



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

NOVEMBER 2023

Approved by Headteacher and shared with the Governing Body	7.11. 2023
Review Date	Autumn 2026

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all External Visits involving children, young people and vulnerable adults. It applies regardless of whether the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

DEFINITION:

External Visits are defined as events that involve children, young people or vulnerable adults being away from their normal school, centre or residential home premises, while in the care of the school or other service. This includes educational visits, outings, school trips and off-site activities such as: local visits to parks, museums, libraries and sports facilities; cultural, educational, recreational and exchange trips; outdoor activities; residential; field trips.

BENEFITS

All children, young people and vulnerable adults should be given the opportunity of benefiting from participation in a wide range of visits and activities, including Learning Outside the Classroom, local activities, day visits, residential, field studies and outdoor adventure activities. Whether their emphasis is adventurous, academic, sporting, cultural, spiritual or creative, off-site visits and outdoor learning provide first-hand experiences that inspire and enhance learning and development in ways which are powerful and lasting. They provide a foundation for life-long learning and healthy lifestyles, as well as complementing classroom learning and enriching the curriculum.

ASSESSMENT OF RISK

As an employer, Michael Faraday School has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed - requiring them to be reduced to an "acceptable" or "tolerable" level. Risk is a natural part of everyday life: all activities involve risk, and it is impossible to entirely eliminate it. Indeed, the human spirit thrives on adventure and journeys into new territory, both physical and metaphorical. It is important that children, young people and vulnerable adults learn to understand and manage risk and uncertainty for themselves. If we attempt to 'wrap them in cotton wool', they not only miss huge opportunities for growth but also emerge into society unable to cope with the uncertainties and challenges of adult life.

Well-managed external visits, including outdoor and adventurous activities, play a vital part in helping children, young people and vulnerable adults to learn about the real world, and to understand and manage risks for themselves. Schools are therefore encouraged to provide such opportunities for children, young people and vulnerable adults. Good planning and management of activities should be about reducing risks to an acceptable level, considering the potential benefits. The starting point for such a risk-benefit assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes. This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is acceptable. Employees who follow this Code of Practice, work within the limits of their own competence, and use their common sense and professional judgement will be fully supported by the school.

Although some paperwork is required in order to record and communicate the decisions made, risk management should be largely a common-sense process centred upon competent staff. It should focus on significant risks, not trivial ones, and it should not become a restrictive and onerous bureaucratic exercise.

Risk assessment is a legal requirement and assessing risks associated with external visits is no different. It is simply a systematic examination of what might harm people, and should be based on common sense.

Procedures

- 1.1 Staff wishing to plan and undertake a visit (prospective visit leaders) should apply verbally to the headteacher or educational visits co-ordinator (EVC) for permission to plan the visit. Once granted they should submit the details on **the school's outing request form**, to the headteacher or EVC and receive outline permission to undertake the visit.
- 1.2 Outline permission will be granted when all the requirements identified have been considered using the Risk Assessment Method, the visit can be accommodated within the school timetable and the ethos of the visit is one with which the school wishes to be associated. The staff undertaking the visit will meet with the EVC to discuss potential risk.
- 1.3 When the visit involves additional or high-risk activities, foreign travel or is a residential visit then details of the visit will also be sent to the Local Authority Educational Visits Adviser by the headteacher or EVC for approval that all the procedures have been satisfactorily completed.
- 1.4 Once outline permission, and any necessary Local Authority approval, has been received the visit leader can complete the planning organisation and bookings for the visit. When all details are complete they must be submitted for final approval. **This should be a minimum of 14 days before the visit.**
- 1.5 Regularly repeated visits may receive block annual approval subject to parents being made aware of every visit, especially any involving a return time outside the normal school day.
- 1.6 Following each visit the leader will undertake a review. Any incidents or accidents will be reported in accordance with the reporting requirements. Leaders of visits that have involved considerable time or financial resources, such as residential visits, will produce a short report evaluating the travel and transport, facilities, quality of any providers and the success and value of the visit and submit this to the headteacher or EVC.
- 1.7 All school staff will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when the policy is reviewed.

Note: Visits to the Local Authority Education Service and School Swimming Service are self-approving and do not require further notification or action.

2. Local Responsibilities

- 2.1 The headteacher is the responsible officer for ensuring visits are approved as necessary, that all visits approved can be accommodated within the timetable and that the ethos of each visit is one with which the school wishes to be associated.

2.2 The Educational Visit Co-ordinator is a staff member who has received relevant training and induction and is delegated with the following indicated tasks: -

To grant verbal permission that a leader may plan a visit after deciding that the timetabling and ethos of the visit are acceptable.

To receive Outing forms and check all visit details are completed and to ensure the annual record of visits is maintained.

To check that all requirements for approving a visit, as identified in through the Rick Assessment, have been undertaken.

To liaise with headteacher and grant outline permission for a visit to go ahead

To check that the further requirements for residential or foreign travel and additional or high-risk activities have been undertaken.

To liaise with the Local Authority on any visit involving residential or foreign travel and additional or high-risk activities.

To grant final permission for a visit when all organisation and planning are complete and to signify this by signing the Outing Form

The school's current EVC is

Sarah Haley

Note: Any tasks not indicated in the above list remain that of the headteacher.

2.3 The designated visit leader is in overall charge of the group and remains responsible throughout the visit.

3. Emergency Procedures

3.1 The risk assessment for each visit will identify the relevant emergency procedures during the visit. For visits extending beyond the school day this includes designating a home contact from the school who may be needed as a link between the party, the parents, the school and the Local Authority in the event of an emergency.

- 3.2 In the event of a delay (of more than 1 hour), or of an incident resulting in harm to any attending participant, staff member or volunteer, then the school must be contacted as soon as possible to inform the headteacher or designated deputy so that they can decide: -
- A. If the incident is of a less serious nature then the next of kin or parents of those affected will be informed about what has happened (e.g. that the party will be returning late or that an incident has befallen a party member) and the action that has been taken so far. In appropriate circumstances the visit leader will be designated to undertake this task.
 - B. However, if the incident is very serious (e.g. involves a disabling or life-threatening accident, or a fatality) then the headteacher, deputy or the home contact will inform the designated senior officer at the Local Authority and the school will instigate its critical incident plan. Officers of the authority will be allocated to support the school with the immediate incident and any necessary follow up or inquiry.
- 3.3 In the event of a party being overdue and without contact by more than 1 hour, the school, or the home contact, must investigate the reason and may, where appropriate, need to involve the police.

The Governing Body

- 4.1 The governing body will receive reports from the headteacher detailing the school visits that have taken place.