

Introduction

It is recognised that pupils can derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in school visits. In particular, they have the opportunity to undergo experiences which are not available in the classroom. Visits help to develop pupils' investigative skills and longer visits in particular encourage greater independence. This policy is designed to help group leaders and others ensure that pupils stay safe and healthy on school visits.

This policy has been created in light of the DFES document entitled 'Health and Safety of Pupil on Educational Visits' referred to as HSPEV in this document. A copy of the document is available in the Visits folder located in the School Office.

1. Planning Visits

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, or includes a residential stay in the UK or abroad, it is essential that formal planning is carried out by the organiser of the visit or the group leader.

For residential visits at home or abroad, or for potentially hazardous activities the Head Teacher and the SDC must satisfy themselves that the visit is planned effectively and risks are minimized.

All visits are to be approved by the SDC. Proposals are to be given in writing.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment must be carried out by the trip organiser or the group leader well before the visit and must be approved by the Head Teacher and the SDC. Forms for this purpose are in Appendix 1.

A risk assessment for a visit need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. The aim of risk assessment is to prevent risks or reduce them. Pupils must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. **Safety must always be the prime consideration.** If the risks cannot be contained then the visit must not take place.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- what are the hazards?
- who might be affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?

The person carrying out the risk assessment should record it and give copies to all teachers/supervisors on the visit, with details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the risks.

Frequent visits to local venues may not need risk assessment every time. Nevertheless it is essential not to become complacent. A generic assessment of the risks of such visits should be made at regular intervals. The group leader and other supervisors should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action as necessary.

The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.
- the location, routes and modes of transport.
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff.
- the ratios of teachers and supervisory staff to pupils.
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament and the suitability of the activity.
- the special educational or medical needs of pupils.
- the quality and suitability of available equipment
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.
- emergency procedures.
- how to cope when a pupil becomes unable or unwilling to continue.
- the need to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

Exploratory Visit

An exploratory visit should be made by any teacher who is to lead a group abroad or on a residential visit or who is to instruct or lead the group in an outdoor activity such as trekking in a location that is not familiar to them.

In other cases the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit, wherever that is possible, to:

- ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- obtain names and addresses of other schools who have used the venue;
- obtain advice from the manager;
- assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;
- become familiar with the area before taking a group of young people there.

If in the last resort an exploratory visit is not feasible then the group leader will need to consider how to complete an adequate assessment of the risks. A minimum measure would be to obtain specific information by letter from the venue, from other schools who have recently visited it, and from local organisations such as tourist boards.

In many cases new groups of pupils will be taken to the same location each year. As some factors will change from year to year, it is prudent to re-assess the risks each time - even when the group leader stays the same. Each completed visit should be evaluated, an evaluation form should be completed, see **Appendix 2**, a record kept and a copy forwarded to the Head Teacher.

Other considerations

Other considerations which should form part of the planning stage include:

- the facilities/equipment the group will need to take on the visit;
- the facilities/equipment to be provided at the venue;
- staff training needs;
- the designation of someone to record the details of the visit and to carry accident forms etc.;
- transport arrangements;
- insurance arrangements;
- information to the provider;
- communication arrangements;
- supervision ratios;
- contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return;
- information to parents;
- preparing pupils;

- emergency arrangements;
- arrangements for sending pupils home early.

Financial Planning

The group leader should ensure that parents have early written information about the costs of the visit. Parents should be given enough time to prepare financially for the visit. It may be useful to break down the costs into subsections such as travel, accommodation, meals, entry fees etc.

All trips must be properly budgeted for in advance. This should include all costs and contingencies. Insurance should be included if needed.

Once the trip details have been approved by the SDC, a non-returnable deposit is required. Make it clear that the deposit is non-returnable and that students will not be taken if their behaviour is unacceptable or unsafe in the interval before the trip takes place.

The Teacher collects the money, and forwards it to MSA. The money is banked by MSA. TET writes out the Cheques.

First Aid

First aid should form part of the risk assessment. Before undertaking any off-site activities the group leader should assess what level of first aid might be needed. On all visits the group leader should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that an adequate first aid box is taken. For adventurous activities, visits abroad or residential visits it is sensible for at least one of the group's teachers to be a fully-trained first-aider. All adults in the group should know how to contact the emergency services.

When addressing first aid issues, considerations should include:

- a person in charge of first aid arrangements;
- a suitably stocked first aid box;
- the size of the group and the nature of the activity;
- the likely injuries and how effective first aid would be;
- the distance to the nearest hospital.

All minibuses are required by law to carry a first aid kit.

2. Supervision

Ratios

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of the group;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;
- requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
- competence and behaviour of pupils;

- first aid cover.

Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. There should be a minimum of one teacher in charge.

In addition to the teacher in charge there should be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly. The same consideration should be given to visits abroad or residential visits.

All groups in Years 7 to 11 must normally be accompanied by a teacher at a minimum ratio of 1 to 15.

All residential groups must normally be accompanied by a teacher at a minimum ratio of 1 to 10.

