



POLICY ON OFF-SITE VISITS

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.
- 1.2 This policy complies with 'National Guidance for Education Visits' www.oeapng.info which is recognised as best practice by the Welsh Government. 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 safety and health of all 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 those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 The aims of our off-site visits are to:
- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
 - provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could 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.

3 Curriculum links

- 3.1 For each subject in the curriculum, there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). The following activities are considered each year at Fairholme:
- English – theatre visits, visits by authors and theatre groups;
 - science – visits to science museums, visits to botanical gardens, visits by specialist scientists;
 - mathematics – use of shape and number trails;
 - history – castle visits, local museums;
 - geography – use of the locality for fieldwork;
 - art and design – visits by artists and picture gallery organisers;
 - PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, sports' camps;
 - music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, concerts for parents;
 - design and technology – visits to design centres;
 - STEM and ICT – visits to Science and Engineering facilities.
 - RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.
 - PSHE and citizenship – visit to residential care homes, visits by local police officers and health workers.

5 How visits may be authorised

5.1 The Principal will appoint a leading member of staff to be responsible for overseeing the activity.

5.2 The Principal will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

She will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- organise transport;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits.

5.5 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 s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents or carers to help us to 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.

6 Risk assessment

6.1 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 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?

6.2 Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the lead member of staff should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. S/he should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. S/he will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

6.3 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 taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the Visit Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them.

6.4 An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

- 1 adult to between 10 and 15 pupils in Years 4 to 6;
- 1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 3;

- 1 adult to 3 pupils in Early Years.

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases. Staff should refer to National Guidance <http://oeapng.info> to ensure pupils are supervised in accordance with the principles of “Effective Supervision”

6.5 A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. These should include:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures.

6.6 The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to police checks.

6.7 A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the Principal.

7 Transport

7.1 Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

7.2 Our minibus is usually used for school trips, and each seat has a belt. We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts.

8 Communication with parents and carers

8.1 The parents/carers of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents or carers must give their permission using an online form before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

9 Further health and safety considerations

9.1 All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the lead member of staff, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day, the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

9.2 Before a party leaves school, the Principal should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity.

9.3 The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity, the lead member of staff must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure their safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

9.4 Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the lead member of staff should discuss with the Principal the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

10 Group leaders' planning

- 10.1 Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:
'National Guidance for Education Visits' www.oeapng.info
'Group Safety at Water Margins' (OEAP)

11 Visit Plan

- 11.1 The Visit Plan for intended educational visits must include the following:
- risk assessment;
 - report on preliminary visit unless this is a repeated trip;
 - applications for approval of visit;
 - general information;
 - names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
 - travel schedule;
 - accommodation plan (if applicable);
 - full plan of activities;
 - fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
 - intended arrangements for supervision;
 - insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
 - emergency contacts and procedures;
 - general communications information;
 - guidance for lead member of staffs;
 - guidance for the emergency contact and Principal;
 - medical questionnaire returns;
 - first-aid boxes.

12 Monitoring and review

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Signed: 

Date: 21/07/2025