



BENSHAM MANOR School

Educational Visits Policy

Last reviewed: November 2020



All visits at BMS are currently restricted due to Covid-19. Only pre-approved safe community visits are able to go ahead as part of our skills for independence curriculum. Please refer to the Risk Assessment on the school website.

Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our students with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at School. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good School practice.

Purposes

Educational Visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the School curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively teachers may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the curriculum and wider personalised learning. Wherever or whatever the venue, we should ensure that the educational benefits to the students are maximised.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the students.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body must satisfy itself that the appropriate procedures, risk assessments and control measures are in place and that the documented guidance notes are being followed. All off-site visits that are residential, abroad or hazardous need to be approved by the Governing Body. Such approval must be recorded in the minutes of the Governing Body.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is delegated by the Governing Body to approve all off-site educational visits of a perceived low risk, local, daily or regular nature.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The EVC at Bensham Manor School will endeavour to ensure that all off-site activities follow the correct procedures. The person with these responsibilities will approve the group leader for every visit and monitor the written risk assessments to ensure good practice. In addition, the following responsibilities and duties are undertaken:

- Support the group leader in identifying the purpose for the visit and the selection, training and briefing of appropriate supervising adults and volunteer helpers. ***(It is important to consider the continuing professional development needs of staff engaged in these activities. Resources will need to be made available.)***

- Ensure that Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) (formerly CRB) disclosures are in place where necessary.
- Arrange Emergency Contact Duty Officer and draw up proper procedures to be followed in such an event.
- Keep records and make reports of accidents and “near misses”
- Review and regularly monitor procedures
- Liaise with the LEA Outdoor Education Adviser where necessary to ensure the proposed visit complies with the LEA regulations.

The Group Leader

The group leader is to be a member of School staff. This is because the group leader is working on behalf of the head teacher and, ultimately, the employer having health and safety responsibilities (usually the LEA).

However, younger or less experienced School staff (those who have yet to ‘serve an apprenticeship’ in outdoor supervision under an experienced group leader) will not usually lead students themselves.

The group leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been appointed by the EVC. The Group Leader should:

- Appoint a deputy;
- Be able to control and lead students of the relevant age range;
- Be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- Undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents of the aims and objectives;
- Undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;
- Have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- Know all the students proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- Observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- Ensure that where possible students understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of students below).

How to Demonstrate Competence

All categories of staff could demonstrate outdoor competence including risk management through a number of recognised routes. These could include, for support staff, their attainment of HLTA status where risk training was also available.

Some activities of a specialised nature such as Forest school, canoeing or rowing can only be carried out by qualified specialist instructors.

Types of Visit

OFFSITE BUT NEAR Bensham Manor School

School staff trained in outdoor supervision, including support staff, under indirect supervision, could take groups of students to, for example:

Facilities within walking distance of the School; or

recognised providers or centres where the instruction or teaching is provided (for example, outdoor or environmental centre; swimming pool where lifesaving and teaching is provided by an approved provider - normally the LEA/employer will provide guidance or regulation on approved status).

FARTHER AFIELD

This is when teachers work in the direct charge of the group leader. The competence of all adult supervisors must be specific to the functions assigned to them. It is the job of the group leader with the EVC to ensure this. Travel to a location farther afield - this to be beyond 30 minutes. This needs one of the staff in the group to have a group leader's competence. This is because the group will be beyond rapid immediate School support. In particular, this applies on residential courses. Where the support is clearly some distance away the visit or venture has to be self-contained. The School would transfer its normal class-size teaching/duty of care ratios off-site, before enhancing them with other teaching or support staff, as well as volunteers.

Planning Off-Site Visits

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them. The Head Teacher is accountable for planning all off-site visits. In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the group leader, but the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience. The organiser/group leader must agree all plans with the Head Teacher and or EVC.

A request form for offsite visit need to be completed and email to the Head Teacher. This needs to be returned with an authorising signature of the Head Teacher/EVC for the visit to take place. Attached should be a risk assessment and program outline.

