

Boutcher School Educational Visits Policy

Rationale

At Boutcher we believe well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. They help children to develop their understanding of the world around them through direct experience.

Aims

- To provide stimulus to work being covered in the classroom
- To enhance and support the curriculum.
- To provide a rich learning experience for all pupils

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits

The Head Teacher will endeavour to ensure that:

- they have appointed a suitable group leader;
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins. (This applies even when the head is not going on the visit);
- 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 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

The group leader is the teacher responsible for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and is appointed by the Head Teacher. The Group Leader should:

- appoint a deputy;
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- be suitable 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;
- have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of pupils below).

Other teachers and adults involved in a visit

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees 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 Head Teacher and 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:

- 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 considered to 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.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language;

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.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit. 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.

Preliminary visit

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake a visit prior to children visiting 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.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first-aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The Head Teacher 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.

Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient 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 offsite 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.

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

Reception	1: 5
Key Stage One, visits off-site on foot:	1: 8
Key Stage Two	1:10

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 a high adult:pupil ratio is required, it is not always 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 understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, 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 retain responsibility for the group at all times.

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.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. 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. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Participation

Pupils should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities.

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 away from the road
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- 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 off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- never run about 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 automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport;
- after leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road;

- if you have to cross roads to get to the transport always use the Green Cross Code
- 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 Head Teacher 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 pupils 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;
- insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation and medical cover. Any cover to be arranged by the parents, if appropriate, will be requested;
- 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

At Boutcher we seek consent before trips for:

- all local visits
- adventure activities;
- swimming lessons
- other residential visits.

If parents withhold consent absolutely 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.

Residential visits

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 be available at all times;
- 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 – it is advisable to bring a torch;
- provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs;
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

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. 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 keep to the path at all times. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

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 coastal visit, will **not** be allowed for Boutcher School's pupils. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One teacher should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.

Farm visits

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 0157 food poisoning and other infections.

Pupils on farm visits will not:

- 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.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is shared with all staff.

The induction of new staff will include introduction to this policy.

The policy is available to parents and carers if requested.

Governors review this policy biannually

