



RADLETT LODGE EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

“HSE fully recognizes that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life – it provides deeper subject learning and increases self confidence”. (HSE, 2011)

“Children should be able to experience a wide range of activities. Health and safety measures should help them to do this safely, not stop them. It is important that children learn to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life”. (Dfe, 2011)

Educational visits are an essential part of a child’s development, helping them to reinforce learnt skills and develop new skills essential for outside school. They build self esteem and provide a motivating context for a range of learning experiences.

This policy outlines the arrangements for educational visits at Radlett Lodge School and is informed by the National Autistic Societies policy on educational visits and Hertfordshire’s offsite visits manual and advice on health and safety for schools.

DEFINITION

Educational visit is defined as any aspect of a pupil’s education and leisure programme that takes place off the main school site. It should include visits the amenities in the local community such as cafés, swimming pools and local shops and wider experiences such as museums, religious buildings and activity centres. It may include residential trips.

THE NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Educational visits are a vital part of any child’s education enabling them to consolidate learning, gain new experiences and provide a stimulus to learning. For the child with Autism they provide even more benefits. These include enabling our pupils to access the local community, which is something that behaviours may limit when the child is with their family. Educational visits also provide opportunities to generalize skills that are learnt in the classroom, something that because of difficulties in flexibility of thought can be particularly difficult for children with Autism. It also provides a context for developing social skills, independence, appropriate behaviours and fostering communication all of which are central to an appropriate curriculum for a child with Autism.

Due to the specific impairments associated with Autism, in particular related to social understanding, it is likely that there are increased risks with supporting these pupils out in the community.

The school strategy believes this makes it even more imperative that pupils have the opportunity for regular and varied access to the community. This will enable pupils to develop knowledge, awareness and skills in such areas as road safety and stranger danger. The school is committed to doing what is necessary to enable all pupils to access the community and has systems of risk assessment in place to support, rather than limit this.

AIMS

- Build on pupils' strengths, interests and experiences
- Develop self esteem and confidence in carrying out tasks independently and as part of a group
- Develop physical skills, enjoy a variety of sports and enable pupils to recognize the importance of a healthy life style.
- Develop pupils' awareness of the environments in which they live
- Develop an awareness of safety and learn rules about environments and activities outside of school (e.g. road safety, swimming pool rules etc)
- To provide a motivating context for learning.
- Develop communication, social understanding and social skills, independence and flexibility of thought / coping with change.
- Enrich the curriculum providing 'real life' experiences.
- To provide opportunities for enjoyment and fun.

ENTITLEMENTS

This policy applies to all pupils and staff (lodge, school and respite) responsible for the organization and planning of visits as well as those who are responsible for pupils during educational visits.

IMPLEMENTATION

Role of the Principal of the school:

- To ensure that visits comply with the guidelines and regulations provided by the Local Authority (Safe practice of Offsite visits) and the National Autistic Societies policies for Educational Visits and Health and Safety.
- To ensure the Educational Visits Co-coordinator (EVC) is competent to oversee the co-ordination of all off site education, and support the EVC in attending relevant courses.
- To ensure the EVC maintains up to date information on current legislation and advice.

- To check that the EVC has designated appropriately competent group leaders and given them sufficient support to carry out their role appropriately.
- To ensure that in the event of a major incident or accident, Local authority and National Autistic Society guidelines are adhered to in terms of informing parents, staff and the media. They will help to ensure that serious incidents, accidents and near accidents are investigated appropriately.
- To ensure that relevant risk assessments are in place to support specific educational visits.

Role of the Educational Visits Co-coordinator:

(Other members of the Senior Leadership Team may provide cover in the absence of the EVC)

- To approve educational visits, ensuring that sufficient planning (lesson plans and activity planning) and appropriate risk assessments are in place.
- To deliver training on educational visits procedures and guidance.
- To designate appropriate competent group leaders (and deputy team leaders) and given them sufficient support to carry out their role appropriately.
- To ensure visits have appropriate support ratios and adequate cover for health and safety.
- Ensure parents have completed general educational visit consent forms and that they are notified of any full day visits, visits outside the local area or of any adventurous activities.
- To ensure there is a named emergency contact available for that visit.
- To ensure any accidents or near misses are recorded appropriately.
- To assist as appropriate in the reporting of serious injuries.
- To review systems and, on occasion, monitor practice.
- Support team leaders in evaluating visits.

