


Sparsholt C of E Primary School

OFF SITE ACTIVITIES - POLICY AND GUIDELINES 2023 - 2025



Review Frequency	2 yearly
Reviewed by Curriculum Chair	November 2023
Review Date	September 2025
Statutory or Non-Statutory	Non-Statutory
Signature of Headteacher	

Introduction

The learning activities organised for the children of Sparsholt C of E Primary School reflect the positive curricular value there has been found to be derived from direct experiences both off-site and within the school premises.

1.1 Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be difficult for all children to access. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.

1.2 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, staff and volunteers 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.

2 Aims

2.1 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 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 short excursions into the local area in the Early Years, and progress to residential experiences at the end of Key Stage 2.

3 Curriculum links

3.1 For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). All these activities are in line with guidance published by Hampshire County Council.

Examples could be:

- English – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;
- Science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens; the Winchester Science Centre
- 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; visits to places such as Hilliers Gardens, Gilbert White.
- 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 schools’ orchestra, concerts for parents to hear;
- Design and technology – visits to local factories or design centres;
- Computing – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools etc;
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.
- PSHE and citizenship – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

4 Residential activities

4.1 Children in Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This activity is in school time and linked to the National Curriculum and parents are asked to contribute towards the costs of the visit. The school supports those families where there is financial hardship.

4.2 The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their curriculum work. We undertake this visit only with the written agreement of Hampshire County Council.

We use centres which provide fully qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

5 How visits may be authorised

5.1 The headteacher will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school.

5.2 The school's educational visits coordinator (EVC), will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

The EVC will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- support the headteacher 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 checks, make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained. Private drivers will need to show proof of appropriate car insurance, a valid driver's licence and MOT.
- 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.
- get approval from HCC 'Hampshire Outdoors' (Evolve) when necessary (overnight, adventurous, near water, open country trips etc.)

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by Hampshire County Council (and available from the school office). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with Hampshire County Council's instructions.

5.3 It is our policy that all visits are staffed by teachers with the Hampshire qualification – 'Outdoor Leader' and staff with appropriate first aid training. When planning which personnel should be involved in visits, regard must be paid to their qualifications, experience and expertise.

5.4 Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the headteacher 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.

5.5 Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, the headteacher will seek the approval of HCC 'Hampshire Outdoors' (Evolve) before permitting the activity to take place.

5.6 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.

6 Risk assessment

6.1 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?

6.2 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 judgements about the risks it may involve. Hampshire County Council will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

6.3 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.

6.4 An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the minimum ratios as advised by Hampshire County Council.

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

6.5 A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue.

6.6 The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to the relevant checks if needed (see 5.2 above).

6.7 A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the headteacher and all adults on the trip. The educational visits coordinator will ensure the trip is entered onto EVOLVE prior to the trip taking place if it is deemed necessary due to their nature e.g. overnight residential visits, involving adventurous activities, near water or involving open country. Hampshire County Council requires risk assessments for all residential visits including an itinerary before permission can be granted

7 Transport

7.1 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 the school has opted to pay for.

7.2 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.

7.3 Where private cars are used for transport, the EVC is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, they have a valid driver's licence and MOT for the vehicle they are using and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal checks (see 5.2). This process will be managed by the school office and full records will be kept.

8 Communication with parents

8.1 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.

8.2 Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by voluntary parental contributions. This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

8.3 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 this policy on our website and letters sent home about intended visits.

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

9 Further health and safety considerations

9.1 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.

9.2 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.

9.3 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. This includes making sure there is suitable first aid provision and for children who have additional medical needs that may require the use of drugs such as Ventolin, that these are easily accessible.

9.4 Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others, the party leader should discuss with the headteacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity after all other options have been explored. A risk assessment should be completed to ascertain whether additional measures can be put in place to enable the pupil to participate safely.

