

STEPHENSON SCHOOL



POLICY FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

POLICY FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Introduction

This policy is written in accordance with the *DfES Good Practice Guidance and supplement for Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV)*, 1998, *Standards for Adventure*, 2008 it considers the suggestions made in the *DfES Learning Outside the classroom Manifesto*, 2006, and is informed by the *Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, Out and About Guidance document 2006*. The recommendations from these sources are reflected in this policy.

Educational Visits and learning outside the classroom are an integral part of life at Stephenson School, furthering the education of the pupils. Educational visits and learning experiences outside the classroom are arranged for pupils at Stephenson School not only so pupils learning is benefited but also so that knowledge, understanding and skills can be developed through experience that is not achievable in the classroom.

'When you step outside the classroom you have the opportunity to transform learning and raise achievement. Learning outside the classroom allows participants to learn in context, to learn by practical engagement, and to learn by personal discovery.'

DCFS, Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, Out and About Guidance 2006

Educational visits and learning experiences outside of the classroom are defined as the use of alternative places other than the classroom for teaching and learning. Learning opportunities outside of the classroom commonly use areas such as the school grounds, the local environment and parks and places further afield.

Educational visits and learning outside of the classroom is a school wide activity and should be encouraged at every opportunity. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum, which became statutory in September 2009, places a strong emphasis on the importance and value of out of the classroom learning experiences. It is important to note that whatever the age of the children, experiences should not be taken in isolation. Children need to be well prepared, supported, resourced and informed for any learning experience to reap maximum benefit. All visits and learning outside of the classroom opportunities should be planned by a member of staff nominated as party leader, with the health, safety and welfare of the children of paramount importance.

Research has shown that the importance of educational visits and learning outside the classroom can raise achievement, increase motivation, and develop understanding in all children. Staff benefit from being given the opportunity to develop leadership skills; all staff are encouraged to liaise with the Head concerning any arrangements for any visit.

All educational visits and learning experiences out of the classroom should be approved by the Head with the exception of visits to Emslie Horniman Pleasance, the Meanwhile Gardens, the library and other places in the immediate vicinity with which the school is well acquainted such as other schools and churches.

In accordance with national recommendations, all educational visits and learning outside of the classroom experiences should consider the outcomes defined in the Every Child Matters agenda, and reflect the ethos of the school.

General Information

Early planning is essential for any visit.

Outdoor and adventurous activities should be within the ability of the children participating and the accompanying staff.

No amount of planning can guarantee that a visit will be totally incident free, but good planning and attention to health and safety measures can reduce the number of accidents and lessen the seriousness of those that do happen. The management of risk should be done in accordance with the Health and Safety policy at Stephenson School.

Staffing Requirements

Party Leader

If a qualified member of staff wishes to take a group of pupils out of school, they assume responsibility for the planning, risk assessment and risk management of the educational visit or experience outside of the classroom. They accept all reasonable responsibility for the well-being and safety of all participants attending the learning experience at all times.

If more than one class/school is involved in a visit, a party leader should be identified. This is normally the staff member with the most appropriate experience, competence or most relevant qualification that is visit specific. For any Educational day visit or learning outside the classroom experience to go ahead, the ratios of staff to children must be correct and in accordance with best practice.

If a child requires support for a behavioural or medical need, an extra adult should accompany them on the visit, at the parent's expense.

The party leader is responsible for informing the parents and accompanying staff of their responsibilities.

Voluntary Helpers

Voluntary Helpers are selected carefully and are well known to staff and the Head at Stephenson School.

All voluntary helpers should let the school know as soon as possible if they are unable to accompany the children for any reason, so that an appropriate replacement can be found. Any documentation already given to them should be returned to school.

Voluntary helpers are made aware of the extent of their responsibilities as detailed in the document, Areas of Responsibility for Voluntary Helpers (Appendix One)

Stephenson School does not permit staff and voluntary helpers to assume responsibility for any activity for which they are not qualified.

First Aid

On any visit, at least one of the supervisory staff will be a competent First Aider, holding a valid first-aid certificate and carrying an appropriate first-aid kit. This person will also be responsible for the inhalers and epipens for all children attending the visit. Stephenson School takes advantage of a recognised first aid organisation for training resources and facilities for obtaining first-aid qualifications and revalidation, normally every three years.

