

Donemana Primary School



Educational Visits Policy

Consulted with staff: November 2024

Approved by Board of Governors: 16th April 2025

Review: 16th April 2028

Signed: T Wallace

Mission Statement

Donemana Primary School aims to develop independent individuals who are equipped to meet the challenges facing lifelong learners

Aims of Donemana Primary School

We aim to:

- ✓ create a happy, caring stimulating and imaginative environment where individual children can achieve success.
- ✓ recognise each child's full potential and provide opportunities for this- intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially and creatively.
- ✓ provide a broad and balanced, relevant curriculum in keeping with the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
- ✓ help each child acquire a reasoned set of Christian moral beliefs and attitudes, thus creating an atmosphere within which children will be encouraged to develop a sense of fair play, tolerance and respect for other people's views, attitudes and possessions.
- ✓ involve parents, pupils, governors and the wider community in the life and work of Donemana Primary School.

Educational Visits Policy Introduction

- This policy covers all educational visits that occur within, around and also outside the school premises.
- This ranges from walks around the locality to visits to places further afield.
- It also includes Outdoor and Adventure Activities/Trips.
- The term 'Educational Visits' refers to: 'all academic, sporting, cultural, creative and personal development activities, which take place away from the young persons' school, and make a significant contribution to learning and development of those participating'

Aims and Objectives for Educational Visits

- Our fundamental aim at Donemana Primary School is to provide the best possible education for all our pupils and to raise the achievement of all the children in the school.
- Educational Visits and Outdoor and Adventurous Activities are an integral part of the children's education at Donemana Primary School.
- They offer opportunities to enrich the curriculum, enabling the children to have first-hand experience of a wide range of topics and activities.

Context for Policy

- In Donemana Primary School we appreciate the enhanced opportunities provided for our children by engaging in school trips and educational visits and are eager to offer our children a range of additional experiences to enhance their education beyond the normal school day.
- Such educational visits help children to develop a wide range of valuable personal and social skills.
- Safety is of paramount importance and to ensure clarity and consistency of good practice, it is the policy of Donemana Primary School to take the following actions before, during and after all school trips/educational visits.
- This policy has been written in the best interests of all involved and in accordance with EA Guidelines (October 2017).

Legal Context

- The employing authority is legally obliged to ensure that the health and safety of its employees and pupils is safeguarded.
- This duty is imposed through occupational health and safety statute, specifically under the 'Health and Safety at Work (N.I.) Order' 1978, and places responsibility upon employing authorities to ensure that their management arrangements in general, but also those arrangements which encompass specific activities such as educational visits, are adequate to protect the health and safety of all those in any way affected by such employer's undertakings.
- The manner in which such arrangements are developed is through the process of a risk assessment, the outcome of which acts as the basis for the staff to establish what needs to be put in place to allow the visit to proceed in a way which sufficiently manages the risks to which participants may be exposed.
- The Board of Governors of a school has a statutory duty under Article 7 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003, to safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils at the school at all times when the pupils are in lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the school.
- The legal framework to protect children from harm is primarily provided by the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 which became law on 4 November 1996 and repeals virtually all pre-existing legislation concerned with child protection.
- The central thrust of the Order is that the welfare of the pupil must be the paramount consideration, and it is this essential principle which underpins effective practice in the area of child protection.
- The basic principles of child protection must always be borne in mind when undertaking an educational visit.
- The pupil's welfare must always be paramount, and this overrides all other considerations. All pupils have the fundamental right to be protected from harm.

- Pupils have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously.
- Careful consideration must be given to pupils who have special educational needs, as such children may be especially vulnerable.

CATEGORIES OF EDUCATIONAL VISITS

- Trips undertaken by the pupils of Donemana Primary School will be in categories 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the E.A. guidelines.
- Category 1: Basic Visits which take place on a regular basis and occur largely within establishment hours e.g. sporting fixtures, swimming pool visits and outings.
- Category 2: One-off day /evening excursions e.g. field study trips, theatre visits, business/education visits, regional sporting fixtures.
- Category 3 Residential visits of one or more nights within the UK or Ireland. (nonhazardous) Eg.visits to residential centres, field centres and school exchanges
- Category 5 Hazardous activities – residential and non-residential as exemplified below:

