



Caldecote Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

October 2021

1. Rationale

Every year many visits are made from Caldecote Primary School for a wide variety of purposes. These visits range from a half-hour walk around the village to a four night residential trip. The range of activities is similarly wide. The purpose of this Policy and accompanying information is to ensure that every trip made from this School combines the safest possible environment for children and the greatest possible educational benefit, both in terms of the National Curriculum and in personal and social development. All trips will, wherever possible, be accessible to all children in the class, enabling them to gain confidence, acquire skills and build positive experiences.

2. Introduction

- All schools are required to offer children a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for the opportunities and experiences of adult life
- At Caldecote Primary School we seek to ensure that the National Curriculum is delivered to all children, regardless of social background, race, gender or differences in ability. All are entitled to the development of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. To enrich the curriculum for our children, we also offer a range of 'learning outside the classroom' (LOTC), educational visits and other activities that add to and complement what they learn in school.
- Caldecote Primary School acknowledges the many benefits of LOTC and is committed to supporting educational visits and activities and enrich the learning opportunities of children and young people. The school works within the requirements set out in Cambridgeshire County Council's Educational Visits Policy and the formally adopted *Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel 'Employer guidance'* (available at <http://oeapng.info/>). All school staff will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when the policy is reviewed.

3. Organisation

- There is an Educational Visits Leader (EVC) who is responsible for ensuring visits are approved as necessary and that all visits approved can be accommodated within the timetable. The EVC has received relevant training to:
 - Grant verbal permission that a leader may plan a visit after deciding that the timetabling and ethos of the visit are acceptable
 - Check and approve that the planning and risk management for visits follows employer policy and guidance, and to liaise with the LA as required

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- Ensure that there is sample monitoring of visits in keeping with the recommendations of employer policy and guidance
 - The EVC will ensure that visit leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained as required and specifically competent to carry out the responsibilities allocated to them for all visits. Visit leaders will have overall charge of the visits they lead, which will effectively be supervised with an appropriate level of staffing.
 - When joining the school, parents will be issued with a document which gives permission for local and other trips. This should be signed, returned to school and held on file. If parents do not wish to sign this permission, they will receive individual permission slips for each trip that is arranged. Relevant visit information is shared with parents beforehand. If we do not receive permission, a child will not be able to participate.

4. Procedures

- Staff wishing to plan and undertake a visit (prospective Visit leaders) should first seek permission from the EVC to plan a visit. Approval from the LA will be required for all overseas, residential and adventurous activities, be it provider or establishment led. These visits must be logged on the EVOLVE system which will automatically pass these visits to the LA for approval. The EVC will also need to approve the visit via EVOLVE.
- Visits requiring LA approval should be submitted four working weeks before a visit is set to take place.
- If the venue is new the visit leader must get clearance from the EVC that it is LA approved before making a booking.
- Parents will be given notice as early as possible about the details of visits, especially when due to take place beyond usual school hours.

5. Charging for school activities

- The EVC and visit leaders should take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996, the DfE guidance Health & safety: for local authorities, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies (February 2014) and detailed in the Charges for Off-Site Activity guidance (published in the OEAP guidance 2017).
- All education within school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum. There are circumstances when school can make charges for trips and visits and these are administered under our Charging and Remissions Policy. There is further information in Appendix I.

6. Curriculum links

- All learning outside the classroom, visits and activities support and enrich the curriculum but are not an activity required specifically by the syllabus for a public examination, or to fulfil a statutory duty relating to the National Curriculum. There are also a number of people who visit our school to

support our work e.g. authors, local police, local church personnel, sports coaches etc.

7. Risk Assessments

- The school follows the LA guidance on risk management. Any risk assessments should identify significant risks and take measures to control these, through proper planning by staff leading the visit.
- A risk assessment must be undertaken prior to all educational visits and off-site activities. It is the responsibility of the member of staff organising the visit or activity to complete the risk assessment and this must be approved by the EVC. The risk assessment must include the SEN/medical needs of group and which adults are supporting.
- The school has a standard form for risk assessment. This should be completed, and an electronic copy saved in the Risk Assessment folder in staff share. There must also be a hard copy which is signed by the EVC and is given to the office. Hard copies must also be given to any adult who is accompanying the trip and they should be fully briefed and made aware of their responsibilities.
- 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 that s/he 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. If there are concerns about a child participating in an education visit / residential for any other reason eg behaviour, the school will assess the risk for the health and safety of the individual child and the rest of the group. The school will endeavour to do all it can to be inclusive whilst ensuring everyone is kept safe and may put in measures, such as a child attending for part of the time, being accompanied by a parent, etc.

8. Pre-Visits

- In order to undertake a full and comprehensive assessment of risks, a pre-visit is useful but not compulsory. Even where the visit is made regularly, risks should be re-assessed in light of current plans. It is usually the responsibility of the visit organiser to carry out a pre-visit.

9. Ratio of adults to pupils

- We follow LA guidance on the minimum adult/pupil ratios for day visits:
 - **Reception age: 1:5**
 - **Years 1, 2, 3: 1:10**
 - **Years 4, 5, 6: 1:15**
- All visits that are outside the school locality will include a teacher. These ratios are **minimum** and factors regarding SEN, medical needs, type of activity, experience and competence of supporting adults, duration, behavioural history of the group, must all be considered when decided ratios. For residential trips ratios may be enhanced.

