

# Children First Academy Trust

## Educational Visits Policy



Agreed Education and Standards – June 2024

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## **Statement of intent**

Children First understands that visits and visits can be effective ways of motivating pupils, and they can often offer unique educational experiences. Our schools aim to ensure that pupils are engaged in their learning and are given opportunities to explore this in a more practical setting.

Our schools take the health and wellbeing of our staff and pupils very seriously. This policy has been designed in line with DfE and HSE guidance and details our responsibilities for pupils and staff members while out on educational visits and school visits.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety on educational visits'
- HSE (2011) 'School visits and outdoor learning activities'
- DfE (2013) 'Driving school minibuses'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Business Continuity Plan
- Health and Safety Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Minibus Policy (where relevant)
- Inclusion Policy
- DBS Policy

## 2. Definitions

**'In loco parentis'** means that the group leader of any school visit or educational visit has a duty of care over the pupils in place of a parent.

**'School visit'** means any educational visit, foreign exchange visit, away-day or residential holiday organised by Schools which takes pupils and staff members off-site.

**'Residential'** means any school visit which includes an overnight stay.

Activities of an **'adventurous nature'** include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Trekking
- Caving
- Skiing
- Water sports
- Climbing

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for:

The governing board is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy complies with the Equality Act 2010.

- Ensuring educational visits and visits positively impact on pupils' lives, teaching them life skills and providing new experiences.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
- Appointing an educational visits coordinator.
- Liaising with the educational visits coordinator and communicating information regarding any planned visits to parents.
- Liaising with the governing board regarding the organisation of extra-curricular visits and activities, including settling any disputes.
- Being part of the approval process for extra-curricular visits and activities.
- Ensuring the educational visits coordinator is competent to oversee the coordination of off-site education and arranging for training to be undertaken, as necessary.
- Ensuring the completion of relevant paperwork, including risk assessments, for extra-curricular visits and activities.
- Ensuring suitable safety measures are in place prior to each visit or activity.
- Overseeing the work of the educational visits coordinator, ensuring a whole-school approach is adopted when planning and coordinating extra-curricular visits and activities.
- Ensuring there are contingency plans in place in the event of a member of staff being absent on the day of the visit or activity.

The educational visits coordinator is responsible for:

- Overseeing all issues and controls regarding extra-curricular activities and visits.
- Liaising between all appropriate parties, including the local outdoor education adviser, during the planning and organising of extra-curricular activities and visits.
- Ensuring the systems and procedures for dealing with educational visits adhere to the requirements of this policy.
- Partaking in relevant additional training to ensure they remain up-to-date with relevant educational visit information and health and safety guidance.
- Overseeing the planning of the educational visits, by ensuring all essential documentation, including risk assessments, is up to date and appropriate for completion by the designated visit leader.
- Appointing an appropriate and competent member of staff to be the designated visit leader for each visit.
- Ensuring the competency of the designated visit leader, in consultation with the headteacher, by organising training for staff and volunteers.

The designated visit leader selected to be in charge on an individual visit is 'in loco parentis' and has a duty of care to all pupils on the visit. They are also responsible for:

- Identifying the educational purpose of the extra-curricular visit or activity and presenting its benefits to the headteacher.
- Undertaking any relevant training or courses which are arranged by the educational visits coordinator.
- Completing all essential documentation for the visit and ensuring it has been approved by the educational visits coordinator.

- Conducting a risk assessment prior to school visits and educational visits to ensure pupil and staff safety.
- Creating an itinerary prior to an educational visit or school visit and distributing it to pupils, parents and staff to ensure the day is well organised and safe.
- Informing parents of the proposed extra-curricular visit or activity **four weeks** in advance and distributing permission slips to parents.
- Implementing safeguarding measures throughout the planning, organisation and delivery of the extra-curricular visit or activity.
- Ensuring all adults on the visit are aware of their responsibilities and that the necessary checks have been carried out on volunteers in line with the DBS Policy.

The designated deputy leader supports the designated visit leader and will assume the designated visit leader's responsibilities if the designated visit leader is no longer fit to lead the visit, e.g., is unwell at short notice. They are also responsible for supporting the designated visit leader in completing all their relevant responsibilities by assuming any delegated tasks.

Staff are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and applying its principles when participating in extra-curricular visits and activities.
- Ensuring they are competent and comfortable with their delegated responsibilities, undertaking training where necessary.
- Ensuring the safety of the pupils is maximised throughout any educational visit or activity.

Volunteers on the visit are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and applying its principles when participating in extra-curricular visits and activities.
- Supervising and ensuring the safety of pupils by following the procedures outlined by the designated visit leader.

## **4. Planning school visits**

Prior to planning a school visit, the following guidance will be read by the organisers:

- DfE (2018) 'Health and safety on educational visits'
- HSE (2011) 'School visits and outdoor learning activities'

A thorough risk assessment will be conducted by the designated visit leader during the planning of the visit, to ensure pupil and staff safety.

