

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 21 May 2021

Report Title

Educational Visits Policy and Guidance

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Suzanne Joyner, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The current RMBC educational visits policy is due for revision to reflect current best practice and the change in the education landscape.

The RMBC educational visits policy has been reviewed and rewritten in line with the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel National Guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom. The new policy concentrates on specific local information, highlighting key issues with reference and links to National Guidance. As part of the rewrite, the appendices have also been rationalised and updated.

Recommendations

1. That RMBC recognise and accept the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel National Guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom, as the basis for its educational visits policy and guidance.
2. That the revised educational visits policy titled Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and Educational Visits Policy and Guidance 2021 is accepted as a replacement for Rotherham LEA Circular 146 Educational Visits Policy and Guidance 2009.

3. That approval for revisions to the appendices (working documents) of the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and Educational Visits Policy and Guidance is delegated to the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, enabling updates to be made in a timely manner as and when required.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1: Equality Analysis Part A and Part B
- Appendix 2: Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and Educational Visits Policy and Guidance 2021
- Appendix 3: Emissions Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Policy document: Rotherham LEA Circular 146 Educational Visits Policy and Guidance 2009.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
None

Council Approval Required
No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

Educational Visits Policy and Guidance

1. Background

- 1.1 The Educational Visits Policy and Guidance supports the planning and approval of safe, well organised activities offsite which improve mental health and wellbeing; educational outcomes; resilience; personal and social development; and broadens horizons.
- 1.2 The Educational Visits Policy and Guidance together with advice and guidance from the designated Outdoor Education Advisor supports schools, and other areas and activities of RMBC when working with children/young people and offsite visits are planned, to meet their legal obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974), Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) and the Children Act (2004).
- 1.3 The current RMBC document Rotherham LEA Circular 146 Educational Visits Policy and Guidance 2009 is based on Health and Safety for Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV 1998) and its four supplements (2002) and is due for revision.
- 1.4 The Outdoor Education Advisors Panel has produced National Guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom. The National Guidance is web based and has been endorsed by several organisations including teachers' unions, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and is referenced in the current Department for Education (DfE) guidance for educational visits.
- 1.5 RMBC uses a web-based system called EVOLVE (provided by Edufocus) to plan, record and approve educational visits.
- 1.6 Since the move towards the academisation of schools and the delegation of centrally held funding (directed schools grant) from 1st July 2015, the service (access to EVOLVE and provision of advice and guidance) is chargeable to all schools via a Service Level Agreement.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The current RMBC educational visits policy needs revision to reflect current best practice and the change in the education landscape.
- 2.2 The government no longer produces detailed guidance in relation to educational visits in the way that led to the production of the current RMBC educational visits policy dated 2009.
- 2.3 The Outdoor Education Advisor Panel has produced National Guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom.
- 2.4 National Guidance has been endorsed by HSE and is referred to in the current DfE guidance Health and Safety on Educational Visits.

- 2.5 The RMBC educational visits policy has been reviewed and rewritten in line with National Guidance with the new policy concentrating on specific local information or highlighting key issues with reference and links to National Guidance.
- 2.6 As part of the rewrite the appendices have been rationalised and updated.
- 2.7 The rewritten policy is titled Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and Educational Visits Policy and Guidance 2021 and is at Appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.8 This policy is for schools where RMBC is the employer (community & voluntary controlled schools, community special schools & maintained nursery schools) and is applicable to other areas and activities of RMBC when working with children/young people and offsite visits are planned.
- 2.9 The policy also applies to non-maintained schools and other educational settings who have purchased Educational Visits Advice and Guidance from RMBC via a service level agreement.
- 2.9 The Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and Educational Visits Policy and Guidance 2021 provides an updated policy to reflect the change in the education landscape and current best practice. The policy incorporates the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel National Guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom and details the specific responsibilities for the management and control of LOtC and educational visits. The updated policy supports positive and safe experiences for children and young people and reduces the risk of legal challenge to staff, establishments and RMBC.
- 3. Options considered and recommended proposal**
- 3.1 Option 1 – (Not recommended) To continue to use the Rotherham LEA Circular 146 Educational Visits Policy and Guidance 2009 and update the links to specific guidance within the policy, however this would not be the preferred option as there have been significant changes to the education landscape and best practice over the past decade which necessitated the policy revision.
- 3.2 Option 2 – (Recommended) It is recommended that RMBC recognise and accept the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel National Guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom, as the basis for its educational visits policy and guidance. In doing so the revised educational visits policy titled Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and Educational Visits Policy and Guidance 2021 be accepted as a replacement for Rotherham LEA Circular 146 Educational Visits Policy and Guidance 2009.
- 3.3 It is also recommended that approval of revisions to the appendices (working documents) of the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and Educational

