



CASTLE MEAD
ACADEMY

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy. The Academy Council will review the policy annually, unless there are significant legislative changes in the interim period.

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1. Aims and purpose

At Castle Mead Academy we believe that:

Far from simply being an excuse to escape from school surroundings, well-planned and organised school trips or visits are an excellent way to expand on educational opportunities by taking learning beyond the classroom. They provide a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our pupils enabling them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Many scholars have had their horizons widened through being involved in all kinds of activities outside the school environment, particularly those pupils whose families aren't able to travel very far.

'Pupils can derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits with their school. In particular, they have the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom. Visits help to develop a pupil's investigative skills and longer visits in particular encourage greater independence.'

(Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits DFEE 1998)

In conjunction with LEA and DFES advice and guidelines on visits, Castle Mead Academy adheres to the following procedures for all educational visits.

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils.

'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.' (Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits DFEE 1998)

2. Guidelines

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at Castle Mead Academy.

Department for Education and Skills

- Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide 1988. (Reprinted in 2001)
- Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers. (DfES/0803/2001)
- Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits. Part 1 of a 3 - Part Supplement to Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits. (DfES/0564/2002)
- Standards for Adventure. Part 2 of a 3 - Part Supplement to Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (DfES/0565/2002)
- A Handbook for Group Leaders. Part 3 of a 3 - Part Supplement to Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits. (DfES/0566/2002)

HSE:

- Agricultural Information Sheet No 23 'Avoiding ill health at open farms: Advice to teachers'
- Five Steps to Risk Assessment INDG163

3. Responsibilities

In relation to all educational trips and visits the Principal will endeavour to ensure that:

- All visits comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the LEA and the school's Health and Safety policy.
- A competent group leader has been appointed, who is able to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

- All necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins.
- Risk assessments are complete and appropriate safety measures are in place.
- Supervisors on the visit are capable people trained to supervise pupils and have appropriate clearance.
- Parents/carers have signed consent forms.
- Arrangements have been made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the scholars.
- The mode of travel is appropriate.
- Travel times including departure and arrival back at school are known to parents/carers.
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover.
- The address and phone number of the visit's venue as well as contact details are left in the office prior to departing school.
- Office staff have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents/carers and the staff's and volunteers' next of kin.

In relation to an educational trip the group leader is responsible for the overall organisation, supervision and conduct of the visit and should ensure that:

- The Principal's prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place has been obtained.
- A deputy has been appointed in case of illness or incident requiring hospital treatment.
- The planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents/carers has been completed.
- Comprehensive risk assessments have been completed and countersigned by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator and Principal.
- The ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group and adheres to DFES guidelines.
- They have regard for the health and safety of the group at all times and consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health and safety of the pupils becomes unacceptable.
- All supervisors have details of the group leaders and school contact.

In relation to an educational trip other teachers and adults involved in a visit act as employees of the LEA or of the Trust. They will therefore be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours and acting under an agreement with the school's Principal if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours. As such they should:

- Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group.
- Care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent/carer would.
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline.

In a briefing meeting prior to the visit the group leader should identify and discuss with the pupils' expectations in relation to their behaviour and their responsibilities.

Pupils on the visit should:

- Follow the instructions of the leader and other adults.
- Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly.
- Look out for anything that might hurt anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it.

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. **The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.**

The group leader should ensure that parents/carers are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for residential visits.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents/carers for whom English is a second language.

