

# Educational Visits Policy

## Meir Heath Academy



**Approved by:** Mrs M Southern

**Date:** September 2023

**Last reviewed on:** September 2023

**Next review due by:** September 2024

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning journey at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them.

## **Guidelines**

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised by Meir Heath Academy. The Principal at Meir Heath Academy will ensure that:

- a suitable group leader is appointed (who is qualified, experienced and has the necessary skills, particularly if they are acting as an instructor)
- all members of staff and/or volunteers on the visit are suitable
- all necessary actions have been completed before the trip (pre-visit if deemed necessary)
- the risk assessment is completed (using 'Evolve') and is approved by the Principal
- local authority have approved the visit, if necessary
- any training needs have been met
- all consent forms have been signed by parents or carers or consent given through the payment on parent pay
- medical arrangements have been made
- special educational needs arrangements have been made
- the mode of travel is appropriate
- travel times are known
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- the school has the contact details of the venue
- the school also has contact telephone numbers for all of the staff and adults on the visit, as well as consent for each child, and contact details for all of the parents/carers

## **Group Leader**

One teacher, the group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit. The Group Leader should:

- agree all plans with the Principal
- organise staff appropriately
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range
- be suitably qualified if they are instructing an activity
- undertake and complete planning and preparation of the trip; including contacting parents, briefing group members and parents (if necessary), risk assessment, 'on the day' checklist - consent checklist from the school office, first aid kits and appropriate medical equipment and a list of emergency contact numbers for the pupils/ access to these details via Arbor
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment (using 'Evolve')
- have the upmost regard for health and safety of the group at all times
- have an awareness of the pupils attending the visit and their suitability (including medical and SEN)

- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults (see below)
- ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities

Teachers and support staff on school-led visits will be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours. Any additional hours and specific terms will be agreed with the Principal.

Teachers and other adults on the visit must:

- do their utmost to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would ('in loco parentis')
- follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline
- ensure that volunteers and/or parents should not have sole responsibility of pupils
- stop the activity if they think there is a risk to health and safety
- along with the group leader, ensure that the pupils are aware of their expectations for behaviour during the entire visit, including when using transport

### **Responsibilities of pupils**

The group leader (and other adults during the day) should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks
- follow instructions of the leader and other adults at all times
- behave responsibly and in a positive manner (in line with our policy and expectations)
- inform the group leader or another adult if they think that anything will affect their own or another group member's health and safety or well-being
- follow instructions when using transport of any description

### **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 (when appropriate for longer visits). The group leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit, i.e. appropriate conduct, clothing, food etc. Parents must:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s)
- sign the consent form / give consent via Payment on Parentpay
- provide the group leader with any relevant information regarding their child's health or behaviour that the group leader may not already be aware of

Parents are to give permission to the school for local visits, including local off-site walk before children are taken off site. Each teacher will be aware of the children that do/do not have permission for local visits. This will also be recorded in the school office and a copy will be stored in the class pastoral file. Prior notification will be given to parents from the school when planned local visits are scheduled.

### **Communication (letters)**

Clear information should be provided to parents/carers through letters and/or briefing meetings for residential visits. Letters should include:

- dates and times of visit
- mode(s) of travel
- details of accommodation – if applicable
- names of staff
- objectives and details of the activities
- insurance details for residential visits
- any clothing, equipment, food or money to be taken

### **Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using 'Evolve'. The risk assessment will decide the adult:pupil ratio (see 'Supervision' guidance). It should also include where appropriate:

- the risks and levels of risk (high, medium, low)
- who is affected by the risks
- the safety measures in place
- the steps that need to be taken in an emergency
- the type of activity and the level of which it is being undertaken
- the location
- the competence, experience and qualifications of all staff involved
- the group members' age, competence and fitness
- the quality and suitability of available equipment
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing

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

### **Pre-Visit**

Wherever possible and necessary the group leader should undertake a pre-visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the visit
- assess potential areas and levels of risk
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils
- ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before the visit

If it is not feasible to carry out a pre-visit, then as a minimum measure staff must contact the venue and seek further information, including obtaining their own risk assessment for their venue, if applicable. In addition, it may be worth seeking information from other schools who have attended the venue. If walking in remote areas, the Tourist Board can be contacted to obtain further information.

