefore visit/site-specific assessments must be made to ensure that risks peculiar to that journey or visit are at an acceptable level. It is important that these assessments, while informing the school's policies and procedures, should remain consistent with those of the LA.

On-going risk assessments

Throughout the duration of the visit the group leader and the other supervisors should be continually reassessing the risks. This reassessment should be based on the generic and site/visit-specific assessments and should take account of local expertise on factors such as changing weather or tides. The need for on-going risk assessments is outlined in the following examples:

- Emergency situations can be unforeseeable and therefore control measures may not have been definitively formed prior to the incident. It is down to the experience and expertise of the group leader and supervisors to quickly establish the nature of the emergency, who is at risk and what control measures should be put in place to prevent harm to members of the group.
- Changes to the group, such as tiredness, illness or misbehaviour, or a change in the weather, may require an alteration to the programme or a switch to Plan B.

Group leaders should trust their professional judgement and understanding of their young people. Ultimately the group leader is responsible for the group and should be able to use their own judgement to cancel or alter hazardous activities, even if contracted activity leaders are running them.

Significant hazards

Although no attempt is made here to identify the specific problems that have led to high-profile accidents and tragedies, some significant contributing factors are clear.

- Water has been the most common cause of fatal accidents on offsite activities. Particular care must be taken in or near water.
- Activities that have not been thoroughly risk-assessed and prepared for pose significant risks. It is clear, therefore, that spur-of-the-moment, opportunist decisions – for instance, to go swimming – are not acceptable. Ensuring that all potential opportunities have been thoroughly explored beforehand can mitigate any lack of spontaneity that might result. This again is evidence of the need for the preliminary visit.
- Accidents have happened where no contingency plan has been pre-organised. Where a supervisor feels they have no alternative, they are more likely to carry on with an activity, in spite of an increased risk. A vital control measure when reducing the risk of an activity is that of being able to abandon it and take up another more appropriate activity if necessary. Risk assessments must also be done for the contingency programme.
- Local advice and expertise have either not been sought or acted upon.
- The competence or qualification of the leaders has not always been sufficient to recognise and understand the nature of the hazards involved.
- There has been a lack of understanding between ‘real’ and ‘apparent’ danger.

Review

The Governing Body of Limpsfield Grange School adopted this policy on: _____

It will be reviewed on: _____

Signed: _____

Dated: _____