

EXCALIBUR PRIMARY SCHOOL

LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM AND EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

The Learning Outside the Classroom and Educational Visits Policy in respect of Excalibur Primary School has been discussed and adopted by the Governing Body

Chair of Governors: Sarah Sproston

Head Teacher: Julie Jones

Ratified at the meeting of Full Governing Body on: 11th January 2021

To be reviewed January 2024

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, school governors, head teachers, young people, pupils, volunteers, visitors and partner organisations, where Excalibur Primary School has control over or overall responsibility for the activity.

The organisation of an outside activity or an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, an activity or visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils. We endeavour to notify parents/carers as soon as possible of a planned activity or visit and no less than 3 weeks notice shall be given for an activity or visit which incur a cost for parents/carers.

Outside activities and educational visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that an activity or visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively teachers may decide to use an activity or educational visit 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 children are maximised.

The letter to parents from teachers will clearly state the learning intention, give an overview/timetable for the day and break down travel costs and other charges.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of learning outside the classroom activities and educational visits organised at Excalibur Primary School.

AIMS AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The aims of this policy are to ensure that employees and young people experience and enjoy a wide range of outdoor experiences and educational visits without being unduly exposed to a risk to their health and safety

The purpose of the policy is to set out the management and procedures necessary for visit leaders to lead safe and successful activities, assessing risk to help participants to take part safely.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 set out the actions that employees are required to take to ensure that staff and young people are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. In addition, the Department for Education has issued advice on legal duties for local authorities, head teachers, staff and governing bodies (June 2011, amended Feb 2014) regarding activities that take place on or off the educational premises, including trips.

HSE fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life – it provides deeper subject learning and increases self-confidence. It also helps pupils to develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives.

The law requires employees to:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do at work
- co-operate with their employers on health and safety matters
- do their work in accordance with instruction and training
- inform the employer of any work situation representing a serious and immediate danger, so that remedial action can be taken
- In addition, teachers and other staff have a common law duty to act as any prudent parent would do when in charge of pupils

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Consultation and communication with Education Visits Co-ordinators (EVCs), expert practitioners (e.g. OEAP) and external providers will take place to ensure safe activity of a high standard. Communication is maintained via EVOLVE, email, telephone and training days.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section of the policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders including employees, and those who are not employees, e.g. external providers, young people, pupils, volunteers and visitors where these people are involved in Learning Outside the Classroom or Educational Visits.

Although Chancery Multi Academy Trust, as the employer, retain responsibility for the health and safety of employees and pupils, they can delegate tasks to the Local Governing Body, Headteachers or other organisational staff.

This policy applies to employees whose work involves any one of the following:

- Facilitating activity and supervising participants undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base

- direct supervision of participants undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of Learning Outside the Classroom or Educational Visits
- deploying staff who will facilitate or supervise participants who are undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base

This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

GOVERNING BODY

The Governing body also ensures that:

- The school has a Visits policy which supports inclusion
- There are training opportunities for staff
- There are planning and approval procedures in place at establishment level
- There are monitoring procedures in place

HEAD TEACHER

A head teacher ensures that:

- Establishment practice follows National Guidance and the establishment policy
- The establishment has a designated and trained EVC
- All Learning Outside the Classroom activities comply with National Guidance and a risk / benefit risk analysis has been submitted and approval, as required, before the activity
- All staff involved in Learning Outside the Classroom activities are appropriately trained and competent to carry out their allocated responsibilities
- All plans for Learning Outside the Classroom activities have included consideration of key areas such as intended outcomes, best value, child protection, inclusion issues, risk-benefit analysis, medical needs, transport, insurance, contingency plans and emergency procedures

EDUCATIONAL VISITS CO-ORDINATOR

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator ensures that:

- They are specifically competent and experienced in Learning Outside the Classroom and Educational Visits to support Visit Leaders in their preparation of an activity
- They have attended appropriate training for the role
- Learning Outside the Classroom activities are led by competent and confident Visit Leaders. It is particularly important that careful

consideration of competency is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. Establishments should view original documents and certificates when verifying qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.

- They disseminate training and information in the establishment to ensure that visit leaders have up to date knowledge and are accountable
- All plans for Learning Outside the Classroom activities have included consideration of key areas such as intended outcomes, best value, child protection and safeguarding, inclusion, risk-benefit analysis, medical needs, transport, insurance, contingency plans and emergency procedures and have been passed for approval to the headteacher
- Support the head with approval and other decisions
- The school has consent from a person in a position of parental responsibility and they have been fully informed of where their child will be at all times and of any extra measures required.

VISIT LEADER

One teacher, the visit leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit. The visit leader must be an employee of the Excalibur Primary School Governing Board.

