



WESTBOURNE  
ACADEMY

# **Local Academy Policy**

# **Off Site & Educational Visits**

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## **LOCAL ACADEMY POLICY OFF-SITE AND EDUCATIONAL VISITS**

Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the academy, and which take place outside the academy grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the academy by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our pupil's learning 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 academy day.

### *Aims and Objectives*

The aims of our off-site 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 academy site alone;
- Promote the independence of our pupils as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

### *Curriculum Links*

For each subject in the curriculum, there is a suggested programme of activities (which includes visits to the academy by specialists).

English - theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;

Science - use of the academy grounds, visits to botanical gardens;

Mathematics - Use of shape and number trails in the local environment;

History - castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums;

Geography - use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails;

Art and design - art gallery visits, use of the locality;

PE - a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches;

Music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, local academy's orchestra, concerts for parents and carers to hear;

Design and technology – visits to local factories or design centres;

ICT – its use in industry/libraries/ other academies, etc.

RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.

PSHE and citizenship – visit to local service providers, health, police, fire etc.

### *Residential Activities*

Pupils may also have the opportunity to take part in outward bound activities. We do make a charge for board and lodging, insurance and specialist instruction for certain activities. (Refer to Charging and Remissions Policy) Parents or carers in receipt of state benefits will be offered a payment plan, if required.

The outward bound visits will enable pupils to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their field work. We provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

### *How Visits May Be Authorised*

- The Principal will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the academy.
- The academy's educational visits manager, will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

They will:

Ensure that risk assessments are completed;

- Support the Principal and governing body in their decisions on approval;
- 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 the letter from our coach company (see 6.5) assures us that their drivers, too, have had police checks;
- Make sure that all necessary parental permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- Keep records of visits, and ensure that there are regular generic assessments of the risks (e.g. road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (e.g. a swimming facility).

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures. They must complete a pre visit. All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the policy and procedures

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the Principal before any commitment is made on behalf of the academy. 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 Principal will seek the approval of the governing body before permitting the activity to take place.

It is our policy that all pupils should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a pupil 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 or carers to help us to adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a pupil with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

## *Risk Assessment*

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. 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?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

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. He/she should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the pupils. He/she 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 he/she lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

The Principal and 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 academy, 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 between 10 and 15 pupils in Years 4 to 11;
- 1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 3;
- 1 adult to 3 pupils in Early Years.

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

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use on a regular basis has provided us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- 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 the trip have been subject to police checks (see 5.2 above).

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the Principal and the governing body, the educational visits manager and all adults supervising the trip.

All staff will have access to a charged, mobile telephone and leave the number clearly identified on their risk assessment. The Principals work mobile will be available for this purpose.

Appendix A contains the risk assessments to be completed

### *Transport*

The costing of off-site activities should 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 that the academy 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 or mini buses are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks (see 'How visits may be authorised' above).

### *Communication with parents and carers*

The parents/carers of pupils taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents or carers must give their permission in writing before a pupil can be involved in any off-site activities. Requests for parental consent, emergency contact details and medical needs form part of the trip letter sent out by the respective trip leader.

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

No pupil may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution, only if written permission has not been received. Parents and carers will be informed of this principle through the academy prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits which are also posted on our academy's website under the Letters page.

The trip leader will give consideration to any pupils who may be absent from school and is responsible for ensuring that they receive a copy of any trip letters.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Principal 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 academy number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal academy day, the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

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

The safety of the party, and especially the pupils, 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 pupils are both safe and well looked after at all times.

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

### *Group Leaders' Planning*

Group leaders must 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 consult the academy's documentation detailing procedures and requirements, including guidance on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation, and 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:

- Risk assessment;
- Report on preliminary visit;
- Applications 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;
- Accommodation plan (if applicable);
- Full plan 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 party leaders;
- Guidance for the emergency contact and Principal;
- Medical questionnaire returns; First Aid boxes.

### *Monitoring and Review*

This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Every visit will be reviewed by the party leader and any accompanying staff.