Hill walking	Fieldwork	Cycling/mountain
biking Orienteering	Rock climbing/abseiling	Caving and
potholing		
Kayaking	Open canoeing	Windsurfing
Dingy sailing	Sub-aqua	Skiing/snowboarding
Horse riding	Angling	Water-skiing
Rafting rowing	Surfing	Bouldering/gorge
walking		
Swimming in open water	Coasteering	Stand-up paddle
boarding		

Nature of Educational Visits

The school organises a wide range of Educational Visits. These may include:

- Walks around the village of Donemana, including to the local churches
- Visits by coach to places of interest to support the curriculum; and/or
- Day visits to places of historical, environmental, religious or other interest to support specific curriculum areas.
- Residential trip for Primary seven pupils

Procedures for Category 1 and Category 2 recurring and one-off (non-hazardous) visit

✓ **Step 1 Identification of Educational Visit**

Donemana Primary School identifies an area or areas of the curriculum for which an educational visit(s) may be an essential or relevant component.

✓ **Step 2 Approval, Implementing Appropriate Risk Management and Completion of Planning Checklist**

Details of the proposed visit(s) are submitted, by the group leader to the the Principal for approval. They should be approved, and noted by the Board of Governors (where appropriate), before they proceed.

A Risk Assessment Form will be completed to ensure that all visits are organised in accordance with current school policies (e.g. Health and Safety and Child Protection).

✓ **Step 3 Informing the Parents**

Parents will be informed about the educational visits their children will participate in. Once parents have been informed of these visits they will be asked to give their consent via the school app.

✓ **Step 4 Maintaining Records**

Copies of all forms (e.g. EVA form with checklist) and any other relevant information should be filed at the school by the Principal. Consent forms should be printed and kept on file by the Group Leader. In the case of an incident/accident occurring, all appropriate documentation from the Employing Authority must be completed (Educational Visit Incident Record Form).

Procedures Step by Step for Visits in Category 3 and 5

✓ **Step 1 Identification of Educational Visit**

Group Leader identifies an area or areas of the curriculum for which an educational visit(s) may be an essential or relevant component.

✓ **Step 2 Approval, Implementing Appropriate Risk Management and Completion of Planning Checklist**

Details of proposed visit should be submitted by the Group Leader to the Principal for consideration in consultation with the Board of Governors). The Educational Visits Proposal Form (EVP) and Risk Management Form should be used for this purpose and any relevant information attached e.g. details of the residential centre to be used. Under normal circumstances, a minimum period of notice of not less than 8 weeks is recommended. Detailed planning can proceed once initial approval has been granted. The appropriate sections of the planning checklist should be completed by those with key responsibilities for the visit.

✓ **Step 3 Briefings**

Staff, volunteers, parents and pupils, should be briefed about all aspects of the educational visit. Once parents are fully aware of the visit details they will be asked to give their consent via the school app.

✓ **Step 4 Information Collated**

It is important to gather together all relevant information about the pupils participating in the visit. This should be collated by the group leader and the originals retained by the school. An Educational Visits Group Details Form should be used for this purpose.

✓ **Step 6 Final Approval Secured**

Visits in this category can only proceed once final approval has been secured from the Principal and the Board of Governors. The EVP form should be signed by both the Principal and the Chair of the Board of Governors to confirm approval and endorsement of the arrangements for the visit.

✓ **Step 7 Maintaining Records**

Copies of all forms and relevant information should be printed filed at the school. Any changes to the original approved visit must be agreed, as appropriate, prior to the event taking place. An Educational Visit Incident/Accident Form may be used by accompanying staff to keep a record of the pertinent information required of any incident or accident that occurs during an educational visit. The Group Leader should also ensure that all documentation required by the employing authority in relation to any incidents or accidents is completed as appropriate. This must be forwarded to the employing authority as soon as is practicable.

✓ **Step 8 Evaluation**

On return it is important to undertake an evaluation of the key aspects of the visit. The completed evaluation should be forwarded to the relevant personnel and maintained by the school for future reference. A Post Visit Review Form will be used for this purpose.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- In Donemana Primary School we undertake a Risk Assessment before every trip. (see appendix).
- Educational visits cannot be entirely risk-free.
- The aim, therefore, must be to contain risks within acceptable levels. Care must be taken not to expose the child to unacceptable physical or psychological risk, particularly on those occasions when the educational visit aims to exercise the

individual's sense of adventure. Fundamental to the planning process of any educational visit is the process of risk assessment.

