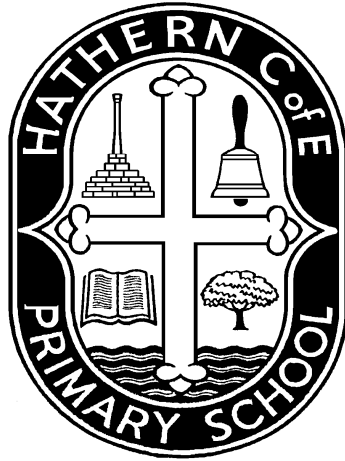


Hathern Church of England Primary School



Educational Off-site Visits Policy

October 2018

At Hathern Church of England Primary School, we believe in
'Learning and Caring Together'

Educational Off-site Visits Policy

Introduction

Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and staff believe that off-site activities enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would not otherwise be possible.

At Hathern, we believe that outdoor learning has equal value to learning inside the classroom. The outdoor environment has unique and exciting characteristics that promote (amongst others) imagination, enjoyment, confidence, resourcefulness, co-operation and healthy living.

All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences. In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the health and safety of pupils at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils and wherever possible to make them accessible to pupils with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Leicestershire County Council's *Management of Outdoor Learning, Off-site Visits and Adventurous Activities Policy and Guidance* document. (31st August 2017, Issue 3). The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) *National guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom* should also be read alongside this policy. It is available from: <http://oeapng.info/>

Aims

The aims of our visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils
- provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than couldn't be provided on the school site alone
- promote the independence of our children as learners and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments

Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities, which includes visits out of school (off-site). All these activities are in line with guidance published by the LA.

The opportunities to learn, practise and apply curricular skills is promoted strongly as a focus of any off-site visit, as part of our continued drive to further improve provision. Off-site visits are also used to extend and enable the pupils to practise the skills of language, literacy and numeracy, physical activity, social and emotional development, healthy life choices and thinking skills in particular.

Residential activities

Residential visits offer a unique opportunity for children to experience greater independence, outdoor and adventurous activities and calculated risk taking. When planning any residential visit, authorisation must be obtained via the Local Authority EVOLVE online service.

A preliminary visit will be carried out and necessary risk assessments made before holding a meeting to share relevant information with parents of all the children participating. On departure for residential visits all medicines will be signed in and medical forms will be checked for any alterations or additional details. A full list of contact details will be kept at school (accessible 24 hrs a day by the Home Contact) and with the group leader for emergencies.

