
Horsmonden Primary School

Educational Visits Policy



Every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.

These, often the most memorable, learning experiences, help us to make sense of the world around us by making links between feelings and learning. They allow us to transfer learning experienced outside the classroom and vice versa.

Learning outside the classroom is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what we learn but importantly how and when we learn.

The school has formally adopted, through its Governing Body, the Kent Regulations and Guidance for the Safe Practice of Offsite Visits/Educational Visits.

Kent Regulations and Guidance for the Safe Practice of Offsite Visits/Educational Visits are available to view at - http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Policy/outdoor_regs.cfm

Aims and purposes of Educational Visits.

The school has a strong commitment to the added value of learning outside the classroom, some of which takes place beyond the statutory school day and beyond the school premises.

Each year the school will arrange a number of educational visits and activities that take place off the school site and/or out of school hours, which support the aims of the school. The range of opportunities and activities are outlined in the school prospectus along with the criteria by which pupils are able to access them and the methods by which parents will be notified and asked for their consent.

The Governing Body has given its approval to the following types of activities being arranged in support of the educational aims of the school:

- Out of hours clubs (music, drama, art, science, sport, homework, etc)
- School teams
- Regular nearby visits (village halls, libraries, shops, parks and woodlands, places of worship, farms)
- Day visits for particular year groups
- Residential visits
- Adventurous activities, which might be classed as higher risk.

Approval Procedure and Consent

The Headteacher has nominated a teacher as per DfE (was DCSF) Guidance as the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) and the Governing Body has approved this appointment. The Governing Body has delegated the consideration and approval of educational visits and other offsite activities to the Headteacher and EVC (Deputy Headteacher) as signatories, as necessary, on behalf of the Governing Body.

Before a visit is advertised to parents the Headteacher, the EVC and Governors must approve the initial plan.



Visits that include adventurous activities and/ or a residential element will require approval by the Local Authority via the on-line Visit Notification and Approval system. 'e-Go' Usernames and Passwords will be managed by the EVC or Headteacher.

Day visits that do not include adventurous activities but involve groups travelling outside the County of Kent can also be registered (Notification) on the above system (e-Go)

Where external contractors are involved in organising all or part of the visit the contract will be made with the school on behalf of the pupils. All payments for the visit will be made through the school's accounts.

For out of hours clubs, school teams and nearby visits, parents will be asked to sign a general letter of consent for participation in these activities when their son/daughter enters the school. Parents will be given the timetable for the activities that pupils are involved in and will be informed through their son/daughter if an activity has to be cancelled.

For any visit lasting a day or more, parents will be asked to sign a letter, which consents to their son/daughter taking part. This will include a separate medical consent form. The school has a standard model letter, which should be used for this purpose.

The school has a separate policy for 'Charging and Remissions' which applies to all educational visits.

Staffing

The school recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety on a school visit.

Teachers and other staff are encouraged and supported to develop their abilities in organising and managing pupils' learning in a variety of environments through induction, apprenticeship and training. The selection of staff for educational visits will be a key priority in the initial approval of any proposed visit.

The school will ensure that DBS screening is available for volunteer adults assisting with educational activities and visits.

On residential visits the gender of the staff responsible for supervision and pastoral care will reflect the gender of the pupils

The staff:pupil ratios will not exceed those as recommended by the Local Authority.

The school does not support additional people accompanying educational visits who are not pupils at the school or part of the agreed staff complement. This may include family members accompanying visits if the Governing Body is not satisfied that there is an educational benefit for the pupils.

The appointed Visit Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange the visit. This will include, as necessary, making time or finances available to conduct an exploratory visit, briefing teachers and other staff, accessing training courses, reviewing and evaluating the visit or identifying time when the leader and EVC might work in partnership to undertake planning and risk assessments.

Emergency Procedures

The school will appoint a member of the SLT as the emergency school contact for each visit. All major incidents should immediately be related to this person, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.

The Visit Leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency school contact, including the home contact details of parents/guardians and next-of-kin, as appropriate.

The Visit Leader will take with them a copy of the schools (linked to KCC) Major Incident Procedures, along with the contact details of the appointed emergency school contacts.

All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back through the school systems. The Outdoor Education Unit should also be advised of any serious incidents or accidents.

The school will have emergency funding available to support the Visit Leader in any emergency that occurs in the UK or abroad.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessment and risk management are legal requirements. For educational visits they involve the careful examination of what could cause harm during the visit and whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more should be done. The aim is to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill. The programme of a visit, as set out in the risk assessment and the consent form, should not be deviated from.

Risk assessment for educational visits can be usefully considered as having three levels:

- Generic activity risk assessments, which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place. These are usually prepared by the LEA/ employer or by the school. Examples of generic risk assessment include travel in the school minibus, coach travel and visits to coastal venues. School staff will not normally prepare them unless they have accumulated specific experience or other expertise.

See Kelsi – Outdoor Education for copies of a wide range of generic Risk

Assessments that should be used as a basis for the visit leaders own risk assessment.

- Visit/site specific risk assessments which will differ from place to place and group to group. These are usually undertaken by the school for each venue and are amended as necessary for different groups. They should be prepared or agreed by someone trained and competent to assess risks, such as the EVC.

Activities such as swimming, crossing roads and curricular partnerships with other schools are examples of these site specific risk assessments where the same venue is used each week and barring any changes to the nature of that venue, our prime concern on a weekly basis is the risk presented by the group of pupils undertaking the visit.

- However for visits which are ‘one offs’ a specific risk assessment for the venue itself as well as for the pupils is required. Examples of this would be visits to farms, galleries, museums, public parks, garden centres etc. as part of a specific curriculum module for a specific class group

- For both of these the EVC will direct the visit leader to the relevant sections of LEA/employer and national guidelines covering the type of visit.

- Ongoing risk assessments are those that take account of unplanned and unexpected changes, for example, illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activity. The visit leader is responsible for making decisions on an on-going basis during the visit as to the appropriateness of continuing the visit in the light of prevailing conditions.
- All staff and pupils should be aware of a “PLAN B” in the event of the planned agenda needing to change. Visit leaders are always in charge. They should trust their own knowledge of the young people and use their own professional judgement. This may include challenging an activity leader where the visit leader’s knowledge of the group is superior, or intervening to prompt a change of plan, including stopping an activity if they feel uncomfortable or believe that that it has become too hazardous.
- Where it is considered unsafe to include a particular pupil because there is serious doubts concerning their behaviour or it is felt that they represent a significant risk to themselves or others within the group (including staff), the Head Teacher will make the final decision on whether the pupil should access the trip and suitable alternatives that will meet the educational needs of the visit will be planned.

Evaluation

All visits will be evaluated by the Visit Leader with the EVC. A short evaluation report will be made available for the Governing Body.

The EVC will ensure that any risk assessments for the visits or activities are evaluated and/or modified as a result of findings or feedback from the visit.

The Visit Leader is responsible for presenting a financial account for the visit which will be audited as part of the school’s procedures.