Staffing ratios for visits abroad will vary according to the activity, the pupils' age and sex, the location and the efficient use of resources. A minimum ratio of 1 to 10 can be taken as a general rule of thumb but at least two of the adults should be teachers.

Groups of pupils containing individuals with specific visual or hearing impairment, or learning difficulties, should also have as supervisors staff who are specifically trained in meeting the needs of these pupils.

Parents/Volunteers

Where there is more than one teacher/supervisor a group leader should be appointed who has authority over the whole group.

Where a high pupil adult ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents/volunteers may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the pupil group. Anyone who has not had a criminal conviction check should never be left in sole charge of pupils.

Vetting Suitability

The group leader needs to be clear about procedures for vetting volunteers who wish to be supervisors or drivers, in particular for residential visits. The suitability of potential supervisors should be assessed by the group leader/Head Teacher at an early stage of the planning process. Where there is any doubt about suitability further investigations should be made and if any doubt remains the adult should not be allowed to help supervise the visit. Similar considerations should be made for adults who have no supervisory role but who wish to take part in the visit.

For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone with a pupil wherever possible.

Supervisors Responsibility

All adult supervisors, including teachers and parent/volunteer helpers, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those likely to misbehave. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

If you intend leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the group leader and other supervisors must be suitably competent to lead or instruct pupils in the activity, bearing in mind that some pupils may be novices. Competences need to be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body award or other recognised qualification.

Remote supervision

The aim of visits for older pupils may be to encourage independence and investigative skills, and some of the time on visits such as trips abroad and fieldwork may not be directly supervised. The group leader should establish during the planning stage of the visit whether the pupils are competent in remote supervision. The group leader remains responsible for pupils even when not in direct contact with them. Parents should be told, before the visit, whether any form of remote supervision will take place and should have agreed this part of the visit.

3. Preparing Pupils

General

Pupils who are involved in a visit's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. A lack of control and discipline can be a major cause of accidents. Pupils should also be told of any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.

Participation

The group leader should ensure that the pupils are capable of undertaking the proposed activity. Pupils should be encouraged to take on challenges during adventurous activities but should not be coerced into activities of which they have a genuine fear.

Pupils, whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such pupils should be sent home early. Parents and pupils should be told in advance of the visit about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a pupil will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

Equal opportunities

Every effort should be made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, etc.

Information to pupils

The group leader should decide how information is provided, but must ensure that the pupils understand key safety information. For some pupils on overnight visits it may be their first experience away from home on their own and in the close company of other pupils. Pupils should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit/activity;
- the background information about the place to be visited;
- basic foreign words where appropriate;
- relevant foreign culture and customs;
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- why safety precautions are in place;
- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- what standard of behaviour is expected from pupils;
- appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct including sexual activity;
- who is responsible for the group;
- what not to bring back within the UK or from abroad such as drugs, knives etc.
- what to do if approached by anyone from outside the group;
- rendezvous procedures;
- what to do if separated from the group;

- emergency procedures.

For residential visits all group members should carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation in case an individual becomes separated.

If at any time there is a change in the planned schedule new activities should be assessed and pupils provided with the appropriate information.

Preparing pupils for remote supervision

During any time that remote supervision takes place the group leader must ensure that pupils are aware of the ground rules and are adequately equipped to be on their own in a group. The size of each group should also be considered. As a minimum pupils should have the following:

- telephone numbers and emergency contacts if lost;
- money;
- maps and plans and any other information for them to act effectively;
- location of local telephones and the appropriate coins;
- a knowledge of how to summon help;
- a knowledge of out of bounds areas or activities;
- means of identity and a rendezvous point.

It is important that pupils are told not to go off on their own, are given clear instructions about permitted remote supervised activities and understand and accept the ground rules.

Transport and pupils

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of the basic safety rules including:

- wear your seatbelt and stay seated whilst travelling on transport;
- never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or controls;
- bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions;
- never attempt to get on or off moving vehicles;
- never lean out or throw things from the window of a vehicle;
- never get off a vehicle at traffic lights or in traffic;
- never kneel or stand on seats;
- never distract or disturb the driver or impede the driver's vision;
- if you feel unwell tell a teacher or supervisor.

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

Every effort should be made to include pupils with special educational or medical needs in school visits, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone in the group. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Pupils with medical needs

Additional safety measures may be necessary to support pupils with medical needs during visits.

All teachers supervising visits should be aware of a pupil's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures. Summary sheets should be held by all teachers containing details of each pupil's needs and any other relevant information provided by the parents. If the pupil's safety cannot be guaranteed, it may be appropriate to ask for additional help such as a care assistant to accompany a particular pupil.

The group leader should discuss the pupil's needs with the parents. Parents should be asked to supply:

- Details of medical conditions;
- Emergency contact numbers;
- The child's GP's name, address and telephone number;
- Information on whether the pupil has spent a night away from home and their ability to cope effectively;
- Written details of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times) and parental permission to administer.
- Information on any allergies/phobias;
- Information on any special dietary requirements;
- Information on any toileting needs, special equipment or aids to daily living;
- Special transport needs for pupils who require help with mobility.

