

Educational Visits

Overton School

Approved by:	Omar Salahuddin, Principal
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The aim of this policy is to safeguard the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff on educational visits or activities that take place off the school premises. It should be read in conjunction with the company's health and safety policy, first aid policy, supervision of young people policy and any relevant associated policies that deal with health and safety issues.

Health and safety responsibilities derive from Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations. For Overton School, the employer is The Bryn Melyn Care and the proprietors of the school. They have a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable:-

- The health, safety and welfare of **pupils** in school and on off site visits
- The health, safety and welfare of **staff** in school and on off site visits

Employees have a responsibility under health and safety legislation too. In short this is to:-

- Take responsible care of their own and others' health and safety
- Co-operate with their employees over safety matters
- Carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
- Inform the employer of any serious health and safety risks Develop their own knowledge of health and safety issues and attend health and safety training
- Assess the risks of activities
- Introduce measures to control those risks
- Tell their employers about these measures

Educational Visits

Pupils can derive a great deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits with the school. In particular, they have the opportunity to undergo experiences that may not be available in the classroom setting. Visits can help pupils to develop:-

- Investigative skills
- Planning and reviewing skills
- Independence skills
- Social skills
- Relationships
- Knowledge of the world around them
- Knowledge of environmental issues
- Site specific knowledge

Roles in Organising an Educational Visit

Educational visits can take many forms including:-

- Day trips to places of interest
- Residential course
- Outdoor education activities (see policy for outdoor education)
- Sports activities away from the school site
- Individual visits by pupils as part of their curriculum

For the planning and carrying out of an off-site educational visit, the personnel involved should be the head teacher, the teacher who is organising the visit and the person with parental responsibility for the trip – the pupil's care manager in the case of The Bryn Melyn Care.

Any visit off the school site must be approved in advance by the head teacher. At Overton School, a 'Summary of Information for Educational Visits' sheet must be submitted to the head teacher by the project leader. This will include details of:-

- The educational focus of the visit
- The details of the visit including planned times and address of venue
- The arrangements for transportation
- Supervision of the pupil(s) when on an educational visit (supervising adults must be clear what to do in case of an emergency)
- First aid provision for the visit
- Emergency procedures

A completed risk assessment for the visit must accompany the 'Summary of Information for Educational Visits' sheet and this should be signed by the teacher leading the trip, as well as the head teacher and the pupil's care manager. An exploratory visit may be necessary for this purpose.

The potential hazards which this policy refers to should not discourage teachers. No amount of planning can guarantee that a visit will be totally incident free, but good planning and attention to safety measures can reduce the number of accidents and lessen the seriousness of those that do happen nonetheless. The management of health and safety on visits is a crucial part of the school's overall policy of health and safety. The policy sets out principles, rather than trying to cover every eventuality, leaving it to teachers' professional judgement how to apply those principles.

The policy attempts to summarise the key points from the legislation listed below, but it cannot be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the law.

Responsibilities for Visits

Legal Framework

1. Under Health and Safety at Work legislation employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employers are also under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. This includes participants in off site visits.
2. These duties apply to all school visits. Teachers and other staff in charge of pupils also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

Approval for Visits

It is good practice for the school to have at least two members of staff involved in the planning and management of educational visits. This will usually be the head teacher and the teacher leading the trip (project leader). It is part of the policy of Overton School that any educational visit being organised also has the approval of the pupils' care manager. This is because they will have an awareness of whether the pupil has any needs that should be addressed before/during the visit, of which the school staff may not be aware.

The Role of the Head Teacher

The head teacher has the responsibility for the sanctioning and authorisation of visits and that the visit is organised within the guidelines stated in this policy. He/She should make sure that visits comply with the DfE guidelines.

Essentially, the head teacher must ensure that:-

- All necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins.
- The risk assessment has been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place.
- The project leader has experience in supervising the age group(s) going on the visit and will organise the group effectively.
- The group leader or another teacher is suitably competent to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place.
- The ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate.
- Arrangements have been made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the pupils.

The role of the Project Leader

The project should ensure that:-

- Adequate first-aid provision will be available.
- There is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home.
- The mode of travel is appropriate.
- They have provided adequate information about the visit to the pupil's care manager and gained the approval of the care manager for the completed risk assessment.
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover.
- The 'Summary of Information for Educational Visits' sheet has been completed satisfactorily.
- A completed risk assessment form for the visit has been completed and attached to the 'Summary of Information for Educational Visits' sheet.
- They have obtained the head teacher's prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place.
- The purpose of the educational visit is appropriate to the pupils' age and level of understanding and forms part of their educational programme.
- They are familiar with the visit location/centre where the activity will take place.
- The visit is appropriately insured*
- They have taken account of relevant health and safety legislation.
- They review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise the head teacher where adjustments may be necessary.
- The ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group.
- They consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health and safety of the pupils is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality.

In short, the project leader must ensure that all adults taking part in the visit do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances.

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 supervisors. Including those at the venue of the visit.
- Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly.

Care Managers/ Parents / Carers

The project leader will need to inform care managers of all relevant aspects of the visit in advance of it taking place and should ensure they have met with the care manager to complete the risk assessment form prior to making the visit.

The pupil's care manager should ensure that he/she:-

- Provides the project leader with an emergency contact number.
- Signs the risk assessment/consent form.
- Give the project leader information about their child's emotional, psychological and physical health that might be relevant to the visit.

***Insurance**

All visits should be adequately insured. The project leader should ensure that the venue has its own Public Liability insurance and that this is sufficient in scope to cover our pupils and their actions when on site. Should the venue not have adequate cover, the project leader should investigate whether The Bryn Melyn Cares' insurance covers the visit, or should source insurance cover elsewhere as part of the planning process.

Costs

Visits should be financially sound and this should be taken into account during the planning stage. On occasions, it may be necessary to ask pupil's care managers to contribute towards the cost of the visit in order for the visit to take place.

Transport costs should be kept to a minimum and this will mean car sharing may be an appropriate method of travel. Consideration to travel arrangements should be given during the planning stage and should be addressed as part of the risk assessment process. Under normal circumstances, transport will be provided by the pupil's care team, who may wish to organise car sharing in order to keep costs down.

Risk Assessment

In practice, risk assessments will be carried out by the project leader. An assessment should be completed well before the visit, and should be approved by the head teacher and the pupil's care manager.

A risk assessment for the visit need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. It does not generally require technical formulae or professional health and safety expertise. But specialised information for some visits may be necessary.

A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Pupils must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained then the visit must not take place.

The risk assessment should 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?

Frequent visits to local venues such as the museums in Ironbridge may not need a risk assessment every time. Nevertheless, it is essential not to become complacent. A generic assessment of the risks of any such visits should be made at regular intervals, and careful monitoring should take place.

Exploratory Visit

The group leader should undertake an exploratory visit, wherever that is possible to:-

- Ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit.
- Obtain advice from the manager.
- Assess potential areas and levels of risk.
- Become familiar with the area before taking a group of young people there.

If in the last resort an exploratory visit is not feasible then the group leader will need to consider how to complete an adequate assessment of the risks. A minimum measure would be to obtain specific information by letter from the venue.