- Staff at the venue should be asked to provide evidence that they have undertaken a risk assessment and that it is a safe location for the children.
- A set procedure is followed for all Educational Visits, although the nature of each visit will determine the level of preparation required. A visit will proceed only when the Group Leader is satisfied that all reasonable preparations have been made.
- This necessitates that the Group Leader, where possible, has made a pre-visit in order to be able to plan for the visit and to conduct a Risk Assessment appropriately.
- Risk Assessments must be simple, manageable, proportional, suitable and sufficient. The system must:
 - identify significant hazards;
 - assess the risk of harm;
 - put control measures in place;
 - check if anything else is needed;
 - use a simple assessment language – high/medium/low.
 - Risk Assessment considers the site and its environment, the group, the activity and the leaders.

SUPERVISION AND STAFF RATIOS

- Supervisory roles should be closely aligned to the roles and responsibilities undertaken by staff on a visit.
- Pupil to staff ratios for educational visits are not prescribed in law.
- There will be a full complement of adult supervision, and this will reflect the E.A. guidelines, as closely as possible.
- These guidelines are as follows:
 - AGE GROUP RATIOS PRIMARY
 - **Foundation Stage (P1/P2) one adult for up to a maximum of ten children**
 - **Key Stages 1 and 2 (P3- P7) one adult for up to a maximum of fifteen children**
 - Among the supervisors there should, where possible, be one who is trained in First Aid.
 - There should be a staff member who is identified as the group leader.
 - Each supervisor should have a written list of names of children in their care.

VETTING

- In the context of educational visits, we follow the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- All supervision will be undertaken by staff members who have had a full police check carried out by E.A. Students from Higher Educational Institutes who are on placement in the school and have had appropriate police checks carried out by their training institution may also be supervisors on trips.

TRANSPORT

- The management of the school must be satisfied that all the transport arrangements meet the legal statutory requirements for the type of journey proposed.
- Only companies approved by E.A. will supply transport.
- The transport selected must provide each child with a single seat and while in a bus, taxi or car the child must be protected by a seat belt.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

- In Donemana Primary School we have an effective, two-way communication process between the school, centre and parents for all visits.
- This ensures that parents are made aware of the purpose and nature of the visit and will ensure that parents inform the school about any particular needs and issues of their child relevant to the visit.
- Information to parents may include:
 - dates of the visit or series of visits;
 - destination details;
 - times of departure and return and whether parents will be required to meet their children on return;
 - the location from where the pupils will be collected and returned;
 - information regarding lunch and/or spending money (where relevant);
 - cost of the trip, this will be kept to a minimum. Teachers will inform the Leadership Team if a child seems to be unable to meet the payment, so that appropriate pastoral arrangements can be made;
 - a request for written parental permission for the trip.

Parental Consent

- Parental consent must be obtained for all educational visits. This will be done for each visit or outing.

Critical Incidents

- A critical incident may be defined as any sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within a school community, and which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of that school.
- In the event of a critical incident occurring during a school visit the school's critical incident management plan will be implemented.

Prior to the Visit

- All staff will be made aware of the Educational Visits Checklist (see appendix) and the Educational Visits Record Grid (see appendix).
- The group leader must ensure that an Educational Record Grid and a Risk Assessment are completed prior to the trip.
- All staff must also have a list of all names of the children on the trip. He/She must also check that there are Health Plans/Medicines for those children who may require them, in accordance with the school's First Aid and Medication Policy.
- The group leader must ensure that there are black bags for rubbish collection, a roll of tissue paper and plastic bags in case a pupil becomes unwell on the bus.
- The First Aid Kit should also be brought on the trip.
- The Group Leader must have a contact number for the school and for the principal and also a contact number of each member of staff on the trip.

During the Visit

- Children should be within the sight of a supervisor at all times.
- Class groupings should stay together except where the venue requires them to break into smaller groups.
- Supervisors should be aware of any dietary requirements or medical/physical needs of any of the children in his/her group.
- In the event of a child needing significant medical attention whilst on the trip or travelling to/from a trip, the school will be contacted as soon as possible after assistance has been given or help has been requested.
- On returning to school the supervisor should remain with the child until he/she has been collected by an adult or in the case of older children a check has been made to ensure that the correct procedures for going home are being followed.