If teachers are concerned about whether they can provide for a pupil's safety or the safety of other pupils on the trip because of a medical condition, they should seek extra advice from the Head Teacher or further information from the pupil's parents.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Off-site visits may pose additional difficulties for a pupil with SEN and the behaviour of some pupils may prove challenging. The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- Is the pupil capable of taking part in and benefiting from the activity?
- Can the activity be adapted to enable the pupil to participate at a suitable level?
- Will additional/different resources be necessary?
- Is the pupil able to understand and follow instructions?
- Will additional supervision be necessary?

It may be helpful to the pupil if one of the supervisors already knows them well and appreciates their needs fully. The group leader should discuss the visit with the parents of pupils with SEN to ensure that suitable arrangements have been put in place to ensure their safety.

4. Communicating with the Parents

Parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or visit

Information to Parents

Parents need to be aware that the teachers and other adult supervisors on the visit will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information should be given to parents:

- Dates of the visit;
- Visit's objectives;
- Times of departure and return - parents must have agreed to meet their child on return;
- The location where the pupils will be collected and returned;
- Modes of travel including the name of any travel company;
- The size of the group and the level of supervision, including any times when remote supervision may take place;
- Details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- Details of provision for special educational or medical needs;
- Procedures for pupils who become ill;
- Names of leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- Details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- Standards of behaviour expected in respect of, for example, general group discipline;
- What pupils should not take on the visit or bring back;
- Details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole, and whether parents need to arrange additional cover;

- Clothing and equipment to be taken;
- Money to be taken;
- The information to be obtained from parents and details of what they will be asked to consent to;
- On exchange visits, the details of the host families;
- Details on the cost of the visit including methods and deadlines for payments.

Parental consent

Group leaders must seek consent for ALL visits.

If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should not be taken on the visit. If the parents give a conditional consent the Headteacher will need to consider whether the pupil may be taken on the visit or not.

A parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group. This form could also be used for obtaining details required. General issues to consider include:

- Any allergies/phobias the pupil may have;
- Any medication the pupil is taking and if so what the dosage is and who is to administer it;
- Any contagious or infectious diseases suffered within the family during the preceding 4 weeks, and any other recent illnesses suffered by the pupil;
- The name, address and phone number of the pupil's GP;
- Any special medical/dietary requirements;
- Whether the pupil suffers from travel sickness;
- Information on any toileting difficulties;
- Whether the pupil has any night time tendencies such as sleepwalking (for residential visits);
- The pupil's ability to swim in the pool or sea; (see Supplement on Supervision of Specific Activities)
- The parental home and daytime phone numbers and addresses;
- An alternative contact, with their phone number and address.

A Parental Consent form can be found in **Appendix 3**.

Medical consent

Parents should be asked to agree to the pupil's receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If parents do not agree to this it may be necessary to withdraw the child from the visit - given the added responsibility this would mean for the group leader. The group leader must consult with the Head Teacher in such cases.

Other consent

Parental consent should be obtained specifically for the transporting of pupils in the private vehicle of a non-teacher adult. Consent should be obtained if pupils are to be carried in a teacher's private vehicle.

Contact with parents during the visit

Group leaders should ensure that parents can contact their child via the school contact and the group leader in the event of a home emergency.

Pupils' contact with parents

Group leaders should arrange for parents to be told by the school of the group's safe arrival. This may be done by a 'telephone tree' or pupils may wish to speak to their parents individually. Such arrangements should be agreed with parents and pupils before the visit takes place. Parents concerned after a phone call should contact the school contact.

5. Planning Transport

The group leader must give careful thought to planning transport. The main factors to consider include:

- Passenger safety;
- The competence and training of the driver to drive the proposed vehicle and whether the driver holds the appropriate valid license;
- Distance, number of driving hours required for the journey and length of the driver's day (including non-driving hours);
- Capacity and experience of the driver to maintain concentration - whether more than one driver is needed to avoid driver fatigue;
- Type of journey - will it be local or will it include long distance driving or motorways?
- Traffic conditions;
- Arrangements in case of breakdown or emergency;
- Weather;
- Stopping points for toilet and refreshments on long journeys;
- Supervision.

Legislation

The driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit.

Seat belts: All minibuses and coaches which carry groups of three or more children aged between 3 and 15 years must be fitted with a seat belt for each child. The seats must face forward.

Supervision on transport

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk assessment for the journey. The group leader is responsible for the party at all times including maintaining good discipline.

The driver should not normally be responsible for supervision. Driver supervision may be sufficient if a small number of older children are being taken on a short journey.

All group members should be made aware of the position of emergency exits and first-aid and fire equipment.

