



PENNINGTON

C of E

JUNIOR SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY



Pennington C of E Junior School

Educational Visits Policy

Introduction:

Pennington C of E Junior School has a strong commitment to the added value of learning beyond the statutory school day and beyond the school premises by the use of carefully planned educational visits. This is part of the school's required role to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares young people for the opportunities and experiences of adult life.

The importance of educational visits:

Every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances. These, often the most memorable learning experiences, help us to make sense of the world around us by making links between feelings and learning. They stay with us into adulthood and affect our behaviour, lifestyle and work. They influence our values and the decisions we make. They allow us to transfer learning experienced outside to the classroom and vice versa. Learning outside the classroom is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what we learn but importantly how and where we learn. These experiences can take place in the school grounds; local nature reserves and wild places; city farms and parks; streetscapes; field study centres; farms and the countryside; heritage and cultural sites; zoos and botanic gardens; places of worship; museums, theatres, galleries and music venues.

Types of visits and ventures planned and used:

All educational visits and activities support and enrich the learning we plan for in school. There are also a number of people who visit the school to support our learning. Some visits relate directly to areas of learning for individual classes or year teams, whilst others relate to all our children.

Organisation and management:

Visits and activities take place within the school day. We follow guidelines set by Hampshire County Council principally through the documents *Off-site Activity and Educational Visits* and *Safety in Adventurous Activity*. An Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is responsible for being aware of current legislation and initiatives in Outdoor Education and is the point of contact with the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service. Governors are kept informed of the overall policy and programme, as well as being given feedback on specific events and

successful ventures. Governors approve the proposed visits prior to visits taking place. Educational visits are fully integrated into the ethos and culture of the school and all key policies are considered for their relevance and adaptations or agreements are made as required. Many visits are managed entirely in accordance with these policies and, apart from simple additional considerations the site and transportation of children and young people, are managed as they would be in school contexts. We aim to take the ethos, culture and challenge to learning in school into all our outdoor learning and off-site contexts.

Head Teacher:

The Head Teacher will endeavour to ensure that:

- that a suitable group leader has been appointed
- 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 the relevant skills, qualifications and experience in supervising and managing the age groups going on the visit
- the governing body has approved the visit
- travel times out and back are known
- they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue (where possible), and the mobile phone numbers of staff accompanying the visit
- they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group and, where more than one vehicle is being used to transport the children, they have a list of which participants are travelling in which vehicle

Group Leader:

One teacher, the Group Leader, is responsible for the supervision and conduct of the pupils during the visit. The Group Leader should:

- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age group
- have undertaken the Outdoor Leader (formally Open Country Leadership) course
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including an exploratory visit to assess potential areas and levels of risk and to familiarise themselves with the area
- give information to parents about the purpose and details of the visit, and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment which has been authorised by the Head Teacher and/or Educational Visits Co-ordinator

- ensure all parents have signed the consent form
- provide a list of the pupils and adults undertaking the visit and, where relevant, which vehicles they are travelling in
- provide travel times out, and the predicted time of return
- have regard to health and safety of the group at all times
- ensure there is a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit in line with LA guidance
- inform the Business Manager of the names of parents joining any off-site activities who will ensure they have undertaken at least a List 99 check, and/or an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service check if the adult is not going to be under the direct supervision of a member of staff throughout the visit
- brief adult group members
- ensure the pupils understand their responsibilities
- consider stopping the visit or activity if they think the risk to health and safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable

Other Staff Members and Additional Adults Involved in the Visit:

Teachers, Teaching Assistants 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 better than any reasonable parent would
- ensure that the requirements of any risk assessments, risk control procedures and safe systems are followed

N.B. Additional adults - other than members of staff - should generally not have sole charge of a group of pupils except where risks to health and safety are minimal.

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
- behave sensibly and responsibly
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group, and tell the group leader about it

Responsibilities of Parents:

The group leader should ensure that parents have:

- signed the consent form
- provided the group leader/school with an emergency contact number
- provide the group leader/school with relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit

Communicating with parents:

Parents (or persons with parental responsibility) are informed at the start of the term of the programme of activities, especially the use of the grounds or local areas for Learning Outside the Classroom. Parents will be asked to complete a consent form to confirm that they are willing for their child to take part. The recommended medical form is collected each year with a request to parents to keep us updated with any changes. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum. We do ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of some activities to help cover admission charges, transport costs, and to allow us to afford to bring outside providers into school. We take all children on off-site activities when it is part of the National Curriculum irrespective of the fact of whether we receive a parental contribution, providing we have received written consent from parents (or those with parental consent). The governing body has a charging policy that details the full range of activities where a charge can be made. A copy of this is available. Off-site insurance covers all visits meeting requirements set out by the LA and details are available. A variety of transport is used following LA guidance.

Supervision:

Supervision strategies are taken from *Off-site Activities and Educational Visits* and include agreements on ratios, which are never exceeded and frequently improved. At Pennington we only use the strategy of direct supervision due to the age of our children.

Inclusion:

Pennington C of E Junior school is an inclusive school. All our children have the right to participate in agreed opportunities or statutory activities, or have suitable alternatives provided for them, whenever this is possible. This also means that extra or specifically targeted activity may not be open to all. In exceptional circumstances, having carried out a risk assessment, it may be deemed unsafe to take a specific child on an off-site activity if the risk involved cannot be reduced to a low level. The Head Teacher will make the final decision whether this course of action is necessary, and such a decision will be fully discussed with the child's parents/carers.

Safeguarding:

PJS's Child Protection Policy includes off-site activity. In particular it includes guidance on acceptable behaviour, and avoiding unnecessary contact is included and taken from *Off-site Activity and Educational Visits*. Suitable 'employment' checks are made on volunteers and other responsible adults who support these ventures in line with LA guidance. External providers or outdoor centres are drawn from the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service's vetted database, which confirms that safety management checks are in place. Should any other instructor or provider be recommended or found, reference would first be made to the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service to ensure that suitable steps are taken.

Risk benefits management:

As part of planning off-site activity, process recommended by the LA is followed:

- an analysis of the benefits of the activity is translated into clear objectives and expectations
- an assessment of the risk of harm and its likelihood is made, followed by putting clear control measures in place so that they can be satisfactorily managed
- a pre-visit by key staff is considered an essential part of reviewing the location and its ability to realise the benefits and be managed. Very well known and used sites may be checked by contacting key personnel prior to re-visiting and web-based information is increasingly available and useful

The Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service have introduced EVOLVE. EVOLVE is a fully managed online service specifically designed to enable the efficient processing of educational visit proposals. From February 2012 all offsite visits at PJS will be managed using EVOLVE to which all staff have access. The management of EVOLVE is the responsibility of the EVC.

Incidents and emergencies:

Guidance from the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service is used to prepare leader and base-contact checklists and contact details. The incident management checklist is also available for use. The Children's Services Incident and Emergency 'Establishment Plan' has been used as the basis for all incident and emergency response. Any concerns or 'nearmisses' are discussed to consider changing strategies and reported to the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service where necessary or if the information is useful. First aid provision is considered when assessing the risks of a visit.

Evaluation:

Individual staff reviews contribute to the feedback on the quality of ventures and recommendations for the future. The head reports to governors on an annual basis as to the effectiveness of the overall programme. Good practice is celebrated and complaints reviewed.

