

Middleton Primary School



Trips & Visits Policy

Introduction

Middleton Primary School positively promotes the active involvement of all children in educational visits and journeys or 'learning outside the classroom' activities. Off-site activities have a great potential for enhancing the educational, personal and social development of children by enabling them to participate in experiences which are not available to them within the classroom.

The benefits of educational visits and journeys include the opportunity to:

- Enhance learning and raise achievement
- Develop independence
- Develop team work
- Extend, enrich and support the curriculum
- Develop resourcefulness
- Develop problem solving skills
- Face challenges
- Question values
- Raise confidence and self-esteem
- Develop social skills and environmental awareness
- Extend personal horizons
- Providing children with a range of enriching experiences

Legal framework

The Governing body of Middleton Primary School as the employer has the legal responsibility for health and safety including off-site visits.

The Activity Centres (Young Persons Safety) Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 require certain providers of specified adventurous activities (see Appendix 1 for definition) to be licensed. Anyone who provides, in return for payment, these specified activities to young persons under 18, must have a licence and abide by its conditions.

Visit organisers, should therefore, as part of their assessment of an activity provider, confirm that the provider has satisfied the licensing criteria.

Under section 19 of the Transport Act 1985 organisations, who operate in Great Britain without a view to profit and under specified conditions can obtain a permit exempting them from the need to hold a PSV operator's licence when providing transport for a charge.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all aspects of off-site visits and outside learning activities, whether they take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods. It includes all elements of those experiences including the journey and any residential element.

Inclusion

Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of additional educational or medical needs, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or religion. If a visit needs to cater for children with additional needs, every reasonable effort will be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

All reasonably practicable measures will be taken to include all children. The principles of inclusion will be promoted and addressed for all visits, thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- An entitlement to participate
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- Integration through participation with peers

Approval of activities and visits

All visits will be approved and authorised in advance.

Level 1 Visits; these are visits that last up to one day and:

- Do not involve an overnight stay
- Do not involve adventurous activities (see Appendix 1)
- Are within the UK

These visits are approved by the EVC (Educational Visits Coordinator) and the Headteacher.

Level 2 Visits; these are visits which include one or more of the following:

- An overnight residential experience
- A visit abroad (including day trips)

These visits are approved by the EVC, the Headteacher and in the case of an overseas visit, by the Local Authority too.

Level 3 Visits; these are visits which involve adventurous activities (see Appendix 1). These visits are approved by the EVC and the Headteacher.

Middleton Primary School uses an online system (EVOLVE) for notification and approval of visits. For level 2 and level 3 visits, a member of EVOLVE staff may complete an additional check to ensure these visits have been planned correctly (i.e., risk assessments have been carried out, staff to pupil ratios are correct etc.)

Effective supervision on visits

Employer guidance for off-site visits and outdoor learning provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competence. It is an expectation that all group leaders and their assistants have been formally assessed as competent to undertake such responsibilities as they have been assigned.

Staffing arrangements for off-site visits must be sufficient to facilitate safe and effective supervision of children. Effective supervision should be determined by risk assessment which includes careful consideration of:

- The age and gender (including the developmental age) of the children to be supervised
- The ability of the children, including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs
- The nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing environmental conditions)
- Staff competence

Whilst staffing ratios for visits will vary according to these aspects, this policy recommends the following supervisory ratios, in normal circumstances for Level 1 Activities:

- 1 adult for every 6 children in school years Foundation to 3
- 1 adult for every 10-15 children in school years 4 to 6

For Level 2 activities, i.e. visits abroad or residential visits, this policy recommends the following ratios:

- 1 teacher or worker for every 10 children
- At least one male and female teacher or worker for mixed groups where possible
- An appropriate number of group supervisors on night standby duty

In all cases there must be a minimum number of two accompanying adults, whatever the size of the group.

The actual ratios of adults to children will be determined through the risk assessment process and may need to be in excess of the above levels. The use of suitable parents or other adult helpers may be appropriate provided any necessary checks e.g. DBS are in place.

