

BALLYDOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Educational Visits Policy

Introduction

This policy covers all educational visits that occur outside the school premises. This ranges from walks around the locality to residential visits of several days' duration. It includes also Outdoor and Adventurous Activities.

The purpose of the Policy is to;

- * Provide guidelines to help minimise risks to staff and pupils
- * Ensure that identified procedures are correctly followed
- * Provide parents with reassurance that one of the prime interests of the school is the safety and health of pupils
- * Enable school to consider legal requirements in relation to best practice
- * Ensure that each trip or activity has clear aims and objectives
- * Identify the relationship of trips and other activities to the curriculum
- * Clarify procedures and lines of responsibility
- * Consider risk assessment

Aims and Objectives for Educational Visits

Our fundamental aim at Ballydown Primary School is to provide the best possible education for all our pupils. It is the aim of the school to place a high value on diversity, treating every member of the school community as an individual, and meeting the needs of all, taking account of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. In doing this, we aim, therefore, to raise the achievement of all the children in the school.

Educational Visits, Outdoor and Adventurous Activities are an integral part of the children's education at Ballydown Primary School. They offer opportunities to enrich the curriculum, enabling the children to have first-hand experience of a wide range of topics and activities. On residential visits especially, there is opportunity to develop social skills which have a long-lasting beneficial effect.

Nature of Educational Visits

The school runs a wide range of Educational Visits. These may include:

- Walks along the Lisnaree Road, including the old railway line and River Bann.
- Walks in Banbridge Town centre and Solitude Park
- Half-Day visits by coach to places of interest to support the curriculum.
- Day visits to places of historical, environmental, cultural or other interest to support specific curriculum areas.
- An annual 2-day non-residential visit for pupils in P5 to an Outdoor Pursuits Centre.
- An annual 4 day residential educational visit to London for P7 pupils

Health & Safety

The school follows the SELB Educational Visits- Best Practice Guidance 2009' guidance. Reference is also made to three further more recent documents:

- A Handbook for Group Leaders
- Standards for LEAs in overseeing Educational Visits
- Standards for Adventure

Note: The SELB has an Outdoor Education Adviser, who is able to give support and advice, and who has the responsibility of approving listed Adventure Activities.

Personnel

The school's Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) is the Vice-Principal Mr T. G. Russell. This school Principal has the overall responsibility for ensuring all aspects of each trip is following the guidelines laid out in this policy.

For each visit, of whatever duration, a Group Leader is identified.

The Board of Governors also has a specific role to play in all Educational Visits.

The roles for these are defined in detail in 'Standards for LEAs in overseeing Educational Visits. In brief:

The **Board of Governors** is responsible for:

- ensuring that guidance is available to inform the school policy, practices and procedures relating to the health & safety of pupils on educational visits;
- ensuring that the Principal is supported in matters relating to educational visits and that she has the appropriate time and expertise to fulfil her responsibilities;
- asking questions about a visit's educational objectives and how they will be met;
- ensuring that visits are approved as necessary by the SELB before bookings are confirmed;

- ensuring that the Principal has taken all reasonable and practicable measures to include pupils with special educational needs or medical needs on a visit;
- ensure that they review procedures with the Principal on an annual basis.

The function of the **EVC** is to:

- ensure educational visits meet the DENI and school's requirements;
- support the Governors with approval and other decisions;
- assess the competence of prospective leaders and staff;
- ensure that Risk Assessment meets requirements;
- organise training and induction;
- ensure parents are informed and have given consent;
- organise emergency arrangements;
- keep records of visits, accidents or incident reports;
- review systems and monitor practice.

The **Principal** is responsible for:

- ensuring approval for visits is given, including liaising with the SELB where appropriate;
- ensuring that the Board of Governors is made aware of visits;
- ensuring that arrangements are in place for the educational objectives of a visit to be inclusive;
- being aware of the need for Best Value;
- ensuring that all accreditation or verification of providers has been met;
- ensuring that visits are evaluated to inform the operation of future visits;
- ensuring that each visit has an appropriately competent Group Leader;
- ensuring that all teachers are aware of the LA guidance;
- ensuring that the school has an emergency procedure in case of a major incident, which has been discussed and reviewed by staff. This emergency procedure must include getting support from the LA's public relations unit. See also the school's Critical Incidents Procedures.

The **Group Leader** has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit, including direct responsibility for the pupils' health, safety and welfare. The Group Leader must:

- be approved to carry out the visit, suitably competent and knowledgeable about the school and SELB's policy and procedures;
- plan and prepare for the visit and assess the risks;
- ensure the appropriate ratio of pupils is appropriate to age and activity of pupils
- define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and pupils and ensure effective supervision of what they do.
- carry mobile phone with relevant contact numbers
- ensure Hi-visibility vests are worn where necessary for pupils' safety.