Reporting back on return to school

- The Group Leader should report back to the School Leadership Team on return to school and provide a brief account of the trip.
- Any incidents, accidents or injuries that have occurred should be reported.
- Accidents, injuries or incidents should be recorded in the School Accident Book.

- The Principal will advise regarding any further action to be taken with reference to either accidents and/or incidents which occurred on a trip. Incidents should be recorded on the Incident Record Form (see appendix).

Personnel

- For each visit, of whatever duration, a Group Leader is identified.

Board of Governors

- The Board of Governors is responsible for:
 - ensuring that guidance is available to inform the school policy, practices and procedures relating to the health & safety of pupils on educational visits;
 - ensuring that the Principal is supported in matters relating to educational visits and that she has the appropriate time and expertise to fulfil her responsibilities;
 - asking questions about a visit's educational objectives and how they will be met;
 - ensuring that visits are approved as necessary before bookings are confirmed;
 - ensuring that the Principal has taken all reasonable and practicable measures to include pupils with special educational needs or medical needs on an educational visit;
 - ensure that they review procedures with the Principal on an annual basis.

Group Leader

- The function of the Group Leader is to:
 - ensure educational visits meet the employer's and school's requirements;
 - support the Governors with approval and other decisions;
 - assess the competence of prospective leaders and staff;
 - ensure that Risk Assessment meets requirements;
 - organise training and induction (where necessary);
 - ensure parents are informed and have given consent;
 - organise emergency arrangements;
 - keep records of visits, accidents or incident reports;
 - review systems and monitor practice.

Group Leader

- The Group Leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit, including direct responsibility for the pupils' health, safety and welfare.

The Group Leader must:

- be approved to carry out the visit, suitably competent and knowledgeable about the school's and EA's policy and procedures;
- plan and prepare for the visit and assess the risks;
- assist in the completion of the risk assessment;

- define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and pupils and ensure effective supervision of what they do.

The Principal

- The Principal is responsible for:
 - ensuring approval for visits is given, including liaising with the EA where appropriate;
 - ensuring that arrangements are in place for the educational objectives of a visit to be inclusive; being aware of the need for best value;
 - ensuring that all accreditation or verification of providers has been met;
 - ensuring that visits are evaluated to inform the operation of future visits;
 - ensuring that each visit has an appropriately competent Group Leader;
 - ensuring that all staff members are aware of the school's policy and procedures in relation to educational visits;
 - ensuring that the school has an emergency procedure in case of a major incident, which has been discussed and reviewed by staff.
 - This emergency procedure must include getting appropriate support and advice from the EA. (See the school's Critical Incidents Policy).

Emergency Procedures

- It is the responsibility of the Group Leader to ensure that emergency arrangements are in place for all Educational Visits.
- This includes:
 - ensuring that all involved know who the emergency contact is in the school, and in the EA;
 - having access to the Critical Incident Policy;
 - ensuring that parental contact information is up to date and accessible.

Policy Review

- As with all policies, it is the responsibility of the Board of Governors to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and the practice that it describes.
- On a day to day basis this responsibility is delegated to the Principal who will report back to the Governors as appropriate.
- This policy is a working document, and will be reviewed in consultation with pupils, staff, parents and Governors.

Appendices

Educational Visit Proposal Form

(To be completed in relation to visits in categories 3, 4 and 5 only)

Name of School	
* Name and address of other school(s) involved (if applicable):	
Educational objective(s) of visit:	
Place(s) to be visited:	

KEY STAGE GROUP:	Nursery	Foundation	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
		[4-6 years]	[6-11 years]	
Tick				

Total Numbers of Pupils Involved	Your School Project	Male	Female
	*Other School(s) Project(s)	Male	Female

Category of visit		Circle as appropriate 3 4 5			
Proposed Dates(s)	From:	.../.../...	To:/...../.....	Number of Days (incl):
Approx cost per pupil					
Activities to be undertaken:					

Staff & other adults involved Name:	M	F	School Visit	Date & Time of attendance

Transport Arrangements:	
Organising Company:	
Agency (if relevant):	
Other comments or information:	
Principal's Signature:	
	Date:
Chair of Governor's Signature:	
	Date:

The information on this form is requested for the purpose of organising an educational visit. The information is covered by the provisions of the Data Protection Act, 2018. Your signature to the form is deemed to be an authorisation by you to allow the school project to process and retain the information for the purpose(s) stated.

