

EDUCATIONAL VISITS IN THE EARLY YEARS POLICY & GUIDANCE

PART ONE: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

INTRODUCTION

Moor Park School places great value on educational visits for all of its pupils, including the very youngest, recognising that they provide a unique opportunity to enhance the curriculum and to extend and support class based work. They provide opportunities which cannot be provided on site and can extend the knowledge and understanding of our youngest pupils. All of our visits for this age group are local – most last only half a day. We do not take Lower School children on overnight or foreign visits.

OUR VISITS

Supervision

Generous staffing levels, close supervision and proper protective clothing are essential for even the shortest of excursions. For all walks within the enclosed school grounds, the children are supervised by their Teacher and a Teaching Assistant who holds a level 3 statutory qualification (as defined by the Children's Workforce Development Council). They always take a mobile phone with them. The children are always briefed in advance about the visit and of the standards of behaviour which we expect.

Staff Ratios and Responsibility

We operate a staffing ratio of 1:8 (1:4 ratio for children under 3) for all off-site visits involving children in our Kindergarten and Reception classes. There is always at least one Teacher and one person will have been designated in charge of the visit. Our normal class size is 12, so the Teacher is accompanied by 1 Assistant. The Teacher is qualified in paediatric first aid. On the rare occasions that they are used, volunteers are checked with the CRB, never allowed to supervise children alone and are thoroughly briefed about their roles beforehand.

The Nursery

We do not take our Nursery children off-site on trips. They need time to settle into the routine of going to school, and there are plenty of opportunities for daily outdoor play in the Nursery Department's well-equipped, secure outdoor play area. Nursery children are taken by their Teacher and their Assistant on nature walks inside the school grounds, where they are encouraged to collect conkers, autumn leaves, scramble over fallen logs and watch the wild life.

Kindergarten & Reception

By the time that they move to Kindergarten, children are ready for more excursions off-site and for a wider range of new experiences. We arrange for regular short walks in the neighbourhood for them to learn about the built environment and different places of work. During the year, they will visit:

- A variety of local shops,
- The Church
- A castle
- A farm

Walks in the school grounds continue throughout the Early Years. By the end of Reception, the children are confidently conducting investigative, observational and topic work outside. Their climbing and balancing skills will have improved, together with their understanding of the cycle of the seasons, such as the first signs of spring.

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

All parents of Lower School have access to details of the year's curriculum prior to the start of the academic year, when the aims of the curriculum, the topics that will be studied and the methods of delivering the curriculum through play, structured activities and outdoor activities will be briefly explained. The Lower School 'Dates Letter' and daily planner list the visits that are due to take place over the coming term. We will inform parents through the Lower School 'Dates Letter' well in advance, telling you about every visit and, if appropriate, its cost.

All Lower School visits return your child to the school at their conclusion. All visits are optional.

CONSENT

On entry to Moor Park all parents are asked to sign a general consent form for out of school visits that will cover any visit undertaken during the school day. You will be notified of visits well in advance and are requested to inform the school if you do not wish your child to be included.

PART TWO: INFORMATION FOR STAFF

SAFETY: ADVANCE PLANNING

Risk Assessments

Safety is our top priority. Even the shortest of visits needs to be thoroughly planned, and requires its own risk assessment, which must be reviewed thoroughly before a repeat visit is made.

Head Counts

The Teacher in charge conducts, or arranges for another Teacher or Assistant to conduct a head count of the children (recording the fact that we have done so):

- Before leaving school
- (If applicable) On sitting down in the coach
- On arrival at the destination
- On leaving the destination
- On arrival back at the school

Where we walk, the children walk in pairs, with one adult at the front, one in the middle and one at the back (unless child numbers are below 8 when only two members of staff will be present, front and rear). Children are reminded about basic road safety and of the expected standards of behaviour. When we travel by coach, a member of staff will check that all the pupils are sitting properly and wearing their seat belts.

Missing Child Policy

Our procedures are structured to ensure that this does not happen; but in the event that a child is missing – either from school, or on a visit, we follow the procedures set out in our Missing Child policy, which can be viewed on our web site.

First Aid Kit etc

The Teacher in charge takes a first aid kit, list of emergency contact numbers and a mobile phone on every outing. We carry bottled water on all of our longer visits.