Adult volunteers who are not teachers at the school must:

- understand and agree expectations of them;
- understand their relationship to the pupils, teachers and visit leaders;
- recognise the limits of their responsibility;
- ensure that they are not left in sole charge of pupils unless this has been formally agreed through a risk assessment;
- follow instructions from teachers;
- raise concerns for pupil welfare with the Group Leader.

Parents must:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s);
- sign the consent form;
- give the group leader relevant information about their child's health and dietary requirements which might be relevant to the visit.

Procedure for Running Educational Visits

A set procedure is followed for all Educational Visits, although the nature of each visit will determine the level of preparation required. Each Group Leader will, in liaison with the EVC, complete the Educational Visits Checklist (attached). A visit will proceed only when the EVC is satisfied that all reasonable preparations have been made.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using Ballydown's Risk Assessment Evaluation Form. The risk assessment will decide the adult:child ratio for each visit. The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- what are the risks?
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit? (See section on Supervision.)

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;
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For adventurous activities, visits which involve overnight stays, or visits abroad it is sensible to have at least one trained first-aider in the group. The group leader should have a working knowledge of first aid and all adults in the group should know how to contact emergency services.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first-aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The Head Teacher should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed. The contents of a first-aid kit will depend on what activities are planned.

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. The lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

Participation

Pupils should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities. During the visit they should not be coerced into activities they fear.

Pupils whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such pupils will return home early.

Information to pupils

It is for the group leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information. Pupils should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit / activity;
- background information about the place to be visited;
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- what standard of behaviour is expected from pupils;
- who is responsible for the group;
- what to do if approached by a stranger;
- what to do if separated from the group
- emergency procedures
- rendezvous procedures.

Transport and pupils

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

- arrive on time and wait for the transport away from the road, track, etc.
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- wear your seatbelt and stay seated while travelling on transport;
- make sure your bags do not block aisles on the transport
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- never throw things out of the transport vehicle's windows;
- never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- never run about while transport is moving or pass someone on steps or stairs;
- never kneel or stand on seats or otherwise impede the driver's vision
- never distract or disturb the driver;
- 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;
- if you have to cross roads to get to the transport always use the Green Cross Code
- if you feel unwell while travelling, tell a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group.

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

The Principal will ensure pupils with special educational or medical needs are not excluded from school visits. Every effort should 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 may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Communicating with Parents / Guardians

Parents 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 would. The following information on matters that might affect pupils health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in letter to parents / guardians prior to a visit:

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- visit's objectives;
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation and medical cover. Any cover to be arranged by the parents, if appropriate, will be requested;
- clothing and equipment to be taken;
- money to be taken;
- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to.

Parental consent

Ballydown Primary School will seek consent for:

- visits involving young children;
- adventure activities;
- visits to UK mainland;
- other residential visits.

If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should 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. If the parents give a conditional consent the Principal will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not. The School's parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

Residential visits

Hotels and Hostels

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the group leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the young people's – we 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 student rooms must be available at all times;
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults;
- ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out 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 bring a torch;
- provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs;
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

Coastal visits

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. At Ballydown, 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;
- establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc;
- 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;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to the path at all times. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

Swimming

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group.

Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit, will **not** be allowed for Ballydown pupils. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One teacher should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.

Where paddling is to be allowed on a visit, a ratio of 1 adult:4 children is a minimum.

Farm visits

Ballydown recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm will be very carefully planned, and the risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections.

The proposed farm will 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 basis rules for a farm visit will be:

Financing Educational Visits

The school complies with the Education Act 1996 (section 451), and procedure is outlined in the school's Charging and Remissions policy.

Emergency Procedures

It is the responsibility of the EVC/Principal to ensure that emergency arrangements are in place for all Educational Visits. This includes:

- ensuring that all involved know who is the emergency contact point in the school, for each visit.
- having access to an emergency (Critical Incidents) plan appropriate to the visit;
- ensuring that the contact point – or rota – is effective throughout the visit;
- ensuring that parental contact information is up to date and accessible.

Policy Review

As with all policies, it is the responsibility of the Governors to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and the practice that it describes. On a day to day basis this responsibility is delegated to the Principal who will report back to the governing body as appropriate.

This policy is a working document, and will be reviewed every three years.

