

ST. JOHN'S
Primary School



Educational Visits Policy
St. John's Primary School, Coleraine

Principal: Mrs H. McDonnell

Chairman of the Board of Governors: Mr L. McQuillan

May 2019

Work hard



Give everything a try

Enjoy the rewards



Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good primary practice.

Purposes

Educational Visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively, teachers may decide to use an 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.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at St. John's Primary School.

The Principal or Vice-Principal will endeavour to ensure that:

- they have appointed a suitable group leader;*
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins;*
- the risk assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit;*
- training needs have been met;*
- the group leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;*
- the group leader has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity;*
- all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance;*

- *the governing body has approved the visit if necessary;*
- *parents have signed consent forms;*
- *arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the children;*
- *the mode of travel is appropriate;*
- *travel times out and back are known;*
- *there is adequate and relevant insurance cover;*
- *they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name;*
- *that they have the contact file with the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents and the staff's and volunteers' next of kin.*

Group Leader

One teacher, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have been appointed by the

Principal/Vice-Principal. The Group Leader should:

- *appoint a deputy;*
- *be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;*
- *be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;*
- *undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;*

- *undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;*
- *always have regard to the health and safety of the group;*
- *know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;*
- *observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults;*
- *ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities;*

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of CCMS or of the Governing Body. They will therefore be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours. They will be acting under an agreement with their Board of Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

Teacher and other adults on the visit must:

- *do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;*
- *care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would;*
- *follow the instructions of the leader and help with control and discipline. Non-teachers should generally not have sole charge of pupils except where risks to health and safety are minimal;*
- *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.*

Responsibilities of pupils

The group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- follow the code of conduct signed at the start of each year by all pupils,*
- 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 group leader about it;*
- should not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous.*

Any pupils whose behaviour may be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

Parents

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

The group leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

Parents must:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s);*
- sign the consent form;*
- give the group leader relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.*
- Pay a contribution towards the cost of the trip where appropriate*

Planning off-site visits

Whether the visit is to local attractions, a museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

The Principal and Vice-Principal are responsible for planning all off-site visits. However, in practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the group leader, but the Principal and Vice-Principal must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

The organiser / group leader must agree all plans with the Principal and Vic-Principal.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using NEELB Risk Assessment Evaluation Form. The risk assessment will decide the adult/child ratio for each visit. (See Guidance under 'Supervision'). The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- what are the risks?*
- who is affected by them?*
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?*
- can the group leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?*
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?*
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit? (See section on Supervision.)*

The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;*
- the location;*
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;*
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;*
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;*
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;*
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.*

Exploratory visit

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;*
- assess potential areas and levels of risk;*
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;*
- ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.*

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.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities or visits which involve overnight stays it is sensible to have at least one trained first aider in the group. 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 oversee first-aid arrangements.*

First-aid should always be available and accessible. If a first aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The Principal and Vice-principal 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.

The Group Leader must carry the prescribed epi-pens, inhalers, diabetic medicines at all times.

Supervision

It is important to have the correct ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group;*
- special needs pupils;*
- nature of activities;*
- experience of adults in off site supervision;*
- duration and nature of the journey;*
- type of any accommodation;*
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.*

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

As general guidelines, the following ratio of adults to children should be used:

Foundation Stage, visits off-site may be as low as: 1:6

Key Stage One, visits off-site on foot: 1:10

Key Stage One, visits off site involving public transport:1:6

Key Stage Two, visits off-site on foot: 1:20

Key Stage Two, visits off-site involving public transport:

1:15

Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits.

These ratios do not include residential visits.

Where there is more than one adult supervisor a group leader, who has authority over the whole party, should be appointed.

Where a high adult/pupil ratio is required, it may not always be 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.

All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must always understand their roles and responsibilities. All supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers always retain responsibility for the group.

For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a pupil.

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the Board of Governors must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications should be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity.

*Whatever the length and nature of the visit, **regular head counting of pupils** should take place. Headcounts must be taken by a responsible member of staff using a checklist of names. Headcounts must be taken at every departure and at suitable times during a visit. When undertaking the headcount, the checker must physically see the person before ticking their name on the checklist.*

*The group leader should establish **rendezvous points** and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.*

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and

why rules must be followed. The lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

Participation

Pupils should be assessed to ensure that they can undertake the proposed activities. During the visit they should not be coerced into activities they fear.

Pupils whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such pupils will return home early.