DBS checks are not required for volunteers or parents who only accompany staff and children on one-off outings or trips that do not involve overnight stays. However, where the Headteacher or EVC assess that helpers are likely to have substantial access or unsupervised contact with children, a DBS check must be undertaken.

When authorising visits, the EVC and Headteacher will ensure that ratios are sufficient to enable effective supervision in accordance with this policy.

Risk control

Effective risk management is a fundamental part of the planning and execution of all off-site visits and activities. Staff have a common law duty of care towards all children in their charge and the purpose of risk assessment and management is to help children to undertake activities safely, and not to prevent activities taking place.

Risk assessments do not need to be complex but should address any significant risks. However, the Headteacher or EVC will ensure that the person assessing the risks is competent to do so.

Risk assessments will be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures need to be in place 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?

The risk assessments will consider:

- The type of activity and the level at which it is undertaken
- The age, competence, fitness and the temperament of the group members
- Any additional educational or medical needs of individuals within the group
- Supervision ratios
- The competence, experience and qualifications of the supervisory team
- The location, routes and modes of transport to it
- Security for residential or overnight stays

There are three levels of risk assessment that will be undertaken:

Generic activity risk assessments, which are likely to apply to the activity wherever or whenever it takes place. They are useful to cover activities which are likely to be repeated and that do not need doing again unless the activity, the environment and/or the nature of the children change significantly.

Visit or site-specific risk assessments, are to be completed by the group leader and are unique to each occasion. They should consider the site, learners' needs and activity specific needs (environment, accommodation, leaders, transport etc). Site specific risk assessments available from activity providers will support this aspect.

Ongoing risk assessments, involve professional judgements during an activity in response to changing situations e.g. weather conditions or ill health of participants. This applies to all categories and is critical to the success and safety of any activity.

Planning visits

Planning should reflect the consideration of legal and good practice requirements, ensuring that:

- There is a clear purpose for the trip
- Benefits and learning outcomes that the trip might achieve have been clearly identified and recorded to enable evaluation
- There is a suitably competent and experienced person designated as Group Leader who understands the role's requirements
- All staff, including adult volunteer helpers and the children involved have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- There is an appropriate risk management plan and all participants are aware of the detail where it impacts on them
- Those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed about the nature of the trip, particularly any risk entailed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained
- Proportionate assurances have been obtained from any providers
- There are emergency contingencies, alternative options in place and designated home contacts have been identified and briefed
- All details of the activity provision are available to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity

The degree of complexity of a particular plan will reflect the nature and complexity of several variables that can impact on any given activity as follows:

- Staffing requirements - training, experience, competency and ratios
- Activity characteristics - specialist, licensable, any insurance issues
- Group characteristics - prior experience, ability, behaviour, special and medical needs, Environmental conditions - like last time, impact of weather, water levels, distance from support mechanisms in place at the home base - transport, residential

Use of an 'External provider'

An 'External Provider' is defined as where there is an element of instruction, staffing, or guiding for example:

- Activity centre
- Ski company
- Educational tour operator
- Climbing wall where instruction is provided by climbing wall staff

- Freelance instructor of adventurous activities
- Youth Hostel (where instruction is provided)
- Voluntary instruction where instruction is provided

Procedure for Providers that hold an (Learning Outside the Classroom) LOTC quality badge

No further action is necessary, other than to check the suitability of the provider/venue in relation to the intended aims or learning outcomes for the particular group.

Procedure for Providers that do not hold an LOTC quality badge

- Download a Provider Form from Evolve resources.
- Complete the top section.
- Send form to the provider.
- On its return check that it has been satisfactorily completed.
- Upload the completed Provider Form to Evolve.

Preliminary Visits

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third-party provision will meet our expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of children. This is a vital dimension of risk management.

Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit. A 'virtual tour', where available, using the internet could support this. It is also useful to learn from other establishments' experience of using particular providers.

Where a provider holds accreditation through one of the national provider assurance schemes, there should be no need to seek further safety reassurances. Examples of such schemes include:

- The Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge
- AALS licensing
- Adventuremark
- NGB centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

Group leaders should be aware that the AALS license is an assurance of safety. It does not accredit educational or activity quality.

