

EDUCATIONAL VISITS



- Introduction
- Legal Duties
- Information
- Controlling & Managing Visits
- Stage 1 – Pre-Visit Planning & Preparation
- Stage 2 – The Visit
- Stage 3 – After the Visit
- Other Sources of Information
- Maintaining Records
- First Aid Procedure
- Lost Child Procedure
- Any other Emergency
- Behaviour Guidelines
- Student Supervision
- Terms & Conditions

Introduction

Pupils of all ages and learning abilities benefit from educational visits that link to subjects being taught under the National Curriculum.

There have been some high-profile cases where education authorities and teachers have been prosecuted when things have gone seriously wrong on a school trip. However, it is important to remember that the overwhelming majority of educational visits are carried out safely and responsibly by teachers who take the time and effort to get things right. The benefits of such trips to pupils can be immense and this is reflected in official advice from the government, the education department and the Health and Safety Executive.

This guidance note is intended to provide information and advice to teachers, classroom assistants, group leaders and other adults involved in school trips.

Hazards that are linked to school trips and educational visits include;

- Travelling to and from the destination.
- Weather conditions (excessively hot or excessively cold).
- Water based activities.
- Adult – pupil ratios.
- Contact with animals (where applicable).
- Infectious diseases.
- Other hazardous substances e.g. pesticides.
- Contact with equipment and machinery.
- Electrical installations and equipment e.g. electric fences, power distribution points.

- Ground conditions (wet, muddy, contaminated).
- Personal hygiene.

Legal Duties

Health and safety legislation requires that employers protect, so far as is reasonably practicable, their workers from the risks to their health and safety whilst at work. They also have a responsibility to protect others (including children) from risks to their health and safety that arise from the way they run their business.

If a member of staff leading a trip deviates from an agreed visit plan or in some way contributes to an incident they too may be in breach of health and safety legislation or common law.

Information

These duties place a clear legal responsibility for the safety of visiting school pupils on both the school authorities and the operator of any site they visit. They must take into account the fact that children are naturally inquisitive and may not have a true understanding of the risks associated with the place they are visiting.

Controlling and managing visits

Every education authority will have a detailed policy in relation to the planning and delivery of school visits. Independent operators have their own systems to monitor and oversee visits.

It is recognised that each school should have an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). This may be the Head Teacher or other nominated person within the school. The EVC should be able to demonstrate competency relative to the size of the school and the activities to be undertaken. They must be able to produce evidence of suitable training, or qualifications and have proven experience of practical leadership of outdoor educational activities. The EVC will normally have the responsibility for approving educational visits organised by other staff.

In developing arrangements it may be appropriate to impose different requirements for different activities. For example the policy could require that routine day long educational visits be approved by the EVC while those involving activities near water or other significant hazards and residential visits would need specific approval by the Governing Body or Local Education Authority (LEA). This guidance note assumes that the activity is being organised by the school's own EVC, or that the EVC for the Local Education Authority is involved in the planning of the visit.

The organisation of a visit can be broken down into three stages: pre-visit, the visit itself and after the visit.

Stage 1 – Pre-Visit Planning and Preparation

- Obtain outline approval for the visit from the school's EVC or LEA, using the school's own or LEA approved documents.
 - Establish the educational criteria for the visit.
 - Ensure that the purpose of the visit is made known to all relevant parties.
 - Ensure that suitable risk assessments for the activities are carried out. Ideally this will be based on a familiarisation or liaison visit carried out by the organiser once the visit has been booked so that they can identify hazards and risks. The risk assessments should address only risks that are reasonably foreseeable – you do not have to consider risks that are trivial or fanciful. You must also follow the Hemsley Conservation Centre's own visit risk assessment for risks that your EVC or responsible adults will not be fully equipped to assess – such as the escape of an animal or fire.
 - Consider whether the needs of disabled or people with special needs can be met thorough the duration of the visit.
 - Prepare a visit plan, supported by a risk assessment, and submit it to the EVC, LEA or Governing Body for approval.
 - When approval is given check that you have, or arrange for parental consent for the children who will be involved. Send parents details of the trip and the proposed itinerary and include planned contingency arrangements in the event of e.g. Traffic delays or bad weather.
 - Establish a procedure to follow in the event of an incident taking place during the visit; unless outside of your remit or relevant professional expertise; such as that related to a specific zoo incident for which an emergency co-ordinator is appointed (a member of appointed zoo staff).
 - Ensure that there is an appropriate ratio of supervising adults to specific children attending.
 - Ensure that a contingency plan is in place to deal with potential alterations to the visit (including changes of route and to take account of adverse weather).
 - If the party is to split up on arrival at the visit site ensure communication between the group leaders.
 - Ensure that a person at the school, with authority to make significant decisions, is available throughout the duration of the visit. There should also be a nominated back-up for this person.
 - Ensure that the provision of transport, either using the school's own bus(es) or those of an approved coach operator is adequate and that the drivers are licensed and authorised. Make sure seat belts are fitted and used.
- Liaison with the operator of the site being visited will include:
- Public Liability Insurance cover.
 - Site specific safety information.
 - This will include major incident procedures. These include but are not limited to the following:
 - Fire