Factors that the group leader should consider when planning supervision on transport include:

- Level of supervision needed on double Decker buses/coaches - one supervisor on each deck as a minimum.
- Safety when crossing roads as part of the journey. The group leader should ensure that pedestrian crossings and traffic lights or footbridges and subways are used to cross roads whenever possible.
- Safety on buses, trains, ferries and boats - the group leader should make clear to pupils how much or little freedom they have to 'roam'. Misbehaviour is a main cause of accidents to children on such means of transport. Appropriate supervision and discipline should be maintained at all times. Pupils should also be made aware of what to do in an emergency and where emergency procedures are displayed;
- Booking transport - the group leader should arrange for seats to be booked well in advance to ensure that the party can travel together;
- Safety of pupils at pick-up and drop-off points and when getting on or off transport, particularly when using UK vehicles abroad;
- Safety while on stops or rests during the journey;
- Safety of the group in the event of an accident or breakdown - the group should remain under direct supervision of the group leader or other teachers wherever possible;

- Head counts by the group leader **and at least one other** supervisor or delegated teacher should always be carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport;
- Responsibility for checking that seat belts are fastened at all times during travel;
- Travel sickness tablets should only be administered to a pupil with previous authorisation from the parents;
- Vetting non-teacher drivers.

Hiring coaches and buses

The group leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. When booking transport, the group leader should ensure that seat belts are available for pupils. Whilst seat belts must be fitted on coaches which carry groups of children, they are not legally required on buses. Buses where seat belts are not fitted are not normally appropriate for visits involving long journeys.

Private cars

Teachers and others who drive pupils in their own car must ensure their passengers' safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy, and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying the pupils.

Volunteers should be carefully vetted before they are permitted to drive pupils in their car. The driver is responsible for making sure that pupils have a seat belt and use it at all times. Vehicles without seat belts should not be used.

Group leaders who wish to use parents, volunteers or other pupils to help transport pupils in their own cars, must ensure that they are aware of their legal responsibility for the safety of the pupils in their cars. Parents' agreement should be sought (on the consent form) for their children to be carried in other parents' cars. It is advisable that parents driving pupils are not put in a position where they are alone with a pupil. The group leader should arrange a central dropping point for all pupils rather than individual home drops.

6. Types of visit

There are certain types of visit for which special planning, permission and consent are required. These are:

- residential visits;
- adventure activities;
- farm visits;
- visits that involve swimming in natural waters and swimming pools;
- visits abroad.

Teachers intending to run any of the above visits must consult HASPEV and ensure that all relevant regulations have been read thoroughly and complied with.

7. Visits abroad

Traveling abroad can be hugely rewarding for pupils and adults alike, but it is important that careful preparation takes place. Much of the earlier advice in this handbook applies to visits abroad, but there are some additional factors that need to be considered, not least because the legislation may be different from that of the UK.

Planning and preparation

It is good practice that an exploratory visit to the location should always be made. If this is not always possible the group leader should gather as much information as possible on the facilities provided and the area to be visited.

Staffing the visit

Staffing ratios for visits abroad are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity, the pupils' age, the location, and the efficient use of resources. A minimum ratio of 1 adult to 10 pupils is recommended but at least two of the adults should be teachers. There should be enough adults in the group to cover an emergency.

Preparing pupils for visits abroad

Factors to be considered for visits abroad include:

- language - particularly common phrases;
- culture eg body language, rules and regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender;
- food and drink - tap water/bottled water. Care with raw vegetables, salads and unpeeled fruit, raw shellfish, underdone meat or fish;
- money - how to carry money and valuables discreetly;
- how to use phones abroad;
- what to do in an emergency.

Briefing meeting for parents

It is particularly important that parents are given the opportunity to meet the teachers and others who will be taking the pupils overseas.

Vaccinations

The group leader should find out whether vaccination is necessary and ensure that all members of the group have received it in good time. Check whether the country to be visited requires proof of vaccination.

Insurance

The group leader must ensure that the group has comprehensive travel insurance.

Foreign legislation

The group leader needs to check relevant legislation, particularly on health and safety eg fire regulations.

Visas/passports

The group leader should ensure that all members of the group have valid passports and visas (if appropriate) in the early stages of planning the trip.

Passports should be collected from each member of the group at least two weeks before leaving and kept in a secure place until the date of departure.

Photocopies of the group's passports should be taken for emergency use.

Nationality

If the group includes pupils whose national or immigration status or entitlement to a British passport is in doubt, it is advisable to make early enquiries of the Home Office's Immigration and Nationality Directorate. (See HASPEV.)

Pupils who are not nationals of any EU member state may need a visa to travel from the UK to another member state. However, they may receive visa exemption if they are members of a school group. (see HASPEV)

Pupils other than EU nationals may require a separate passport and may need to use separate passport control channels from the rest of the group. The group leader must be aware of the need to supervise such arrangements.

Emergency Medical Facilities

Some of these are available through reciprocal health care arrangements in EC countries to EU nationals.

Form E111 from DSS is the certificate of entitlement to free or reduced cost treatment and must be completed by the child's parent. It is available from Post Offices or freephone 0800 555 777.

It is advisable to take a contingency fund or Visa card as sometimes treatment has to be paid for in advance and money has to be claimed back later.

Paperwork

The group leader should ensure they obtain and take with them:

- travel tickets, passports and visas;
- a copy of the contract with the tour company/accommodation etc.
- medical papers e.g. form EI 11 and significant medical histories;
- parental consent forms
- the contact numbers of the Headteacher, and other home contacts;
- the names of parents and the addresses and phone numbers at which they can be contacted (home and workplace).
- several copies of a list of group members and their details;
- details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number;
- the name, address and phone number of the group's accommodation;
- photocopies of all the groups documents.

