

# **Highwood Primary School**

## **Health and Safety Policy for Visits for children**

**January 2013**

## **Introduction**

Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The Head and 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.

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 health and safety 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.

## **Aims**

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.

These visits begin with short excursions into the local area in the Early Years, and progress to residential experiences during Key Stage 2.

## **Organising a visit**

### **Level 1 visits (day trips)**

Day trips are organised by the class teacher in conjunction with the school office and offsite visits coordinator. They must seek and obtain the approval of the Head before any commitment is made on behalf of the school.

### **Level 2 visits (residential trips)**

The Head will appoint a party leader for Level 2 visits (residential trips.) Where possible, this will normally be a member of the senior leadership team (SLT)

For all level 1 and 2 trips, the Head, offsite visits coordinator and school office will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks, and that the letter from our coach company assures us their drivers too have had police checks;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example a swimming facility).

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 he/she is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us 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.

### **Risk assessment**

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?

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 party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They 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. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

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. A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue.

The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to police checks by consulting the CRB list located in the school office. A copy of the completed risk assessment should be sent to the offsite visits coordinator to authorise. No children will be allowed on trips if risk assessments have not been carried out.

### **Transport**

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for.

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.

Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double checking that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks. It is also the group leaders responsibility to ensure that children have booster seats where necessary.

### **Communication with parents**

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any level 1 off-site visits. Activities which take place as part of the curriculum and involve being off site for a short period of time eg: local environment walk do not need parental consent. However, they should be informed in advance that the activity is taking place and its purpose.

Funding for off-site activities is provided by the parents. Children on free school meals pay half the cost of the trip

No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution.

### **Further health and safety considerations**

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, 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.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that 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.

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 party leader should complete an individual risk assessment and also discuss their concerns with the Head.

### **Governing Bodies**

Where an establishment has a governing body, it must:

- ensure that the establishment is following the CSF Policy and guidance on visits and other relevant Council policies;
- check that those organising visits have the required level of competence for the type of visit;
- check proposals for certain types of visit, including those involving an overnight stay or travel outside the UK. Where necessary seek further specialist advice;
- check that establishment managers can demonstrate that their plans:
- comply with the Council's and establishment's safety policy;
- have specific and clearly stated educational objectives;
- include reasonable measures to include those with special needs;
- are provided early, to allow plenty of time for pre-visits etc.
- ensure that those organising visits have sufficient support, time and resources to fulfil their responsibilities;
- be aware that their role is to ask questions, not to advise or become directly involved in risk assessments.

It is not expected that governors should check arrangements for every visit.

### **Categories of Visit & Authorisation**

All visits must be authorised by a competent manager. This would normally be the Head unless local service arrangements require a higher level of authorisation.

Visits have been classified into three levels. The following table outlines the levels, authorisation and training requirement for the organisation of the visit.

<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>Type of visit (examples)</b>	<b>Authorisation</b>	<b>Further checks / monitoring</b>
<b>1</b>	Activities that would not expose those taking part to greater risk than that experienced on a day to day basis. Regular visits of one day or less duration (swimming, theatre trips, environmental studies, etc)	Headteacher Single, annual authorisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk assessment to be reviewed annually by Group leader.</li> <li>• Visit organisation to be checked by Headteacher annually using Level 1 audit checklist, (Form OV 1)</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	Non routine activities and residential stays. Adventurous and hazardous activities run by licensed/accredited centres.	Headteacher Each visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each visit organisation must be checked by Manager using audit checklist.</li> <li>• Providers of adventurous and hazardous activities must be licensed for adventurous activities and/or accredited under non-statutory schemes</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	These would include overseas visits and adventurous activities, except those covered by level 2.	Headteacher Each visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit organisation must be checked by Manager using Level 2 &amp; 3 audit checklist, (Form OV 2)</li> <li>• Risk assessments for adventurous activities <u>must</u> have been assessed by a Technical adviser.</li> <li>• Providers must be licensed for adventurous activities and/or accredited under non-statutory schemes.</li> <li>• Audit Checklists and approval forms must be forwarded to the Offsite Visits Adviser for monitoring purposes.</li> </ul>



## **Training and Competence**

### **Managers and Visits co-ordinators**

CSF has set up Offsite Visits Management courses. These courses are provided to ensure that the council meets its legal duties with respect to health and safety training and that managers fully understand CSF's procedures and requirements with regard to offsite visits. At least two senior members of staff from an establishment must attend the CSF Offsite Visits Management Course (e.g. Head and visits co-ordinator).

### **Visits Organisers/Group leaders/Supervisors**

Those leading and organising or supervising visits must be competent to do so. The manager or visits co-ordinator must assess competence, taking account of their staff's ability to lead, manage and control the children partaking in the visit. Competence on specific activities may also be necessary, as well as knowledge of the venue being visited.

## **Emergencies**

Emergency procedures must be drawn up as part of the planning stage. This must include nominating someone as an emergency contact at establishment level and linking into the council's existing critical incident procedures.

**The group leader** would usually take charge in an emergency and would need to ensure that emergency procedures are in place and that back up cover is arranged. The group leader should liaise with the representative of the tour operator if one is being used.



**Pre-arranged contacts.** The Emergency Contact at establishment level should have all the necessary information about the visit.

**Insurance**

Managers must ensure that, well before the departure date, there is adequate insurance cover for the visit, taking account of the activities being planned.

Insurance policies are legal documents. They will impose conditions, limit the cover, and exclude certain people or activities. Insurance companies/travel firms can advise on particular types of insurance. However, the following are examples of cover which may be appropriate to many types of visits:

- Employers' liability (this is covered by HCC);
- public liability;
- personal accident cover for teachers/staff/other adults and children;
- cost of medical treatment.

**Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored by the Head and will be reviewed every 2 years or before if necessary.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Date for review:** January 2011





