

## **Conatus Federation of Schools**

### **Partnership Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy**

#### **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.

In the Conatus Federation, 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 educational visits and off-site activities that add to what they learn in school.

Educational visits might include visits to museums, galleries, farms, field centres, place of worship. Off-site activities would include swimming lessons, sports fixtures, maths competitions and fieldwork in the local area. We also have regular visits from members of the local community such the police, fire brigade and occasional visits from poets, authors, sport coaches and members of the local faith communities.

#### **Organisation**

The National Curriculum defines what we teach the children in school. This is the basis for each class's programme of learning for each school year.

Within each class's programme of work the teachers plan educational visits and off-site activities that support the children's learning. Some activities such as swimming are ongoing throughout the year and we give details of these visits and activities to parents at the beginning of each school year. We plan other activities as the school year progresses and inform parents of these as they occur.

Visits and activities usually take place within the school day and the governing body approves all such visits in advance. We follow the LA's guidelines relating to health and safety and we ask parents to give written permission for their child to take part in any activity that takes children off the school site. For ongoing activities this consent will be given annually. If we do not receive this written permission, the child will be unable to participate.

#### **Charging for school activities**

All education during school hours is free. We do no charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum. However, we do sometimes need to ask for voluntary contributions to help cover the costs incurred in carrying out these activities. Visits may have to be cancelled if there are not enough voluntary contributions and the shortfall cannot be made up.

#### **Ratios**

All trips should be individually risk assessed to ascertain the safe level of adult supervision required. Below are the minimum adult to pupil ratios that our school is committed to

implement. These are to be adhered to unless there are exceptional circumstances and/or permission has been given by the Headteacher.

- Nursery - 1:2
- Reception - 1:4
- Key Stage 1 - 1:6
- Lower Key Stage 2 - 1:8
- Upper Key Stage 2 - 1:10
- KPLC and DSP ratios will be determined by the needs of the child on the educational visit.

### **Behaviour on school trips**

The school's Behaviour Policy applies equally to children when they are being educated off-site. Indeed, being outside of the school, expectations are even higher as children are acting as ambassadors for our school. We expect our pupils to behave courteously to all members of the public that they meet. It is essential for their own safety that they listen carefully to their accompanying adults and act on any instructions given to them. It is also essential that all children actively participate in all aspects of the trip as trips are an integral part of the child's education. Children will always be reminded of the behaviour expectations before going off-site on their visit.

### **Residential activities**

Children across the school have the opportunity to take part in residential visits. These activities operate during term time however, we do make a charge for board and lodging, insurance and specialist instruction for certain activities. The school office and admin team apply for bids for UK based residential trips for qualifying children/families.

Residential visits enable children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work. We undertake this visit only with the written agreement of the LA. All specialist activities are undertaken with qualified instructors.

### **Insurance**

Assuming the programme is approved, the council's liability insurance will extend to the group leaders, other staff, voluntary helpers and pupils taking part in the activity. All those who provide services to the programme e.g. transport, museum must have their own liability insurance. It is wise to check this obligation especially when using small companies. The value of the third-party liability insurance must be at least £2 million pounds. Evidence should be in writing or a record of who spoke to who and the date.

### **The role of governors**

The governing body should agree a policy for the management of off-site activities. This may be done by endorsing the procedures outlined in the Royal Borough of Greenwich Handbook 'There and Back Again' and should include additional reference to school procedures. The Governing Body should have procedures for

- Approving off-site activities
- The provision of training and information
- The management of any significant provision which is particular to the school
- Action in case of emergency

- Reporting accidents and incidents
- Monitoring and reviewing policy and practice

### **The role of the Executive Headteacher or Head of School**

The Head teacher should ensure that educational visits and off-site activities comply with the procedures in the Royal Borough of Greenwich Handbook 'There and Back Again' and the agreed procedures of the governors. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that

- That the group leader has been appointed and that additional staff are sufficiently experienced and competent to assess the risks and manage the visit or activity with regard to any group or activity
- Risks have been assessed, significant risks recorded and appropriate safety measure are in place
- Procedures for approving educational visits and off-site activities are followed
- The final planning checklist is completed and all supporting documents are completed before the journey takes place

### **The Role of the Curriculum Leader/Phase Leader**

- Liaise with the employer to ensure that educational visits meet the employer's requirements including those of risk assessment
- Support the head and governors with approval and other decisions by giving accurate information about the purpose of the visit, location, date and cost of the visit, the proposed staffing levels, number of pupils involved the travel arrangements, insurance cover and risk assessments
- Assign competent people to lead or otherwise supervise a visit
- Assess the competence of leaders and other adults proposed for a visit.
- Organise thorough induction of leaders and other adults taking pupils on a specific visit
- Make sure that DBS disclosures are in place as necessary
- Work with the group leader to obtain the consent or refusal of parents and to provide full details of the visit beforehand so that parents can consent or refuse consent on a fully informed basis
- Organise the emergency arrangements and ensure that there is an emergency contact for each visit
- Keep records of individual visits including reports and accidents and 'near accidents'
- Review systems and monitor practice by holding regular briefings to review good practice, evaluation and risk assessments

