

Malmesbury Primary School



Educational Visits Policy

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Committee responsible	Standards
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Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Signed (Headteacher)	

Malmesbury Primary School Educational Visits Policy

This policy outlines the protocols for arranging educational visits (off-site) at Malmesbury Primary School. It has been written, and should be read, in conjunction with “There and Back Again” The Outdoor Education Handbook (Merton Council). The handbook is particularly useful in its provision of generic risk assessments but should be read by all teaching staff as it gives an excellent overview of the issues to be taken into account when planning a visit off-site. A copy can be found in the SLT office or on “staffshare – whole school admin – risk assessments – outdoor education handbook”.

Merton has adopted the National Guidelines for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom. The guidelines are available at www.oeapng.info This comprehensive site is managed by the Outdoor Education Advisers’ Panel; it is regularly updated and reflects best practice in safety management for outdoor education.

Initial Planning

At Malmesbury we believe that educational visits and off-site education should be an integral part of the broad and balanced curriculum which is provided for all children.

Educational visits should always be considered during the earliest stages of planning the curriculum for the coming term/year. A visit can be used as a stimulus for, or introduction to, a new theme or may be more useful once a topic has been introduced. Sometimes it is important that the children have some knowledge or have developed some specific skills before undertaking the visit.

Educational visits do not have to be major expeditions or expensive. A visit to the local shops, park, library, churchyard etc can be just as rewarding and creative as a spur to children’s engagement with their learning, as a whole day visit to a museum in Central London.

Consideration should also be given to the opportunities presented by having a visiting speaker, storyteller, theatre group etc to come into school to launch or reinforce a new theme.

Arranging a visit

Once the decision has been made to arrange a visit, a meeting should be held with the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) to agree suitable dates, appropriateness of the proposed visit, cost implications, travel arrangements, ratio of adults to children, any specific risk factors, curriculum links and to ensure that the proposed visit is the best way in which to enrich the children’s learning. The staff planning the visit will also complete a written risk assessment which must be approved by the EVC, Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Following this meeting any necessary bookings at the venue should be made, the dates and times confirmed and entered into the school diary and any travel tickets booked. Free TfL transport and reduced train fares can be arranged through the school office but these tickets have to be booked at least 2 weeks in advance.

The teacher designated to be in charge of the visit should then meet with the EVC to discuss staffing arrangements for the visit when specific details such as the activities planned, the transport arrangements and the needs of the children will be taken into consideration.

Whenever possible, teachers should visit the proposed venue prior to the visit taking place in order to plan fully for the time to be spent there, and also to make well-informed risk assessments of both the venue and the journey. Alternative options should also be considered e.g. in case of bad weather.

A letter should be sent to parents and carers outlining the purpose of the visit and giving all the necessary details with regard to timings, clothing requirements, lunch arrangements, voluntary contributions towards the cost, travel details etc. The letter should be checked by the EVC before it goes to parents. Class teachers must check that signed permission slips are received from all parents/carers, which includes an emergency telephone number from the parents.

A risk assessment should be completed by the lead teacher and given to the EVC for review. A copy of the completed and signed risk assessment along with a list of names of the children going on the visit and their responsible adults should be filed in the office. A copy of the risk assessment should also be taken on the visit. Blank risk assessment forms can be found in "Staff share – whole school admin – risk assessments". Previously completed risk assessments are also saved there.

All adults accompanying the visit should be made aware of their responsibilities during the day at a pre-visit meeting. Ratios of adults to children depend on the activity, the travel arrangements, age of the children, needs of individual children and the experience of the teachers involved. Final ratios must be agreed with the EVC.

On the day of the visit

A list of children going on the visit showing the groups they will be in and the name of their adult must be handed in to the school office ensuring that it has been amended to show any absentees. The mobile contact number of each adult should be included on the list.

Adults responsible for a group must check that any children requiring asthma pumps etc have them in their bags. One adult in each class should take a First Aid kit.

During the visit

All pupils and staff will wear Hi-Viz vests for the duration of the visit (pupils in yellow and staff in pink). If any accidents causing injury to a child or adult occur during the visit the action to be taken depends on the location in which it happens e.g. if in a museum, art gallery, tube station etc the staff at the venue should put their own policy in place e.g. calling a First Aider, ambulance etc whilst school staff concentrate on reassuring the child and keeping the rest of the group safe. If the accident occurs whilst walking in a public space it is the responsibility of the teacher to call for assistance – either to another member of staff or 999. If a child becomes unwell but does not require First Aid or an ambulance e.g. travel sickness, fainting etc depending on the timing of this it may be possible for a member of staff to return to school with the child, for a member of staff from school to come and collect the child or for a parent/carer to collect the child.

In all these situations school should be contacted and made aware of the situation. At all times the safety of the whole group is paramount.

