

Fairisle Junior School



Off-Site Activities

Policy and Guidelines

Fairisle Junior School

Policy for Off-Site Activities

This policy should not be read in isolation, but in conjunction with other school policies, the LA Regulations and Guidance Notes, and Health & Safety: Advice on Legal Duties & Powers (2014).

At Fairisle Junior School, we believe that:

- Visits and journeys off-site are a valuable and integral part of a child's education. They can add greatly to children's understanding of a wide variety of concepts and skills. They can enhance personal and social skills.
- Costs to parents need to be carefully considered when planning off-site activities and we should always strive to give reasonable notice and work within the principles of best value.
- Preparation is imperative to the success of off-site activities and planning must be in accordance with our off-site guidelines and those of the LA.
- The safety of pupils is always the most important consideration. It is vital to maintain safety consciousness and safe working practices.

Date of policy: Summer 2023
Review Date: Summer 2025

Fairisle Junior School

Guidelines for Off-Site Activities

These guidelines apply to every activity organised by the school which takes place off the school site. They relate to all kinds of off-site activities, irrespective of whether the activity takes place during normal school hours, evening, weekends or holidays, and whether or not they include hazardous activities.

Before any activity takes place, the approval of the Governing Body should be obtained. This responsibility is delegated to the Headteacher, who will approve off-site visits and ensure that appropriate organisation and supervision are in place. Our school has a trained Educational Visits Coordinator who is Maria Hughes. She will always liaise with group leaders and the Headteacher, who will give the final approval for all trips and visits.

Before approval is given, the Head will need to be satisfied that the activity is appropriate. Appropriate activities:

- have significant educational value;
- are suitable to the ages, abilities and aptitudes of the pupils concerned;
- are linked to the normal work of the pupils by preparation and follow-up activities;
- do not interfere with the work of other pupils at the school.

Every teacher planning an off-site activity must read the relevant sections of the LA Guidelines as well as this school document. LA guidelines are available from the headteacher and administrative office and are periodically updated. They are:

Off-Site Activities – Regulations and Guidance Notes
Safety in Hazardous Pursuits –Regulations and Guidance Notes

The headteacher must make sure that there is adequate supervision, taking into account the LA recommendations, the programme of activities and the environment to be visited. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, each group should be accompanied by at least two teachers and the overall ratio of pupils to adults should not exceed the limits specified below:

- For pupils under 8 (year 3) there will be no more than 8 pupils to 1 adult
- For pupils aged 8 or above there will be no more than 20 pupils to 1 adult

- For activities beyond a 60-mile radius, including the Isle of Wight and overseas, there will be no more than 10 pupils to 1 adult, with a minimum to 2 adults for all groups. For residential visits the ratio is normally 10:1.

For some activities the headteacher may require better ratios than those specified above.

For activities involving hazardous pursuits there are mandatory ratios which are detailed in the LA document.

A lower level of supervision may sometimes be acceptable to the headteacher, e.g. when small groups of pupils are being transported to a sports centre in a minibus or coach; visiting a local establishment.

OPEN COUNTRY

Defined as:

- Marked public footpaths/rights of way in open country more than 0.5 of a mile from a metalled road.
- Marked public footpaths/rights of way in open country which include routes on paths with possible hazards, e.g. cliffs, vicinity of water etc.
- Tidal coastal areas (e.g. immediate foreshore)

For 'Open Country' visits, the ratio of pupils to adults must not exceed 12:1 and there must be at least 2 adults. The organiser of a visit in 'Open Country' must hold a valid Hampshire County Council certificate in open country leadership or equivalent.

Open country activities require submission of plans to the County Education Office at least 8 weeks before the activity is planned to take place.

All groups involved in activities off-site must carry with them a First Aid Kit.

Minibus travel – there must be a second adult in the vehicle apart from the driver. In addition, the driver must hold a valid MIDAS test certificate.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

It is desirable that the party leader visits the location beforehand. This is essential where safety factors are involved or where residential accommodation is involved, in order to carry out appropriate risk assessments. Where there is no pre-visit, the leader must find out about any hazards, facilities for refreshments, rest, toilets etc. before booking. Pupils

should be involved in the planning at some stage. They should know what is required of them at every stage. They should be aware of any hazards and fully briefed in all relevant safety procedures.

Where an off-site activity involves the use of parents, or other assisting adults as supervisors, it is imperative that their role is explained to them and that appropriate guidance is given during a full briefing session. Untrained adults should never be solely responsible for groups in high risk situations e.g. by water. It is vital that police checks are run on all adults where significant contact with children is a possibility. Parents supervising an off-site activity must not bring other children (e.g. a pre-school child) with them. Parents should not normally be given their own child as part of their group. Teachers must establish procedures to be used on the trip and communicate these clearly to all adults. For example:

- procedures at road crossings
- what to do if a pupil becomes separated from the group
- whether or not pupils are to walk in single file, as a group, run etc.
- the necessity for regular head counts during the day. When counting pupils onto transport the numbers should always be double checked and the group leader satisfy him/herself that all pupils are present
- procedures for the safe collection of children by parents at the end of the trip.

Appropriate behaviour

When going off-site, leaders may find themselves in situations which cause their intentions or actions to be misinterpreted. They should try to anticipate and to avoid such situations wherever possible. Situations might include:

First aid

Try to make sure that you are never alone with a young person. If clothing has to be removed, try to ensure that an adult of the same sex as the child is present.

Activity

If you have to hold or have physical contact with a child for safety reasons, be open and clear about it and explain clearly what you are going to do. You should not be alone. If the physical contact was different to that explained in advance, for example because of an emergency, then simply explain why it was different.

