

Kensington Queensmill

Educational Visits Policy



Approved by:	Head of School	Date: March 2022
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Next review due by:	March 2024	

Introduction

Visits are an important part of the teaching and learning at Kensington Queensmill. Through our community outings and visits children are able to generalise skills in the wider community, practice social and life skills, participate in group events and extend the curriculum based knowledge that they have learnt at school. Kensington Queensmill also recognises that it is often difficult for parents and carers to participate in community visits with their children due to the children's anxieties. By giving children the experience of community visits it allows the children to become more tolerant of public places and families may then find outings and visits less stressful.

Implementation

Educational visits are an important part of our school curriculum and all pupils, on a rota basis experience a range of different visits, these include:

- Swimming
- Horse riding
- Climbing wall
- Library
- Café
- Shopping
- Adventure play
- Park
- Work experience
- Cinema-autism friendly screenings
- Residential trips (these usually occur during the summer term)
- Curriculum visits-e.g. museums, places of worship, historical sites, and farms.

All staff are required to carry one of the schools mobile phones during an educational visit. These must be checked to ensure they are fully charged and have the school number within the phone's address book.

Where appropriate children will travel using public transport as this is an important life skill for our children.

Visits may be undertaken as a whole class, a group of classes, small groups of pupils or an individual pupil. Supervision is given the highest priority at all times and where it is not possible to provide appropriate supervision due to staff issues then a visit may be cancelled or postponed.

Before each visit is carried out a through Risk Assessment is carried out for the class as a whole and where necessary for individual children. Ongoing

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risk assessments are undertaken for trips such as swimming and walks in the local community. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that Risk Assessments are written and signed off by a member of the Senior Management Team. The teacher ensures that all members of the team are aware of the content of the Risk Assessment and what their role is during the outing/visit.

Where a trip is not part of the weekly curriculum permission forms are sent to parents and a voluntary donation towards the cost of the visit can be asked of parents where necessary.

Where a visit occurs to a new or unfamiliar destination the teacher carries out an initial visit to assess the venue. This assessment allows the teacher to plan the trip according to the needs and practicalities of the venue and the needs and abilities of the pupils.

Residential trips are organised by a member of the Senior Management Team and adhere to the DFE guidelines - see appendix 1 for specific content for residential trips.

All our educational visits Health and Safety Executive guidelines, www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf and the Department for Education's advice contained in 'Advice on legal duties and powers For local authorities, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies- June 2013.

Appendix 1

Planning and Preparation

This is crucial to safety and educational effectiveness. On the few occasions when things do go wrong the cause can almost always be traced back, to at least some extent, to faults in planning.

It is essential that formal planning takes place before setting off on ANY visit. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties that may arise and making plans to reduce them.

The Head of School – whose agreement must be obtained and who is responsible for planning visits – will often delegate the detailed planning to the organiser of the visit or the group leader.

Off-site educational residential visits require the approval of the Head of School, governors and the LA and therefore at least a terms notice is required.

The LA must be notified of all residential off-site educational visits at least two working weeks before the departure date using the EVOLVE electronic system. This will be completed by the School EVC. At present this is only applicable if the visit is a residential, or it involves a dangerous activity, thereby triggering an OS3 and OS4 Form.

The aims of all visits should be clearly established from the outset –

- Why are we doing this?
- What will it achieve?
- Who will benefit from it?
- Will it be worth doing – do the expected outcomes justify the means?

You should discuss the outlines of proposed trips with one or more colleagues and with the Phase leader. This will enable ideas to be shared and supplemented.

Risk Assessment

The language of risk assessment requires an understanding and use of two essential definitions:

- “**Hazard**” means anything that can cause harm.
- “**Risk**” is the possibility that someone will be harmed by the hazard.
- “**Control**” is how to manage the risk and/or hazard.

Risk assessments are carried out by the Visit leader. Assessments should be completed well before the visit and **should be approved by the EVC and then signed-off by the Head of School/delegated SLT member.**

A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Pupils and staff must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. NB. If the risks cannot be contained then the visit must not take place.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures need to be in place 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?

Pre-Visit

A pre-visit must be made by the Visit Leader who is to lead a group on a visit, (including residential trips) to the location even if the location is familiar to them.

The Visit Lead must:

- Ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit.
- Ascertain if it has quality marks which might suggest the venue is appropriate
- Obtain advice from the manager regarding evacuation policy/first aid, etc.
- Assess potential areas and levels of risk and have a copy if parents wish to scrutinize.
- Ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group and ensure they are fully aware of the levels of need of our pupils.
- Become familiar with the area before taking a group of pupils there.

If using a provider, research them appropriately:

- Do the values and ethos of the provider match your expectations?
- Is there a clear understanding about the responsibility for supervision at all times during the visit?
- What are the respective roles of provider staff and your staff?
- What provision will be made for our pupils' special needs?
- How flexible is the programme to meet changing circumstances?

First Aid

First Aid should form part of the risk assessment. Before undertaking any off-site activities, the Visit Leader should assess what level of first aid might be needed.