When partaking in adventure visits, activities will always be identified at the planning stage and never added during the visit. When planning water sport activities, the need for instructors and lifeguards will be considered, particularly when using facilities which may not have a trained lifeguard present.

Schools will do everything in their power to ensure that all pupils are given an opportunity to participate in school visits, for example, organising two visits with a smaller group size or finding a venue which can cater for all pupils. Where there is a maximum capacity of pupils

for a visit, places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. This will be clearly communicated to parents.

## **5. Risk assessment process**

Our risk assessment process is designed to manage risks when planning visits, while ensuring that learning opportunities are fully experienced. The individual carrying out the risk assessment process will have the skills, status and competence needed for the role, understand the risks involved, and be familiar with the activity.

The process is as follows:

- Identify the hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- Record findings and implement them
- Review assessment and update if necessary

A risk assessment will be conducted for each school visit before it is undertaken to identify hazards and control measures specific to the visit.

## **6. Vetting providers**

When considering external providers for activities, the educational visits coordinator will check whether they hold the 'Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge' to indicate they meet nationally recognised standards.

If a provider does not hold the badge, the educational visits coordinator will check the following to ensure they are a suitable organisation to work with:

- Their insurance arrangements
- Their adherence to legal requirements
- Their control measures
- Their use of vehicles
- Staff competency levels
- Safeguarding policies
- The suitability of their accommodation
- Any sub-contracting arrangements in place
- The presence of necessary licences

If it is deemed appropriate to engage with an external provider, a written agreement will be created outlining what each party is responsible for. If an organisation does not meet Schools' standards, they will not be considered.

## **7. Equal opportunities**

Schools promote values of equality and do not discriminate against any individual or group of pupils when organising a visit. The extra-curricular visits and activities offered to pupils will provide new experiences and develop life skills. Extra-curricular visits and activities are organised, managed and conducted in accordance with Schools' Inclusion Policy.

Due to the popularity of some extra-curricular visits and activities, Schools offer places on a first come, first served basis.

Where possible, pupils will be given the opportunity to contribute to the planning and organisation of extra-curricular visits and activities.

For school visits in school time, where there are costs, a voluntary contribution will be requested from parents/carers. Children will not be excluded from a visit in school time because they have not contributed.

## **8. Transport**

Specific Risk Assessments will be carried out for each form of transport being used; risk assessments must cover agreed procedures for if a child is separated from the group whilst travelling on public transport. If staff are to transport children in their own cars, they must have business insurance, parental permission and an additional adult.

## **9. Parental consent**

Parental consent will always be acquired when children are attending school visits that go beyond the local area.

Parental consent is not generally required for off-site activities that take place in the local area for only part of Schools day. For these local visits, Schools will ask parents to sign a consent form when their child enrolls. This consent form will cover them for their whole time at school.

A school must always get written consent for nursery age children.

## **10. Staffing**

School visits will always be led by a member of school staff. There will be sufficient adults to cope in an emergency and generally. Our minimum adult to pupil ratios are as follows:

<b>Child's Age</b>	<b>Number of Adults</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>
2-4	1	3-4
5-8	1	6-8
9-12	1	10

On every visit there will be at least one nominated, qualified first aider. On residential visits there must be a trained DSL.

Where parents or volunteers support a school visit, they will be briefed prior to departure on the risk assessments and procedures for the day. Regular volunteers should have a DBS check; this will allow them to support children or small groups on an individual basis.

Where a volunteer does not have a DBS check, they will not work with individuals or groups unaccompanied by a member of school staff.

## **11. Accidents and incidents**



In the case of accidents and injuries while on a school visit in the UK, the school's accident reporting process will begin, as detailed in the Health and Safety Policy.

The headteacher will keep written records of any incidents, accidents and near misses.

Staff will use guidance as set out in the Business Continuity Plan, in particular the 'initial response' section, to ensure the safety of pupils and staff should anything happen, e.g. a terrorist attack. Staff will be briefed on how to react and respond should an emergency occur. Relevant risk assessments will be undertaken before the visit, including for points of interests such as museums and hotels. Pupils and staff are informed of an evacuation plan before entering visit venues; this should include an agreed rendezvous point, to ensure everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

To ensure pupils are easily identifiable, they must wear school uniform. Failing this, pupils will be given a hi viz, which must be always worn.

## **12. Missing person procedure**

Schools place pupil and staff safety as their top priority when participating in school visits.

Before embarking on the visit, extensive risk assessments are undertaken in accordance with this policy. The educational visits coordinator will communicate with the venues of Schools visits to ensure the correct group sizes are planned for each setting.

When travelling with pupils with SEND, the educational visits coordinator will ensure appropriate adults are always accompanying them and that the visit is adequately modified to suit the pupils needs in accordance with this policy.

Staff on the visit will be provided with a contact sheet for all members of staff, in the event they are unable to locate their group. All staff members will be required to always carry mobile phones with them.