- Animal Escape

- Any limits on numbers that may be appropriate.
- Risk assessments;
- COSHH assessments.
- Supervision.
- Safety equipment.
- Provision for first aid.
- Washing facilities.
- Provision for catering or eating and drinking. Provision for those with disability or special needs
- Emergency procedures – All group leaders will be advised by a member of appointed zoo staff and will follow their lead at all times.

Stage 2 – The Visit

- On the day of the visit, if not before, explain and check that the supervising adults, including parent volunteers, understand their role and what is expected of them. Ensure that each group leader has the means to communicate with the visit leader through the day.
- Ensure that children are wearing appropriate clothing and that any cuts or grazes are covered with waterproof dressings.
- Remind children of the safety rules.
- Stay in allocated groups at all times.
- Listen carefully to all instructions given to them by staff or parent supervisors.
- Approach and handle any animals carefully (if applicable).
- Wash hands thoroughly before eating and after using the toilet.
- Eat only food brought with them, or food bought at the venue.
- Eat only in designated areas.
- Clean, or if possible, change their footwear before leaving and wash their hands after touching footwear.
- Do not pick up or handle any tools or equipment unless permitted to do so by zoo staff.
- Do not climb on walls or fences.
- Do not chase or frighten the animals.
- Do not try and touch animals.
- Do not suck fingers or put pencils, pens, crayons etc. into their mouths.
- Do not eat food which has fallen to the ground.
- Do not force children to rush to keep up, allow plenty of time for each activity including rest and lunch breaks.
- Undertake regular headcounts to ensure that all children are present - especially at departure.
- Make sure that no personal possessions or rubbish are left behind. Ensure that all possessions are accounted for and rubbish disposed of before departure.

Stage 3 – After the Visit

- Review the visit with other staff and parents involved to identify any causes for concern that may need to be taken into account by the school or LEA for future visits.
- Review the visit with the site operator to see if there are things that need to be improved, or amended for future visit programmes. A questionnaire will be sent out after the visit, which you are required to complete as part of our educational bookings terms and conditions.
- Where there are lessons to be learned, keep a written record for future reference.

Other sources of information

There is a huge amount of more detailed information on educational visits available on educational websites and from trade unions representing teachers. Visit organisers would benefit by looking at and learning from these sites. Some include, as case studies, details of trips that went wrong so that lessons can be learned and similar mistakes avoided.

Maintaining Records

A file should be maintained that contains all information such as school or LEA approval, risk and COSHH assessments, site operators' assessments and insurances, parental consent forms and any other relevant documents. This may then be referred to at a later date if any subsequent visits are planned to the same site.

First Aid Procedure

In the event of a First Aid incident, please find the nearest member of HCC staff or a volunteer, and they will contact the First Aider on duty and coordinate any emergency services if required.

Lost Child Procedure

In the event of a lost child, please find the nearest member of HCC staff or a volunteer, and they will initiate our Lost Child Procedure, which will be coordinated by the Duty Manager onsite.

Any other Emergency

In the case of any other emergency, please alert the nearest member of HCC staff or a volunteer, and they will initiate the most appropriate procedure, led by the Duty Manager onsite, including the coordination of any emergency services.

Student/Pupil Supervision

Lead Teacher

We want your students, and our other visitors, to be able to make the most out of their visit to the zoo today. At the HCC we take both safeguarding children and animal welfare very seriously. We know that the majority of our visitors show exemplary behaviour but we have experienced incidences where unsupervised students have behaved in a way that inhibits their safety, is disruptive to other visitors or compromises the wellbeing of our animals. We want to work with you to support your students during their visit today. As the identified

lead teacher, you are responsible for ensuring adequate supervision of your students at all times during their trip.

If your students are 16 or under, they must be with a supervising adult at all times whilst in the zoo, including in our shop and walk-through exhibits. Please read the following carefully to ensure you are clear of your responsibility to supervise your students and what to do if a student goes missing or if there is an emergency situation.