### **The Role of the Group Leader**

The group leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit or activity and should be approved by the head or governing body. In particular the group leader should

- Obtain the approval of the Head before any off-site visit or activity takes place

- Follow policy guidelines and regulations of Royal Greenwich Education Service and the Governing Body
- Assess the risks (including COVID and Terror Related risks) involved and draw up or amend as appropriate any previously recorded risk assessment
- Ensure that all other members of staff and voluntary helpers are aware of their responsibilities and have the appropriate training and experience to undertake the assigned roles
- Consider the planning procedures to ensure that all procedures have been followed
- Inform parents about the visit and gain their consent where appropriate

Group leaders assume the duty of care enshrined in the principle of 'loco parentis'. This generally requires the party leader to exercise the same standard of care as would a careful parent. This standard is not easily arrived at however and is influenced by the existence of codes of practice, guidance and professional training. In reality the standard 'duty of care' expected of a party leader is higher than that expected of a careful parent.

The 'duty of care' means avoiding actions or omissions where injury to others may be 'reasonably foreseeable' consequence. Organisers have a duty of care for participants and if they fail to fulfil this duty they risk legal action being taken against them. The principle of vicarious liability provides that the person for whom the act was committed should generally be liable. This means that for the party leader will not be sued. The LA and the Governing Body will be held responsible.

#### **The role of additional members of staff and volunteers**

Members of staff and volunteers act as employees of the LA whilst on approved off-site activities. Members of staff and volunteers should

- Assist the party leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the young people on the visit
- Be clear about their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in the visit or activity

#### **The role of pupils**

Whilst taking part in educational visits and off-site activities young people also have responsibilities about which they should be made aware by the group leader or other members of staff for their own health and safety and that of the group. Pupils should

- Not take unnecessary risks
- Follow instructions of the group leader and other members of staff
- Behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct
- Inform a member of staff of significant hazards

#### **The role of parents**

Parents have an important role in deciding whether any visit or off-site activity is suitable for their child. Subject to their agreement parents should

- Inform the party leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit

- Provide an emergency contact number
- Provide the group leader with arrangements to resume care of their child should this be necessary
- Sign the consent form

We recognise that children should understand the need for safety and the development of an awareness of safety as an important life skill. We therefore seek to involve children in the safety planning of the visit and their own responsibilities to manage themselves safely and in line with the teacher expectations.

### **Emergency procedures**

The trip leader must always complete the Emergency Action Plan on the day of the visit. In cases where a child or children need urgent medical attention, one staff member will accompany that child (or children) for treatment, while other staff members and adults remain with the rest of the group. School will be notified at all times, and they in turn will notify parents.

In the unlikely event that a child becomes separated from their group, they must follow the steps below, about which they will have been briefed prior to departure:

- Wait so that the trip leader can re-trace their steps to locate the child
- If a child has been left on the tube/train, they are to get off at the next station and wait
- Speak only to adults in uniform, e.g., TfL staff, police etc. but under no circumstances go with them

The trip leader and one other member of staff will search the immediate vicinity. Another member of staff will assume overall responsibility for the group during the absence of the trip leader to maintain the safety and well-being of the other children.

If the child is not found after approximately 20 minutes, the trip leader will phone the school office to notify them and ascertain whether they have any information. The school will notify the parents.

The trip leader will then contact the police. Once the police arrive, all relevant information about the child will be given, so that the police can take over the search. The trip leader will remain with the police to comfort the child when found and maintain regular contact with the school. The remaining staff and adult helpers will return to the school with the rest of the children.

When the situation has been resolved, a member of SLT will conduct a full investigation to ascertain how the incident occurred and revise the risk assessment procedures where appropriate.

### **Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs**

We fully endorse the Royal Borough of Greenwich's entitlement policy to outdoor education. We recognise that in providing outdoor education for children we should take into account both special needs and equal opportunities issues so that no child

is excluded. In planning outdoor activities, the following issues need to be considered and addressed:

- How experiences are designed, planned and implemented to ensure that all children are able to participate fully, irrespective of gender, religion, race, physical disability and special education needs
- The possible need for more adult supervision (in terms of numbers)
- The minimum entitlement for all children
- The identification of the needs (as stated in PLPs and EHCPs) and how the range of experiences is adapted to those needs and the flexibility of what is offered to meet those needs
- How every child is able to participate without being excluded because of the financial situation of the family
- How every child is able to participate within the cultural and ethnic context of their family

These issues are to be considered in the light of the school as an institution and equality in the organisation and content of the programme. The equal opportunities policy of the place to be visited also needs to be considered.

In drawing up this policy we have guided by The Outdoor Education Handbook 'There and Back' supplied by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. For further information please consult this book.

Signed:

Date:

Reviewed: Autumn 2022

Next Review: Autumn 2025