

Policy and Procedures for Organising Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities at Stamshaw Infant School

Introduction

The school places a high value on educational visits and off-site activities and recognises that such trips are of enormous benefit to pupils. Examples of the benefits for our pupils include:

- Promoting motivation, enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning
- Helping children develop social skills and citizenship
- Boosting self-esteem and confidence
- Enabling learning through practical experiences not possible in school
- Develop a positive attitude to their environment
- Encouraging lifelong learning

Within the programme of work in each year group, the teachers plan educational visits and activities that support the children's learning. Visits usually take place during the school day and are approved by the Head Teacher. We follow National and LEA guidelines relating to Health and Safety and we ask parents and guardians for written permission for their child to undertake any such activities. If we do not receive permission, the child will be unable to participate.

Authorisation and Risk Assessment

Whilst a careful programme of visits is coordinated across the school, pupil's physical and moral health and safety should always be of paramount concern. The school accepts that visits cannot always be completely without risk, but it requires that those staff in charge take all reasonable precautions to protect staff and pupil health, safety and welfare and minimise any possible risks. Wherever possible the staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue in order to familiarise themselves and make a proper assessment of its suitability, bearing in mind the age of the children, the size of the group, the time of year (and probable weather conditions) and the suitability of the facilities. A SCHOOL RISK ASSESSMENT form must be completed **at least 48 hours before the trip** and handed to the Headteacher. Teachers will ensure that the visits conducted offer a variety of worthwhile experiences throughout a child's experience at the school. No trip may go ahead without a risk assessment being completed and submitted to the Head Teacher.

Generic risk assessments for visits including ones for transporting children by walking, minibus and coach are available and can be adapted to suit a particular visit. However, a visit specific risk assessment may also be required so that any risks associated with specific places and activities can be managed.

Guidance on the Safe Organisation of Educational Visits

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must make themselves familiar with the regulations, advice and procedures published by Portsmouth LA. All off-site activities must take place under the terms of these regulations, advice and procedures.

There are no set national regulations for exact adult to child ratios on school visits. We do, however need to ensure that the children are adequately supervised during the entire duration of a visit. The adult to child ratio will depend on the age, responsibility and behaviour of the children, the nature of the venue and activities and the competence of the adults involved in supervision. It is this school's policy that there should be a minimum of 1 adult to every 8 children on any visit although more adults may be needed in some cases. There should also be a minimum of 2 adults on any visit.

Charging for School Visits

All education during school hours is free. We cannot insist on a charge for any activity which a child undertakes as part of the National Curriculum.

The costing and funding of off-site activities will be in accordance with "Charging for school activities DfE 2014" and the academy's 'Charging and Remissions Policy'. Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary). No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent/carer to make a contribution. Details of all anticipated expenditure and contributions should be passed on to the school finance office.

PROCEDURE FOR ORGANISING OFF-SITE VISITS

- Gather information about the visit that you intend to go on.
- Visit the site to aid with the planning if at all possible and particularly if it is the first time that the school has been on a visit to this location.
- Carry out a risk assessment for the visit using the blank risk assessment form. A standard risk assessment for walking children or transporting them by coach or minibus is available plus a generic risk assessment for all visits. These can be included with any details specific to the location you are visiting and the activities you are undertaking. You should also ask the facility that you will be visiting if they have a risk assessment of their facility that you could have to assist with this. If an organisation is running some of the activities, you should ensure that they accept responsibility for health and safety during the activities. You should also ensure that the activity leaders hold any necessary qualifications. It is important to remember that at any time before, between or after activities the health and safety of the pupils is our responsibility unless otherwise agreed with the organisation.

- Write a letter to parents about the visit. This should include details of any activities that the pupils will be undertaking and should have a permission slip for parents to provide consent. Please note that activities during the visit should not be significantly different to those indicated in the letter to parents, otherwise consent for those activities has not been given on an informed basis and is invalid.
- Transport arrangements should provide a seat for each member of the party. It is the policy of the school to use coaches with seat/lap belts where available.
- Where private cars are used for transport the party leader is responsible for ensuring that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys and dependent on the age and height of the children, that appropriate car seats are used.
- The parents/carers of children taking part in an off-site activity will be provided with appropriate information about the activity. Where the activity is taking place entirely within a normal school day and within the local environs it is sufficient to use the parental consent given when children are admitted to the school. For all other activities written permission from the parent/carer must be obtained. In exceptional circumstances verbal permission can be accepted with the Headteacher's permission.
- 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.
- Before a party leaves school, the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme/timetable for the activity. Similarly, party leaders must leave contact details with the school office.
- 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 safety.
- Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of themselves or others, the party leader should discuss with the Headteacher the possibility of additional adults (usually a child's parent/carer) accompanying 1:1 or excluding the child from the activity.

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