

The Croft Preparatory School

Educational Visits Policy

Whole School Policy, including the Early Years Foundation Stage

Policy Reviewed (MC)	01 May 2023
Peer Review Completed	16 May 2023
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Next Review	May 2025

Introduction

The legal responsibility for ensuring that the Croft Preparatory School adheres to all relevant statutory regulations, as issued by the DfE, lies with the Proprietors. At their discretion, the Proprietors may delegate the monitoring of the efficacy with which the school discharges its statutory duties to The Headmaster and Governing Committee.

Notwithstanding the above delegation, the Proprietors retain ultimate responsibility for how the statutory functions are executed.

Rationale

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good primary practice.

Purposes

Educational visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively, teachers may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the curriculum.

Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised and explained in detail to parents.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at The Croft Preparatory School.

Responsibilities

Headmaster

The Headmaster at The Croft must ensure that:

- a suitable Group Leader has been appointed
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins
- the Group Leader has made a preliminary visit to the venue, where possible
- the risk assessment is completed in advance and that it is safe to make the visit
- training needs have been met
- the Group Leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- the Group Leader has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity
- all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance
- parents have signed consent forms
- arrangements have been made for all the medical needs and special educational needs of all the children
- the mode of travel is appropriate
- travel times outward and return are known
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name
- they have the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents
- the Group Leader ensures all adults are aware of the School's Safeguarding Policy
- all trips are agreed and countersigned by the EVC (Educational Visits Co-ordinator (Headmaster))

Group Leader

One teacher, the Group Leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been appointed by the Headmaster. The Group Leader should:

- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range

- be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment
- have regard to the Health & Safety of the group at all times
- know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below
- ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of pupils below)
- ensures all adults are aware of the School's Safeguarding Policy

See the School's Safeguarding Policy for further information.

The Group Leader must:

- ensure that they take all necessary steps to secure any personal data being removed from the school site for the purposes of the trip, to prevent a breach of data. Such personal data may include pupil names and dietary requirements, parental contact details and special categories of data, such as pupil medical details. Personal data for school trips will usually be transported electronically, via the provision of a password protected school tablet, to guard against loss. Where this is not possible, a hard copy may be taken, and signed out of school by the Group Leader. Hard copies must be retained securely by the Group Leader for the duration of the trip and signed back into school on return, so the paperwork may be securely shredded and disposed of. The Group Leader should familiarise themselves with the school procedures on transporting data prior to the trip, to ensure compliance with these guidelines

All adults involved in a Visit

All adults on the visit must:

- ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would
- follow the instructions of the Group Leader and help with control and discipline. Non-teachers should generally not have sole charge of pupils except where risks to health and safety are minimal
- consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable
- read and consent that they understand the risk assessment prior to departure

Pupils

The Group Leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks
- follow the instructions of the leader and other adults (including staff of the venue in an emergency supported by school staff)
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the Group Leader about it
- not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous, the exception being a ski trip or PGL adventure trip where some pupils may have fear at first, but may need to be challenged beyond their comfort zone

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

Parents

The Group Leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits.

The Group Leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's Code of Conduct.

Parents must:

- provide the Group Leader with emergency contact number(s)
- sign the consent form
- give the Group Leader relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit
- provide any prescribed medication to the nominated First Aider on the trip, including details of dosage and frequency of administration

Allocation of Places

Should a school trip have a limited quantity of places available, a process of random selection will be adopted. For any pupil who returns the relevant paperwork prior to the published deadline, their name will be placed 'in a hat' and selected randomly until all the places are filled. Other trips with particular conditions will be subject to an appropriate process.

Planning off-site Visits

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

The Headmaster has overall responsibility for all off-site visits. In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the Group Leader, but the Headmaster must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

The organiser/Group Leader must agree all plans with the Headmaster, whilst the Facilities Manager and the Headmaster must sign off the risk assessment for the trip.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should always be carried out before setting off on a visit, using The Croft's Risk Assessment Form. The risk assessment should be completed in consultation with the Facilities Manager who will sign off the risk assessment prior to submission to the headmaster. The risk assessment will decide the adult:child ratio for each visit. (See Guidance under 'Supervision'.) The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- what are the risks?
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the Group Leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit? (See section on Supervision.)
- where possible, a copy of the venue's own Risk Assessment should be attached

The Group Leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The Group Leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken
- the location
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament
- pupils with special educational or medical needs
- the quality and suitability of available equipment
- First Aid cover
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing

If planning an activity that will involve caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports, a check must also be made that the activity provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004.

See the School's Risk Assessment Policy for further information.