Transport

Stephenson School has a policy that all coaches used are fitted with seat belts when booked. All seats should be forward facing and seat restraints should comply with legal requirements. The drivers should be suitably qualified and experienced.

On rare occasions, children may travel in staff or parents' cars. Children travelling thus should comply with the legal requirements. Booster seats are legally required for all children under the height of 140cm travelling in a car. Parents sign consent to the travel arrangements which have been arranged for their child. No signature or written notification results in the child not travelling to learning experience outside the school. Except in emergencies, staff are not permitted to transport children unless written consent from the Head and parent of the child is obtained.

Supervision

- At least two members of staff should supervise the pupils getting on and off the coach – one on the coach and one by the steps.
- Check numbers on outward and return journeys and at any point where children or adults disembark and subsequently embark onto the coach.
- Do not let pupils sit on the first two seats facing the front window or next to the emergency exit where ever practicable.
- Ensure pupils are settled and seat belts fastened before setting off.
- Pupils **must** wear their seat belts throughout the journey unless told to remove them in an emergency.
- When leaving the coach, check for lost property and litter.
- At least one member of staff should be on each coach or minibus and have a mobile phone with them.

Pupil Organisation

Regular sessions are generally held with pupils to prepare them for the visit, so that they obtain maximum benefit from the educational visit or learning outside the classroom experience.

Groups lists are prepared for all staff and helpers on the visit. Lists should be collated prior to the visit and included with the risk assessment documentation handed to the head in advance. Copies of all groups should be given to the school office before departing on an educational visit or learning experience outside of the classroom. The Party leader should maintain copies of the lists and carry them at all times when on the visit. Group leaders should keep a copy of their group at all times.

Adult:Pupil Ratios

Stephenson School sets guidelines with regard to adult:pupil ratios that are required on any educational visit or learning outside of the classroom experience. The normal maximum ratio of adults to children should be 1:6 for Reception and 1:8 for KS1 and 1:12 for KS2 but this should be confirmed as part of the risk assessment.

Pupil Welfare

All accompanying adults have a duty of care. Colleagues should remember that they are in *loco parentis* at all times on the visit and thus are legally responsible for the well-being and safety of the children.

Children should never be on their own, or isolated from their group.

When deciding groups, children should be considered individually according to need and placed with a suitable adult who can best enhance the learning experience. Groups and group leaders should be decided in advance and attached to the risk assessment. (*Appendix Three.*)

Information Available at School

The Group Leader, Head and school hold the visit information for the duration of the visit. The information should contain details of:

- ◆ itinerary } (*Appendix Four*)
- ◆ contact points } (*Appendix Four*)
- ◆ mobile phone number(s) } (*Appendix Four*)
- ◆ staff – member of staff in charge, teachers, helpers, etc. } (*Appendix Four*)
- ◆ emergency contacts (*Appendix Five*)
- ◆ copies of Parental Consent Form (*Appendices Six and Seven*)
- ◆ copies of any insurance documents, critical incident policy, contacts, etc.
- ◆ emergency procedures.

Reporting Accidents

The standard procedures for reporting accidents are followed at all times. Injuries to any person (adult or child) attending a learning experience outside the classroom must be recorded in accordance to HSE guidelines and school protocol as stated in the school first aid policy. Completion of the relevant forms detailing injury, location, time, date and treatment given is essential and will be logged on return to the school.

Emergencies

Despite good planning and organisation, emergencies that require immediate response by the leaders sometimes occur. The group leader ensures the safety of the group as a priority and contacts the appropriate emergency/rescue services. The Head at Stephenson School should be contacted as soon as practicable.

Unrelated School Educational Visits

The guidelines in this document relate only to activities connected to the work of the school. Where a member of staff takes charge of children voluntarily on an activity out of school hours i.e. one which is not organised by the school (and not approved by the Governors) but involves children from the school – no responsibility is accepted by the Head or the Governing Body at Stephenson School.

Educational Visits or Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom – 1 day or less

The educational experiences and opportunities of the educational centre should be obtained, and all information about the proposed visit collated, before a request is submitted to the Head.