The visit leader should ensure that:

- They are specifically competent, qualified and experienced to lead the Learning Outside the Classroom activity they are planning.
- They have received appropriate training (e.g. visit leader training)
- They can demonstrate the ability to operate to current standards and recognised good practice
- They have appropriate qualifications and knowledge of the activity area
- They plan and prepare all aspects of the Learning Outside the Classroom activity or Educational Visit, completing a risk-benefit assessment, define roles and responsibilities of other staff, know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability, provide appropriate information to parents and group members, ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities and ensure that the visit is effectively supervised
- They have fully briefed any assistant leaders and other adult helpers involved in the activity

OTHER TEACHERS AND STAFF

Teachers and other staff on activities and visits are employees of the Governing Body. They will therefore be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours.

Teacher and other staff on the visit must ensure that:

- They understand their role, responsibilities and limitations with regards to the activity or visit they are supporting
- They have been fully briefed about the activity and group members
- They do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- They care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would
- They consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

VOLUNTEER ADULT HELPERS

A volunteer adult helper should ensure that:

- They understand their role, responsibilities and limitations with regards to the activity they are supporting
- They have been fully briefed about the activity and group members

Where a Volunteer Helper is a parent (or otherwise a close relation to a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the Risk-Benefit assessment.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUPILS

The visit leader should make it clear to pupils 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 visit leader about it
- should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the activity or visit. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such pupils will return home early. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

Pupils 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.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

The visit leader should inform all parents how they can help prepare their child for the activity or 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;

If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent the Head Teacher 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 in the group.

Parents must:

- Provide the visit leader with emergency contact number(s)
- Provide consent for the activity or visit
- Provide the visit leader with relevant information about their child’s health which might be relevant to the activity or visit

ARRANGEMENTS FOR LEARNING PUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATIONAL VISITS

In order to fulfil the aims and objectives of this policy the following arrangements should be implemented:

Planning

Planning for an activity should reflect the consideration of legal and good practice requirements, ensuring:

- The plan is based on establishment procedures and National Guidance.
- All staff (including any adult volunteer helpers) and the young people to be involved, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk management process.
- Those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained.

- Proportionate assurances have been obtained from any external providers (making full use of national accreditation schemes that ensure that a provider has been subject to a credible inspection regime).
- Designated emergency contact(s) and procedures have been identified that will work on a 24/7 basis where required.
- All details of the activity provision are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity.

At a very early stage of the planning process, the visit leader and the head teacher concur in order to identify and evaluate the benefits and learning outcomes that the activity (or range of activities) might achieve. A record of these outcomes will help to keep the plan focussed and also be a vital part of the risk management process in providing some objectivity in a “Risk Benefit Analysis”.

Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances

All Learning Outside the Classroom activities are thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk-benefit management and should be included in the risk-benefit assessment on E.V.O.L.V.E.

A preliminary visit to the activity venue is carried out where the activity venue has not been used by the school or the visit lead before.

If it is not 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 addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards.

Where an visit leader commissions Learning Outside the Classroom activity or and Educational Visit from an external provider, they must ensure that the commissioned agent has either adopted Cheshire East Council policy and Learning Outside the Classroom National Guidance or has systems and procedures in place where the standards are not less than those required by Learning Outside the Classroom National Guidance.

It is good practice for visit leaders to take full advantage of any nationally accredited provider assurance schemes that are now available, thus reducing bureaucracy.

Examples of such schemes include:

- The LOtC Quality Badge
- Adventuremark
- NGB centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

Where a provider holds such one of the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances. If they are not appropriately accredited, visit leaders have the responsibility of conducting a thorough assessment of the service offered by the external provider, including ensuring that activities will be delivered safely (adhering to National Governing Body guidelines as appropriate), that safety and fire procedures are in place and that external provider staff are DBS checked.

Equality

Every effort is be made to ensure that Learning Outside the Classroom activities and Educational Visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of any 'protected characteristic' as defined in The Equality Act 2010, i.e. disability, race, religion or belief, age, socio-economic disadvantage, special educational needs, disability, sex, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment. If a visit needs to cater for people with protected characteristics, every reasonable effort is be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

Equality is promoted and addressed for all visits and reflected in establishment policy, thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- an entitlement to participate
- accessibility through direct or reasonable adaptation or modification
- integration through participation with peers

Employers, Heads Teachers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit Leaders are aware of the extent to which equality is or is not a legal issue.

Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to:

- treat a person with a protected characteristic less favourably;
- fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

Consent Forms

When an activity is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time and no parental contributions are requested, then formal consent is not necessary. However, in the interests of good relations between the school and the home, the school ensures that those in a position of parental responsibility are fully informed of where their child will be at all times and of any extra measures required. Written consent is only required for activities that need a higher level of risk management or those taking place outside of school hours

Notification and approval of Learning Outside the Classroom Activities and Visits

The school buys into the Cheshire East Council online notification and approval system for Learning Outside the Classroom activities, including Duke of Edinburgh trips, EVOLVE. A key feature of this system is that Learning Outside the Classroom activities requiring approval are automatically brought to the attention of the Local Authority. Those activities not requiring approval may be viewed, sampled or monitored using the database and report facilities of the system by individual establishments and the Local Authority

A minimum notice time of four working weeks is required by the local authority for Learning Outside the Classroom activities requiring approval. However, if the school is planning major visits, particularly those involving the commitment of non-returnable deposits, the use of providers not recognised by the local authority or ABTA, or trips to remote countries, they will notify the local authority before any financial commitment is made

Risk- Benefit Assessment

The notification and approval system requires the preparation of a risk - benefit assessment. A risk-benefit assessment approach considers the targeted benefits and learning outcomes against any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) to provide an acceptable level of risk.