Information retained at the school

Full details of the visit should be retained at the school while the visit is in progress. This should include:

- the itinerary and contact phone number/address of the group;
- a list of group members and their details;
- contact names, addresses and phone numbers of the parents;
- copies of parental consent forms;
- copies of travel documents, insurance documents, medical papers;
- a copy of the contract with the tour company/hotel etc.;

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that this information is available at all times, particularly if the visit takes place at a time when the school is closed.

During the visit

It is advisable for pupils to carry a note in the relevant foreign language for use if they get lost asking the reader to reunite them with the group at the accommodation/meeting point. They should also carry the group leader's name and the duty contact's phone number.

All group members should carry an appropriate amount of foreign currency at all times e.g. money for

telephone (or a phone card).

It is important to be able to identify group members readily e.g. uniform, cap or item of clothing, badges. However, **no student should display their name clearly on their clothing** - this could result in their being isolated from the group by an apparently friendly, personal call.

Travel by Air

Taking a school group on aircraft requires careful planning and preparation. If the group includes any members with disabilities it is necessary to check that the airline has a wheelchair and lifting facility, if appropriate. The group leader should resist any attempt by the airline to split the group between different aircraft.

8. Emergency Procedures

Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to ensure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school visit.

Please refer specifically to the DfES supplement entitled "Emergency Procedures".

The group leader would usually take charge in an emergency and would need to ensure that emergency procedures are in place and that back up cover is arranged. The group leader should liaise with the representative of the tour operator if one is being used.

All those involved in the school trip, including supervisors, pupils and their parents, should be informed of who will take charge in an emergency, the named back up cover and what they are expected to do in an emergency.

Preparation

By their nature, emergencies are usually unexpected. But careful emergency planning can mitigate the trauma of being caught up in an emergency. It is good practice for the group leader to:

- agree an emergency action plan, which includes 24-hour (i.e. constant cover) contact points at the school and clear roles for the group leader, school contact, Headteacher - eg managing media interest, supporting parents of an injured pupil, transport arrangements etc.;
- ensure that all members of the group know what action to take if there is a problem;
- hold evening briefings with supervisors to discuss issues for the next day;
- spend time early the next morning explaining arrangements to the pupils;
- have, or ensure that other adults in the group have, up-to date competence in First Aid and other life saving competence as necessary for the activities;
- ensure that the First Aid kit is properly stocked and accessible (see *Guidance on First Aid for Schools*, paragraph 60 <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/firstaid>);
- ensure that all pupils' medical needs (e.g. asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis) are known and that staff are competent to handle them (see *Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs: A Good Practice Guide* <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/medical>);
- be aware that some diseases are more common in some countries and know what preventative action to take and what to do if a group member becomes infected;
- recognise that many of the health problems of pupils on longer visits are caused by lack of food, of liquid or of sleep;
- if appropriate, advise group members about the dangers of over-exertion in the heat and of dehydration, which can cause headache, dizziness and nausea;

- in warm climates, keep fluid levels high, take extra salt and wear loose, lightweight clothing - preferably made of cotton or other natural fibres - and use suitably factored sun protection creams and sun hats/glasses; . ensure that drivers take adequate rest breaks on long journeys;
- ensure that all pupils understand and follow the code of conduct; practice emergency drills e.g. evacuation of mini-bus;
- if abroad, know where the nearest British Embassy or Consulate is located and the telephone number. Depending on the age of the pupils, it may be appropriate to ensure that they have this information to hand.

Emergency procedures during a visit

If an emergency occurs on a school visit the group leader should maintain or resume control of the group overall. The main factors to consider include:

- establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible;
- ensure that all the group are safe and looked after;
- establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention;
- ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital with any relevant medical information, and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together;
- notify the police if necessary;
- ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident;
- ensure that all group members are following the emergency procedures and the roles allocated to them - revise procedures and re-allocate roles as necessary;
- inform the school contact and provider/tour operator (as appropriate). The school contact number should be accessible at all times during the visit;
- details of the incident to pass on to the school should include: nature, date and time of incident; location of incident; names of casualties and details of their injuries; names of others involved so that parents can be reassured; action taken so far; action yet to be taken (and by whom);
- school contact should notify parents, providing as full a factual account of the incident as possible;
- notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required (this may be done by the school contact);
- notify the British Embassy/Consulate if an emergency occurs abroad;
- ascertain phone numbers for future calls. Try not to rely solely on mobile phones;
- write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence;
- keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident;
- complete an accident report form as soon as possible. Contact HSE or local authority inspector, if appropriate;
- no-one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to their families. Refer media enquiries to a designated media contact in the home area;
- no-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties, nor sign anything relating to accident liability without clear advice from the Shura;
- keep receipts for any expenses incurred - insurers will require these.

9. HASPEV Supplement Supervision

Responsibility

The group leader is responsible overall for the group at all times.

In delegating supervisory roles to other adults in the group, it is good practice for the group leader to:

- allocate supervisory responsibility to each adult for named pupils;
- ensure that each adult knows which pupils they are responsible for;
- ensure that each pupil knows which adult is responsible for them;

- ensure that all adults understand that they are responsible to the group leader for the supervision of the pupils assigned to them;
- ensure that all adults and pupils are aware of the expected standards of behaviour.