Delay

The Teacher in Charge will ring the school if there is any delay, for example, because of heavy traffic. The School Office has parent contact information and will phone the parents to warn them of a delay.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN CHARGE OF A LOWER SCHOOL VISIT

Every visit, however local, or short, must be planned in advance by the member of staff who is in charge of it. S/he will have had previous experience of accompanying Lower School visits before organising one him/herself. S/he will also have attended a briefing session by the Bursar who holds the appointment of Education Visits Coordinator (EVC). For Early Years visits the Teacher in Charge either holds a valid Paediatric First Aid Certificate him/herself, or ensures that another member of staff accompanying the visit holds one.

ROLE OF THE EDUCATION VISITS COORDINATOR (EVC)

The Head of Lower School is responsible for approving all requests for visits. The EVC works closely with the Head in checking that the paperwork is correct, gives

guidance on carrying out risk assessments, budgeting for visits and on permission slips, and keeps a “library” of previous visit documentation.

PERSONAL LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

Staff in charge of pupils have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances. The DCSF Guidance “The Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide,” (www.teachernet.gov.uk) is required reading for all Teachers in Charge of a visit as part of their training in the responsibilities of the role. It explains that their responsibility is to “act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances.” Staff who take part in visits and activities outside school may feel concerned about the possibility of being held personally liable if an accident should occur. However, they can be assured that Moor Park School, as their employer, will always stand behind them in the unlikely event of an accident occurring, provided they have exercised reasonable care and followed the school’s guidelines.

Moor Park School has £10M of Employers’ Liability Insurance and £15M of public liability insurance, as well as a group travel policy that covers any visit made by the Lower School. Cover includes cancellation or delay, medical expenses, replacement of personal possessions and money.

USE OF PRIVATE CARS

At Moor Park School, we expect every member of staff who is likely to drive on school business to complete a “Drivers’ Declaration Form” before s/he drives pupils in a school minibus or privately owned vehicle. The completed forms are held by the EVC. Where a member of staff transports pupils in his/her car, insurance cover is automatically provided through the school’s “occasional business use” motor policy. That ensures that motor insurance claims arising whilst a member of staff is using their own car for school business purposes can be settled without involving their own motor insurer. Nursery children can only be transported in private cars that are fitted with special child seats. The School can provide a limited number of booster seats for use in cars where the child is over 3 years of age.

SCHOOL MINIBUSES

No one is allowed to drive the school minibus unless s/he has qualified as a minibus driver. For any minibus journey that involves Early Years children, there should always be a second member of staff. The school will arrange and fund First Aid courses, as well as courses in driving minibuses for all staff who are involved in visits. At Moor Park School, we expect every member of staff to complete a “Drivers’ Declaration Form” before s/he drives pupils in a school minibus or privately owned vehicle. The completed forms are held by the EVC.

USE OF HIRED TRANSPORT

Occasionally, we may hire coaches for Early Years visits when more than one class is involved. The school has a long-standing relationship with a local company that understands that all drivers have current CRB disclosures and carry (hands free) mobile phones. School staff will accompany the children on the coach at a minimum

ratio of 1:8. It is a condition of booking that the school holds details of the driver's name, the vehicle's registration number and insurance details and an emergency contact number for the company/driver. We only book vehicles with front-facing seats that are fitted with seat belts.

PREPARATORY ARRANGEMENTS

Visits made by the Early Years classes are all local; but nevertheless, their outline is planned at least a term in advance, when dates need to be agreed with the Head of Lower School. Parents will be told about the visits planned for the ensuing term through the Lower School 'Dates Letter'.

Actions for the Teacher in Charge

All visits should be organised a term in advance:

- Parents should be invited to express an interest and be given an idea of cost.
- (If necessary) The Head of the Lower School and the School Nurse should be consulted about individual children's special and medical needs. Advice should be obtained on any arrangements that may be required for a pupil's individual special and medical needs
- The Bursary will need to be informed if tickets and hired transport need to be reserved.
- As required, the Bursary should be asked to arrange CRB checks and take up the necessary references for volunteers

Up to One Month in Advance

- The Educational Visits Approval Form should be completed including the trip risk assessment and Requirements Form (refreshments, transport, entry fees etc.)
- The travelling first aid kit should be booked from the Medical Centre
- Bookings should be finalised
- The Risk Assessment should be finalised and approved by the EVC
- Parents should be advised if special clothing (sun hats, waterproof clothing, wellington boots, sun cream) is needed/advisable

