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Policy for the Management of Educational Visits

Introduction

This policy covers all off-site visits and activities organised through the school and for which the Governing Body and headteacher are responsible.

The Governing Body endorses the Northumberland County Council policy document “Safe Management of Visits and Off-site Activities” as the basis for the school’s health and safety policy for the management of visits and off-site activities.

The Governing Body seeks to ensure that every pupil has access to a wide range of educational experiences as an entitlement. As part of this entitlement the Governing Body recognises the significant educational value of visits and activities which take place away from the immediate school environment.

The Governing Body aims to enable this school to become an educational environment in which all members of the school community can thrive, regardless of race, religion, culture, gender or individual need. We intend to apply this aim to the planning and management of all visits and off-site activities.

Visits and off-site activities support, enrich and extend the curriculum in many subject areas, encourage co-operation, team work and the application of problem solving skills and develop independence and self confidence.

Residential opportunities, physical challenge and adventure can have a particular part to play in the development of personal and social qualities for all young people. Outdoor education helps young people to be physically active and to understand how to assess and manage risk.

The management of visits and off-site activities places particular responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of all participants on the Governing Body, headteacher, the visit leader, members of staff and volunteers, pupils and parents. The school also has responsibilities to other members of the public and to third parties. This policy on visits and off-site activities therefore complements the wider school health and safety policy.

It is a priority of this school that all visits and off-site activities are safe, well-managed and educationally beneficial.

1. Responsibilities of the Head teacher

The Headteacher will:

- ensure all visits and off-site activities have specific and appropriate educational objectives
- approve all visits and activities, based on compliance with the council and school health and safety policy, relevant Northumberland County Council guidance and recognised good practice;
- ensure off-site programmes are led by competent staff who are appropriately experienced to assess the risks , manage the activity and manage the specific group;
- check that the staffing ratio is suitable for each visit;
- ensure visit leaders have access to a planning checklist, based on the Northumberland policy, and adapted as necessary to meet the particular needs of the school;
- check that risks have been assessed, significant risks recorded and any appropriate safety measures are in place.

2. Responsibilities of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator

The Headteacher is the EVC in this school. The EVC will be responsible for carrying out agreed tasks and attending relevant training provided by the Council.

3. Approval of off-site activities

The Headteacher will be responsible for approving all off-site activities. This includes approving the visit leader for each visit or off-site activity.

A summary of the programme for the following categories of visits, together with a risk assessment, will be sent to the Outdoor Education Safety Adviser, Northumberland Health and Safety Team, for endorsement:

- hazardous outdoor and adventurous activities
- residential visits UK, visits abroad;
- activities where there is significant concern about health, safety and welfare.

The head teacher will monitor off-site visits and activities and will provide a regular report to the Governing Body about the off-site activities which have taken place from the school.

4. Responsibilities of the visit leader

The visit leader will:

- have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit or activity;
- obtain the head teacher's approval before any off-site visit or activity takes place;
- follow policy and procedures of the Council and the school;
- assess the risks involved and amend as appropriate any previously recorded risk assessment;
- use the 'visit planning checklist' to ensure all procedures have been followed;
- ensure form SV8 from the policy is completed where commercial, charitable or private are being used for adventurous or residential activities;
- inform parents fully about the visit and gain their consent, where appropriate;
- reassess risks while the visit or activity takes place;
- ensure there is a contingency plan (Plan B) should a significant change to the programme be necessary due to weather etc.

5. Responsibilities of additional members of staff taking part in visits and off-site activities

Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

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

6. Responsibilities of pupils

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

- Avoid unnecessary risks;
- Follow instructions of the visit leader and other members of staff;
- Behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct;
- Inform a member of staff of significant hazards.

7. Responsibilities 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 to the activity parents should:

- support the application of any agreed code of conduct;
- inform the party leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit;
- provide an emergency contact number;
- sign the consent form.

8. The provision of training and information

A copy of this policy and associated school procedures will be made available to all staff within the school who may be responsible for leading off-site visits and activities and to any parent requesting a copy.

The head teacher will make additional information available to staff to help ensure the safe management of off-site activities, including the Northumberland policy statement “Safe Management of Visits and Off-Site Activities 2009” and access to the DES website:

www.northumberlandvisits.org.uk

Appropriate training will be made available to leaders and other adults taking part in off-site activities in order to reflect identified school health and safety priorities and educational priorities.

The head teacher will maintain a record of the qualifications held by staff and volunteers involved in outdoor activities including first aid, life-saving, mini-bus driving and specific hazardous activities.

9. Action in the case of emergency

The head teacher will ensure that emergency arrangements are in place, known to staff and in line with Council policy, to cover the range of activities undertaken from the school and the times at which they take place. This will include a minimum of two emergency contact numbers for designated senior members of staff or the governing body out-of hours. First aid provision and training of staff will be in accordance with good practice.

10. Accidents and incidents

Any accidents and incidents that occur during off-site visits and activities will be reported and recorded in accordance with the school health and safety policy. Northumberland County Council will be informed of notifiable accidents and incidents. Accidents and incidents will subsequently be reviewed within the school to identify any learning points.

11. Monitoring and review policy and practice

The Governors will review this policy:

- Every two years
- At such time as there are significant changes to guidance on the management of educational visits and off-site activities
- Should significant issues be brought to the attention of the Governors through the report of the Headteacher.

This policy has been agreed by the Governing Body on: 23rd October 2012