



THOMSON HOUSE SCHOOL

Thomson House School

Outdoor / Off-site Learning Policy

Agreed by: Governor's Education Committee

Date: February 2023

Review Cycle: Three Years

Review Date: February 2026

All the Thomson House School policies should be read in conjunction with the Equality Policy.

If you require a copy of this document in large print, Braille or audio format, please contact the School Business Manager

Thomson House School

Outdoor / Off-site Learning Policy (Educational Visits)

Aims

At Thomson House School we aim:

- To foster the values of *curiosity, kindness and courage* through outdoor learning;
- To provide opportunities for all children to access learning through a well-planned outdoor environment (EYFS) and a well-planned range of trips and off-site visits (YR-Y6) - to meet their needs, engage and motivate learning, stimulate curiosity and expand interests through a range of resources and experiences outside of the classroom;
- To ensure that off-site environments are still environments in which children feel safe, secure and confident;
- To ensure that transport arrangements to venues are age appropriate and where possible, use of public transport is encouraged, subject to risk assessments;
- To provide opportunities outside of the classroom for children to work independently and collaboratively with enthusiasm and perseverance, developing socially and emotionally;
- To provide opportunities for THS pupils to learn alongside children from other schools;
- To take advantage of all that the local area and the city of London has to offer;
- To build character through taking responsible risks during residential trips;
- To provide appropriate adult support to help the children's learning when outside of the classroom, to develop their experiences and interests;
- To build resilience through competitive sporting opportunities.

EYFS Outdoor learning

At Thomson House School we have:

- A separate outdoor area for the Foundation Stage children to access;
- A defined boundary in which the Foundation Stage children can feel safe, secure and confident;
- Qualified adults to provide appropriate intervention to engage children in the learning process;
- A range of large and small equipment and cross-curricular activities which help to promote interactive and independent play, sharing and physical skills;
- Learning activities outdoors which mirror the same learning objectives indoors;
- Opportunities for self-initiated activities under adult supervision;
- Access to the wider environment of the local parks and playground under adult supervision.

We will ensure that children have access to outdoor learning on a regular basis in line with Ofsted guidance.

Assessment and Recording

Assessment is by systematic observations of each child's achievements and interests and by interaction with the children during their play. All assessments inform current and future planning. Observations are recorded by all staff and used to inform teacher assessments made on Target Tracker. See the EYFS policy for further information on assessment and recording.

Inclusion

The outdoors curriculum of shared and physical activities is an important part of a child's overall development. At Thomson House School we are committed to providing for each child, whatever their individual and/or special need, the opportunity to access all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. We adapt the facilities and activities whenever possible, to enable all children to use them. We aim for our outdoor spaces to be accessible for wheelchair users.

Resources

Our varied resources aim to cover all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. To maintain a high standard, these resources will be continually reviewed, thus enabling the maximum input in the important area of learning out of doors.

Off-site activities/day trips/Sports Fixtures

At Thomson House School we:

- Believe that the learning opportunities which London and the surrounding areas provide should be accessed by all our children as part of their education;
- Plan trips and off-site activities which support curriculum subjects;
- Will always conduct a pre-visit to ensure all aspects of safety and learning have been considered by the adults accompanying the children;
- Follow guidance from the authorities as to the level of risk associated with travel and venues.
- Believe that participating in sporting events will build character and resilience.
- Believe that participating in residential increase independence, collaboration and resilience.

Risk Assessments

- A risk assessment will be written by the lead adult for every off-site visit/event.
- The pre-visit will contribute to the risk assessment – both at the venue and on the journey to and from the venue.
- The risk assessment should include all medical needs.
- Trip Leaders will work directly with the trained EVC to evidence how they have planned every element of the trip.
- The risk assessment will be signed off by the Head Teacher, or Deputy (EVC)
- Risk assessments are shared with all adults accompanying the trip and held on file.
- Staff will ensure that each risk assessment has contingency plans in case of terrorist action – this will include alternative travel arrangements and ways of contacting school and parents in case of emergency.
- Ratios of adult:child supervision will be risk assessed for each trip
- Staff will take the school mobile phone and ensure all accompanying adults have the number.
- Post trip reviews will take place to ensure that the risk assessments and emergency trip procedures were suitably assessed.

Health and Safety

- The safety of our children is paramount
- All Health and Safety policies of venues will be checked prior to planning a visit off-site. We adhere to the school's *Health and Safety* policy.
- A first-aid kit and necessary medical support will be carried by adults whenever children are off-site.
- In EYFS off site visits will always have at least one Paediatric First aid trained person.
- Sporting fixtures will always have at least one first aider attending.

Travel/Transport

- Children will be registered and counted before leaving the school site.
- Where possible the school will walk or use public transport.
- If the risks associated with public transport are deemed too great, then alternative transportation will be sought. All coaches used will have seat belts for all passengers
- Children and adults will always wear hi-vis jackets when travelling to and from off-site activities
- Ratios of adult:child supervision will be risk assessed for each trip
- Children will walk in an orderly manner.
- Children will be counted on and off any mode of transport

Residential Trips

At Thomson House School we have a programme of residential trips which build independence and character for the children.

Year 3 – The Big Sleepover. One night in the School Hall, following an evening of activities.

Year 4 – The Big Camp. One night away camping. Using a risk assessed scout campsite in Oxfordshire.

Year 5 – The Big Stay. Four nights away at a PGL centre in Hayling Island, with a variety of activities.

Year 6 – The Big Journey. Four nights away at an outdoor centre in Portland, Weymouth.

In each case, THS staff will remain with the children and responsible for them. Pre-visits will be made, and risk assessments written and signed off before each trip.

Higher risk trips will be approved by the Head teacher with support from the link Governor. Meetings with parents will be held so that further information can be given, and any questions answered.

All children are expected to attend residentials – financial support can be offered, if necessary. If any child does not attend the residential, they will be expected to attend school as normal.

Procedures for Mortlake Green/Brewery Playing Field

- Children will be registered and counted before leaving school.
- Children and staff will wear hi-vis jackets.

- A risk assessed route will be followed by all members of THS when walking to Mortlake Green/Brewery site – either from Sheen Lane or Vernon Road sites
- Children will be clearly instructed of the risks along the route.
- Children will have annual road safety lessons and these procedures will be put into practice when crossing roads and will be reinforced prior to every trip.
- Children will have annual safety lessons from Network Rail on behaviour around the station and level crossing.
- Children will walk in pairs along the pavements.
- Children will go over the station footbridge in single file.
- Staff will carry first aid kits and any other medical equipment required by children.
- Staff will carry the school mobile phone
- At least one member of staff will be first aid trained.
- Children will be split into groups for easier adult supervision.
- Children will be made aware of the necessity to share the Green with other members of the local community and show kindness appropriately.

FOTH Events

At Thomson House School we have a team of volunteers (Friends of Thomson House) that organise various fundraising events for the school. Before each event:

- A risk assessment will be written by the EVC.
- The risk assessment will be discussed with the lead organiser.
- At least one FOTH member will be first aid trained.
- Each volunteer will be appropriately trained

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by the Education Committee and reviewed every three years.

Date of policy: February 2023

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