

Ranvilles Infant School

Off Site Visits Policy

Drawn up January 2019

To be reviewed January 2021

Introduction

As part of the broad balance of curriculum and learning at Ranvilles Infant School the opportunity is sometimes taken to enrich and enhance the children's learning through outdoor learning, outdoor education and educational visits and ventures.

The governors and teaching staff believe that educational visits supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing the children with experiences and opportunities which would otherwise be inaccessible. All educational visits must serve an educational purpose.

Ranvilles Infant School seeks to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our educational visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum for the safety and health of children, staff and volunteer helpers at all times. Within these limits we aim to make our educational visits available to all children, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The educational visits take place at Ranvilles Infant School within the school day.

Aims

The aims of our educational visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our children;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our children than could be provided on the school site alone;
- promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

These educational visits often involve short excursions to the local area in the Early Years progressing to wider field experiences in KS1. Visits to a local Art Gallery are featured in the Spring term for KS1, together with another excursion to support learning in the Summer term.

What we are trying to achieve

For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which does include visits to the school by specialists). We try to expand upon and cement learning in these areas with outdoor, off site events. All these activities are in line with guidance published and supported by Hampshire County Councils (HCC) Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service.

- English – we encourage visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;
- Science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens;
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
- History – visits to museums and the local art gallery;
- Geography – use of the local area;

- Art and design – art gallery visits, visits from an artist;
- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches;
- Music – concerts for parents to hear, performing arts and recorder clubs
- RE – visits by local clergy.
- PSHE and citizenship – visits by the basics back, NSPCC and Red White and Blue Day where parents are invited to talk about their employment and roles in society

Types of visits

Our children have the opportunity to visit various different locations during their time with us. In KS1 the children are invited to attend a trip to Southampton Art Gallery where there is a guided tour looking at the work of different artists. The day visit also encompasses the opportunity to take part in an art workshop which expands creative awareness and appreciation.

During the Summer Term every class has a day visit organised to support project work in school. This is an enjoyable day and has included trips to Southampton Sea City Museum with a focus on the Titanic, Sir Harold Hillier Arboretum where living plants are the focus and also Manor Farm and Marwell Zoo where mini beasts are investigated.

Organisation and management

The head teacher will appoint a group leader in each year group, this will be the Year Group leader. They will be responsible for running the activity or visit. We recognise that it is not good practice for an NQT to be a visit leader. The school's educational visits coordinator (EVC) will be involved in the planning and management of off-site activities and visits. This will include:

- ensuring that risk assessments are completed;
- supporting the governing body in their decisions on approval;
- assigning competent staff to lead and help with activities and visits;
- organising related staff training;
- verifying that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks, and that the letter from coach companies assures us their drivers too have had police checks;
- making sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keeping records of visits using HCCs EVOLVE electronic system, and ensure that there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues.

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in educational visits must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by HCCs Outdoor Education, PE and Sports Service and HCCs EVOLVE system. All educational visits must take place in accordance with HCCs Outdoor Education, PE and Sports Service's advice and guidance. Where staff are proposing to arrange an educational visit, they must seek and obtain the approval of the head teacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.

It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, every effort will be made to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents or carers to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

Risk Assessment

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the party leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Staff planning an educational visit should make a preliminary visit to the venue in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the group leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

HCCs Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the activity should proceed, and the educational visit plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be supported by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

At Ranvilles our staff to pupil ratio is as follows:

Year R- 1 adult to 4 children

KS1 - 1 adult to 6 children

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach companies we use on a regular basis have provided us with details of all the health and safety measures they routinely take, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures

Copies of the completed risk assessment will be kept in the school office and shared with HCCs Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service and group leader.

Transport

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

The school makes a charge to parents if their children are transported by means of transport provided by the school. The charge covers the expenses of the journey only; we do not make any profit from this.

Charging for Visits

The school may invite, but not require, parents and carers to make voluntary contributions for school activities in order to enhance what is otherwise provided. There is no obligation to contribute and children will not be treated any differently according to whether or not their parents have made a contribution. Some activities may not take place if parents and carers are reluctant to support it and we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions to make a trip viable.

The school has a policy on remission of charges which states all charging procedures.

Communication with parents

The parents and carers of children taking part in an educational visit will be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents and carers must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any educational visit.

Funding for educational visits is provided mainly by parental contributions with the school making an agreed subsidy. This must be made clear to parents and carers in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

No child may be excluded from an activity because of the inability or unwillingness of the parent or carer to make a contribution. Parents and carers will be informed of this practise through the school prospectus and the school's Charging and Remissions Policy.

The timetable for the payment of contributions will allow for the head teacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time. If 75% of the parental contribution towards the visit has not been received by the agreed deadline, then the trip will not be considered viable and will be cancelled.

Further health and safety considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the group leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply and will be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact will be provided.

Before a party leaves school the school office should be provided with a current list of everyone travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity as well as contact telephone numbers of party members. Mobile telephones should remain on at all times or regularly checked for text messages.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the group leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child or their medical needs is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the group leader will discuss with the head teacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity or asking the parent to accompany the children.

If the party is splitting into smaller groups, the sub groups should remain of a sufficient size to accommodate two adults and their accompanying children. This will allow adults to take comfort breaks and be supported by one another.

If an adult accompanying children on a visit wishes to have a cigarette break they must remain away from the children until they have finished.

Group Leaders' Planning

Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities,

They must consult HCCs Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service via the EVOLVE system, detailing procedures and requirements, including guidance on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation, and must have a visit plan.

Any visits will be arranged a term in advance to ensure that parents and carers are given plenty of time to organise payment.

Invoices and other particulars should be passed to the Senior Admin Officer as soon as possible to ensure that either deposits or full payment is made prior to the commencement of the visit.

The group leader must book the trip into the main school diary, ensuring that it does not over-lap with any other school activity.

At least a week before the visit takes place, the group leader with assistance from the office staff will check that parental consents have been received by the school, packed lunches have been ordered, volunteer helpers are still available and groups have been sorted. The group leader will also contact the venue and the coach company to check arrangements.

Visit plan

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

- risk assessment;
- report on preliminary visit;
- applications for approval of visit;
- general information;
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- travel schedule, including a map of the visit location;
- full plan of activities;
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;

- guidance for group leaders;
- guidance for the emergency contact and head teacher;
- medical questionnaire returns;
- current medical needs;
- lunch order for children who have chosen to order this from the kitchen (this is to be labelled clearly with the child's name to avoid allergy issues);
- arrange with the office team for the release of the car park barrier for ease of departure and return to the school site;
- collection of travel first-aid kits from the medical room.

The above information is included in the risk assessment and HCCs Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service application which is uploaded to the EVOLVE electronic notification system used by Ranvilles Infant School to retain records of all visits, updating staff of approval by the head teacher or where applicable by HCCs Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service. All teaching staff, head teacher, EVC and EVC admin staff are linked to this system via email enabling them to review previous visits for planning purposes, tracking progress of application approval and evaluating purposes after the visit.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed by the Finance Committee every two years or earlier if deemed necessary and was ratified by the Full Governing Body on 19th March 2019.

This policy is due for review in March 2021.