Information to pupils

It is for the group leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information. Pupils should understand:

- *the aims and objectives of the visit / activity;*
- *background information about the place to be visited;*
- *how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;*
- *why safety precautions are in place;*
- *why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;*
- *what standard of behaviour is expected from pupils;*
- *who is responsible for the group;*
- *what to do if approached by a stranger;*
- *what to do if separated from the group*
- *emergency procedures*
- *rendezvous procedures.*

Transport and pupils

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

- *arrive on time and wait for the transport, in a straight line, away from the road, etc.*
- *do not rush towards the transport when it arrives, walk in a line, led by the group leader;*
- *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 throw things out of the transport vehicle's windows;*
- *never get out off your seat while transport is moving or pass someone on steps or stairs;*
- *never kneel or stand on seats or otherwise impede the driver's vision*
- *never distract or disturb the driver;*
- *stay clear of doors after boarding or leaving the transport;*
- *if you feel unwell while travelling, tell a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group.*

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

The Principal or Vice-Principal will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Communicating with Parents / Guardians

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 following information on matters

that might affect pupil's health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in letter to parents / guardians prior to a visit:

- dates of the visit;*
- times of departure and return;*
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;*
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;*
- names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults;*
- visit's objectives;*
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;*
- clothing and equipment to be taken;*
- money to be taken;*
- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to.*

Parental consent

St. John's Primary School will seek consent for:

- all children going on school visits*
- adventure activities;*
- residential visits.*

If parents withhold consent 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. The School's parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

Residential visits

There should be adequate staff (as advised by guidelines) on a residential trip, with care given to gender balance as appropriate.

Residential Centres and Hotels

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the young people's - we will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance;*
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group;*
- access by staff to student rooms must always be available;*
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults;*
- ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions / exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key personnel;*

- *security arrangements – where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors;*
- *ensure that locks / shutters etc. work on all the rooms used by the group;*
- *storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables;*
- *adequate lighting;*
- *provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs;*
- *safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);*
- *recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.*

Beach/River Bann visits

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea.

There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. At St John's the group leader should bear the following points in mind in the risk assessment of a coastal activity:

- *tides and sandbanks are potential hazards so timings and exit routes should be checked;*
- *ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags;*
- *establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;*

- *look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc;*
- *some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds;*
- *cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should always keep to the path.*
- *when visiting the River Bann pupils must always keep to the path and stay in their group with a leader.*

Swimming

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group.

*Swimming in the sea on a beach or River Bann visit, will **not** be allowed for St John's PS pupils. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One teacher should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.*

Where paddling is to be allowed on a visit, a ratio of 1 adult:4 children is a minimum.

Farm Visits

St John's PS recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm will be very carefully planned, and the risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli O157 food poisoning and other infections.

The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare; and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas. An exploratory visit should be carried out.

The basis rules for a farm visit will be:

We will never let pupils:

- place their faces against the animals or their hands in their mouths after feeding them;*
- eat until they have washed their hands;*
- sample any animal foodstuffs;*
- drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities);*
- ride on tractors or other machines;*
- play in the farm area.*

The Need for a Higher Level of Supervision

Aside from the generic advice given on ratios within this section, the Visit Risk Assessment (having given due regard to the visit venue, its environment, the Group Leader's and Supervisor's qualifications, competencies and experience, as well as those of the group itself), should identify a suitable Staff Group member ratio.

The number of staff should be increased if: -

- It is found that the environment or location of the visit site or activity presents hazards; e.g. poor visibility, poor security or prevailing physical hazards.*
- If it is known that a group's or an individual group member's behaviour or needs (education, physical or medical), requires management. This could mean a ratio as low as 1:1 in some circumstances with additional staff not being tied into other agreed staffing ratios.*
- Teachers/Classroom assistants are inexperienced and are accompanying the group as part of a work placement to gather experience; this may mean them not being included in calculated staff ratios.*

Crossing Roads

This is undoubtedly one of the more dangerous activities that Group Leaders and supervisors will manage. Technically within the UK only the police, traffic wardens and officially designated crossing patrols have the right under law to control traffic. It is therefore important that there

*is a clear and agreed procedure that can be applied to reduce the risks.
If possible, there should be three Supervisors present if crossing a group
across a main road.*

*The following control measures may be used in drawing up such a
procedure: -*

- Where possible pre-visit the location; map out the intended walk route, to avoid the need to cross busy roads as far as is practicable.*
- Where crossing a road is unavoidable, a safe crossing site must be chosen; where visibility is good in both directions (at least 100 metres) and there is a suitable collection point on both sides of the road; an area off the road where pupils can be lined up safely. One teacher must lead the children across the road, a teacher must stand in the middle of the road until all children have crossed the road, and an adult must wait at the end of the line.*

Coleraine Leisure Centre/Score

Visits to the Leisure Centre/Score for football, netball etc must be carefully planned, managed and controlled. Each teacher is responsible for his/her class at all times and MUST be present with the class during any coaching session. An agreed strategy for toileting must be drawn up with Sports Centre staff and St. John's P.E. Co-ordinator.

Conclusion

The health and safety of our pupils is paramount. Use common sense and professional judgement to ensure that their safety is ensured and that visits outside of school are enjoyable and beneficial.

Policy Review

St. John's Primary School will update this Policy in the light of any further

guidance and legislation and review it annually.

On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

Ratification: May 2019

Review Due: Term 3 2020