One Week in Advance

- Any tickets required should be checked and stored in the school safe
- Meeting with other members of staff participating in the visit to discuss risk assessment, the respective roles of the Teacher in Charge, other staff and emergency procedures
- A school mobile phone should be booked
- Prepare packs for the accompanying staff, EVC and the School Secretary (this will usually be a copy of the Educational Visits Approval form and accompanying paperwork) containing:
 - The itinerary
 - The Teacher in Charge's mobile number / school mobile
 - Mobile numbers of all participating staff
 - A list of pupils, together with details of any medical conditions

- Emergency contact numbers for the Head of Lower School and the EVC
- Contact details for the School Secretary
- The name of the driver, the registration number of the minibus, confirmation of insurance etc.
- A copy of the risk assessment.
- Location of local hospital
- Refreshments are ordered from the Catering Department

The Day of Departure/ Day Prior to Departure

- Remind the children of the aim of the visit and of the expected standards of behaviour
- Give information packs to recipients
- Collect first aid pack. Check contents
- Collect school mobile phone
- Collect bottled water / refreshments

DURING THE VISIT

Primary responsibility for the safe conduct of the visit rests with Teacher in Charge. He or she has sole responsibility for amending the itinerary or canceling the visit in the event of unforeseen delay or sudden deterioration in weather conditions. S/He may delegate part or all of the responsibility for the following to one or more of the accompanying staff:

- Carrying out (and recording) head counts of the children on leaving school, on getting on and off each form of transport, entering or leaving a theatre, museum, centre, etc
- Checking that all pupils wear their seat belts
- Enforcing expected standards of behaviour
- Keeping account of all expenditure
- Recording any accidents or near misses

ILLNESS OR MINOR ACCIDENTS

If a Pupil has a minor accident or becomes ill, the Teacher in Charge, or another member of staff will phone the school's emergency contact number (01584 876061/872342) at once and arrange for him/her to be collected. If required by the nature / severity of the accident / illness the parents will also be informed. If contact cannot be made, the Teacher in Charge, or another member of staff, will take him/her to the local hospital. A member of staff will remain with the child at the hospital or Medical Centre until a parent or carer arrives.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of a serious accident resulting in the death or injury of one or more of the pupils and staff, the Teacher in Charge's first priorities are to ensure the safety of the remainder of the group, to summon the emergency services and to arrange for medical attention for the injured. One of the accompanying members of staff should accompany the injured pupil(s) to hospital and would remain with the child/children until their parents arrived. Ensuring that the rest of the group were safe and looked

after, and informing the Head of School/the EVC of what had happened would be the next task for the Teacher in Charge, who would need to give as full, calm and factual account as the circumstances permitted. Where the full facts had not yet emerged, he or she should say so, and ensure that follow-up communications with the Head / Head of Lower School are maintained. The School Office will arrange for the parents of the uninjured children to be contacted on their emergency contact numbers and asked to collect their children from either the venue or the school, depending upon the circumstances. The School Office would notify the insurers as quickly as possible. Any media contact should be directed to the school. A full record should be kept of the incident, the injuries and of the actions taken.

At Moor Park School, depending on the nature of the incident, we would implement our own model communications plan for informing both the families of the injured, and the families of those who are unhurt as swiftly as possible. We recognise that in an era of instant communications, it may not be possible for us to be the first to break the news. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that we have an important duty to speak personally to the parents of any pupil who has suffered some injury or mishap. We will use mass communication methods (SMS, email, messages on our web, local radio) for communicating with those whose children are not affected.

Where possible, communication with the media should be left to the Head. The Teacher in Charge should refer the media to the school. If comment is unavoidable, it should be factual, calm and no attempt made to cover gaps in knowledge.

ON RETURN

Each Teacher in Charge is asked to provide the EVC with a report on the visit, particularly if there have been any accidents and near misses. Personal observations and lessons learned are always valuable. The Group leader should return all school property

Expenditure

The Teacher in charge is responsible for producing a schedule of all expenditure on the trip.

Report for Governors

The Head 's termly report to the Governors always contains a synopsis of the school trips and visits that have taken place since the last meeting.

January 2010