Home contact, emergency planning and critical incident support

A home contact must be established as part of the planning of any journey involving an overnight stay and is recommended for all off-site visits.

The home contact will need to be conversant with and act in accordance with Middleton Primary School's critical incident procedure.

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has either:

- Suffered a life-threatening injury
- Suffered a fatality
- Is at serious risk

OR

- Has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period of time

Insurance cover

Organisers must ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place for any off-site visit, including for transport arrangements. Visit organisers should clarify what cover already exists, to identify whether additional cover needs to be obtained.

Provision of transport

Organisers must ensure that all travel arrangements, including the hire of private coaches or buses, are suitable for the nature of the visit. Where driving is carried out by members of staff, all relevant licences including Passenger Service Vehicle (PSV) or Section 19 permits (within UK) must be held, in accordance with the Transport Act 1985 and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency guidance.

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey, giving proper consideration to the issues of driver distraction when considering what supervision is required for the specific group of passengers being transported in a minibus.

All transport arrangements must comply with UK and/or EU rules in respect of drivers' hours and breaks, and use of tachographs as appropriate to the journey being undertaken.

All staff and others who drive participants in their own car must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and that they have proper insurance e.g. for business use, that covers carrying participants. The driver is responsible for making sure that children and young people have a seat belt and age appropriate booster seats and that children use these at all times.

Charging for visits

In all cases group organisers must ensure that there is a clear financial audit trail for all income and expenditure in respect of off-site visits.

Middleton Primary School may charge or request voluntary contributions for educational visits and journeys in accordance with our Charging and Remissions Policy.

If charges are raised for trips involving transport, this affects the legal position as outlined in the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency guidance.

Appendix 1

Definition of Adventurous Activities (Level 3)

An adventurous activity is defined as including:

1. Caving
2. Climbing
3. Trekking
4. Water sports
5. Camping
6. Working around water margins
7. Airborne activities
8. Archery
9. Angling
10. All Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions
11. 'Open country'
12. Swimming
13. Trampolining

'Caving' means the exploration of underground passages (other than those principally used as show places open to the public):

- In parts of mines which are no longer worked; or
- In natural caves where the exploration of those passages requires, in order to be carried out safely, the use of rock climbing or diving equipment or the application of special skills or techniques

'Climbing' means climbing, traversing, abseiling or scrambling over natural terrain or outdoor man-made structures which requires, in order to be carried out safely, the use of equipment for, or the application of special skills or techniques in, rock climbing or ice climbing.

'Trekking' means journeying on foot, horse or pedal cycle or skiing over terrain:

- Which is moorland or more than 600 metres above sea level and
- From which it would take more than 30 minutes travelling time to reach any accessible road or refuge.

'Water sports' means the use on waters of:

- Canoes, kayaks or similar craft propelled or steered by paddles held in the hand
- Rafts (including those which are inflatable or which are improvised from various materials)
- Sailing boats, windsurfers, sailing dinghies or other craft whose principal means of propulsion is the wind but excluding craft in which the construction, equipment and use of which is subject to a requirement for a certificate issued pursuant to the Merchant Shipping Act 1995(3) or any regulation or order made thereunder.

'Camping' which involves knowledge and use of tents and camping stoves.

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'Working around water margins' means all learning which takes place around ponds, rivers, canals, estuaries, the sea, beaches and cliffs.

'Airborne activities' includes all modes of propulsion into the air excluding commercial aircraft available to the general public.

'Archery' means activities using bows and arrows.

'Angling' includes all types of fishing including the use of boats and the river bank.

'Open Country' is defined as land above 300m, or more than 1km from vehicular access. However, this is an arbitrary boundary and there may be occasions when this definition is inappropriate.

'Swimming' includes all forms (excluding publicly lifeguarded pools)

'Trampolining' - The Association for Physical Education (AfPE's) view is that trampolining is suitable for teaching in secondary schools only. AfPE currently recommends that schools do not arrange visits for pupils to Trampoline Parks.

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