

The Priory Primary Academy Trust
Educational Visits Policy



January 2012
Reviewed annually by the governing body

Introduction

The Priory Primary Academy Trust believes that school visits are an essential resource for the teaching of a broad and balanced curriculum. Each year group will go on at least one visit each year linked to an aspect of their topic work. Alongside visits off-site, the School will invite in speakers, groups, artists or other adults into the Academy to enrich and extend experiences.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the School day.

When planning for a visit, teachers should consult with the Head Teacher (designated teacher with responsibility for educational visits) to ensure correct procedures are followed. The Governing Body approves the schedule of proposed visits.

Aims

The aims of our off-site educational visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils
- provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the School site alone
- promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

These visits begin with day or half day trips and progress to a residential experience in Year 6.

Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which can include visits to the School by specialists). Examples of educational visits or visitors include:

- English – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups
- Science – use of the School grounds, visits to Living Rainforest
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment
- History – castle visits, study of local housing patterns, museums
- Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, town trails
- Art and Design – use of the locality
- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches
- Music – extra-curricular activities, peripatetic music teachers
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy
- PSHE and citizenship – visit from the fire brigade or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

Residential visit

Children in Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is in school time and is designed to:

- to develop self-esteem and confidence
- to function as a member of a group
- to face new challenges.

The School makes a charge for this trip and considers on an individual basis any parent who has financial difficulties.

The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities. The School only takes part in this trip with the prior approval of the Governing Body. We ensure that only qualified instructors deliver the specialist activities that we offer the children.

How visits are authorised

The Head Teacher will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity and will oversee the preparation for and the management of off-site visits.

The Head teacher will:

- ensure that risk assessments are in place
- seek approval from the Governing Body
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips
- organise related staff training
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks, and that any coach company used assures us their drivers too have had police checks
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained
- keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example a local library).

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with all regulations, advice and procedures. All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the agreed instructions.

A member of staff looking to arrange an off-site activity must seek and obtain the approval of the Head Teacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the School. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.

Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the Head Teacher will seek the approval of the governing body before permitting the activity to take place.

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. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

Risk assessment

A comprehensive risk assessment will be checked by the group leader before the proposed visit is put forward to the Head Teacher. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgments about the risks it may involve. The Governing Body will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the Visit Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the School, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

- 1 adult to 6 pupils under 5
- 1 adult to 8 pupils under 11

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are *minimum* requirements, and may *not* provide adequate supervision in all cases.

When not using its own transport the Academy follows the guidance issued by Hampshire County Council Passenger Transport regarding the requisitioning of coach companies:

- the provision and required use of seat belts
- proper vetting of the driver by the police
- proper insurance for the driver
- details of first aid and emergency equipment
- breakdown procedures.

The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise any residential trip have been subject to police checks.

A copy of the initialled risk assessment will be given to the Head Teacher for approval and signature.

Transport

The costing of off-site activities should normally include any of the following that apply:

- transport
- entrance fees
- insurance
- provision of any special resources or equipment

- costs related to adult helpers
- any refreshments the School has opted to pay for.

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, the car is roadworthy, appropriate car seats in place and that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks.

We instruct all children to attach their seat belts, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach.

Communication with parents

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary except in the case of residential visits), with a limited subsidy from the parent teacher association. This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle through the School prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Head Teacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

Further health and safety considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the School number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

Before a party leaves school the School office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the School, the party leader should discuss with the Head Teacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements are contained in the Off Site manual held in the Head Teacher's office.

Group leaders' planning

Group leaders must liaise closely with the Head Teacher and read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:

- *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide* – (DfES 1998) and its supplements:
- *A Handbook for Group Leaders* (DfES 2002)
- *Group Safety at Water Margins* (DfES 2002)

They must draw up a Visit Plan which records in writing (including standard forms where appropriate) the arrangements that have been made.

Visit plan

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

- appropriate risk assessment
- report on preliminary visit
- application for approval of visit
- general information
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit
- travel schedule, importantly arrival and departure times
- accommodation plan (if applicable)
- full schedule of activities
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures
- intended arrangements for supervision
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group
- emergency contacts and procedures
- general communications information
- guidance for the emergency contact and Head Teacher
- medical questionnaire returns
- first-aid boxes.