

NASUWT

Putting teachers first

Educational Visits

A Checklist for Members

An educational visit is defined as any excursion with children outside the perimeter of the school.

NASUWT advises members to carefully consider whether they should be involved in educational visits at all. When something goes wrong on a visit the leader bears a legal responsibility and so the finger of blame will almost certainly point at the teachers.

In recent high-profile cases teachers have been heavily penalised. Some have lost their jobs as a result of alleged misjudgements.

If you decide against NASUWT advice to take part in such a visit either as a leader, or an accompanying professional, you must follow the relevant advice and guidance set out below.

In particular, you must follow exactly your LEA guidance on educational visits, and NASUWT strongly recommends that you check the activities against the other checklists provided in this leaflet.

Essential Information

1. LEA advice on educational visits.
2. Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV) (DfES).
3. Standards for Adventure (DfES).
4. Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits (DfES).
5. Handbook for Group Leaders (DfES).
6. Group Safety at Water Margins (DfES).

2-6 above are all available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/healthandsafety/visits/

Checklist for Group Leaders

A group leader is responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of the group under common law. If you are a group leader use this checklist to ensure you have taken proper care in organising your visit.

1. Obtained appropriate experience, qualifications and training.
2. Carried out a pre-visit and liaised with the Educational Visits Co-ordinator.
3. Carried out appropriate risk assessments and are aware of health and safety issues regarding both staff and pupils, e.g. use of seat belts in a coach or minibus.
4. Gained approval from the employer for the visit and ensured there is adequate insurance coverage.
5. Arranged appropriate supervisory duties and ensured effective communication between adults on the visit, the children, their parents and the base school.
6. Ensured other adults are appropriate in terms of maturity, experience and police checks.
7. Ensured the visit has a clear educational purpose.
8. Have a clear plan of the activities to be undertaken and their educational objectives.
9. Have a clear understanding of emergency procedures and ensured there will be a qualified first aid person available at all times.
10. Ensured all staff on the visit are given a list of group members and that they check pupils' presence at regular intervals.
11. Have detailed clearly by letter to parents the activities on the visit and enlisted their support regarding acceptable behaviour and obtained their written consent.

12. Have a reasonable prior knowledge of the group, including any special educational or medical needs or disabilities.
13. Ensured the exclusion from the visit of pupils whose behaviour may put others in the party at risk.
14. Ensured that all monies have been collected and accounted for by school administrative/clerical staff. (Also see 36 below.)

Checklist for Accompanying Teachers and Other Education Workers

15. You should be familiar with the LEA guidelines on educational visits.
16. You should have been actively involved in the planning of the visit.
17. You should be supportive of the group leader and be prepared to act on his/her instructions.
18. You should carry a list naming all the pupils and adults on the visit.
19. You should be aware which pupils have special educational or medical needs or disabilities.
20. You should be fully aware of the nature of the activities that the group is going to be involved in.

Checklist for Headteachers

If the headteacher has delegated responsibility for a visit to a suitable group leader then s/he should have ensured they are satisfied:

21. All LEA visits guidelines have been followed.
22. The visit is educationally justifiable and will not affect the efficient running of the school.
23. The group leader is suitably trained, qualified or experienced.
24. The LEA and Governing Body have been notified and have authorised the visit.
25. Child protection measures are in place.
26. A school contact has been nominated and there is a contingency plan for delays including a late return back to school.
27. Full and comprehensive information has been provided to parents including details of costings, modes of transport and the precise nature of activities the pupils will be involved in.
28. Parental consent has been obtained in writing with specific consent for activities such as swimming, along with relevant pupil medical information.
29. Supervision of the group is appropriate in relation to gender, experience and police checks.
30. The mode of transport is suitable and all safety measures will be taken.
31. Detailed costings of the visit have been approved.
32. Appropriate cover for teachers on the visit has been organised.
33. An emergency procedure has been planned with well-established lines of communication should the need arise, including the provision of a mobile telephone if requested.

Other Considerations

34. Since the Children Act was introduced NASUWT has dealt with many more allegations of abuse by teachers. Members are therefore advised:
 - not to give a child/children a lift in your own vehicle;
 - not to place yourself in a one-to-one situation;
 - not to administer any medication.
35. NASUWT strongly advises any member contemplating driving a minibus in the course of an educational visit or journey to reconsider and instead enlist the services of a specially trained driver.
36. In order to ensure the avoidance of personal liability as the 'provider' of the visit, NASUWT recommends that the group leader should:
 - only act on behalf of the employer as the employer's agent;
 - take professional advice on the level and type of insurance required for the visit;
 - use a tour operator that has an externally verified safety management system rather than making arrangements on a "diy" basis.
37. A visit involving outdoor activities should engage the services of a specialist provider (for example, an LEA-run centre or a commercial organisation licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority) where pupils can be placed in the care of qualified instructors.

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