On any kind of visit there must be one member of school staff or place of visits staff with an up to date first aid qualification or if within walking distance from school a designated member of school staff.

For residential visits at least one of the group's staff to be a fully-trained first-aider. The person given designated responsibility for administering any regular medication will hold a copy of medication details for all pupils involved with the visit.

All adults in the group should know how to contact the emergency services. The minimum first aid provision for a visit is:

- A suitably stocked first aid box or pack.
- A person appointed to be in charge of first aid arrangements.

Other considerations when considering first aid should include:

- The number in the group and the nature of the activity.
- The likely injuries and how effective first aid would be.
- The distance of the nearest hospital.
- First aid should be available and accessible at all times.

Ratios

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adults to pupils for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Sex, age and ability of the group.
- Nature of activities.
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision.
- Duration and nature of the journey.
- Type of any accommodation.
- Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.
- Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited.
- Competence and behaviour of the students.
- First aid cover.

At our school, due to the complex special needs, it is vital that the Visit Leader speak to the students' class staff and finds out potential risks when going off-site in order to appropriately staff the visit.

Residential Visits

Other issues for the Visit Leader to consider include the following:

The leader should obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance.

- There must be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for pupils and adults.
- The immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the group's use.
- Ensure there is appropriate and safe heating and ventilation.
- Ensure the whole group is aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routine, and that everyone can identify key personnel.
- Security arrangements – where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors.
- The manager of the accommodation should be asked for assurances that all staff, including temporary workers, have been checked as suitable for work with students.
- Locks on doors should work in the group's rooms but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times.
- There should be drying facilities.
- There should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage, equipment, etc., and for the safe keeping of valuables.
- Adequate lighting – it is advisable to bring a torch.
- There should be provision for students with special needs and those who fall sick.
- Balconies should be stable, windows secure and electrical connections safe.
- The fire alarm must be audible throughout the accommodation.
- There should be recreational accommodation/facilities for the group.
- The place of residential should be able to meet any particular cultural or religious needs of the group.
- There should be an appropriate number of group supervisors on standby during the night.

Communicating with Parents

Parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum which parents have already been informed about.

Before residential visits parents should be encouraged to attend a briefing meeting where written details of the proposed visit should be provided. There should be alternative arrangements for parents who cannot attend or who have difficulty with communication in English. This is a legal requirement. Parents need to be aware that the teachers and other staff on the visit will have a 'duty of care'.

The following information on matters that might affect pupil health and safety should be imparted to parents:

- Dates of the visit.
- Visit objectives.
- Times of departure and return – parents must have agreed to meet their child on return.
- The location where the pupils will be collected and returned.
- Mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company.
- The size of the group and the level of supervision at all times
- Details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site.
- Details of provision for educational or medical needs.
- Procedures for pupils who become ill.
- Names of leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults.
- Details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed.
- Standards of behaviour expected and general group discipline, including prohibited items. This information may take the form of a code of conduct which parents should sign.
- What pupils should not take on the visit or bring back.
- Details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation, medical cover, any exceptions in the policy and whether parents need to arrange additional cover.
- Clothing and equipment to be taken.

Medical Consent Forms part of the parental consent form. Parents are asked to agree to the pupil's receiving emergency treatment, including the administration of a general anaesthetic and to surgical operations in the case of an emergency (in accordance with the recommendation of a qualified medical practitioner).

If parents do not agree to this, the Head of School may decide to withdraw the child from the visit – given the additional responsibility this would entail for the Visit leader.

Contact with Parents during a Residential Visit

The Visit Lead should ensure that parents can contact their child via the school contact and the group leader in the event of a home emergency, and that they have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the visit or a late arrival home. Parents should therefore:

- Know the destination details.
- Be aware of the emergency contact arrangements at home and at all the venues the group will visit.

- Provide contact numbers for day and night use in an emergency.
- Group leaders should arrange for parents to be told by the school of the group's safe arrival using SMS Service.

Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Additional safety measures to those already in place in school may be necessary to support pupils with medical needs during visits. Arrangements for taking medication and ensuring sufficient supplies for residential visits may be required.

All teachers supervising visits should be aware of a pupil's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures.

Summary sheets held by all teachers, containing details of each student's needs (within their assigned responsibility group), and any other relevant information provided by parents/carers, is one way of achieving this.

The Visit leader should discuss the pupil's individual needs with the parents.

The Visit leader should check that the insurance policy covers staff and pupils with pre-existing medical needs.

Off-site visits may pose additional difficulties for a pupil with SEN and the behaviour of some pupils may prove challenging. The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- Is the pupil capable of taking part in and benefiting from the activity?
- Can the activity be adapted to enable the pupil to participate at a suitable level?
- Will additional/different resources be necessary?
- Is the pupil able to understand and follow instructions?

It may be helpful to the pupil if one of the staff already knows them well and appreciates their needs fully. The group leader should discuss the visit with the parents of pupils with particularly complex SEN to ensure that suitable arrangements have been put in place to ensure their safety.