Educational Visit Approval Form
(For use in relation to visits in categories 1 and 2 only)

Year 20 _____ Term _____ Dates _____ to _____

Activity	Educational Objective(s)	Frequency (dates)	No of Pupils	Year group(s)/ age range	Category (1 or 2)

Activity	Educational Objective(s)	Frequency (dates)	No of Pupils	Year group(s)/ age range	Category (1 or 2)

Approved _____ / _____
Signed principal *Date:*

Approved _____ / _____
Signed chair of governors *Date:*

PLANNING CHECKLIST FORM

School: _____

Date of Visit: **From** _____ **to** _____

Venue: _____

Group Leader: _____

	Yes	No	N/A
The proposed visit has clear educational objectives			
The nature of the visit has been established			
The target group has been identified			
All the relevant information regarding the proposed educational visit has been presented to the management e.g. destination, itinerary, timescales etc.			
The management has approved the proposed visit			
<i>An initial risk assessment has been undertaken for all aspects of the visit(s) and appropriate control measures have been put in place and recorded:</i>			
• hazards have been identified			
• people who may be at risk have been identified			
• evaluation of the risk has been undertaken			
• additional safety and/or control measures have been established			
• information has been disseminated to all relevant persons and appropriate records maintained			
Where residual risks (inherent in all visits) still prevail an appropriate contingency/emergency plan has been put in place and disseminated to all relevant persons			
<i>The number of leaders in attendance has been agreed:</i>			
• a staff member has been identified as group leader			
• accompanying staff have been identified			
• volunteers have been identified			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vetting procedures have been undertaken (where necessary) 			
	Yes	No	N/A
<i>Leaders are made fully aware of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their roles and responsibilities (including Staff Code of Conduct) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the standard of conduct required of them during the visits 			
Pupils and parents have been informed/briefed and understand the implications of their participation in the visit (including Pupils Code of Conduct)			
Parents/guardians have given their written consent to the young people participating in the educational visit			
All relevant information (medical, dietary and contact details) pertaining to the young people participating in the educational visit(s) has been obtained, recorded and appropriate action taken where necessary			
The transport arrangements for the group are appropriate for the nature / type of journey(s) planned			
Adequate insurance is in place to cover all aspects of the educational visit, including transport			
<i>Where a residential visit is planned, the overnight accommodation has been assessed as appropriate in terms of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its suitability for the group 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its compatibility with the objectives of the visit 			
<i>Where the educational visit involves outdoor or adventurous activities, the Education Visits Co-ordinator and group leader are satisfied that:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate management structures and systems are in place in relation to child protection / health and safety 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff are competent to provide the activities 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risk assessments for the activities the group will partake in are in place 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all relevant checks have been undertaken to ensure the above are in place 			
The Educational Visits Co-ordinator has approved the operational arrangements for the visits.			
Final Approval is obtained, as appropriate.			

Educational Visit Incident Record Form

1 Name of School _____

2 Name of group leader _____

3 Date, Time and Location of Incident _____

4 Name and address(es) of witness(es)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5 (Please state in your own words what happened including details of names and status of those involved)

6 Describe what action was taken (e.g. details of First-Aid, police or medical involvement)

Signed _____ Date _____

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Post Visit Review Form

Group Leader: _____

Visit to: _____

Dates: _____

Please comment on the following:-

Was the venue suitable?	
Was the accommodation / food / equipment of a suitable standard?	
Were the venue staff competent?	
Were the travel arrangements appropriate?	
Were the educational objectives met?	
Was the content of programme relevant to the group?	
Were the young people effectively briefed prior to the visit?	
Were agreed procedures followed by all in a supervisory capacity?	
Are there any specific issues which need to be addressed as a result of this visit?	

Other Comments:

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Signed group leader: _____

Date: _____

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Completed by:		Date:		Review Date:	Ongoing
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Donemana Primary School				
RISK ASSESSMENT FOR:				
Identified Hazard	To Whom	Severity	Likelihood	Risk
Existing Precautions	Additional Precautions	Who	When	
	<i>Please add any additional precautions you believe are required to mitigate the risk further here.</i>	<i>If additional precautions are required, please identify who is responsible for implementing them.</i>	<i>If additional precautions are required, please identify by when. e.g. date or ASAP.</i>	
<i>Additional control measures particular to school should be added here when implemented or in operation.</i>				

