



Knowsley Central School

Educational Visits and Minibus Policy

Reviewed by: SLT

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Last reviewed on: September 24

Next review due by: September 2025

The following policy has been written using advice from the DFCS publication 'Health and safety of pupils on Educational Visits', MIDAS and the LA.

Educational Visits Rationale

At Knowsley Central School, educational visits contribute to pupil's development across the curriculum. Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils 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 practice in all classes to enhance community curriculum.

Purpose

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 curriculum theme to enhance and support the curriculum. Educational visits are an extremely important part of our curriculum. Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised.

Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits

Risk assessment must be completed by the group leader/class teacher before embarking on any off-site visit.

It is the responsibility of the group leader/ class teacher to ensure that all medical and emergency forms are complete and up to date. Class emergency forms should be readily available during all educational visits.

Any medical requirements should be noted on individual risk assessments.

When planning an activity that presents no significant risk and which will take place within school hours a school risk assessment must be completed prior to visits by the group leader. Where the group leader is not teaching staff, the class teacher must complete the risk assessment alongside the group leader. The risk assessment must be checked and signed by the educational visit's coordinator or the headteacher.

Well trained support staff, Level 3 Teaching Assistants will be able to lead classes under the direct supervision of a teacher. However, there is no assumption that the teacher will always be physically present when a member of staff is carrying out specified work.

If planning overnight stays and a visit that includes any hazardous activity approval is needed from the school governors and the LA.

Any queries regarding planning a visit, see Educational Visits co-ordinator and complete Educational Visit risk assessment and checklist.

Staffing Educational Visits

Although a teacher does not always need to be physically present with groups of pupils, a teacher employed at the school will have overall responsibility for the activity and completing the risk assessment. This responsibility cannot be delegated. Other support staff employed at the school may escort the group. Students who are on placement at the school and are never left in sole charge of a pupil, may escort the group. Volunteers can be used on school trips. Staff ratio for a trip will be calculated according to pupils age and needs, for example, a higher ratio may be needed for pupils with significant additional needs such as challenging behaviours.

All group leaders should be confident that they are able to manage a group when out. Visits should be curtailed if a problem arises and school informed at the earliest opportunity. The group must not worry about arriving late at a destination or returning to school as arrangements can be made regarding follow on activities as necessary. It is essential to take a mobile phone on every trip.

If a query arises staff should consult the Headteacher/ SLT or the educational visits coordinator.

Visit Leaders will need to evaluate the success of each trip, recording their evaluations on the class risk assessment form.

Residential, overnight stays and Hazardous activities

The procedures above must be followed when planning a residential, overnight stay or hazardous activity. (Category B and C)

In addition, group leaders must ensure:

Category B

These comprise some high-risk or higher profile activities. LA approval is required. Safe supervision requires that the group leader should as a minimum, have undergone familiarisation specific to the activity and location. The group leader will have to be approved as suitably competent by the LA, and hold any necessary qualification/award.

Category C

This is the most demanding category. It includes all those activities that if not school-led, would be in the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations. LEA approval is required for visits in this category. If school led, the leader must hold recognised qualifications.

Notifying the LA

The requirement for approval of visits extends to all visit abroad, even if they do not include hazardous activities. If you are unsure about whether you require LEA approval for a particular visit contact Educational visits advisor at the LA.

Where LA approval is applicable, outline approval from the LA should be obtained at the earliest opportunity, before any visit arrangements are made and prior to offering the visit to pupils.

Roles and responsibilities

The Head teacher must:

- Be consulted on any educational visit being organised
- Ensure arrangements are made for approval of visit from governors and LA if needed.
- Ensure that the EVC is aware of his/her duties and that a clear line of responsibility is established
- Ensure that the EVC is competent, trained and is revalidated at least every 3 years
- Ensure that medical and personal/address details for all pupils are updated regularly
- Consider insurance matters for Educational Visits and fully informs parents.
- Ensure that funding is available when needed and appropriate consideration is given to financial management and obtaining best value.
- Ensure that group leaders are suitably competent and familiar with the activity, location and nature of educational visit. Further training should be provided where a need is identified.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the emergency procedure guidance and fully understand procedures in relation to educational visits.
- Ensure adequate first aid provision is made including trained first aiders.
- Ensure that arrangements for particular medical needs have been made.
- Ensure that contingency plans are in place in case of a change of events or staff absences.
- Ensure that visits are evaluated to improve future visits and identify any training needs.

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator must:

- Promote Educational Visits from School and take a lead in policy development.
- Approve all visits and notifies the LA for categories of 'Adventurous Activities' and 'Overnight stay'.
- Approve competency of the Visit Leader and accompanying staff, ensuring that the Visit Leader is a Knowsley Central School employee.
- Ensure all paper work is completed appropriately
- Support and advise colleagues in planning visits
- Check to make sure parents are fully informed of visit details
- Ensure that accident and emergency procedures are in place and understood by staff.
- Ensure that records of trips are held centrally.
- Ensure that evaluations of trips are undertaken.