### **First Aid**

First Aid provision must be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities and overnight stays, it is advisable to have at least one trained first-aider in the group. Where possible, all adults in the group could have some knowledge of emergency

first aid. The group leader must ensure that first aid bags are taken on each of the vehicles transporting the adults and pupils, and that all adults are aware of where first aid provisions can be located during the course of the visit. The contents of the first aid bag will depend on the planned activities.

## Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult to pupil supervision. The following factors need to be considered:

- sex, age and ability of the group
- special needs pupils
- nature of activities and their location (i.e. remote areas)
- experience of adults in visits
- type of any accommodation
- competence of staff

OEAP Statutory Guidance states: 'The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (updated 3rd April 2017) no longer sets out different requirements for minimum ratios during outings from those required on site. As with other age groups, ratios during outings should be determined by risk assessment, which should be reviewed before each outing. The appropriate ratio on an outing is always likely to be higher than the legal minimum **(for children aged three and over in early years settings either 1:8 or 1:13 and 1:30 in infant school reception classes in maintained schools)**.

To aid the smooth running of a trip the school will look at each trip on a case by case scenario and aim for smaller ratios (however this is not a statutory ratio):

For example:

Nursery and Early Years, visits off-site 1:5 KS1, visits off-site on foot 1:10

KS1, visits off-site involving public transport eg. Public bus or public train (not private coach hire) 1:6

KS2, visits off-site on foot 1:15

KS2, visits off-site involving public transport eg. Public bus or public train (not private coach hire) 1:15

Regardless of these ratios, visits must be assessed individually. These ratios do not include residential visits.

Where a high adult:pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents, students and volunteers with appropriate clearance may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. The group leader must have an awareness of all adults supervising the visit.

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

## **Participation**

Pupils should not be coerced into activities that they fear. Pupils whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be removed from the activity. On residential visits, it should be considered as to whether the pupil should return home early. This decision would be taken by the Headteacher.

## **Coastal Visits**

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea. At Meir Heath Primary School, the group leader needs to consider the following:

- tides and sandbanks are potential hazards, so timings and exit routes must be checked
- ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags
- establish a meeting point on the beach if separated
- look out for hazards such as glass
- decide on a zone area for recreational time
- are coastal paths safe for walking or bike riding, particularly on cliff tops

Swimming (for weekly swimming lesson, see 'Health and Safety' Policy)

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities. Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit, will not be allowed for pupils from Meir Heath Primary School. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers with at least one teacher supervising out of the water.

## **Farm Visits**

Meir Heath Academy recognises that farms can be highly dangerous, even for the farm workers. Risks assessed on such a visit include; the misuse of farm machinery and E coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections.

The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed, has a good reputation for safety and animal welfare, as well as maintaining good washing facilities. A pre-visit is recommended. The group leader and supervisors must ensure that pupils wash their hands after feeding or handling animals, not ingest any animal foodstuffs, drink from taps, ride on tractors or machinery or play in the farm area that is not a designated play area/playground.

## **Residential Visits - Hostels and Hotels**

The following must be considered:

- the group leader will ideally have adjoining rooms to the pupils or on the same floor
- the immediate accommodation area should have exclusive use for the group
- access by staff to pupil rooms must be available at all times
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults
- ensure that all of the school party know the layout of accommodation, i.e. fire exits and precautions
- security arrangements; ensuring that all locks on doors and windows in rooms work effectively

- storage of luggage and valuables
- adequate lighting, i.e. is a torch advisable?
- provision for sick or disabled pupils or staff
- safety in rooms, i.e. electrical components
- suitability of recreational areas Following the above guidelines should ensure a safe and happy trip for all concerned