All of your students must know:

- Who will be supervising them today.
- The standard of behaviour expected of them.
- What to do in the event of an emergency All of your supervising adults know:
- Who they are supervising.
- The standard of behaviour expected of them and the students.
- What to do in the event of an emergency.

Supervising Adults

The Hemsley Conservation Centre is a public space. As a supervising adult, your school has identified you as being responsible for the safety and well-being of the students in your group. As a result, you acknowledge your responsibility to ensure all your students know:

- The standard of behaviour expected of them.
- What to do in the event of an emergency.
- What to do if they lose contact with you at any point on the trip.

If any student from your school is found to be acting in a way that is disruptive, aggressive or compromises the health and well-being of our animals:

- You will be called on the telephone number you have given us and asked to meet your students.
- Your head teacher will be contacted and your whole group may be asked to leave the zoo.
- Your school may be invoiced for the free supervising adults, incurring an additional £25 administration fee per invoice, if we feel that you have not put in place adequate supervision requirements.

Our free adult:pupil ratios

Nursery - 1 free adult per **6** paying pupils.
Reception & Primary - 1 free adult per **6** paying pupils.
Secondary (year 7-11) - 1 free adult per **8** paying pupils.
Post 16 - 1 free adult per **10** paying students.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have adequate supervision requirements for the pupils attending. This may or may not be above the ratios above.

Behaviour Guidelines for groups visiting the HCC.

We want all our visitors to have fun and an enjoyable time at the Zoo. This list has been written to make sure everyone understands what behaviour is expected on their visit to the HCC. Please make sure you read through this list with your students or other members of your group, and possibly ask them for their ideas on what they could do to make their visit as enjoyable as possible.

- Even though it is very exciting, and you want to see everything, try to walk around the Zoo instead of running.
- To see the animals behaving naturally, it is great when visitors are very quiet, so the animals don't feel scared. Please don't yell, knock, or tap on the glass at enclosures.
- Our animals are fed very special diets. Make sure they do not get any extra food as it is not good for them.
- Some of the exhibits allow visitors to walk through the animal areas - please let the animals move freely around you and don't try to touch the animals.
- Use the hand wash dispensers placed inside and outside of walkthrough exhibits and always wash your hands before eating.
- It is very important to stay with the adults accompanying your group. They will be able to answer any questions you have and make sure you have a safe visit.
- Please help us keep the Zoo clean and tidy and put your rubbish in the bins provided. We have separate bins for recycled materials so double check you are putting the right things in the right bin.
- If you see another group, maybe say hello, and ask them if they have seen anything they have enjoyed on their visit. Everyone's day is nicer when people are friendly.
- Make sure you leave the Zoo together with your group.

If you have any questions while you are at the Zoo, please ask any member of Zoo staff. You can identify them by their green uniforms and name badges.

HCC Educational Visit Terms and Conditions

- Bookings available for UK and international schools, exclusively Mon-Fri during UK school term time only. If your class is visiting outside of UK term time you may be eligible to book with our groups discount. See our admissions page on our website for more details.
- Bookings must be made in advance for classes to be eligible for the school rates.
- Payment for an education visit must be made at least two weeks in advance of the visit and can be made by credit card, cheque or BACs.
- Adults leading school groups are expected to follow the supervision guidelines and behaviour expectations set out by the HCC. These guidelines will be emailed to you. Any failure to follow these guidelines can result in a group being asked to leave the HCC and school management being contacted.
- If you amend your booking, cancel within two weeks of the scheduled date or no show on the day of your visit, the HCC reserves the right to charge an administration fee of £25.
- If payment is not received by the day of your visit, an invoice with a £25 administrative fee will be raised. This must be paid within one week of the invoice being raised.
- As part of an education booking, you agree to complete our feedback form after your visit which shall be emailed to you. We require this to be completed within two weeks of your visit, or there will be a fee of £25.
- If for any reason a booked session (i.e home schooling) cannot take place, the HCC will offer a re-schedule date, convenient to all parties. Unfortunately, refunds are not available unless the sessions are cancelled in their entirety by us, and no alternative can be arranged.
- Education prices cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer, promotion, discounts or third-party payment methods. Membership cards can be used but they will not count towards the free adult ratio for supervision purposes.
- Education groups must make a single payment for their visit.
- For every class booked in to visit the Zoo, we allow one free pre-visit for one teacher. If your booking is for multiple classes, we allow up to two complimentary entries for a pre-visit.
- If any student from your school is found to be acting in a way that is disruptive, aggressive or compromises the health and well-being of our animals:
Your school may be invoiced for the free supervising adults, incurring an additional £25 administration fee per invoice, if we feel that you have not put in place adequate supervision requirements.