It is good practice for each supervisor to:

- have a reasonable prior knowledge of the pupils including any special educational needs, medical needs or disabilities;
- carry a list/register of all group members;
- directly supervise the pupils (except during remote supervision) - particularly important when they are mingling with the public and may not be easily identified;
- regularly check that the entire group is present;
- have a clear plan of the activity to be undertaken and its educational objectives;
- have the means to contact the group leader/other supervisors if needing help;
- have prior knowledge of the venue - the group leader should normally have made an exploratory visit, see *Standards for LEA's in Overseeing Educational Visits*;
- anticipate a potential risk by recognising a hazard, by arriving, where necessary, at the point of hazard before the pupils do, and acting promptly where necessary;
- continuously monitor the appropriateness of the activity, the physical and mental condition and abilities of the group members and the suitability of the prevailing conditions;
- be competent to exercise appropriate control of the group, and to ensure that pupils abide by the agreed standards of behaviour;
- clearly understand the emergency procedures and be able to carry them out;
- have appropriate access to First Aid;

Each pupil should:

- know who their supervisor is at any given time and how to contact him or her;
- have been given clear, understandable and appropriate instructions; .
- rarely if ever be on their own;
- alert the supervisor if someone is missing or in difficulties;
- have a meeting place to return to, or an instruction to remain where they are, if separated;
- understand and accept the expected standards of behaviour.

Head counts etc.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. It is good practice for all supervisors to:

- carry a list/register of all pupils and adults involved in the visit at all times;
- ensure that pupils are readily identifiable, especially if the visit is to a densely populated area. Brightly coloured caps, T-shirts or a school uniform can help identify group members more easily;
- avoid identification that could put pupils at risk e.g. name badges (though some schools find it useful to provide pupils with badges displaying the name of the school or hotel and an emergency contact number, or for visits abroad a note in the language of the country being visited);
- ensure that all pupils are aware of rendezvous points;
- ensure that all pupils know what to do if they become separated from the group.

Buddy System

Each child is paired with a buddy. Each regularly checks that the other is present and is OK. A variant of this is the 'circle buddy' system - the pupils form a circle at the start of the visit so that each pupil has a left side buddy and a right side buddy. He or she will check on these when asked. Thus two pupils cannot vanish together and not be missed (as might happen with paired buddies).

Remote Supervision

Supervision can be close or remote but is always 24 hours:

- close supervision occurs when the group remain within sight and contact of the supervisor;
- remote supervision occurs when, as part of planned activities, a group works away from the supervisor but is subject to stated controls (e.g. during certain Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions). The supervisor is present though not necessarily near or in sight, but his or her whereabouts are known;
- down time (or recreational time) - for example during the evenings - may involve close or remote supervision, but should not be unsupervised - the supervisors continue to be in charge;
- it is essential that everyone involved in the visit understands the supervision arrangements and expectations.

When supervision is remote:

- groups should be sufficiently trained and assessed as competent for the level of activity to be undertaken, including First Aid and emergency procedures. Remote supervision will normally be the final stage of a phased development programme;
- pupils will be familiar with the environment or similar environments and have details of the rendezvous points and the times of rendezvous;
- clear and understandable boundaries will be set for the group;
- there must be clear lines of communication between the group, the supervisor and the school. Do not rely exclusively on mobile phones;
- the supervisor should monitor the group's progress at appropriate intervals;
- the supervisor will be in the expedition or activity area and will be able to reach the group reasonably promptly should the group need support in an emergency;
- there should be a recognisable point at which the activity is completed;
- there should be clear arrangements for the abandonment of the activity where it cannot be safely completed.

Rearranging Groups

Potential danger points can occur when rearranging groups. In particular:

- when a large group is split into smaller groups for specific activities;
- when groups transfer from one activity to another and change supervisor;
- during periods between activities;
- when small groups re-form into a large group.

It is important that the supervisor:

- clearly takes responsibility for the group when their part of the programme begins, particularly making certain that all group members are aware of the changeover;
- clearly passes on responsibility for the group when their part of the programme is concluded, together with any relevant information ensuring that the group members know who their next leader is.

Down Time

Group leaders should ensure that pupils continue to be properly supervised during downtime before, between and after activities, including the evenings on residential visits. A group occupied in study or activity is far safer than a group left to its own devices in an unfamiliar environment. Too much unstructured free time in a residential programme can allow time for mischief, bullying, homesickness and wandering off from the body of the group.

It is good practice to:

- ensure that all staff and pupils understand the standards of behaviour that apply at all times, not just during activities;
- ensure that handover between activities is properly supervised, with a named supervisor responsible for the group if there is down time between activities;
- ensure that all supervisors understand that their supervisory role continues in the evening;
- use down time in the evening or at the beginning of the day to brief the group on the planned activities for the day to come, e.g. the planned learning outcomes, specific health and safety issues, meal and break times etc.;
- use down time after activities for individual reflection on personal learning outcomes, and group discussion about the highs and lows of the day;
- apply the advice contained in **Remote Supervision** above, adapted as necessary, if it is felt reasonable to allow pupils some time without close supervision;
- occupy the group with mildly active, non-academic activities in the evening, e.g. craft activities, environmental activities, quizzes, team challenges, led-walks.

