

RIVERSDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Trips, Visits and Off Site Activities Policy

Date:

Review Date:

Signed: _____ (Governor)

Signed: _____ (Headteacher)



INTRODUCTION

At Riversdale Primary School we believe that:

- Visits and journeys off-site are a valuable and integral part of a child's education. They can add greatly to children's understanding of a wide variety of concepts and skills. They can enhance personal and social skills;
- Costs to parents/carers need to be carefully considered when planning trips, visits and off-site activities and we should always strive to give reasonable notice and achieve maximum value for money;
- Preparation is imperative to the success of activities and planning must be in accordance with LA Guidance;
- The safety of the pupils is the most important consideration. It is vital to maintain safety consciousness and safe working practices.

A trip, visit or off-site activity will be defined as:

- children taken off-site, accompanied by the minimum recommended number of approved adults, to a venue ;
- visiting performers, professionals and instructors, to the school ;
- a residential visit for which there is a separate section.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy is in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

All trips, visits and/or off-site activities must first be approved and authorised by the Headteacher.

Pupils should ideally be involved in the planning at some stage. They should know the aims and purpose of the visit, what activities are planned and how they are to be carried out. They should also know what is required of them at every stage. They should be aware of any hazards and be fully briefed in all relevant procedures.

The following procedures/information should be followed by staff in preparation for such an activity:

- Details must be entered into the school diary, along with a list of accompanying members of staff;
- The school diary should be consulted when making a provisional booking, avoiding days when there is swimming, school photographs, medicals etc;
- Where possible and reasonable to do so, staff should utilise public transport which is free. If a coach is required, staff must bear in mind that these can be in short supply during the summer term, all coaches have seat belts and usually seat up to 53 persons. Office staff will book coaches and send a confirmation letter.
- Staff must visit the site prior to the event taking place (see Risk Assessment section below);
- Ensure that there will be enough adults to accompany the children (i.e. staff and parents). We follow the Wandsworth guidelines on adult/pupil ratio (see Supervision section below);
- Organise for office staff to order packed lunches as necessary;
- Complete a Risk Assessment on the correct form, available from the office or on the PDrive (see Risk Assessment section below);
- It is the responsibility of the organising staff for overseeing which children have paid. Money must be sent to the office and NOT kept in the classroom;
- In the event of payments made directly to the office, the signed permission slip will show that payment has been made and passed to the organising staff;
- Registers must be completed and returned to the school office before leaving the school premises on the day of the visit.

Residential Visits

Riversdale Primary school considers that a residential trip, at least once in a child's primary career, is of sound educational value. The choice of venue is carefully selected on the following criteria:

- Safety record of the venue.
- Staff qualifications.
- Distance from school should be manageable.

- Quality of accommodation.
- Outdoor facilities should be challenging and varied.
- Value for money.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

It is imperative that the group leader visits the locality beforehand. This is particularly important where safety factors are involved or where residential accommodation is needed. The leader must find out about any hazards as well as facilities for refreshment, rest, toilets, etc. before booking.

A Risk Assessment must be made for each trip, detailing actions to be taken to reduce any significant or medium risk using the risk assessments forms and guidelines found in the staffroom. Exceptions may be those trips that are taken frequently, for example to Southfields Academy.

INFORMATION TO PARENTS/CARERS

Teachers should ensure that parents are kept fully informed regarding any off- site activity. This information should always be given in writing and the mode of transport made clear. Parents should have full particulars of a visit before they are asked to give their consent. If parents refuse their consent for any off-site activity, then the child must not be taken off site. For local trips in the immediate environment parents sign a consent form when their child starts at Riversdale.

CHARGES

Where there is a charge for any part of or all of the visit then a 'Voluntary Contribution' will be requested from the parents/carers of each child. If a contribution is not made the trip may have to be cancelled. The voluntary contribution will be calculated for each visit and could include any of the following:

- The charges of any commercial provider.
- Any transport component.
- Entry charges to facilities including those for adults who are supervising and/or accompanying the children.
- Any equipment hire.
- Refreshments.
- Staffing and instruction.

If the overall cost of the trip or visit, including transport, exceeds £10 per child the school will consider subsidising the excess costs. However, it may have to be changed or cancelled if it is deemed too expensive.

All letters to parents/carers asking for a voluntary contribution will include the following words:- *Payment for all educational visits is voluntary; but the governors' educational visits policy states that should parents or carers not contribute, the trip may have to be cancelled.*

Families who have genuine financial hardship will be offered support on an individual basis depending on circumstances. The headteacher, or the member of staff delegated responsibility, will make this decision.

The concept of a voluntary contribution is not applicable to residential visits. In this circumstance, parents/carers will be expected to pay to cost of their child's place.

GRANTS FOR RESIDENTIAL TRIPS

A grant is calculated to cover the 'Board & Lodging' element of total costs as a minimum requirement. Grants are only available to children whose parents meet the criteria for eligibility of free school meals. Proof of eligibility will be required prior to the start of the trip.

Special circumstances may be taken into consideration by the Governors.

GOVERNORS

The school governors have delegated the authorisation and oversight of any residential trips to the Governors' Finance & Personnel Sub Committee.