Exploratory Visit

Wherever possible, the Group Leader should undertake an exploratory visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit
- assess potential areas and levels of risk
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group
- ensure that the Group Leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group and requesting a copy of the venue's risk assessment. In situations where a venue's risk assessment is not available, then an exploratory site visit must be undertaken in advance by the trip leader. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue. In some cases, such as when taking walking parties to remote areas, it may be appropriate to obtain local information from the Tourist Boards.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. There is always a nominated, trained First Aider on every visit, which may be the Group Leader, or another member of staff accompanying the trip. Where, due to the numbers of pupils attending, two coaches are required for transportation, we will endeavour to have a trained First Aider on each vehicle. In addition, there may be additional trained First Aiders, or adults with a working knowledge of First Aid within the group, and all adults should know how to contact emergency services. For visits which include children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there will always be at least one First Aider with Paediatric training present.

The minimum First Aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked First Aid box
- a person appointed to be in charge of First Aid arrangements.

First Aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a First Aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate First Aid cover for the other pupils. The Headmaster should take this into account when assessing what level of First Aid facilities will be needed. The contents of a First Aid kit will depend on what activities are planned and any special medical needs known about.

Please also see the School's First Aid Policy.

Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group
- special needs pupils
- 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

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

As a general guideline, the following ratio of adults to children supervision should be used:

Little Crofters	1:4
Little Crofters Pre-School and Reception	1:5
Years 1 & 2	1:8
Years 3 – 6	1:10

Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the School's risk assessment procedure for educational visits.

These ratios do not include residential visits.

Where there is more than one adult supervisor, a Group Leader, who has authority over the whole party, must be appointed.

Where a high adult:pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents, or the School's Governors, with appropriate safeguarding clearance may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the School and the pupil group.

All adult supervisors, including School staff, Governors and parent helpers, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one-to-one situation with a pupil. Where staff are escorting children to the lavatory, they should not go into the toilet cubicle, nor are they expected to be involved with toileting, unless the child has a specific need which has been brought to the School's attention in advance, and a procedure for this agreed. Adult supervisors should ensure that an appropriate level of supervision is always in place for children visiting public conveniences.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head-counting of pupils should take place. The Group Leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. The lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and others' safety.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any Health & Safety issues.

Participation

Pupils should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities. Pupils need to be encouraged to take part in activities they fear, which will give them a sense of achievement.

Pupils whose behaviour is such that the Group Leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits, the Group Leader should consider whether such pupils will return home early.

Information to Pupils

It is for the Group Leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information. Pupils should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit / activity
- background information about the place to be visited

- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules
- why safety precautions are in place
- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities
- what standard of behaviour is expected from pupils
- who is responsible for the group
- what to do if approached by a stranger
- what to do if separated from the group
- emergency procedures
- rendezvous procedures

Transport and Pupils

Pupils using public or private transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- arrive on time and wait for the transport away from the road, track, etc
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives
- wear your seat belt and stay seated while travelling on transport
- make sure your bags do not block aisles on the transport
- never attempt to get on or off moving transport
- never throw things out of the transport vehicle's windows
- never get off a vehicle which is stationary at traffic lights or in traffic
- never run about while transport is moving or pass someone on steps or stairs
- never kneel or stand on seats or otherwise impede the driver's vision
- never distract or disturb the driver
- stay clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport
- after leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road
- if you have to cross roads to get to the transport, always use the Green Cross Code, with adult supervision at all times.
- If you feel unwell while travelling, tell a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group
- travel-sick pupils should be seated towards the front of the coach

Supervision on public transport is subject to the same ratios as those outlined above on page 6, with a full risk assessment to have been completed in advance.

Pupils with Special Educational and Medical Needs or Disabilities

The Headmaster will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs or disabilities from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be

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

Communicating with Parents / Guardians

Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place – ‘in loco parentis’ – and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupils’ health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in a letter to parents/guardians prior to a visit:

- date of the visit
- times of departure and return
- mode(s) of travel, including the name of any travel company
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site
- names of Group Leader and other accompanying staff
- visit’s objectives
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed
- insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation and medical cover. Any cover to be arranged by the parents, if appropriate, will be requested
- clothing and equipment to be taken
- money to be taken
- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to
- the cost of the visit

Parental Consent

The Croft Preparatory School will seek consent for:

- visits involving young children
- adventure activities
- visits abroad
- other residential visits

If parents withhold consent, the pupil must not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent, the Headmaster will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not. The School’s parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

Residential Visits

Hostels and Hotels

The School will bear in mind the following:

- the Group Leader should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the young people's – we will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group
- access by staff to student rooms must be available at all times
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults
- ensure that the whole party is aware of the lay out of the accommodation, its fire precautions / exits, its regulations and routing, 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
- ensure that locks / shutters etc work on all the rooms used by the group
- storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc, particularly safe keeping of valuables
- adequate lighting – it is advisable to bring a torch
- provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies)
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group