Night Time

Group leaders should ensure that:

- the group's immediate accommodation is exclusively for the group's use;
- teachers have sleeping, accommodation on the same floor immediately adjacent to the pupils' accommodation;
- there is a teacher present on that floor whenever the pupils are there;
- child protection arrangements are in place to protect both pupils and staff;
- where hotel/hostel reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visits;
- in the absence of 24 hour staffing of reception, external doors should be made secure against intrusion and windows closed as necessary to prevent intrusion;
- where possible, internal doors should be lockable but staff should have reasonable access to the pupil accommodation at all times;
- where pupils' doors are locked, teachers have immediate access, as necessary, to a master key;
- all staff and pupils know the emergency procedures/escape routes in the event of a fire. Where windows and doors are locked against intrusion at night, ensure that alternative escape routes are known and that all fire doors function properly.

Don't be lulled into a sense of false security by local assurances, such as "no need to lock doors in this part of the country". The presence of the group may attract unwelcome attention that is unusual in the locality.

Travel

A driver cannot safely drive and supervise children at the same time. Group leaders should ensure that:

- transport by road has seat belts and that the pupils wear them;
- there is adequate supervision at all times when travelling;
- supervisors are reserved seats that allow them to supervise properly
- pupils are supervised when boarding and leaving;
- extra care is taken when leaving a vehicle in a country that drives on the right as some doors may open onto the road side;
- standards of behaviour are met, and in particular that drivers are not distracted;
- pupils are occupied on long journeys - this will help the journey pass quickly;
- evacuation procedures are clearly understood by everyone, luggage is securely stored and emergency exits are kept clear;
- there are adequate rest stops for drivers;

- head counts are carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport.

10. HASPEV Supplement Advice on Specific Activities

Coastal Visits

HASPEV chapter 8 "Types of Visit" has advice on coastal visits at paragraphs 181-2. *HASPEV* states: "... many of the incidents affecting pupils have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming."

The group leader will want to bear the following points in mind when assessing the risks of a coastal activity:

- tides, rip tides and sandbanks are potential hazards; timings and exit routes should be checked;
- group members should be aware of warning signs and flags;
- establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc.;
- some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain are out of bounds, and whether the risk assessment allows swimming in the sea;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to a safe distance from the cliff edge at all times - a "buffer zone" between the pupils and the hazard. Be aware that cliff falls can mean that cliff paths stop abruptly at the cliff edge;
- group leaders should not normally allow pupils to ride mountain bikes on any route that is near a sheer drop e.g. coastal path or canal towpath. If the risk assessment indicates that the risk could be managed adequately, then there should be a small known group of skilled and experienced riders accompanied by appropriately qualified staff;
- the local coastguard, harbour master, lifeguard or tourist information office can provide information and advice on the nature and location of hazards.

Swimming in the sea or other natural waters

Swimming and paddling or otherwise entering the waters of river, canal, sea or lake should never be allowed as an impromptu activity. The pleas, of children to be allowed to bathe - because it is hot weather, for example, or after a kayaking exercise - should be resisted where the bathing has not been prepared for. In-water activities should take place only when a proper risk assessment has been completed and proper measures put in to control the risks. The activities should be formal and supervised.

It is good practice that, wherever possible, group leaders seek out recognised bathing areas that have official surveillance i.e. qualified lifeguard cover. But, even then, group leaders should be aware that pupils might mingle with members of the public and be lost to view. Pupils should always be in sight and reasonable reach of their supervisors.

The group leader should:

- be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers;
- ascertain for themselves the level of the pupils' swimming ability;
- check the weather;
- be aware of the local conditions - such as currents, weeds, rip tides, a shelving, uneven or unstable bottom - using local information from the lifeguard, coastguard, harbourmaster, police or tourist information office;
- beware of rocks, breakwaters and other potential hazards;
- look out for warning signs and flags: a red flag means it is unsafe to swim; yellow flags mean that lifeguards are on patrol in the area - between the flags; a black and white flag means it is an area used by surfers and not suitable for swimming;
- designate a safe area of water for use by the group;
- brief the group about the limits of the swimming area;

- avoid crowded beaches where it is harder to see pupils;
- be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water;
- be aware of the dangers of paddling especially for young pupils;
- ensure that pupils have not eaten (at least half an hour) before swimming;
- ensure the activity is suitable for the pupils, especially any with special needs or disabilities;
- adopt and explain the signals of distress and recall;
- ensure that buoyancy aids, lifejackets etc. are used where appropriate;
- carry out regular head counts;
- be aware that it is not always possible to tell when someone is in difficulties.