10. Voluntary help

- We very much rely on the support and goodwill of our volunteer helpers. Volunteers will normally be people very well known to the school as either parents or governors.
- Volunteers will be fully briefed about their responsibilities and how they must follow the instructions of the visit leader who retains overall responsibility.
- As far as possible, we will operate a fair and equitable system when appointing volunteers to support trips, but the school retains the right to make the final decision.
- All volunteers must read and sign the Volunteer agreement and provide proof of identity.
- Parent volunteers will not directly supervise their own child(ren).
- If it is required that a volunteer will need to accompany a residential trip, they must obtain a DBS check prior to the trip.

11. Transport

- Parents will always be informed as to the type of transport being provided for an educational visit
- Coaches: seat belts must be provided and worn at all times whilst on the coach (even when stationary). The visit leader is responsible for the conduct and behaviour of the children whilst they are travelling. The school must ensure that there is sufficient supervisory staff to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children whilst travelling. Children **must not** sit in the front seats or **by an emergency exit**. Adults must spread themselves out throughout the coach to ensure they are able to supervise all children.
- Public transport: can also be used for local journeys. An increased adult/pupil ratio should be considered, and close supervision must be ensured.
- Parents transporting pupils: this helps to reduce cost and can be used for local events. The guidelines set out in appendix II must be strictly adhered to and the Parent Volunteer Driver agreement must be completed **before** the trip.

9. Policy Review

The Policy statement will be reviewed in line with the rolling programme of Policy reviews.

Headteacher:

Date:

Chair of Governors:

Date:

Appendix I

CHARGES & ADMINISTRATION FOR VISITS & TRIPS

After careful consideration, we have decided we will need to change how we administer visits and trips that are additional to the statutory curriculum.

The reasons for the changes:

- Budget reductions mean we have had to cut office hours
- Clerical assistant spends over 80% of her time chasing parents for permissions and payments
- A small number of families routinely give permission but don't make payments for trips

A reduced budget means we have less cash-flow and therefore do not have reserves to cover the cost of services such as trips, which must now be paid in advance. Schools are not allowed to make a profit on trips (i.e. we cannot 'round' costs up) but nor is it fair that we pay for trips for some families and not others (except in hardship cases where we are very happy to work with a family to find the best solution). When planning a trip, the overall cost of travel and entry will be shared equally amongst all the children who have permission to go on the trip. If a parent doesn't pay currently this means the school has to cover that cost. Sadly, increasingly we are finding that more parents are choosing not to pay or are paying late which means many hours chasing payments. We cannot continue to allow this to happen.

The changes we are making:

- In line with our charging and remission policy, whilst all trips enhance and enrich learning they are not 'an activity required specifically by the syllabus for a public examination, or to fulfil a statutory duty relating to the National Curriculum'
- As trips and visits are **additional** to the curriculum, payment is not voluntary
- Signing a permission slip will also mean you have signed to say you agree to pay the cost in full **before** the trip
- There may be a slight increase to the original cost if numbers going reduce due to non-payers or permission being received too late
- There will only be **one reminder** sent to chase permissions / payments
- A clear deadline will be set for permission and payment (usually 10 days before). If this deadline is missed your child(ren) will not be able to go on the trip

These changes have been made after very careful thought as we really don't want any children to miss out. However, the current situation cannot continue. To illustrate our point: on the day before a recent trip, we only had permission for 15 out of 28

children (payment for 13). The office had to spend most of the day tracking down parents to get their permission. Some parents didn't want their child to go but hadn't let school know. Consequently, school has had to pick up the additional costs (approx. £50).

Appendix II

PARENTS TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

To help reduce costs for parents (e.g. cost of coach to Comberton Village College = £220 minimum), we have been successfully using parent volunteers to transport children to local events for a number of years. However, after concerns were raised by some parents, we have recently had to review this practice and have sought advice from our Educational Visits Director, the Local Authority Health & Safety department and the Outdoor Educational Advisory Panel.

I am pleased to let you know that the advice from all parties is that we can continue to use parent volunteers but need to have more stringent checks in place.

We have drawn up a Parent Volunteer Driver Agreement in which parents will sign to confirm:

- They hold a valid, current driver's licence
- They have not been banned from driving for any period in the past 10 years
- The vehicle they use is roadworthy and has a current MOT certificate (if needed)
- They hold a valid, current insurance policy
- They will abide by all aspects of the Highway Code and laws governing driving and road use

Their signatures will also confirm they understand their duty of care including:

- Ensuring children wear seatbelts / use booster seats throughout journey
- Ensuring the adult is never alone with an individual child (other than their own child)
- Overseeing the safety of all children as they enter and exit the vehicle
- Following all instructions and safety advice given by the visit leader
- They know of no other reason why they should not be responsible for the temporary care of the children they have agreed to transport

We will have a checking system and each Volunteer Agreement form will need to be reviewed annually. We hope this will reassure everyone that we take this issue

seriously and we will continue to do all we can to ensure your children are kept safe at all times. Using our parent volunteers helps extend the range of opportunities, particularly local, that we can offer to enrich the curriculum.