

## Policy Statement for

# Educational Offsite Visits



| <b>Change History</b> | <b>Summary of Key Changes</b>  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Dec 2014              | Updated to new format  |
| June 2016             | Updated to link to Safeguarding & Child Protection policy  |
| Sept 2016             | Updated to link to Health and Safety Policy, Intimate Care Policy, First Aid & Medical Policy, Charging & Remissions Policy. Updated link to GCC website. Added 6.4, amended other areas to include reference to children with SEND and CP |
| Jan 2017              | Updated in relation to use of online e-GO system for trips   |

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1** Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.
- 1.2** In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

## 2 Aims

- 2.1** The aims of our off-site visits are to:
- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
  - provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;

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- promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

These visits begin with short excursions into the local area in the Early Years, and progress to a residential experience towards the end of Key Stage 2.

### 3 Curriculum links

**3.1** For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). All these activities are in line with guidance published by the LEA:

- English – theatre visits, 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 – castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums;
- geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails;
- art and design – art gallery visits, use of the locality;
- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches, swimming;
- music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, local schools' orchestra, concerts for parents to hear;
- design and technology – visits to local factories or design centres;
- ICT – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools etc;
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.
- PSHE and citizenship – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

### 4 Residential activities

**4.1** Children in Year 5 and Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. The residential visits are chargeable to parents, although the school endeavours to secure grant funding to assist those parents on certain benefits.

**4.2** The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work. We undertake this visit only with the written agreement of the LEA. We provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

### 5 How visits may be authorised

**5.1** The head teacher will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be the class teacher employed at the school.

**5.2** The school's Educational Visits Coordinator, Sarah Edwards, will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits. She will:

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- Ensure that all staff are aware of and trained in how to use the Gloucestershire County Council's e-GO system to set up trips and visits:  
<https://www.ges24.com/gloucestershire/ego/live/>
- Ensure that all individual trips and visits are set up appropriately on the e-Go system and provide authorisation for each trip;
- ensure that risk assessments are completed that will then be stored electronically on e-GO;
- support the headteacher and governing body in their decisions on approval;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all staff have had DBS checks;
- check that a letter from the coach company assures us their drivers too have had police checks and that their vehicles are adequately maintained to safety standards;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LEA (and available from the school office). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LEA's instructions which can be found at:

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/article/113585/School-visits>

- 5.3** Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must input the information as a new trip on e-GO and they send this to the Educational Off Site Visit Coordinator to obtain approval before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan is incorporated within the e-GO template.
- 5.4** Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the headteacher will seek the approval of the Local Education Authority before permitting the activity to take place.
- 5.5** It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with SEND is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with SEND. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

## 6 Risk assessment

- 6.1** 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?

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- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

A risk assessment pro-forma can be found online within the e-GO system when a trip is raised.

**6.2** Staff planning an off-site activity 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 party 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. The LEA will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

**6.3** 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 visit should proceed, and the 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 should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

**6.4** Risk assessments for any individual pupils with SEND or child protection should be checked by the group leader and where relevant, risks relating to individuals should be added to the risk assessment for the trip.

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

- 1 adult for every 6 pupils in Years 1-3
- Reception classes, i.e. Under 5s, should have a higher ratio to be determined by risk assessment.
- 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in Years 4-6.

Any trip will require a minimum of three adults. However, these are *minimum* requirements, and may *not* provide adequate supervision in all cases. In working out the ratio of adults to pupils, the group leader must make provision for any pupils with SEND who require individual support.

**6.6** A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use on a regular basis has provided us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

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- 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.

**6.7** The group leader will ensure that all adults involved in a trip are supervised by school staff members who have been subject to appropriate police checks.

**6.8** All risk assessments are stored electronically within our My e-GO system and in dropbox and are available to the headteacher, the governing body, the LEA, our educational visits coordinator, and the school staff members supervising the trip.

## **7 Transport & Cost**

**7.1** 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;
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for.

**7.2** 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.

## **8 Communication with parents**

**8.1** The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents do not have to give their permission before a child can be involved in off-site activities during the school day. Permission is required for any trips starting or ending outside the school day, including overnight trips.

**8.2** Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary except in the case of residential visits), with Pupil Premium Funding being available for specific pupils. This is made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

**8.3** No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits.

**8.4** The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the headteacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

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## 9 Further health and safety considerations

- 9.1** All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should 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 should be provided.
- 9.2** Before a party leaves school the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party. All staff and children will be signed out and back into school, as relevant.
- 9.3** The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party 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.
- 9.4** Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the headteacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

## 10 Group leaders' planning

- 10.1** Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities: <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/article/113585/School-visits> (Local Education Authority's Off-Site & Hazardous Activities File)

## 11 Visit plan

- 11.1** The visit plan is completed via the e-GO system and includes 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;
- accommodation plan (if applicable);
- 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 party leaders;

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- guidance for the emergency contact and headteacher;
- medical questionnaire returns;
- first-aid boxes.

## 12 Safeguarding and Child Protection

In planning and executing off site visits, staff should be aware of the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection policy. The group leader must ensure that all staff supervising the trip have read this policy.

This policy is made available to adults involved in school trips via the website or in hard copy via the school office, upon request.

## 13 Other Policies to cross-reference to:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid & Medical Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Charging & Remissions Policy
- Curriculum policies, as relevant

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