Upon arriving at every venue, the designated visit leader will identify a rendezvous point where pupils and adults should go if they become separated from the rest of the group. Pupils and staff will wear school branded clothing, in order to make them easily identifiable.

Regular head counts of all pupils and staff will take place throughout the day to ensure all persons are present at all times.

In the event someone goes missing whilst on a school visit:

- The designated visit leader will ensure the safety of the remaining pupils and staff by taking a register to identify who is missing.
- The designated visit leader will immediately identify at least one adult to start looking for the person, these people will look for the person until, where necessary, the police arrive.
- Where possible, the venue will be notified of the missing person to help ensure the person is found quickly.
- If the person cannot be contacted or located within 10 minutes, the local police will be contacted.

- If the police are called, the visit leader will contact the headteacher, or other available person, back at Schools and inform them of what has happened.

If the police, or another authority, is called to an incident where someone is missing, they will oversee locating the person and will advise on factors including, but not limited to, when to contact next of kin.

If the missing person cannot be found, the group will return to school.

If a member of the party has gone missing and is subsequently found, the visit leader will:

- Review the group sizes and staffing ratios to ensure no one becomes separated from their group.
- Review whether more registers should be conducted throughout the day.
- Assess which venues they attend to ensure they are suitable for the group.
- Make recommendations to the educational visits coordinator to ensure similar incidents can be avoided in the future.

### **13. Pupils with SEND**

Where possible, activities and visits will be adapted to enable pupils with SEND to take part. The SENCO will liaise with pupil's parents, where appropriate, to consider what reasonable adjustments may be necessary.

Where a young person is the subject of an EHCP or other care plan or risk assessment this should be used and included when planning for the visit.

Child/Adult ratios for SEND children must be discussed and planned before the visit takes place and included in the risk assessment.

Where this is not possible, an alternative activity of equal educational value will be arranged for all pupils. Pupils with SEND will be accompanied by a responsible adult during the extra-curricular visit or visit. **(further guidance is available in Appendix 1)**

### **14. Finance**

The financial procedures outlined in the Trust's Charging and Remissions Policy will always be followed when arranging visits.

Schools will act in accordance with the DfE's guidance document 'Charging for school activities' (2018) and, therefore, will only charge for visits which are classed as an 'optional extra'. This is education provided outside of school time which is not:

- Part of the national curriculum.
- Part of a syllabus for an examination that the pupil is being prepared for at Schools.
- Part of religious education.

Money for school visits will always be paid directly to Schools. Under no circumstances should school visit money be processed through personal accounts.

All letters to parents regarding school visits will include a clause explaining what will happen in the event that the visit is cancelled or a pupil cancels their place on the visit.

In the event that the visit is cancelled due to unforeseeable circumstances, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the cost to Schools, including alternative provision costs.

In the event that a pupil cancels their place on a visit, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the pupil's reasons for cancelling their place, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the visit, and whether the space on the visit can be offered to someone else. Where a pupil has previously cancelled a space on a school visit and received a full refund, Schools has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future visits and visits.

Schools will take a common-sense approach to refunds and cancellations, ensuring that all pupils are treated equally. Any charge made in respect of pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the visit divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Once visit arrangements are booked and confirmed, if contributions to a visit exceed the total cost of the visit, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil. Any excess of expenditure will be subsidised by Schools fund.

## **15. Evaluating visits**

Following an educational visit and/or visit, the educational visit coordinator will meet with any staff members present on the visit to assess the success of the visit in respect of both educational value and safeguarding effectiveness.

Based on this assessment, recommendations will be made to improve future visits and visits.

## **16. Monitoring and review**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the headteacher. The Trust board will review this policy annually.

# **Appendix 1**

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

### **Staff and Supervision**

Supporting pupils with special needs or disabilities on visits may require additional staffing to provide effective supervision. For supervision to be effective, staff should be experienced in dealing with the needs of the pupils involved.

All staff should be given the opportunity to talk through any concerns they may have about their ability to support participants with special needs or disabilities. Extra help should be requested, if necessary.

The following factors should be considered when determining staffing requirements:

- The need to administer medication;
- The need for support with toileting;
- Any heightened likelihood of a participant absconding;
- The likelihood of a medical emergency arising;
- The way in which being away from the normal setting will affect behaviour (for example, some young people have unpredictable fears and phobias that will be more difficult to cope with out of their normal environment);
- The risk of violence or assault, and therefore the need for skills in de-escalation and positive handling;
- The need of manual handling of participants, and whether staff require training in this;
- The need for flexibility for staff working on a 1:1 basis to take a break;
- Where a member of staff is needed to supervise or care for an individual participant, they should not be considered to be part of the overall staff ratio, as their role will be focused on their charge's wellbeing, not on the wider supervision needs of the group;
- If a member of staff is driving a minibus, they will not be able to supervise passengers, nor deal with any emergencies – if pupils need supervision while travelling, you should ensure that sufficient staff are available.