Responsibilities of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator:

The role and responsibilities of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator at Castle Mead Academy include:

- To regularly visit The National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Offsite Visits and Learning outside the Classroom and Educational website.
- To keep an educational visits file containing risk assessments for each visit in the school office.
- To regularly update the Educational Visits policy and save a copy of the 'Planning and Educational visit check list' on the school network.
- To ensure that group leaders and staff helping on trips are competent.
- To liaise with group leaders over completion of risk assessments.
- To approve visits, alongside Principal, and upload relevant copies to the LEA using EVOLVE if approval is required. The LEA require residential or dangerous pursuits risk assessment sheets uploaded and sent on EVOLVE, 20 working days before the visit. If they have any issues they will ask to see the proposed risk assessment forms and supporting documentation.
- Ensure Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are in place.
- Ensure the issues identified on the preliminary visit have been resolved within the risk assessment.
- Ensure accreditation / verification of providers has been checked.
- Ensure correct ratio of adults to pupils and first aid supervision in place.
- Ensure transport and accommodation arrangements meet standards required by the LEA.
- To keep copies of accident or incident reports.
- Review systems and, on occasion, monitor and evaluate practise.

4. Planning off-site visits

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful and rigorous planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties, which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

Exploratory visit:

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit in order to:

- Ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit.
- Assess potential areas and levels of risk.
- Ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group.
- Ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of scholars.

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group, and to gather generic risk assessments.

Risk Assessment:

A comprehensive risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit. This should include the following considerations:

- What are the risks?
- Who will be affected by them?
- What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?
- What is the acceptable ratio of adults to pupils for this visit?

The group leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- The type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.
- The location.
- The competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff.
- Pupils with special educational or medical needs.
- The quality and suitability of available equipment.
- Seasonal conditions such as weather.

First Aid:

A qualified first-aider should be available and accessible at all times on an educational visit.

Supervision:

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to scholars for any off-site visit.

The factors to take into consideration include:

- Gender, age and ability of the group.
- Special educational needs pupils.
- Nature of activities.
- Type of any accommodation.

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. Where a high adult: scholar ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents/carers with appropriate clearance may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the pupil group.

For the protection of both adults and scholars, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a scholar.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell scholars what to do if they become separated from the party.

Transport and pupils:

Scholars using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- Wear seatbelt and stay seated while travelling on transport.
- Never throw things out of the transport vehicle's windows.
- Stay clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport.
- After leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road.

Scholars with special educational and medical needs:

The Principal will not exclude scholars with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort will be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures that need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Communicating with Parents/Carers:

The following information on matters that might affect scholar's health and safety is useful to parents/carers and should be included in letter to parents/carers prior to a visit:

- Dates of the visit.
- Times of departure and return.
- Mode(s) of travel.
- Names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults.
- Visit's objectives.
- Details of the activities planned.
- Money to be taken.
- Details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site.
- Clothing and equipment to be taken.

Parental consent:

Castle Mead Academy will seek consent for all educational visits. If parents/carers withhold consent absolutely the pupil will not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible.

Residential visits:

Approval and guidance for all residential visits must be obtained from the LA.

In relation to hostels and hotels the following needs to be considered:

- The group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the pupil's - staff will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance.
- The immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group.
- Access by staff to pupil rooms must be available at all times.
- Separate male and female sleeping areas for scholars and adults.
- Ensure that the whole party are aware of the layout of the accommodation its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key personnel.
- Security arrangements - where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors.
- Ensure that locks/shutters etc. work on all the rooms used by the group.
- Storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables.
- Adequate lighting - it is advisable to take torches.
- Provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs.
- Safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies).

Coastal visits:

The group leader and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school scholars on visits have occurred by or in the sea. There are many dangers on the coast and the group leader should bear the following points in mind in the risk assessment of a coastal activity:

- Tides and sandbanks are potential hazards so timings and exit routes should be checked.
- Ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags.
- Look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows.
- Some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds.
- The group should keep to designated path ways all times.

Paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group. Advice should be sort from the LA about any such activity.

Farm visits:

Taking pupils to a farm should be very carefully planned, and the risks to be assessed include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli food poisoning and other infections.

The proposed farm needs to be checked to ensure that it is well managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare; and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas. An exploratory visit should be carried out.

The basic rules for a farm visit indicate that scholars should not:

- Place their faces against the animals or their hands in their mouths after feeding them.
- Sample any animal foodstuffs.
- Drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities)
- Ride on tractors or other machines.
- Play in the farm area.