Planning

A meeting of all those involved is held to formalise the administration and organisation of the educational visit. Specific duties are allocated and a School Party Leader clearly identified.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment is a process. The group leader initially draws up a visit plan and timetable (who, what, where, why, when and how?).

For any educational visit learning outside the classroom experience, if possible an exploratory/risk assessment visit should be made by the school party leader of the group.

This is to acquire knowledge at first hand:

- ◆ the venue is suitable
- ◆ to acquire site specific risks ascertain category level of activity
- ◆ that the venue can cater for the needs of pupils and staff
- ◆ to assess potential areas and levels of risk, completing a Risk Assessment
- ◆ to become familiar with the area before taking the children
- ◆ to obtain information concerning staff qualifications and licences

When off-site venues offer inspection visits, staff are encouraged to take advantage of this service.

If it is **not** possible to make an exploratory/risk assessment visit, every endeavour is made to acquire information about the centre before the visit. Stephenson School should, for instance, contact another school, which has already visited the centre, the area, and the site.

If a preliminary visit has not taken place, as a matter of priority when the party arrives, the party leader conducts a visual risk assessment noting down any anomalies and controlling the risks where necessary in order to maintain the safety of all. The party leader then resolves concerns and informs the Head of any major decisions that need to be made.

Supervision

Supervision of children on all educational day visits or out of the classroom learning experience is close supervision. Close supervision is defined as the group remaining within sight and contact of staff or voluntary helpers assisting on the visit.

Information to Parents for Day Visits

Parents are notified of the arrangements and cost of visits and sign a consent form.

Last reviewed by Helen Powell, April 2010

Next review June 2011

Further Information

Useful Documents and Resources

ATL	Taking students off site
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation	Wise Before the Event: Coping With a Crisis in School
DfES and further information)	Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits 1998 (Circular 11/98) (Includes a wide range of model forms, contacts www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits)
DfES	Learning outside the classroom Manifesto 2006
HSE	5 steps to risk assessment Managing Health & Safety www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163
NASUWT	Educational Visits and Journeys
NUT	Safety on School Journeys
Outdoor Education Advisory Panel	High Quality Outdoor Education 2005
PAT	Safety on School Trips: a Colleague and the law booklet
RoSPA	RoSPA Guide to School Trips, Part 2 (SE326)

Appendix One

Stephenson School

Areas of Responsibility for Voluntary Helpers

- You should attend meetings before the visit, if appropriate.
- You should be aware of the itinerary for the educational visit and receive a copy of the itinerary, names of the pupils and details of the groups.
- You should stay in close proximity to a Colleague on the visit. You should not take a group away to an undesignated area.
- You may be given a small group of children to look after and should know who they are. (The leader should check on a regular basis that the children are behaving themselves and that they are safe and feeling well.)
- You should keep the children with you at all times.
- No child should ever be left alone.
- You should not assume any responsibility for an activity for which you are not qualified, e.g. rock climbing.
- You should be aware that the pupils must wear seatbelts at all times on a coach, unless told to remove them by a member of staff or in the case of an emergency.
- You should tell school party leader if a pupil does not wear his or her seatbelt or interferes with that of another pupil.
- You should tell the school party leader if a pupil is misbehaving or will not do as asked.
- You should accept you have a duty of care to make sure the children in your group are safe and well.
- You should report any accident to the school party leader immediately.

Appendix Two

Stephenson School

Visit Details

Outing to: _____

Date: _____

Leader: _____ Contact number _____

Other staff and contact numbers: _____

First Aider: _____

Adult: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Adult: _____

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Adult: _____

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Adult: _____

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Adult: _____

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Stephenson School

Appendix Three

Group Visits Pro Forma

Date: _____ Times: Departure _____
Arrival _____

Destination: _____

Coach firm: _____ Tel. No: _____

Itinerary: _____

Accompanying adults

Colleague in charge: _____

Accompanying Colleague(s): _____

Support staff: _____

Parent helpers: _____

Point of Contact at Place of visit: _____

Mobile tel. No: _____

School contact: _____

School contact after hours: _____

Attached: Parental Consent Forms; Emergency Contact Information