Supervisors should:

- have clear roles - at least one supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance, even where lifeguards are on duty;
- take up a best position from which to exercise a constant vigilance;
- divide their careful watching between staff who stand in the sea and look landward towards the group and staff who stay on land and watch the group from that vantage point;
- give the children their full, undivided attention;
- always follow the advice or directions of a lifeguard;
- never swim themselves unless it is to help a child in distress;
- not join in any of the children's games;
- ensure that no child is allowed to wade out or swim further than his/her waist height;
- nevertheless, be aware that it is possible to drown in one's own depth, and to act immediately when a child appears to be in difficulties;
- ensure that children leave the water immediately if they get too cold, especially if toes and fingers look blue or feel numb - this could suggest the onset of hypothermia;
- recognise that a child in difficulty is unlikely to wave or shout - all of their energies will be used in trying to keep afloat.

It is good practice for the group leader, or another designated adult in the group, to hold a relevant life saving award, especially where lifeguard cover may not be available. For further advice contact the: The Royal Lifesaving Society UK, River House, High St, Broom, Warwickshire B50 4HN (Tel: 01789 773994) <http://www.lifesavers.org.uk/>

Farm Visits

"There is a seasonal increase in the number of cases of E.coli 0157 infection, and there is a link between farm visits and infection in young children. This means that some simple and sensible precautions should be taken." - Chief Medical Officer -12 April 2000,

Group Leaders should check the provision at the farm to ensure that:

- eating areas are separate from those where there is any contact with animals;
- there are adequate clean and well-maintained washing facilities;
- there is clear information for visitors on the risks and the precautions to take.

Ensure that:

- there is adequate trained adult supervision wherever children can come into contact with animals and need to wash their hands;
- all children wash their hands thoroughly immediately after touching animals and before any eating or drinking;
- shoes are cleaned and then hands are washed on leaving the farm

Never let pupils:

- place their faces against the animals;
- put their hands in their own mouths after touching or feeding the animals;
- eat or drink while going round the farm;
- eat or drink until they have washed their hands;
- sample any animal foodstuffs;
- drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities);
- touch animal droppings - if they do then wash and dry hands;
- ride on tractors or other machines;
- play in the farm area, or in other areas that are out of bounds such as grain storage tanks, slurry pits etc.

The Chief Medical Officer's revised guidance suggests:

- individual supervision by an adult for every child younger than 12 months;
- a supervision ratio of one adult for two children for children between ages one and two;
- gradually increasing ratios up to one adult for eight children for children between ages five and eight;
- higher standards for washing facilities.

11. HASPEV Supplement

Ongoing Risk Assessment

HASPEV chapter 2 paragraphs 37-46, and *Standards for LEA's in Overseeing Educational Visits* deal with risk assessment. Risk assessment does not end when the visit begins. Changes to the itinerary, changes to the weather, incidents (whether minor or major), staff illness - all or any of these may bring pupils face to face with unexpected hazards or difficulties and give rise to the need to re-assess risk.

The group leader (and other adults with responsibility) prepares ongoing risk assessments while the visit is taking place. These normally consist of judgements and decisions made as the need arises. They are not usually recorded until after the visit. They should be informed by the generic and visit or site specific risk assessments.

It is good practice to have briefings each night to take stock and assess the circumstances for the next day, and to spend time early the next morning explaining arrangements to the pupils.

Check the local weather forecast

- to inform decisions on appropriate clothing;
- to be aware of whether water activities might be in areas prone to flash floods, high winds etc.,
- to be aware of whether trekking or climbing at altitude might be subject to dramatic changes of weather; potential for fallen trees, avalanches etc.

Seek local knowledge of potential hazards, e.g. tides;

- rivers/streams prone to sudden increases in flow;
- difficult terrain;
- crossing points for road, rail or water;
- unstable cliffs.

Plan B

- good forward planning will always include alternative plans in case the itinerary needs to be changed;
- a flexible itinerary can allow activities from later in the visit to be substituted for earlier activities if those are prevented by unexpected circumstances;
- group leaders faced with potential difficulties will feel more confident to change the itinerary if a pre-assessed alternative is available;

- regardless of whether alternatives have been pre-assessed, always take time to reassess risks if the itinerary changes;
- on arrival at an alternative site or activity that has not previously been risk assessed, we recommend that the group leader should risk assess the situation before allowing the pupils to disembark from the transport;
- an unknown location might involve hazards not covered in the original risk assessment, for example if the original intention to visit a land-only site has to be changed at short notice to a lake or seaside location.

Behaviour problems, illness or injury

- poor behaviour may be reduced by ensuring that all pupils are signed up to agreed standards of behaviour before (or at least at the beginning of) the visit;
- educational visits can be a good opportunity for school staff to get to know pupils away from the confines of the school. But the group leader should resist any temptation to accept lower standards of behaviour. The different hazards that pupils may be exposed to away from the school will require them to observe standards of behaviour that are at least as high as, or higher than, in the classroom;
- if one adult has to give prolonged attention to one group member, the group leader should reassess the supervisory roles of the other adults to ensure that all members of the group know who is responsible for them. Activities may need to be amended until the other adult returns all of his or her attention to the group;
- group leaders should trust their own knowledge of the young people and use their own professional judgement; this may include challenging an activity leader where the group leader's knowledge of the group is superior, or intervening to prompt a change of plan

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