Swimming

Only supervise young people in changing rooms who are the same sex as yourself. If this is not possible for primary aged children then males must never supervise females.

Residential

Ensure that there are two adults on duty in sleeping areas. One adult should be of each sex when mixed groups are involved.

Dropping off children at their homes

Try to avoid being left in a vehicle with one young person of the opposite sex.

Misinterpretation

If you have to act in a way that you realise that your actions may have been open to misinterpretation, then report it to your line manager as soon as possible.

Safety in numbers

It is wise to ensure that no adult is left alone with a child.

Crossing the Road

The LA recommended way to cross the road:

- choose a safe place to cross where approaching traffic can be seen for 100 metres (minimum) in both directions.
- line up with the group parallel to the kerb
- only involve numbers that can be easily controlled
- have a teacher at the end of the line nearest to approaching traffic
- the group should approach the road on command and only take the same time to cross as an individual. Try to avoid crossing in crocodiles unless at a traffic controlled point e.g. pedestrian subway
- always ensure that there is an adult on either side of the road

Minibus Travel

There must be a second adult in the vehicle apart from the driver. The driver must not be distracted from driving by the behaviour of pupils. On long trips (more than 2 hours) the driver must take adequate rest periods of at least 15 minutes.

Any minibus driver must have completed the MIDAS assessment.

Seatbelts must be used. The driver is responsible for this.

Travel by Coach

The school should always book coaches with seatbelts. It is recognised, however, that some local service buses do not have them. It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all fitted seatbelts are in use at the start of each journey and after stops.

To ensure adequate supervision, adults must be spread throughout the coach and not be seated together. Some E.U. legislation now makes this a legal requirement.

Pupils must remain seated and the driver must not be distracted from driving.

Pupils should not be seated next to emergency doors.

Private Cars

Private cars must not be used to transport pupils unless a parent for each pupil concerned consents to this. The owner of the car must state in writing that he/she has an appropriate level of insurance cover for this activity and a current insurance certificate must be shown to the school admin office.

Members of staff transporting pupils in their own cars need to be insured for full business use, which includes the conveyance of passengers. Drivers must comply with relevant legislation regarding seat belts and child restraints in all respects. All pupils must wear seat belts and be seated in the back of vehicles in a child seat if the child's age/height requires this. A form for transporting pupils in cars is included at the back of this document.

Information to Parents and Parental Consent

Teachers should ensure that parents are kept fully informed regarding any off-site activity. This information should always be given in writing and the mode of transport made clear.

Parents should have the full particulars of a visit before they are asked to give their consent. A useful checklist when informing parents is given below:

- Dates
- Times of travel and return
- Method of travel
- Destination with address and telephone number

- Emergency contact arrangements
- Names of leader and accompanying staff
- Names and status (e.g. parent) of other accompanying adults
- Aim of visit and activities planned
- Cost
- Methods of payment and any cancellation arrangement
- Advice on pocket money
- Insurance in respect of luggage, accident and medical cover
- Clothing/footwear and other items to be taken
- Prohibited items
- Standards of behaviour expected during the visit

The nature of the supervision. Parents should be aware if there are times when their children will not be directly supervised.

Parents should complete a medical form for residential visits and give their written consent for emergency medical treatment. A standard letter is included in the LA guidelines.

If parents refuse their consent for any off-site activity then the child should not be taken off site.

If parents make consent conditional, thereby creating an unacceptable risk or unnecessarily burdening staff, then the child should not be taken off site.

If a child's behaviour in school could cause risk to that child or to other children in the group, then the child should not be taken off site unless the headteacher is satisfied about the child's future conduct.

Procedures

See 'Off-site Activities – Planning the Project'

Each off-site activity should have one specified teacher as the organiser.

The organiser should discuss the organisation and supervision with the headteacher well in advance and obtain approval in writing on the appropriate form at the back of this document.

A list of pupils and adults taking part in the activity should be handed into the office before the group leaves the school site. The list should identify in which vehicle each person on the trip is travelling. Copies of the list should also be held by all adults on the trip.

A contact point must be established and known by all adults on the trip. When the trip covers only the school day the school telephone number is sufficient. In the case of an evening trip or a trip involving travel outside normal hours, the home telephone numbers of the senior school staff contacts should be available to the group organiser.

The group should normally be sub-divided into smaller groups of pupils who shall be the responsibility of an adult group leader.

All groups involved in activities off site must with them a first aid kit.

The group leader should carry a mobile telephone and should make a note of the school phone number on the main list.

Note: In the context of this document, the phrase parent or parents means a person with parental responsibility for each pupil.

Fairisle Junior School

Car Insurance Confirmation for Employees

I confirm that I do have a motor vehicle insurance policy for the vehicle in which I intend to carry pupils.

Name of insurance company

Policy number

I understand that I am not indemnified by Fairisle Junior School or Southampton City Council in the use of my vehicle.

I have checked with my insurance company and confirm that the activity is covered by them and that this includes the carrying of passengers related to my paid employment.

Signed

Date

Address

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Fairisle Junior School

Car Insurance Confirmation for voluntary helpers

I confirm that I do have a motor vehicle insurance policy for the vehicle in which I intend to carry pupils.

Name of insurance company

Policy number

I understand that I am not indemnified by Fairisle Junior School or Southampton City Council in the use of my vehicle.

I have checked with my insurance company and confirm that the activity is covered by them.

Signed

Date

Address

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Insurance Certificate seen (date)

Signed (for Fairisle Junior School)

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