

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: Off site activities and educational visits

DATE: October 2013

RECIPIENT: SCHOOLS' FORUM

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

1. Since 1997 when Southampton City Council became a Unitary Authority, the function of providing an operational system to support all schools in the County with offsite activities and educational visits has been managed by Hampshire County Council on behalf of Southampton. It is a shared service covering Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth. A Service Level Agreement between Hampshire and Southampton has covered this arrangement. At the April Schools Forum meeting it was agreed that this charge needed to be passed on to schools in a proportional way and that a further report would follow providing details of the Service Level Agreement (SLA).

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

2. NAHT guidance issued in 2011 outlined the role and responsibility of the Head Teacher regarding educational visits:

“An employer (the Local authority for maintained schools) has a legal responsibility for the health and safety of pupils, employees and volunteers involved in an educational visit. The day to day management of the visit and the discharging of this responsibility can be delegated, often to the head teacher, who is then responsible for ensuring that employer and establishment policies are implemented and that all visits and activities are properly planned and supervised by a competent person, or persons, with an appropriate staff/pupil ratio. It is important for there to be an establishment visits policy on which a school’s Outdoor Education Adviser can provide guidance’.

3. Southampton City Council has discharged this duty by maintaining the Service Level Agreement with Hampshire County Council for this service. Should any Southampton school choose not to be part of the arrangement Southampton City Council has with Hampshire County Council, it would need to be giving evidence that robust and effective alternative arrangements are in place.

4. The core service Hampshire County Council provides is as follows:
- Regulatory, legal and employer support and advice on current and best practice, insurance and indemnification.
 - Provision of documents and web-based advice and guidance.
 - Provision of agreed approval systems for educational visits and ventures, sporting activity, and outdoor, PE and sport providers.
 - Good practice guides related to high quality practice, teaching and learning.
 - The clarification of such matters and advice or issue resolution by phone or e-mail.
 - Access to advice on matters to do with insurance and the indemnification of staff.
 - Monitoring and inspection of the safety management systems of providers, activity centres and instructors.
 - Operation of any required licences, eg Adventure Activities Licence.
 - Immediate support for incidents and emergencies, and access to emergency provision.
 - Direct support of key personnel: Heads of Establishments, Heads of Department/Curriculum Leaders, Educational Visit Coordinators, Trailblazer Managers.
 - Access to a comprehensive outdoor education/outdoor learning training programme, DofE e-training, and PE safety management courses, as well as those via Local Sports Partnerships.
 - Access to good practice initiatives, e.g. Trailblazer (outdoor learning).
 - Access to services that are recognised nationally for their range, quality and expertise.
 - Support to schools with Direct Licensing Organisation status for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to ensure consistent and effective practice and access to suitable training and the development of training teams.
5. It is recommended that, as agreed at the April Schools Forum meeting, the City Council makes an annual charge of £1.25 per pupil to all schools, maintained and academies, from 1st September 2013, (pro rata £0.73 per pupil for the rest of the financial year 2013/14). The charge will then rise to £1.35 per pupil from 1st April 2014. This charge is designed to cover the £32,000 annual cost Southampton City Council pays Hampshire County Council in its latest SLA commencing 1st April 2013, through to 1st March 2016.
6. It is noted that schools will have the freedom to opt out of this provision and develop or purchase their own arrangements to support off site activities and educational visits. However the Hampshire County Council service is tried and tested, and represents good value for money and it is anticipated that all schools will choose to opt in as is the case for all schools across Hampshire and every academy in Southampton where the choice has previously been required.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

SLA between Hampshire County Council and Southampton City Council

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