The risk-benefit assessment should be shared with accompanying staff and trip members. The young people are involved in the risk – benefit assessment and exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

Sufficient control measures should be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual, or harm several people. The content of the risk - benefit assessment process includes consideration of the degree of complexity of a particular activity and reflects several variables that can impact on any given activity:

- Staffing requirements (qualifications/experience/competency/ratios)
- Activity characteristics (specialist/ licensable/adventurous/insurance issues)
- Group characteristics (experience/ability/behaviour/special and medical needs)
- Environmental conditions (familiarity/impact of weather/water levels)
- Distance from support mechanisms in place at the home base (transport/ residential/local/remote)

This is known as the “SAGED” model

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. It is sensible to have at least one fully trained first-aider in the group and if this is not possible a first aid at work first-aider. 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.

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 pupils. The Head Teacher 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.

Effective Supervision

The visit leader retains a “higher duty of care” for the group at all times, even when the activity may be being led by an external provider.

In general terms, the Law does not prescribe specific staffing ratios, but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is “effective”. Effective supervision is determined by consideration of the variables in the “SAGED” model. However, as an exception, Ofsted and DfE guidance prescribe ratios for Early Years.

Where a high staffing ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents with appropriate clearance may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the pupil group.

The visit leader considers how the group is to be supervised, e.g. head counts, buddy systems, close or remote supervision, group sizes, and records this in the risk / benefit assessment. The visit leader ensures that the group continues to be appropriately supervised during downtime, and in the case of residential trips, at night time.

Transport

Careful thought is given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits. All national and local regulatory requirements are followed.

The level of supervision necessary is considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey, giving proper consideration to issues of driver-distraction when considering what supervision is required for the specific group of passengers being transported in a minibus.

The visit leader ensures that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company.

Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration. Where this occurs, there is recorded procedures and a risk assessment conducted

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- 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 run about while transport is moving or pass someone on steps or stairs;
- 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.

Charging

Head teachers, EVCs and visit leaders take into account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996.

Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school day which entail additional costs, for example educational visits or non-school based organisation, such as a visiting drama group or a storyteller. In these circumstances no pupil will be prevented from participating because his/her parents cannot or will not make a contribution but if insufficient funds are available it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities.

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't or won't. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising.

Parents/carers who would qualify for support are those who are in receipt of eligible benefits.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents/carers.

Vetting and DBS Checks

All Excalibur Primary School employees undergo an Enhanced DBS check as part of their recruitment process.

However, it must be clearly understood that a DBS check (or other vetting procedure) in itself, is no guarantee as to the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people.

The placement of an adult within a situation of professional trust (where young people could be vulnerable to physical or mental exploitation or grooming) should always be on the understanding that an overview based on a risk-benefit assessment process has been considered.

The school has taken the decision that all voluntary helpers on educational visits are required to have an Enhanced DBS check.

The responsibility for confirming that a deliverer has been DBS checked rests with the visit leader and should be recorded in the risk-benefit assessment.

INSURANCE FOR OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES AND VISITS

Employer's Liability Insurance is a statutory requirement and Excalibur Primary School holds a policy through the DfE that indemnifies it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person employed by it. This cover extends to those persons who are acting in a voluntary capacity as assistant supervisors. Excalibur Primary School also holds Public Liability insurance, indemnifying it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury from persons not in its employ, as well as for the accidental loss of, or damage caused to, as a result of the School's negligence. Employees (as agents of the employer) are indemnified against all such claims, as are voluntary helpers acting under the direction of the employer's staff. The indemnity covers activities such as off-site activities and visits organised by all establishments and settings for which the employer is responsible both in the UK and overseas.

CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group involved in Learning Outside the Classroom or an Educational Visit may:

- suffer a life threatening injury or fatality;
- be at serious risk;
- go missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

Excalibur Primary School has a Critical Incident procedure that includes Cheshire East Council.

Cheshire East Council is committed to providing emergency planning procedures to support the school in the event of a critical incident.

In order to activate support from Cheshire East Council the telephone numbers listed in the procedure should be used.

These numbers are carried by visit leaders at all times during an off-site activity but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.

REVIEWING THE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every three year on the anniversary of implementation, unless service delivery requires a more immediate amendment due to incidents affecting or included in this policy or changes in guidance from any appropriate body.