5. Castle Mead Academy - Check list:

- If there is sufficient interest in educational visit, ask the office to gather exact costing.
- Seek permission from the Principal to go ahead with trip, giving details of final costing, via the senior leadership team.
- Seek LA permission for all residential visits. Advice and guidance can be obtained from the LA.
- Once the above has been collected, send a letter home to parents with full details of visit, as set out previously above.
- Ensure that the trip is well planned and organised, including exploratory visit if required to make sure facilities are safe and adequate transport is arranged (see Group leader and Exploratory visit).
- Ensure that all risk assessments are complete and passed on to Principal for approval **one week** prior to going on visit. (See Risk assessment and model 4 and 5)
- Ensure that there is a sufficient ratio of supervisors to pupils (see supervision and HASPEV document, page 13).
- Ensure that parents/carers have signed consent forms/medical forms.
- Parents/Carers need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place - **'in loco parentis' - and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent/carer would.**
- Maintain regular communication with the office about remittance in case a further letter giving payment deadline needs to be sent out.

- Have briefing meeting to ensure that group supervisors have details of the visit including group lists, itinerary and emergency contact numbers.
- Before leaving school make sure that the office has details of staff and their next of kin as well as list of pupils going on visit. If it is a residential visit also leave a set of photographs of the scholars going.
- Ensure that 'Procedure for Planning a School Trip' is complete.

6. Emergency Procedures:

Introduction:

Despite good planning and organisation there may be accidents and emergencies, which will require on the spot response by the group leaders. Adequate provision for minor first aid must be available when the party is 'in the field' and the leader should ensure that the levels of supervision are sufficient to allow the group to be split where necessary. A mobile phone is to be used for communication amongst members of staff and for contacting school.

Activity centres should have their own emergency procedures. Details of these must be obtained in advance of the visit and compared with the recommended guidelines contained in the HASPEV document. If there is any doubt about the safety of the arrangements the trip should not take place.

Procedures:

Castle Mead Academy will appoint a member of the senior leadership team as the emergency contact for each visit. All major incidents should immediately be relayed to the school office, the office will then relay the problem to the senior leadership team, and especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention. For trips which go beyond the time of the school day, it is necessary for an out of hours mobile phone number for the senior leadership team member to be shared.

The group leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the office staff prior to leaving school premises, including the home contact details of parents/carers and next-of-kin. The group leader will also keep this list with them at all times during the trip.

All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back through the school's reporting systems.

The group leader should complete the following:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency.
- Make sure all other members of the party are accounted for and safe.
- If there are injuries immediately establish the names of the injured and their extent, so far as possible, and ring 999. Also inform on-site first aiders.
- Advise other party staff of the incident and that the emergency procedures are in operation.
- Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies the injured pupil/pupils to hospital.
- Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout and arrange for their early return to school.
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all pupils and staff are accounted for.
- Control access to phones until contact is made with the Principal emergency contact point or designated senior member of Senior Leadership Team, and he or she has had time to contact those directly involved.

Incident details:

Details of the incident to be given to the Principal or designated member of senior leadership team include:

- Name.
- Nature, date and time of incident.
- Location of incident.
- Details of injuries.
- Names and telephone numbers of those involved.
- Action taken so far.
- Telephone number for further contact.

Serious Incidents:

- For serious incidents where the media may be involved, the group leader or other party members must not discuss matters with the media. Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be divulged to the media.
- The Principal or designated senior member of the leadership team should arrange to contact parents/carers of those involved.
- **The group leader should write down, as soon as practicable, all relevant details while they are still fresh in the memory. Other staff members might also be asked to do so.**
- A record should be kept of the names and addresses of any witnesses.
- Any associated equipment should be kept in its original condition.
- Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.
- All accident forms should be completed as soon as possible and Insurers, the Health and Safety Executive should be informed as appropriate.