For regular visits approval can be gained on a termly basis. For all trips abroad and Residential approval needs to be sort from the governors and the LA using the Evolve system.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using Bensham Manor School form. See appendix also an electronic copy can be kept on the Central Resource Library under "Educational Visits" there are 2 risk assessment format that can be used, either for the activity or the class.

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 11 on Supervision.)
- A safe place to go to in the event of a major incident/terror attack
- An alternative route back to school

The group leader and other supervisors should continually monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if students 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;

- Students with special educational or medical needs;
- The quality and suitability of available equipment;
- Seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

A risk assessment for the venue should be carried out. A risk assessment for specific possible risk students should also be written using the Bensham Manor School format.

Exploratory Visits

Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- Ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the School visit;
- Assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- Ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and students in the group;
- Ensure that the group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For all, visits it is sensible to have **at least one trained first-aider in the group** (this does not have to be the group leader). The group leader should have a working knowledge of first aid and all adults in the group should know how to contact emergency services. Bensham Manor School will try to ensure that all teaching assistants have been trained in a minimum of a 4 hour first aid course.

The minimum first-aid provision is:

- A suitably stocked first-aid box, (these are kept in the mini bus, or in reception if on foot).
- 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 students. The EVC 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.

It is the responsibility of the group's leader to report any first aid given and equipment used to the EVC to help in the evaluation of the visit.

Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to students for any off-site visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Sex, age and ability of group;
- The specific special needs of the students;
- Nature of activities;
- Experience of adults in offsite supervision;
- Duration and nature of the journey;
- Type of any accommodation;
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly. An appropriate ratio to the needs of the group should be used.

Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the School's risk assessment procedure for educational visits. These ratios do not include residential visits.

Where there is more than one adult supervisor, a group leader, who has authority over the whole party, should be appointed.

Where a high adult: student ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use School staff alone. **Adult helpers with appropriate clearance** may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the School and the student group.

All adult supervisors, including School staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any students who may require closer supervision, such as those with additional educational needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

For the protection of both adults and students, all adult supervisors should ensure that they would not normally be alone in a one to one situation with a student (see staff hand book for further guidance).

If the School is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the LEA or Governing Body must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of students should take place. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell students what to do if they become separated from the party, a recommendation that students wear a Bensham Manor School identification badge where appropriate.

Preparing Students

Providing information and guidance to students is an important part of preparing for a School visit. Students should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Students 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. Students should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and others' safety.

Students 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

Students 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.

Students 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 students will return home early.

Information to Students

It is for the group leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the students understand key safety information. Students 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 safety precautions are in place;
- Why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- What standard of behaviour is expected from students;
- What to do if approached by a stranger;
- What to do if separated from the group;
- Emergency procedures
- Rendezvous procedures.

Transport and Students

Students 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.

Private Cars

It may be necessary at times for the private cars to be used to transport students between venues. In this case the car needs to be deemed suitable for this purpose by the School prior to the journey. The car must have full seatbelts fitted through out and be used by the students. Students may only be transported in the back seat of the car. The insurance certificate must be provided showing adequate cover for the vehicle including business insurance & county form completed. A log of registered cars that can be used will be kept with the Business Manager.

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 students' 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

Bensham Manor School will seek consent on an annual basis for Local and routine visits Bensham Manor School will seek consent on a trip by trip basis for:

- Trips that are further than local, (over 30 mins travelling time),
- Adventure activities,
- Visits abroad,
- Residential visits.

If parents withhold consent absolutely the student should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the student in some other way, wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent the Head Teacher 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 student in the group.

Residential Visits

Use the planning check list for residential visits, this is update and sent to all staff annually.

Hostels and Hotels

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 students and adults;
- Ensure that the whole party is aware of the layout 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 students or those with special needs;
- Safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- Recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

The Experience

The experience should include:

- The group leader should ensure that they know or carry the emergency contact details with them.
- Going out form should be printed out and an accurate register attached.
- When on residential a pack should be put together containing all relevant information. Copies should be given to emergency contact, EVC, and reception.
- When on residential a daily log should be kept, including any accidents/incidents. This should be phoned through to reception each morning.
- All trips should be evaluated on return against intended outcomes. Regular trips using the Local authority format and residential using the School proforma.