Visit Leader, Teacher and Support Staff must:

- Ensure that there are clear educational aims for the visit
- Ensure that all staff are aware of safety procedures / routines, e.g., the importance of performing regular headcounts, pupil groupings, signing pupils in and out of school etc.
- Ensure that class risk assessments are submitted to the EVC at least two weeks before the planned trip.
- Understand the importance of 'collective Discussion' regarding risk assessments and that these risk assessments are shown to the Head and EVC.
- Carry an Emergency Contact List of everyone going on the visit to include dietary requirements, medical, names, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Ensure that parents are kept informed.
- Plan carefully, ensuring that all staff are aware of the timetable and procedures for the trip.

- Evaluate the trip and give children the opportunity to do the same where possible, sharing any things that could / should be done differently on subsequent trips.
- Ensure that the children, where appropriate, are briefed regarding the timetable of the trip and expectations.
- Ensure that adequate first aid has been considered

Parental consent

A general consent form for routine educational visits of half a day or less will be sent to parents once a year.

This informs parents about possible weekly visits to soft play centres, shops, parks etc. For longer visits e.g., day trips, individual consent forms will be sent by each class teacher.

For longer visits parents will be invited into school to a briefing regarding the educational visit. Parents will then be informed of the planned itinerary and will be given the opportunity to ask questions and express any points of concern.

Funding educational visits

Individuals planning visits should consider costing and value for money at all times. Parents should be asked when needed to consider providing a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the visit, however this should not have an impact on individual pupils being able to participate in each educational visit.

Insurance

Insurance has been arranged for educational visits and placed with the LA insurance cover; this scheme provides cover for all Knowsley council schools. Non-residential and low risk activities (category A activities) will be covered by the 'self-insurance scheme' managed by the LEA.

For category B or C activities (see LA guidance), the scheme will be initiated where permission from the LA is required for the educational visit to take place.

First Aid and emergency procedures (see LA guidance for full details) A

designated first aider must be available during all educational visits.

First aid boxes are readily available on each bus.

Emergency contacts for all pupils and staff are to be held centrally by the group leader during all educational visits.

A record should be made of every occasion when any member of the party receives first aid treatment.

Ensure accident book is completed on return to school.

All accident/incidents should be reported immediately to the school-based contact. The schoolbased contact is Daryl McConnell, in Daryl's absence contact should be made with the Deputy Head, Liz Kearney.

Medication during educational visits

If pupils need to take medication during a school visit, parents must inform the trip leader. Medication must be kept in a securely controlled medical store or held where appropriate by a suitable person until required.

Near Miss Incidents

A near miss is defined as an incident that only by chance did not result in loss or injury. All significant near misses should be considered when reviewing the visit. Near misses that could have resulted in severe injury or death should be reported to the LA.

Reporting accidents or incidents

All accidents or incidents should be reported to the Headteacher immediately.

Minibus Guidelines

The following points must be considered by a group leader when organising an educational visit/ minibus trip:

- Passenger / pupil
- Does the driver hold a valid driving licence?
- The experience and training of the driver
- The type of journey, i.e. A local trip, motorway journey etc
- Traffic / weather conditions
- Arrangements in case of a breakdown / emergency
- Insurance cover
- Journey time and distance
- Stopping / rest points if a long journey
- Supervision of pupils

Minibus Driving

Although the Headteacher is ultimately responsible for the school minibus, the driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit. Therefore, they must:

- Be qualified to drive a minibus
- Have completed MIDAS training
- Have a valid and clean driving licence
- Keep to speed limits and abide by the Highway Code
- Not drive when taking medication or undergoing treatment that may affect their ability or judgement
- Know what to do in an emergency
- Know how to use firefighting and first aid equipment
- Avoid driving for long periods and ensure rests are taken
- Take into consideration the effects of the working day
- Have regular medical checks, e.g., eyesight
- Have consumed no alcohol

Maintenance and checks of the school minibus

The Headteacher is responsible for the school minibuses, although the driver is responsible for the vehicle during a visit. The Headteacher may delegate to a willing member of staff responsibility for carrying out regular checks and ensuring the minibus is maintained. This does not take responsibility away from other drivers to carry out a visual check of the minibus before each journey nor the responsibility to report any known faults immediately they become aware of them. The person responsible for maintaining the minibus should:

- Checks the vehicles condition on a weekly basis, e.g., tyres, oil, water and windscreen wash
- Report any faults as soon as they become aware of them
- Check when the next service is due and make arrangements for this to happen by a reputable garage.
- Maintain the minibus check chart timetable showing the class groups the bus has been allocated to.
- Make sure drivers log each journey.
- Ask each class to keep the minibus clean.
- Take the minibus for a service clean regularly.
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Minibus Safety and Service Checks

The school will act on guidance given by MIDAS regarding safety and service checks on school minibuses.

The suggested mileage for a safety check is 2,500 miles and for a service check it is 5,000 miles. The school will follow this guidance regarding both minibuses.

Safety belts

All persons on a school minibus must wear a seat belt.

Booster Seats

Booster seats **MUST** be used until a child can correctly fit in an adult lap and shoulder seat belt, typically when they are around 4 feet 9 inches in height, this is usually around 9 to 12 years old.