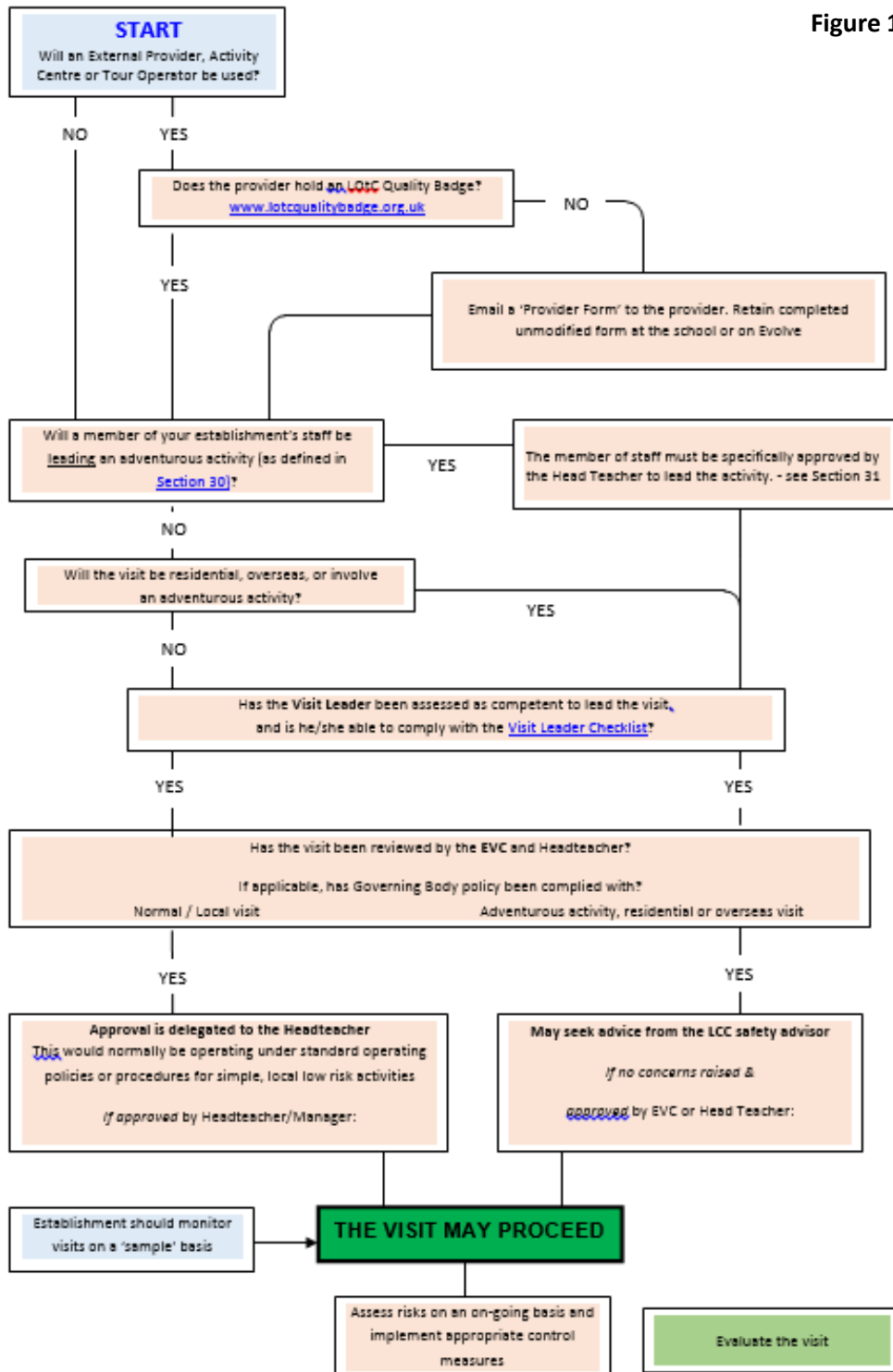
How visits may be authorised

There is a set procedure to follow in the planning of a successful off-site Educational visit, with specific roles being performed by different staff. There are checks at each stage of the process ensuring the proposed visit has been carefully considered by those leading it – see Figure 1, over.

A **group leader** will be appointed to be responsible for running the activity. This will usually be a teacher in the school who will then liaise with the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) in planning the off-site trip or visit. This will include:

- discussing the proposed visit purpose and checklist of trip organisation
- creation of relevant risk assessments

Figure 1. Off site visit flowchart



The school's **Educational Visits Co-ordinator** will:

- support group leaders to assign competent staff to support with trips
- ensure authorisation is obtained via the Local Authority EVOLVE online service
- ensure all generic risk assessments are available in the Educational Visits folder in the office

- ensure that risk assessments are completed before departure
- organise related staff training
- oversee that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained
- ensure records of visits are kept in the EV folder (on the Server) and ensure that there are regular generic assessments of the risks where there are frequent visits to local venues
- conduct a post-trip discussion to ascertain its success as part of monitoring procedures

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations advice and procedures published by the LA. This advice is contained in the Local Authority EVOLVE online service.

All details of the trip must be shared with the **Headteacher** and the Headteacher must authorise that all relevant risk assessments and related paperwork have been completed and the trip can go ahead.

Overall responsibility for approval of planned off-site activities lies with the Headteacher.

Equal Opportunities

It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that he/she is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

Risk Assessments

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The use of generic risk assessments, particularly for coach travel can be used and adapted to suit individual children or circumstances. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed 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, for example, with a plan B?

Staff planning an offsite activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue in order to carry out an off-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of the year proposed for the trip and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to health and safety and where appropriate adopt their risk assessments.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is made on whether the visit should proceed.

Ratios

Any off-site trip will require a minimum of two adults but an activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios based on children's ages and subsequent yeargroup;

- 1 adult to 4 children for Foundation pupils
- 1 adult to 6 children for Years 1-3
- 1 adult to 15 children for Year 4-6.

For residential visits, a ratio of 1:10 is required with a member of staff of each sex needed for mixed groups. At least one of the adults on the residential visit should hold a valid first aid certificate.

These are minimum requirements and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases depending on the activity and location. A copy of the risk assessments will be given to the Headteacher, and all adults supervising the trip.

Transport

We only hire coaches/minibuses from reputable companies and always use vehicles with seat belts. Generic risk assessments are available in the EV folder for coach travel. All adults accompanying the group must ensure they space out on the coach to ensure supervision of children throughout the bus. If more than one coach is used then a list will be compiled of the staff/children on each coach.

It may be necessary on occasion to transport children to sporting fixtures at other schools and hiring buses for this is just not feasible. In these instances the school will not organise this transport but allow parents to make arrangements themselves between friends.

It would be very difficult for the school to establish that driving licences and insurances are legal and up-to-date. Parents therefore undertake these arrangements themselves and at their own risk. The school recommends that parents consider carefully when undertaking these arrangements that correct car seats are used as appropriate and give health and safety due consideration.

Costings

The costing of offsite activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport

- entrance fees
- insurance
- provision of any special resources or equipment
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for

Funding for off site visits is mainly by parental “voluntary contribution”. In the event that not enough contributions are received, the trip may have to be cancelled. No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. In some instances, for a trip to go ahead, it may be necessary at the discretion of the Headteacher to subsidise the trip cost with money from the school private account.

Communication with parents

At the beginning of an academic year parents complete a permission form for trips into the local area. This form allows the school to go on walks within the immediate locality without the need to seek further permission. Parents and guardians of children taking part in offsite activities will be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Written permission will be required for any trips involving a considerably longer amount of walking or a trip with transportation involved.

Further health and safety considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware by the party leader of the emergency procedures that may apply. Each adult will be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number as well as the mobile number of the Teacher (Group Leader) in charge of the visit. Adults travelling in separate buses will exchange mobile phone numbers so they can stay in contact.

Group leaders in addition will carry crisis line phone number cards. As part of the planning process group leaders will take a medical checklist with them and ensure there are sufficient first aid personnel present with a full medical kit and inhalers as appropriate. There will be sufficient numbers in the party to account for one person to be responsible for first aid provision without compromising the ratios of the groupings.

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the LA or 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 Headteacher and Governors if any 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 behaviour management. 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.

The safety of the children is of paramount importance. During the activity the Group Leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This includes taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns and ensuring that children are safe and well looked after at all times. This may also mean a party leader alters plans in respect of adverse weather or other unforeseen circumstances to ensure the trip is carried out safely.

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.

Prior to an activity if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others, the party leader should discuss with the Headteacher the possibility of excluding the child from the activity. In respect of residential trips this could mean parents collecting their child and bringing them home.