

Adopt a School Project



Information for
Land Managers & Gamekeepers

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the NGO Educational Trust 'Adopt a School' project. This pack will give you all the information you need to support you in developing a sustainable relationship with a local school and allowing you to help them support their pupils learning by offering them your land and expertise.

The principal of the project is very simple. By making links with your local school, you can offer visits throughout the year to the same groups of pupils to enable them to see what a Gamekeeper does during the changing seasons and also how and why the countryside changes through the year.

You do not need to make a massive time commitment, 3 or 4 visits a year would be enough to support the school, although we are aware some of you will want to offer more. The number of visits and the frequency as well as the topics covered is purely up to you and the school. We can support if you need advice or ideas.

Working with schools

Finding a school

If you already have a school in mind or have been approached by a school, the next step would be to invite a teacher/head teacher to look at the estate/farm and see what you can offer them. It is wise to choose just one teacher to work with who can feed back to others at the school. Although it is expected that you will work with all classes at the school it can get complicated if the school doesn't have a designated person to lead the project. If you don't have a school in mind it is worth contacting a few in the local area, bearing in mind that transport costs are high so the closer it is to the estate/farm the more successful the partnership will be.

It may also be appropriate, especially during the winter months if you're not too busy with shoot days, for you to do some 'outreach' work where you go in to the school and talk to and work with the pupils. This could involve you taking a working dog in to show them or maybe some feathers from the various birds that have been shot on shoot days so they can see the difference in size, shape and colour and look at why they differ from bird to bird and female to male. Try to always take something in to show them. Primary children are not good at listening without doing! Include an activity and they will absorb more information.

What we expect from you....

As previously mentioned there is no set number of visits we expect you to undertake as part of this project. That needs to be something you discuss with your school. However in order to support the project and the NGOET we do expect the following:

- Always be on time. If you are visiting the school or meeting them on the estate/farm, please be on time as they will be running to a tight schedule.
- Be organised. In order to make sure they get the most out of the visit and want to return try and have every activity organised before they arrive to avoid them waiting.
- Have a contingency plan! All best laid plans fail at some point so make sure you have a backup activity in case one fails or is finished too early!
- Try not to cancel the school. Unless it is unavoidable, for example, adverse weather or illness, please try not to cancel visits. It takes a long time for schools to plan visits and to timetable them in and so try not to let them down if it's avoidable.

How to talk to pupils

If you are working with a primary school you will be speaking to children aged 5 to 11. If you have adopted a secondary school or college please get in touch so we can give you more appropriate information on working with older children.

The primary school is split into 2 sections. Key Stage 1 which covers age 5 – 7 and Key Stage 2 which covers age 7 – 11. Each of these Key Stages work to a separate curriculum, covering all subjects. We anticipate most schools will use your estate/farm to support the Science and Geography curricula, although we do promote 'Adopt a School' as a cross curricula project.

Key Stage 1 (years Reception, 1 and 2)

In Science these pupils will be looking to learn basic information about:

Plants, humans and animals and what they each need to survive.

Plants and animals that live in their local environment.

In Geography these pupils will be looking to learn basic information about:

Changes in the physical features of land (e.g. heavy rain causing flooding, strong winds damaging trees)

Look at seasonal changes in the weather

Recognise how the environment can be improved and sustained

Key stage 2 (years, 3, 4, 5 and 6)

In Science these pupils will be looking more in depth at:

Nutrition, growth, movement and reproduction in animals and humans.

Nutrition, growth and reproduction in plants.

The role of parts of a plant.

How locally occurring animals can be put into groups (basic classification)

How plants and animals are suited to their habitats

Food chains

Ways in which living things in their environment need protection

In Geography these pupils will be looking more in depth at:

Looking at why places are like they are and how and why they change

Recognise human and physical processes and how they can cause change in the environment (e.g. river erosion)

Look at how people can improve the environment, or damage it

Recognise how and why people seek to manage environments sustainably.

Plan for the visit

As all estates/farms and keepers are different and you will need to devise your own activities for the schools to undertake. This should be done in conjunction with the lead teacher at the school as it maybe that they have a specific topic that they would like supporting with a trip to see you.

It is important though that you do have toilet and hand cleaning facilities. (Anti-bacterial gel can be enough if sinks are unavailable.) If your school is coming all day it is very important that they can clean their hands before they eat lunch. They also need a safe place to eat lunch away from estate/farm animals and machinery. In some cases it may be best if they eat back on the coach, especially if it's raining and you don't have shelter for them.

The pupils may also need to run off some energy if they are staying all day, this can either be done by ensuring your activities involve a decent walk or by allowing them some free time in an open space. But please ensure the space is free of hazards such as wire, machinery, livestock etc.

If you would like some advice regarding activity planning or toilet facilities please don't hesitate to get in touch and we can advise you.

Staying Safe

Staying safe and keeping visitors safe on the estate/farm is obviously going to be a priority. It is probable that you know the land and potential hazards and automatically take action to avoid accidents without even realising! However, with children on the estate/farm it is vital all health and safety precautions are taken.

Site assessment

Included in this pack is a SAMPLE site assessment. You need to read through and add any areas unique to your estate/farm, that haven't already been mentioned. For example; if you have a pond or river you would need to add that. You would need to add fatality (drowning) as the risk and state how you are managing this risk. This could be either through avoiding the area when schools visit OR by ensuring all visitors are made aware of the risk and having appropriate lifesaving equipment ready.

This site assessment needs to be available for the school to view, however it is the teachers responsibility to carry out their own assessment too.

Your site assessment needs reviewing every year unless a new hazard arises, in which case you must add it immediately.

Activity assessments

As well as risk assessing the site you must assess each activity. For example if you were taking the pupils sweep netting you must risk assess this activity. Please have a look at the sample activity assessment and use this format to draw up your own.

It is important not to feel daunted by risk assessments; they are there for your safety as well as those of the visitors. You don't need to go overboard with them, but if you need any support or help, please email us and we'll help you out.

Insurance

Before you have schools on to your estate/farm you need to check your own insurance. Does the current insurance and public liability cover under 16s? It is best to ring your insurance company and inform them that you are planning on allowing a school on to your estate/farm, under your supervision. They may request copies of your site and activity assessments as evidence that you are planning properly.

Schools also have their own insurance to cover external activities.

Transport

Unless you have specially designed vehicles, please do not provide transport round the estate/farm. It is preferable to walk the pupils to where they need to be or if possible ask their coach, minibus to move them. There are strict regulations regarding the transport of minors.

Safe Guarding Children

You needn't worry too much about child safety if you follow some simple guidelines.

You will not be acting in 'loco parentis' the school will always be responsible for the children.

In order to keep the pupils safe the school needs to provide a ratio of 1 adult to 10 children, do not include yourself in this ratio.

You shouldn't need to be CRB checked as you will never be alone with the children; however some schools like people who are coming into regular contact with the same children to be checked. In this is the case they should provide the forms and pay for the check.

Be aware of who the trained first aider on your estate/farm is (if it isn't yourself). Make them aware of the visit and ensure you are in phone or radio contact with them and other members of estate/farm staff. Carry a first aid kit with you, either in a nearby vehicle or in a bag. You can get waist belts that carry everything you should need. Never find yourself with a group of pupils unable to call for help if you need to.

Don't feel daunted by child safety, planning ahead is the key. If you would like any more information please get in touch.

Thank you for expressing an interest in the Adopt a Schools Project

For any more information and support please contact us:

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