- The governors shall authorise each trip individually,
- They will agree the total cost to each pupil and authorise the amount and payment of grants,
- They will agree the level of pupil:teacher ratio,
- They will agree individual cases for special consideration recommended by the headteacher. e.g. Financial hardship for parents of more than one child.
- Risk assessment of children who have special educational needs or have a history of behaviour problems and have expressed a desire to go on a residential trip. *The school reserves the right to withdraw a place if a child's attitude and/or behaviour is deemed to be detrimental or a risk to the wellbeing and safety of the rest of the party.*

All decisions that are made by the Finance & Resources Committee are final and will be made during the committee meeting in the term preceding School Journey.

The residential trip must be planned, authorised and booked at least 4 months before departure so as to give parents time to pay by instalments.

A residential trip must have a Statement of Account produced at the end of each trip for audit and submission to the governors for inspection. Any surplus balance (less than £5 per child) will be carried forward.

SUPERVISION

Group leaders should ensure that there is adequate supervision taking into account the LEA Guidance, the programme of activities and the environment visited. A minimum of 3 adults should accompany any group going off-site.

- For pupils under 5 there will be no more than 6 minors to 1 adult
- For pupils under 8 there will be no more than 8 minors to 1 adult
- For pupils between 8 and 18 there will be no more than 20 minors to 2 adults
- For some activities the head teacher may allow a lower ratio than those specified above e.g. walking to Southfields Academy.

CROSSING THE ROAD

Only the police, Traffic Wardens and School Crossing patrols have the right to control traffic. If a member of staff assumes responsibility for seeing children across the road they must discharge this activity to the best of their ability. The LA recommended way to cross is for the group to cross in waves, but teachers should use their own discretion and cross in crocodile if they consider it safer. See Page 65 of the LEA Guidance.

TRAVEL BY COACH

The school should always book coaches fitted with seatbelts. It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all fitted seatbelts are in use at the start of each journey and after stops.

To ensure adequate supervision, adults must be spread throughout the coach and not seated together. Some EEC legislation now makes this a legal requirement.

Pupils must remain seated and the driver must not be distracted from driving.

VOLUNTEER ADULTS

Where an off-site activity involves the use of parents, or other assisting adults, it is imperative that their role is explained to them and that appropriate guidance is given during a full briefing session. Untrained adults should never be solely responsible for groups

It is desirable that volunteer adults be police-checked, unless the head teacher has agreed otherwise. Parents/Carers supervising an off-site activity must not bring other children with them.

Briefings to adult helpers should include, for example:

- Procedures at all road crossings ,
- Behaviour management ,
- What to do if a pupil becomes separated from the group,
- Whether the pupils are to walk in pairs, single file, as a group, etc.
- The necessity for regular head counts throughout the day. When counting pupils onto transport the numbers should always be double-checked,
- Procedures for the safe collection of children by parents at the end of the trip,
- Emergency procedures.

RECORD OF GROUPS OFF-SITE

When any group goes off-site the party leader must ensure that: All accompanying adults have lists showing:

- All adults and pupils on the trip,
- The distribution [if in separate groups or vehicles],
- The planned itinerary,
- Their own group responsibility,
- The location contact point,
- The name and telephone number of the school office [base contact person].

The base contact person [school office] and the group leader should have:

- The information held by all adults on the trip [as above],
- Access to next of kin emergency telephone numbers,
- The name and address of any travel company,
- Details for contacting the LEA representatives in the event of an emergency.

During a residential visit the Headteacher must keep a record of each participant's relevant details [as above] at home as well as in school.

MOBILE TELEPHONE

When organising an off-site activity the group leader must arrange to carry a full charged mobile telephone. In an emergency, group leaders must contact the head teacher or deputy head teacher immediately and follow emergency procedure.

FIRST AID, HEALTH AND MEDICINE

First Aid bags must be taken on each trip; these are kept in the office. The group leader is responsible for ensuring that all medicines, inhalers and Epipens are taken with them on the visit. All medicines must be carried by the teacher and not by parent helpers. Therefore, pupils requiring medicines should be in the teacher's own group as child and medicines should not be parted.

MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or earlier where required.

Checklist for leaders planning an off-site activity

NB. This checklist is not to be used instead of the LEA Guidelines and School Policy, but just as an aide memoir.

- Three weeks beforehand write date and time of trip in diary in school office
- Read the LEA Guidelines and the school policy
- Pre-visit the site
- Determine adult/pupil ratios
- Cost activity
- Order transport or free travel tickets
- Send letter to parents giving full details of the activity
- Order packed lunches in the office two weeks before trip
- Secure adult help [ensure police checks in place if necessary]
- Involve pupils in planning, including discussion of hazards, expected behaviour etc.
- Complete Risk Assessment and have it signed by head or deputy head teacher
- Check medical forms and ensure that necessary medication is available. Determine who is going to carry it.
- Check first aid provision
- Ensure mobile is charged and know the school telephone number.
- Collect school packed lunches.
- Fully brief adults taking part on their responsibilities. Give them written guidance, pupil lists etc.
- Give each child a sticker with name of school and telephone number on it.
- Check you have all necessary equipment for the day, first aid bag, inhalers etc.