Role of the Visit team leader:

- Identify the clear purpose and objectives of the visit
- Complete visit documentation (lesson plan and activity planner)
- Plan the itinerary in such a way as to account for all times on the visit including meal and rest times.
- Inform parents of content and purpose of weekly educational visits.
- Allocate supervisory responsibility to each adult for named pupils and ensure that adults know their role.
- To ensure all adults have read activity planner and relevant risk assessments and signed the activity planner form.
- To ensure emergency planning contingency plans are in place.
- Have prior knowledge of the venue (should have done a site visit)
- To continuously monitor the appropriateness of the activity, the physical and mental condition and abilities of the group and the suitability of the prevailing conditions.

- Be aware of medical needs of pupils and ensure appropriate arrangements have been made for Safe storage and authorized administration of medicines.
- Ensure phone numbers are wrote on the activity planner and that a copy is made and left with the registers.
- Ensure photos are taken of the children on the morning of the visit and these are stored on the digital camera.
- Complete swimming activity planners allocating supervision arrangements for whilst in changing room, pool and during travel.
- Carry out regular head counts.

RESOURCES

- Risk assessment files available in each classroom and lodge office.
- Educational visits ideas file is available in the staffroom
- The EVC has copies of relevant documentation and guidance
- A specific budget is allocated to each class each term to enable pupils to attend weekly educational visits
- The school has 2 minibuses to enable visits to occur weekly for each class.
- All classes will have a going out bag prepared containing change of clothes, wipes, nappy sacks, motivators etc

ASSESSMENT

- Planning of educational visits will be monitored on a half termly and weekly basis by the EVC.
- The EVC will on occasions observe for the duration of an educational visit.

COMMUNCIATION OPPORTUNITITES

Educational visits provide an excellent opportunity to develop communication skills. In community environments such as a shop, pupils can be motivated to practice using their current communication method to make requests. Educational visits can be stimulating and enable pupils to see and experience things that can not be found in the classroom so therefore this lends itself to developing pupils communication in the area of commenting and asking questions. Educational visits also provide a context for learning social rules, developing social skills and rehearsing situations such as ordering food in a café or taking out a library book. A lesson plan should be completed for each educational visit and this should detail how the visit will focus on promoting communication for all pupils.

LINKS WITH OTHER SUBJECTS

Commonly in an Autism specific environment most educational visits will have the strongest links with Citizenship & PSHE This is because the nature of the visits will be regularly visiting local amenities such as shops, parks and cafes with a focus on developing individual communication, independence and social skills and generalizing skills learnt in school.

However all subjects can be linked into educational visits. In English reading and communication skills can be generalized into the local environment with children being given the opportunity to make requests or comments or perhaps read signs or items on a café menu. Skills taught in Maths particularly related to shopping can be practiced in a real life and motivating situation. Physical education has obvious links in attending swimming lessons at the local pool but other external sporting facilities may also be used such as visiting a sports stadium, tennis courts or dry ski slope. Geography, History and Art related outings can be hugely beneficial in bringing a topic to life and providing pupils with visual stimulation. Technology related visits might include a visit to a local bakery or purchasing items for food technology in the supermarket or visiting a soft play centre and building and interacting with an environment.

See also Early Years and Post 16 Policies.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All pupils should have the opportunity to go on a weekly educational visit regardless of age, gender, ability or ethnic origin and this should be appropriate to their needs and ability level.

Where a pupil demonstrates challenging behaviours on an educational visit there should be a risk assessment carried out and the relevant safety measures put in place to ensure they can go out again safely. Pupils should not be excluded from educational visits but rather the type of visit and the organization and supervisory arrangements be adjusted accordingly to ensure the pupil can access this area of the curriculum. In order to have time to complete risk assessments pupils may miss 1 or 2 visits but this should not continue beyond this.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Relevant risk assessments should be completed for specific activities. Some pupils will require individual risk assessments. All risk assessments should be evaluated and reviewed regularly.

A first aid box is located on each bus and MPV and wherever possible there will be a first aider on the visit.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Radlett Lodge School Educational visits: guidelines for team leaders and deputy team leaders

National Autistic Societies educational visits policy and procedures.

National Autistic Societies missing adult or child procedure

National Autistic Societies emergency in services policy

Hertfordshire Off site visits manual

DFEE 1998 Health and safety of pupils on educational visits: A good practice guide

DFES 2002 Health and safety of pupils on educational visits