10 Group leaders' planning

10.1 Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities. This is available on EVOLVE and from the EVC. They must consult Hampshire County Council documentation detailing procedures and requirements, including guidance on offsite Emergency procedures, and must draw up a Visit Plan which records in writing (including standard forms where appropriate) the arrangements that have been made.

11 Visit plan

11.1 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 headteacher;
- medical questionnaire returns and medical awareness
- first-aid boxes and medicines of children which might be required whilst on the trip such as asthma inhalers , Epipens etc.

12. Roles and Responsibilities:

12.1 Responsibility of the Headteacher:

Ensure all visits and off-site activities have specific and appropriate educational objectives.

- The head in discussion with the EVC (Educational Visits Coordinator) will ensure all off-site programmes are led by competent staff who are appropriately experienced to assess the risks , manage the activity and manage the specific group, in addition will ensure that those leading residential trips or into ‘open country’ hold an Outdoor Leaders Certificate.
- Check that risks have been assessed, significant risks recorded and any appropriate safety measures are in place.
- The Headteacher, in addition to the EVC will be responsible for approving all off-site activities in addition to those that also need to be approved by Hampshire Outdoors due to their nature. This includes approving the party leader for each visit or off-site activity.
- Ensure that there is an appropriate gender mix of staff, where pertinent, especially in relation to residential visits.
- That an adult on every trip is first aid qualified or has agreed to act in a role of competence.
- That where a child requires an ‘Epipen’ then the child is assigned to a group leader who is medically trained in this area and who has possession of the ‘epipen during the visit.

- Ensure that Governors have signed off all 'open country' or residential visits at least 8 weeks prior to the visit in order for them to be approved through the EVOLVE format in conjunction with Hampshire County Council.

12.2 Responsibility of the EVC

- In order to carry out the above responsibilities effectively the Head Teacher may delegate specified tasks to a suitably experienced and competent Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC).
- The current EVC is Mrs Kate Morey.
- The EVC will be responsible for carrying out agreed tasks and attending relevant training provided by Hampshire County Council. They will also ensure that they regularly log in to the EVOLVE site to ensure that they are familiar with new updates on provision and legalities.
- The EVC, in addition to the Head Teacher, will be responsible for approving all off-site activities. This includes approving the party leader for each visit or off-site activity.

12.3 Responsibility of the Visit Leader:

- Have overall responsibility for the supervision, pastoral care and conduct of the visit or activity;
- Obtain the Headteacher's approval, in addition to the EVC before any offsite visit or activity takes place;
- Have written a risk assessment for the visit, have completed a pre-visit to inform themselves of any potential risks/issues that might ensue;
- Have had the risk assessment signed off for the trip by the EVC and/or the Headteacher at least one week prior to the trip. Where the trip is into 'open country' (For example beside open water- a trip alongside a canal or river, into open country, adventurous etc.) or a residential visit then the EVOLVE risk assessment must be completed at least 8 weeks prior to the visit.
- Follow policy and procedures of Hampshire County Council and the school;
- Assess the risks involved and amend as appropriate any previously recorded risk assessment;
- Inform parents fully about the visit and gain their consent, where appropriate;
- Reassess continually 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.

- Ensure all adults, who are attending the visit, have read, prior to going, the risk assessment and have been made aware of any vulnerable children or those with specific medical needs, who will be taking part in the visit;
- Have made all adults accompanying the trip, aware of the risk assessment and groups.
- Ensure when assigning groups to parent helpers, there are no conflicts of interest.

12.4 Responsibilities of additional members of staff taking part in visits and offsite activities

Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

- Assist the party 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.
- Have read the risk assessment and have discussed this with the visit leader.
- Not take photos/videos of children on the trip on their personal phones/tablets/cameras etc.

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

Linked Policies:

Child protection

Safeguarding

Behaviour and anti-bullying policy

Supporting Pupils with Medical conditions

Policy for offsite activities

Teacher responsible : Mrs E Hanratty