



Educational Visits Policy

Context

At Tavistock, we endeavour to provide children with broad and diverse learning experiences. We value the contribution that outdoor learning has to every child's health, enjoyment and wellbeing.

Our policy and procedures are formulated in conjunction with advice, guidance and training provided by Hampshire County Council Outdoor Education, PE & D of E Service and their documentation and guidance.

We believe that education outside the classroom has enormous benefits for children, both in their learning and in their physical, social and emotional development. It allows all children to have memorable experiences that lead to memorable learning. Good practice evidence and research from many agencies show that when outdoor learning and outdoor education ventures are well-planned with clear aims and objectives, alongside management and implementation strategies, they are of real quality.

The Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto: "We believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances."

Types of visits and outdoor opportunities: Visits should provide children with first hand experiences and learning opportunities. They may range in scope:

- On-site: use of the school grounds
- Local: the neighbourhood of the school, within reasonable walking distance
- Away from base: where transport is required, limited to one day.

Organisation and management

Off-site visits should be organised and managed following guidelines set by Hampshire County Council, principally through the documents 'Off-site activity and educational visits' and 'Safety in adventurous activity', but also via the website and support services (in particular for approval, risk or benefit management).

Off-site visits and educational visits are fully integrated into the ethos and culture of the school, and all key policies are considered for their relevance and adaptations or agreements as required. Specific relevant policies that also apply to offsite visits include (but are not limited to):

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- SEND
- Health and Safety

- Curriculum policies
- Administration of medicines

At least one member of staff from each year group is required to pass the Outdoor Leader Award credited by Hampshire County Council. This lasts for 5 years.

Governors are kept informed of the overall policy and programme, as well as being given feedback on specific events and ventures.

It is important to note that many straightforward visits are managed entirely in accordance with these policies and, apart from simple additional considerations such as the site and transportation of the children, are managed as they would be in school contexts. We aim to take the ethos, culture and challenge to learning in our school into all of our outdoor learning and off-site contexts.

Communicating with parents

A medical form will be collected at the start of the year for each child, with a request to parents to keep the school updated with any changes. When letters detailing trips throughout the year go out, parents will be again reminded to update the school with any relevant changes. The school undertakes to ensure that all trips are costed accurately, with a minimum of three quotations for the cost of travel. Parents will be requested to supply a voluntary contribution towards the cost visits, with provision made for those households who may require assistance towards these costs. Pupil Premium funding will be used for specific children.

A variety of transport may be used, following Council guidance. In the main, this will be coach travel; solely using companies approved Hampshire County Council.

Supervision

Strategies for supervision of children are taken from 'Off-site activities and educational visits' and include agreements on adult/child ratios, which are never exceeded and frequently improved. The strategies to be used are dependent on the risk factors of the group or individuals concerned, the site or location, the leaders present (including ratios) and other factors such as transport, weather and so on. These are agreed as part of the planning process and can be adapted to changing circumstances (for example, adoption of alternative activities should it be deemed necessary or prudent so to do).

Inclusion

At Tavistock, we are committed to offering an inclusive curriculum to ensure the best possible progress for all of our children whatever their needs or abilities. All our children are valued equally, regardless of their abilities and behaviours. The needs of pupils requiring special education are met primarily through providing a differentiated and appropriately planned, inclusive curriculum.

Within this context, it should be noted that there are three types of outdoor learning opportunities:

1. Those which are provided as part of the National Curriculum, and hence a statutory requirement. Inclusion of all is required. At present, we do not undertake such activities.
2. Those where comprehensive coverage (such as a whole class) is desirable, but suitable alternatives can be arranged at school. National Curriculum and similar entitlements are not lost as this is an enhancement or enrichment activity. Inclusion of all is desired but is not required. Choice or other factors may mean that not all attend.
3. Enhancement or enrichment activities that demand a clear choice as an optional extra. Personal choice and other factors mean that it is quite likely that not all will attend.

It is also important to distinguish between these curriculum-centred differences, and those concerning the health and safety of a child, and their effect on other children and staff. Any decision on inclusion when such factors are included must, as normal, take 'every reasonable step' to include a child. However, if these reasonable steps cannot ensure their safety and/or that of others, then they may not be able to attend that particular venture. The section 'Equal opportunities and inclusion strategies in practice' within 'Off-site activity and educational visits' can provide additional clarification here.

Ensuring excellent behaviour of all children on trips, where they represent the school, is an important part of the planning process. If children exhibit Challenging Behaviour at school, the group leader must ensure that they have discussed the inclusion of the child with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Adaptation of the activities may be appropriate, with additional control measures potentially a requirement of including such a child. These may include requesting the child's parent to accompany them, or ensuring that they have a named adult who is responsible solely for them. A copy of the Challenging Behaviour Risk Assessment should be taken by the group leader on the visit.

Safeguarding

Our Child Protection Policy follows and includes off-site activities. Suitable checks are made on all volunteers and other adults who support these ventures in line with guidance. External providers / outdoor centres are drawn from the Outdoor Education, PE & DofE Service vetted database, which confirms that management checks are in place. Where other providers are to be used, reference must be made to the Outdoor Education, PE & DofE Service beforehand, to ensure that suitable steps are taken.

Risk-Benefit Assessment

When planning any off-site activity, the following steps should be considered:

Analysis of the benefits of an activity are translated into clear objectives and expectations

1. An assessment of the risk of harm and its likelihood is made, followed by putting clear control measures in place so that they can be satisfactorily managed,

2. A pre-visit by key-staff is considered an essential part of the reviewing of the location and its ability to realise the benefits and be managed. Very well-know sites may be checked prior to re-visit by contacting key staff at the venue,
3. All our regular off-site locations are managed by a site-specific agreement with the Outdoor Education, PE & DofE Service detailing our management procedures.

Incidents and Emergencies

Guidance from the Outdoor Education, PE & D of E Service is used to prepare leader and base-contact checklists and contact details. The incident management checklist is also available for use. The Children's Services Incident and Emergency 'Establishment Plan' has been used as the basis for all incident and emergency response. The school Critical Incident Plan will be used where required, allowing implementation of a clear hierarchy of actions. Staff must ensure that they are fully aware of procedures to be followed should an emergency arise, particularly the need for notifying the school using the emergency phone number, to allow the management of an incident. Any concerns or 'near-misses' are should be referred to the Senior Leadership Team for discussion, to consider changing strategies and reported to the Outdoor Education, PE & DofE Service where necessary. Monitoring and Review: This policy is reviewed regularly, with reference to changes in regulations, guidance or other circumstances.