Reviewed On:	Date of Next Review: Sept. 2017	Date Reviewed:
	Date of Next Review Sept 2019	Date Reviewed:
	Date of Next Review: Sept 2021	Date Reviewed:

Ratio Requirements

	Age Group	Ratios
PRE-SCHOOL	Nursery	one adult for up to a maximum of six young people 1:6
PRIMARY	Foundation Stage (P1/P2) 4-6yrs	one adult for up to a maximum of ten young people 1:10
PRIMARY	Key Stages 1 and 2 (P3-P7) 6-11yrs	one adult for up to a maximum of fifteen young people 1:15

The key factors which should be taken into consideration in the establishment of appropriate ratios are as follows:

- nature and location of activities to be undertaken
- age and ability of the group
- pupils with special educational and/or medical needs
- day visit or overnight stay
- mixed or single gender group
- experience of supervisory staff in off-site supervision
- duration and nature of the journey
- type of any accommodation
- competence of supervisory staff, both general and in relation to specific learning activities/requirements of the organisation/location to be visited
- competence and behaviour of the pupils
- prevailing weather conditions and time of year
- duration and location of planned activities

BALLYDOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL VISITS – CHECKLIST 1

Note: ‘Completed’ means that all measures taken comply with guidelines contained in the fuchsia folder ‘Educational Visits’.

Focus	Completed	Comment
Pre-visit completed		
Risk Assessment form completed		
Parents and Governors informed		
All parental consent received for all activities		
Payment contributions sought according to SELB guidance		
Accommodation, security and fire certification checked		
Transport arranged and parents informed		
Dietary requirements forwarded (where applicable)		
Group Leader informed of all relevant medical conditions/special needs		
Emergency procedures in place		
Appropriate number of other adults arranged and briefed		
Insurance arranged where necessary		
Vetting procedures completed on personnel		

BALLYDOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL VISITS – CHECKLIST 2

This checklist is to be completed by the Group Leader for every Educational Visit, and a copy given to the EVC before the visit is undertaken.

Place/Activity	
Date(s)	
Time of Visit	
Category of planned activity	
Group Leader	
Additional Group Leader*	
Purpose of Visit	
Children (numbers and classes)	
Accompanying adults	
Transport arrangements	
Evaluation (to be completed on return)	

*The designated Group Leader may change during the course of a visit if the visit requires specialist leadership – this is especially the case for Adventurous Activities

Categories of Educational Visits

Category 1

Visits which take place on a regular basis. (Non hazardous) and occur largely within establishment hours e.g. sporting fixtures, swimming pool visits and outings

Category 2

One-off day /evening excursions (Non hazardous) e.g. field study trips, theatre visits, business/education visits, regional sporting fixtures

Category 3

Residential visits of one or more nights within the UK or Ireland. (Non hazardous) e.g. visits to residential centres, field centres, youth and school exchanges

Category 4

Residential visits outside the UK or Ireland (Non hazardous) e.g. international exchange visits, sporting events, cultural activities and international community work

Category 5

Hazardous Activities – residential and non-residential as exemplified below:

Hill walking

Fieldwork

Cycling/ mountain biking

Orienteering

Rock climbing/abseiling

Caving and potholing

Kayaking

Open canoeing

Windsurfing

Dingy sailing

Skiing/ Snowboarding

Horse riding

Angling

Waterskiing

Rafting

Rowing

Bouldering/ Gorge walking

Swimming in open water

Educational Visit Incident Record Form

1 Name of School _____

2 Name of Group Leader _____

3 Date, Time and Location of Incident _____

4 Name and address(es) of witness(es)

(a).....

(b).....

(c).....

5 Please state in your own words what happened including details of names and status of those involved

6 Describe what action was taken (e.g. details of First-Aid, police or medical involvement)

Signed..... Date

The information on this form is requested for the purpose of organising an educational visit. The information is covered by the provisions of the Data Protection Act, 1998. Your signature to the form is deemed to be an authorisation by you to allow the school to process and retain the information for the purpose(s) stated.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment can be undertaken by identifying the hazards and then assessing the risk.

Note that a hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm. Risk is the likelihood of harm from the hazard being realised.

Risk = Probability of occurrence x Consequence of outcome

The level of risk can be calculated by multiplying probability by consequence, so providing a theoretical maximum score of 25.

If the resulting score totals 10 or more then active management of the risk is required.

The vital issue is whether the risk can be managed.

If there are doubts that the risk is manageable, then it is advisable to change the activity and/or the location.

Where there is considerable concern as to the outcome, it is better to abandon and redesign the educational visit than to expose young people to an unacceptable level of risk.

Probability of occurrence	Score	Consequence of outcome
Highly unlikely to ever occur	1	Slight inconvenience
May occur but very rarely	2	Minor injury requiring First-Aid
Does occur but only rarely	3	Medical attention required
Occurs from time to time	4	Major injury leading to hospitalisation
Likely to occur often	5	Fatality or serious injury leading to disability

