

Off-Site Activities and Educational Visits Policy



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Responsibility:

Curriculum & Standards Committee

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Introduction

At Ringwood Junior School, we recognize the value of educational visits and off-site activities in enhancing our students' learning, personal development, and well-being. These experiences offer opportunities to develop skills, deepen understanding, and foster independence and teamwork. This policy outlines the school's approach to planning, approval, and management of off-site visits, ensuring they are safe, inclusive, and educationally valuable.

1. Policies and Guidance

This policy aligns with:

- **The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)**
- **DfE Guidance: Health and Safety on Educational Visits (2018)**
- **Advice and Guidance from Hampshire Outdoors which is based on OEAP National Guidance.**

All staff, including those planning the off-site visits, will follow this policy and the procedures and guidelines set by the Hampshire Outdoors.

2. Aims of Off-Site and Educational Visits

Off-site visits at Ringwood Junior School aim to:

- Enrich the curriculum through real-world experiences.
- Promote social, personal, and emotional development.
- Foster independence, confidence, and teamwork.
- Ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all students.
- Provide opportunities for physical, cultural, and environmental education.

3. Types of Visits Planned

- Visits to Ringwood Churches (Year 3 and 4)
- Stubbington Study Centre (Year 3)
- Blashford Lakes Study Centre (Year 4)
- Bolderwood (New Forest) Geography Study (Year 5)
- Southampton visit including Hindu Temple (Year 6)
- Moors Valley Team Building (Year 6)
- Butcher's Coppice Activity and Camping Residential (Year 5)
- PGL Activities Centre four nights residential (Year 6)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Approve the overarching policy.
- Support senior leaders in ensuring proper oversight of visits.
- Monitor the implementation of the policy.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Approve all off-site visits.
- Ensure compliance with Local Authority guidelines.
- Designate a trained Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The EVC will:

- Advise on planning and risk management.
- Ensure all visit leaders and staff are trained and informed, including Outdoor and Visit Leader Training and appropriate first aid training.
- Oversee visit approval processes and maintain visit records.
- Consider the training needs of activity leaders for each visit if applicable.
- Work alongside the Visit Leader to review each visit.

Visit Leaders

Visit Leaders will:

- Plan and organize visits in line with school and Hampshire Outdoors' policies.
- Conduct risk assessments and ensure all safety measures are in place.
- Add residential/adventurous activity visits to Evolve for Hampshire Outdoors approval at least 4 weeks before the visit is due to take place.
- Communicate effectively with parents, staff, and students.
- Lead the visit responsibly, ensuring the safety and well-being of participants.

Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers on visits will:

- Support the Visit Leader in supervising students.

- Follow risk management procedures and adhere to school policies.
- Act responsibly and ensure students' safety and engagement.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Provide accurate medical and contact information.
- Support the school's policies and procedures.
- Make voluntary contributions to cover the cost of visits, as appropriate.

Students

Students must:

- Behave responsibly and follow instructions.
- Respect others and the environment during visits.
- Engage fully in activities.

5. Planning and Approval Process

1. Initial

Visit Leaders submit an outline of the visit, including objectives, itinerary, and preliminary costings, to the EVC.

Proposal:

2. Pre-Visit Check:

A staff member should visit the site beforehand to identify risks, accessibility needs, and learning opportunities.

3. Approval:

- The EVC reviews the visit for compliance and suitability.
- The Headteacher gives final approval. For residential or adventurous activities, approval from the Hampshire Outdoors is also required. This must be completed by adding the visit to Evolve at least 4 weeks before the visit is due to take place.

4. Parental Consent:

- Written consent will be obtained for all visits.
- Annual blanket consent may be used for routine, low-risk trips.

5. Risk Assessment:

- A thorough risk assessment will be completed and shared with all staff using the Hampshire Outdoors template.
- Dynamic risk management will be implemented during the visit.

6. Communication:

- Parents will receive detailed information about the visit, including objectives, itinerary, transport, and costs.
- Emergency procedures will be clearly outlined.

7. Inclusion:

- The school is committed to making visits accessible to all students, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

6. Health and Safety

- All visits will adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy.
- A qualified first aider will accompany every visit.
- Emergency contact procedures will be in place, with contact information provided to parents.
- Staff-to-student ratios will comply with Local Authority recommendations.

7. Behaviour Expectations and Management

The school implements a *Code of Conduct* specific to educational visits, which is aligned with our overall Behaviour Policy.

- **Pupils:** The expectations are shared with pupils before every visit, emphasizing the importance of respect, safety, and teamwork. Pupils verbally commit to following these rules as part of the preparation process.
- **Parents/Carers:** Parents agree to the Code of Conduct by signing the permission slip and committing to support the school in ensuring their child adheres to the rules.
- **Staff:** All staff involved are trained to uphold the Code of Conduct consistently and model appropriate behaviour.

Expectations for behaviour

On educational visits, pupils are expected to:

- Follow instructions promptly and without argument.
- Demonstrate respect for others, including peers, staff, and members of the public.
- Stay with their designated group at all times.
- Act responsibly to ensure their safety and the safety of others.
- Show respect for the environment, property, and the purpose of the visit.

These expectations are communicated clearly in advance and reinforced during the visit.

Repercussions for unsatisfactory behaviour

We adopt a proportionate and reflective approach to managing unsatisfactory behaviour during visits:

1. **Minor Incidents:** Handled on-site through verbal reminders, restorative conversations, or temporary adjustments to participation in activities.
2. **Persistent or Serious Incidents:** Documented and discussed with the pupil. Parents may be contacted, and in some cases, the pupil may be excluded from certain activities or future visits.
3. **Severe or Dangerous Behaviour:** In cases where behaviour poses a safety risk, the pupil may be sent home. This decision would be made by the Visit Leader in consultation with the Headteacher or designated senior leader. Arrangements for the child's safe return would be ensured.