If there are behaviour concerns about any child during a visit and the usual strategies/reminders have been put in place to no avail then school should be contacted as the safety of the group could be compromised. If at any time a child's safety is in question e.g. if they run away from an adult then the teacher should call 999 and then inform school of the situation. These situations are extremely unlikely to occur as teachers will have included the measures to put in place for children with a history of unsafe behaviours as part of their risk assessment.

If it seems likely that the group will be returning later than expected due to travel issues etc, school should be informed so that the message can be relayed to parents/carers.

If at any time the visit is unable to continue as planned e.g. a situation at the planned venue causes the visit to be cancelled at short notice and the group is already en route, school should be contacted. It may be possible to allow the visit to continue at another location or by altering the activities but the risk assessment will need to be reviewed and amended.

If the group becomes separated e.g. when catching a return bus/tube, it is the responsibility of each group leader to ensure the safe return of their group to school. If at all possible there should always be a teacher with each part of the separated groups. School should be informed if the group has become separated on a journey and there is not a teacher with a part of the group.

An adult must always be the last person to board any form of transport and the last person in the line when walking, to ensure that all children are accounted for.

On returning to school (if this is after the end of the school day) it is the teachers' responsibility to ensure that all children are collected or have permission to walk home alone (Years 5 and 6).

After the visit

It is good practice to evaluate every educational visit and to make a note of any way in which the visit could be enhanced. Successful visits/venues/contacts should be shared at staff meetings. It is important that children have an opportunity to reflect on the visit and to use their experiences as they continue to learn about a particular area of the curriculum. Evidence of the visit should be seen in displays, the children's work and on the school website.

Regular/weekly visits

Some visits take place regularly e.g. swimming, visits to the Schools Christian Resource Centre. It is not necessary to obtain parental permission each time the child participates in such an activity. At the beginning of the term/course a letter should go home outlining the details and giving all the dates on which the visit will take place. A risk assessment for the duration of the course should be completed but should be reviewed each week and revised as necessary.

Sometimes visits are very local e.g. a walk around the roads along the perimeter of the school site or a visit to the local park (a 5 minute walk) etc. In these cases, it is sufficient to send a letter stating that the visit will take place at some point in a particular week. Teachers can then make the final decision as to when the visit should take place taking weather conditions into account.

However, in all cases risk assessments must be completed which are dated for the day of the actual visit and all parents/carers must give written consent for their child to participate in the visit i.e. on a reply slip attached to the information letter.

Whenever a visit off-site is being planned, however local or brief it may be, teachers must always meet with the EVC to check that the correct protocols are being followed.

Residential visits

When planning a residential visit, parents/carers will need to be informed well in advance – at least 2 terms in advance – of the costs that will be involved. Following the payment of a non-refundable

deposit, payments can be made at regular intervals throughout the year in order to ease the financial stress on the families. Children for whom the Pupil Premium Grant is provided will be able to participate in the visit on payment of reduced fees. It is not the wish of the school to exclude, due to financial hardship, any child from such a visit. Parents/carers should be invited to speak to the EVC in confidence if they have any financial concerns in this respect.

Any visit which requires an overnight stay must be agreed by the Governors. A dialogue must be established between the EVC and the provider with the outcome being a transparent agreement on respective roles and responsibilities.

The range of activities that are to be undertaken should be clearly identified and should be the basis for informing the children, parents/carers and supervising staff. It is the responsibility of organisations which provide residential/outdoor activity centres to assess the risks of their provisions. It is not necessary to copy or scrutinise all such risk assessments but verification that they exist for the agreed programme must be received. The questions "Can you confirm that you have assessed the risks for our programme?" and "How can you verify this?" should be asked and a written confirmation received.

The party leader should complete a specific Residential Accommodation risk assessment in respect of the particular venue being used. This should cover any activities during the visit when the provider is not in charge of the activity e.g. during the night, free time, the journey etc

Medical consent forms, medical questionnaires (e.g. with regard to immunisations), dietary requirement forms, behaviour contract/agreements etc, as well as any information needed specific to the activities e.g. swimming competence must all be completed by parents/carers at least 4 weeks before the visit takes place.

A meeting for parents/carers must be held at least 6 weeks before the visit takes place in order to give detailed information and to give an opportunity for parents/carers to ask questions.

The school accepts that it places a huge responsibility on staff when asking them to participate in a residential visit and it is always up to the staff concerned to have the final decision as to whether or not such a visit should go ahead.

Sporting/Music/MFL events/competitions

The PE/Music/MFL Co-ordinator will select potential participants for events/competitions **3 weeks** prior to the event/competition and inform the relevant class teachers (BUT not the children).

The class teacher will monitor the behaviour, attitude and quality/quantity of learning the children produce and consider what needs to be done to ensure they cover the learning they will miss when attending the event/competition.

The co-ordinator will consult the class teacher before informing children of their selection and distributing permission slips/letters to participate – ideally a minimum of 1 week in advance of the event/competition.

The co-ordinators will be responsible for collecting all permission slips and ensure that their class teaching (and other duties) are covered whilst they attend the event/competition.