Visits Policy and Guidance Appendices is delegated to the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services. Enabling updates to be made in a timely manner as and when required e.g. COVID

4. **Consultation on proposal**

4.1 Consultation on the updated policy has been undertaken with service users (schools and other establishments) via email and with the designated Educational Visit Co-ordinator and establishment Head on EVOLVE. The consultation period commenced on 23 March 2021 and concluded on the 16 April 2021.

4.2 One response to the consultation was received with the following feedback:

*Please include information on preparing parents of students from a special/alternative provision setting.
Ratios and Effective Supervision –please highlight the need to consider special/alternative provision settings.*

The policy has been updated to reflect the above feedback.

5. **Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 July 2020: Schools and other service users/customers notified of intention to update the existing policy via email (sent to designated Head and Educational Visits Co-ordinator).

5.2 Revised policy to be in place and used from 1 September 2021

6. **Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)**

6.1 There are no financial implications linked to the updated policy.

6.2 There are no procurement implications associated with the recommendations detailed in this report.

7. **Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)**

7.1 The adoption of a policy updates based on well-regarded National Guidance reduces the risk of legal challenge (and complaints short of legal action) based on unlawful discrimination (where children have been excluded because of disability or other protected characteristic under the Equality Act), or the failure of the organisers or providers to secure the health safety and welfare of attendees (giving rise, for instance, to proceedings under the Health and Safety at Work (etc) Act 1974, or a civil claim for damages for negligence and/or breach of statutory duty).

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no direct HR implications linked to this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 This policy is for schools where RMBC is the employer (community & voluntary controlled schools, community special schools & maintained nursery schools) and is applicable to other areas and activities of RMBC, when working with children/young people and offsite visits are planned.

The policy also applies to non-maintained schools and other educational settings who have purchased Educational Visits Advice and Guidance from RMBC via a service level agreement.

9.2 The policy supports the planning and approval of safe, well organised activities offsite which improve mental health and wellbeing; educational outcomes; resilience; personal and social development; and broadens horizons.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 When establishments plan and run educational visits, they must consider the Equality Act 2010. The policy includes specific reference to the Equality Act 2010 and establishments obligations in section 23 "Inclusion."

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 The policy supports and encourages educational visits undertaken by schools across the borough (maintained and academies who purchase the service via SLA) and other RMBC services. By their nature educational visits involve transport usually via coach.

11.2 Visits have been a part of education for decades and the policy will not directly impact on the number or type of visits undertaken as the deciding factors are planned outcomes and cost.

11.3 Over the past year due to COVID-19 educational visits have been suspended, as we move further down the COVID Recovery Road Map more educational visits will resume which will result in an increase of emissions from increased use of transport.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 The recommendations in this paper will provide partners (schools and other establishments) with an updated policy which is easier to access.

13. **Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 The recommendations in this paper reduce the risks to young people, staff, establishments and RMBC from the potential consequences of poor or unsafe practice in relation to educational visits.

14. **Accountable Officers**

David McWilliams Assistant Director: Early Help, Family Engagement & Business Support
Colin Gratton-Rayson Outdoor Learning Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	07/06/21
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	28/05/21
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Stuart Fletcher	02/06/21

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