We use CPOMS to record all behaviour incidents after the visit.

8. Inclusion

At Ringwood Junior School, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with disabilities or other protected characteristics, can fully participate in educational visits. Inclusion is central to our planning, and we aim to provide equitable opportunities while meeting our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

We strive to make all educational visits accessible by:

- Conducting detailed pre-visit assessments to identify potential barriers.
- Choosing venues and activities that cater to diverse needs, including physical accessibility, sensory considerations, and suitability for different learning styles.
- Liaising with activity providers to confirm that their facilities, equipment, and staff training support inclusion.
- Consulting with parents/carers, pupils, and staff to identify individual requirements.

Reasonable adjustments are tailored to the needs of individual pupils and may include:

- **Physical Access:** Arranging alternative transport, accessible pathways, or adaptive equipment.
- **Learning Support:** Providing additional staff or modifying activities to suit different learning or behavioural needs.
- **Sensory Needs:** Allowing for quiet spaces or offering sensory-friendly versions of activities.
- **Medical Support:** Ensuring appropriate healthcare plans are in place and that staff are trained to administer medication or respond to emergencies.

We involve the following in the planning process:

- **Parents/Carers:** To gain insight into the child's specific needs.
- **Pupils:** Where appropriate, to understand their preferences and concerns.

- **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo):** To advise on adjustments and ensure compliance with individual education plans (IEPs) or healthcare plans.
- **Hampshire Outdoors:** For additional advice and expertise if the visit involves complex adjustments or high-risk activities.

Decisions regarding a pupil's participation are made collaboratively and inclusively, considering:

- The pupil's individual needs and any reasonable adjustments that can be made.
- Risk assessments that account for the pupil's safety and the safety of others.
- Input from parents/carers, the SENCo, and other relevant professionals (e.g., healthcare providers).
- Advice from Hampshire Outdoors for specialist support or guidance.

We are committed to exploring every reasonable option to ensure participation. However, in rare cases where the safety of the pupil or others cannot be guaranteed despite adjustments, alternative arrangements may be considered in consultation with parents/carers.

9. Transport

- Transport arrangements will prioritize safety, using licensed providers where applicable.
- Where private vehicles are used, drivers must have appropriate insurance and documentation.

10. Finance

- Voluntary contributions will be requested for visits, but no child will be excluded due to inability to contribute.
- Visits will be budgeted to ensure cost-effectiveness and transparency.

11. Evaluation and Monitoring of Visits

- All visits will be evaluated to assess their success and inform future planning.
- The EVC will regularly review the implementation of this policy.

12. Insurance

As a maintained school within Hampshire, we are covered under Hampshire County Council's comprehensive insurance policy.

This policy provides coverage for:

- **Public Liability:** Protecting against claims arising from injury or damage caused by the school's activities.
- **Employer's Liability:** Covering staff and volunteers involved in school-organized visits.
- **Personal Accident:** Providing compensation in the event of accidents affecting pupils, staff, or volunteers.
- **Travel Insurance:** Covering trip-specific risks, such as cancellations, delays, or loss of belongings, for residential or overseas visits.

For activities not automatically covered by the local authority's policy, we take the following steps:

- **Activity Provider Insurance:** Confirm that external providers, such as adventure centres or transport companies, hold valid and adequate insurance for their services. Copies of certificates are requested and reviewed as part of the pre-visit checks.
- **Specialist Insurance:** Arrange additional coverage for high-risk activities (e.g., water sports or skiing) or trips abroad, if required. This is done through recommended providers or in consultation with Hampshire County Council.

To ensure proper insurance coverage for each visit:

- The Visit Leader works with the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) to review the local authority's insurance documents and ensure alignment with the planned activities.
- Risk assessments include confirmation of adequate insurance coverage as a key criterion.
- All insurance arrangements are documented and retained with the trip's planning records

13. Data Protection

At Ringwood Junior School, we are committed to upholding the principles of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 when managing and sharing information related to educational visits. Ensuring the security and confidentiality of student information is a priority, especially when such data is necessary for health and safety purposes during off-site activities.

Collection of Information

For educational visits, we collect and hold the following essential information:

- Emergency contact details for parents/carers.
- Medical information, including allergies, dietary needs, and any required medication.
- Individual support needs, such as SEND requirements or behavioural considerations.

This information is gathered through consent forms completed by parents/carers, ensuring that only relevant and up-to-date data is collected.

Secure Storage and Access

To safeguard sensitive data:

- **Electronic Records:** Information is stored securely on the school's password-protected management system, accessible only to authorized staff.
- **Paper Records:** Any paper copies, such as medical forms or emergency contacts for the trip, are kept in locked cabinets or secure bags during the visit.
- **Limited Access:** Only staff directly involved in the visit, such as the Visit Leader or first aiders, have access to the information.

Sharing Information

Data is shared on a strict need-to-know basis:

- **With Trip Providers:** Only essential medical or support information is shared with external providers to ensure appropriate accommodations or emergency care.
- **Emergency Services:** In the rare event of an emergency, information may be shared with medical professionals or other relevant parties as necessary.

All sharing of information complies with the principle of data minimization, meaning only the data required for a specific purpose is shared.

Data Retention and Disposal

- **Retention:** Information is retained only for the duration of the trip and any follow-up period required (e.g., incident investigations).
- **Disposal:** After this period, paper records are securely shredded, and digital records are deleted in line with the school's data retention policy.

14. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance.