

Belfast Model School for Girls

“Achievement for All”

Educational Visits Policy

Agreed by the Board of Governors :

To be reviewed May 2013

Rationale

The Belfast Model School for Girls recognises the significant educational value of visits and activities which take place away from the immediate school environment and believes that staff should be encouraged to organise and take students on school trips to:

- To provide pupils with subject-specific experience and information which cannot be obtained in a classroom environment
- To broaden pupils’ knowledge and understanding of the world around them
- To encourage independence resourcefulness and initiative
- To fulfil the requirements of the curriculum

The Belfast Model School for Girls encourages trips linked to all aspects of the curriculum; academic, sport, music, art and theatre, cultural, social and volunteering. All trips will be appropriate and relevant to the age group and the needs and development of the students participating. Our school is committed to equal opportunities and will make every effort to ensure that these activities will be available and accessible in some form to all who wish to participate or are required to take part.

It is the policy of the School to encourage educational visits and to ensure that they are properly organised and run in accordance with best practice and having full regard to health and safety and the School’s duty of care to pupils.

The School retains ultimate responsibility for pupils at all times during school visits, even when activities are undertaken under instruction from outside providers. Teachers on school visits must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group. Attention is drawn in particular to the BELB publication, “Educational visits policy, practice and procedures 2007” and the DfSS publication, “Health and Safety of pupils on Educational Visits”, 1988.

Objectives

- To ensure all Health and Safety requirements are met
- To identify the roles of trip organisers, accompanying staff and students
- To detail the procedures required when organising a school trip
- To define the type of trips that should be encouraged to take place
- To identify the standards expected from all the staff and students participating in school Trips

Definitions

Educational Visits

An educational visit is defined as a school excursion beyond the immediate locale of the school. Examples include trips to theatres, museums, castles, farms, field trips, adventure centres, or any residential trip. This list is for example only, and is not exhaustive.

Routine Off-site Activities

The following are not classed as educational visits, but as 'routine off-site activities': away sporting fixtures, PE activities at local venues, swimming lessons
This list is for example only, and is not exhaustive.

All parents are asked, on their child joining the school, to sign a form giving consent for the school to take children, without separate permission, on routine off-site activities. regular out-of-school visits, this form can be signed on an annual basis by the parent giving consent for trips within the neighbouring area of the school i.e. environmental studies, swimming events, sports fixtures etc. Although it will still be necessary to provide parents with information of any planned visits i.e. actual times and dates, it will be up to the parent to let the school know if they do not want their child to go along, rather than waiting for permission slips to be returned.

This policy applies to Educational Visits as defined above, although some of the good practice described (especially staff ratios and risk assessments) will be applicable to routine off-site activities.

Roles and responsibilities

Our system is based on everyone concerned understanding and using this policy and the procedures set out in it.

Board of Governors

- Have overall responsibility for Health and Safety.

Principal

- Has overall responsibility for ensuring that the management of visits meets the regulations and guidance offered by the BELB as well as conforming to the schools own Health and Safety Policy.

Education Visits Coordinator

Must be competent to fulfil the role in relation to the size of the school and the extent and nature of the planned visits. The EVC has responsibility to:

- Ensure that the policies, regulations and guidance are followed so that educational visits meet employers' and schools' requirements
- Instruct all new staff on the procedures of the schools Educational Trips Policy
- Assign competent people to lead or supervise a visit by assessing the competence of leaders and other adults proposed for a visit. This may include reference to awards, practical observations or verification of experience;
- ensure that all staff accompanying the visit are appropriately selected and have the expertise, experience and qualifications relevant to the activities;
- Ensure parents are informed and give consent, or refuse consent on a fully informed basis.
- ensure that parental consent forms have been issued and returned signed;
- Confirm that adequate risk assessments have been carried out and meet requirements
- ensure that the ratio of adults: pupils is appropriate and suitable;
- ensure that child protection procedures are in place;

- ensure that the governing body and/or the LA have approved the visit if appropriate
- ensure that suitable arrangements have been made for the medical and special needs of all pupils;
- ensure that first aid provision is available;
- ensure that the mode of transport is appropriate and that outward/inward journey times are clear;
- ensure that there is relevant insurance cover;
- ensure that they have details of the venue including address, telephone number and contact name;
- ensure that a school emergency contact has been nominated and that the group leader has these details;
- Have an overview of the programme of trips taking place
- Help and support staff in the planning of trips
- ensure that CRB disclosures are in place as necessary (no-one should have unsupervised access to children unless fully CRB cleared)
- Ensure that robust emergency procedures are in place and ensure there is an emergency contact for each visit;
- Monitor and review to establish a clear picture of current practice; report on successes and set targets for improvement

Group Leaders

The Group leader is in overall charge of the group and remains responsible throughout the visit. The Group Leaders and assistant group leaders, accompanying a trip have a duty of care to the students. They must provide welfare, support and supervision throughout the visit and exercise the same level of care as would a reasonable and careful parent.

Group Leader's Responsibilities and Good practice:

- The Group leader is in overall charge of the group and remains responsible throughout the visit
- The Group Leaders has a duty of care to the students, providing welfare, support and supervision throughout the visit, exercising the same level of care as would a reasonable and careful parent.
- Have the ability to control and lead pupils of the relevant age group, and be familiar with the venue
 - Obtain the Principals prior agreement before any visits take place;
- Follow all relevant BELB and school policies regulations and guidelines regarding educational visits.
- Ensure the meticulous planning and preparation of the school trip
- Prepare a risk assessment of all activities
- Ensure that liaison with parents, particularly with regard to obtaining consent, is effective.
- Ensure that members of the party have reasonable preliminary, theoretical and practical preparations that should be at a level appropriate to the age of the group and the nature of the activities. This should include consideration of potential emergencies and associated actions to be taken.
- Define accompanying supervisors roles and ensure tasks are assigned;
- Ensure that adequate first aid arrangements are made bearing in mind the location and nature of the activity. In a situation where expert medical help is not readily available at least one member of staff should be a competent first aider.
 - Be aware of child protection issues;

- Ensure that the students are capable of undertaking the proposed activity.
- Provide information to students to ensure that they understand key safety information
- Discuss and agree an acceptable code of conduct with both the accompanying staff and the students to promote good behaviour.

Assistant group leaders, Responsibilities and Good practice:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- act as any reasonable parent would in the circumstances;
- take reasonable steps to avoid exposing pupils to dangers that are foreseeable and beyond those that the pupils can reasonably be expected to cope with;
- Consider stopping the visit or the activity and notify the group leader if s/he thinks there is an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of the pupils in their charge.
- Current good practice favours the ‘apprenticeship model’ of training staff to run trips. Less experienced staff should work alongside those with more experience to develop competence in running off-site trips.

Pupils

- Must understand the procedures and strategies in place for their supervision;
- Must understand their individual and group responsibilities, have regard for the rewards and sanctions in place and ensure they follow the schools dress and behaviour policy
- Must not take unnecessary risks;
- Must follow instructions of the group leader, teachers, instructors and people within the venues;
- When abroad, be sensitive to local customs;
- Be aware of anything that may cause themselves or others harm, speak to their group leader or teacher if they are concerned.

Parents have the responsibility of

- Emphasising to their child the importance of following the school dress schools dress and behaviour conduct policy
- Preparing their child for participation and accepting that a child who is a risk to the health and safety of either him/herself or others may be sent home early.
- Informing the school about any medical needs / allergies / special dietary needs etc. of their child.
- When children are going on a residential trip, parents must supply an emergency contact name and telephone number, this contact must be available for the duration of the trip.
- The school must inform the parents about all aspects of the visit to enable them to make an informed choice as to whether or not they want their child to participate.

Essential Steps for Organising a Trip

Procedures

- All the forms referred to below can be located in RM staff, in the folder, “Educational Visits”

- Staff wishing to plan and undertake any visit (prospective Group leaders) should apply verbally to the Principal or Educational Visits co-ordinator (EVC) for permission to plan the visit.
- Once granted they should submit the details on the Educational Visits Proposal Form (Form EVA) to the EVC. This applies to all visits
- In addition the Planning Checklist (Form EV1) must also be completed for all visits.
- Outline permission to undertake the visit will then be given if ,
 - all the requirements identified in Form EV1 have been met,
 - the visit can be accommodated within the school timetable and
 - the ethos of the visit is one with which the school wishes to be associated.
- For routine off site activities block annual approval will suffice, subject to parents being made aware of every visit, especially any involving a return time outside the normal school day and subject to a risk assessment being prepared and forwarded to the EVC.
- For all other visits it is necessary to secure written parental consent for each specific event, parental consent forms can be located in RMstaff.
- For all other visits it is necessary to complete and forward to the EVC a risk assessment of the visit. A generic risk assessment form can be located in RMstaff.
- For all other visits it is necessary to prepare a list including the names of all pupils on the trip, any relevant medical details and home contact numbers. This form is available in RM staff.
- For all other visits the group leader must take two contact numbers of senior staff.
- When the visit involves foreign travel and /or hazardous activities such as swimming or skiing, then additional risk assessments to cover such activities should be prepared. These too can be located in RMstaff
- When the visit involves additional or high risk activities, foreign travel or is a residential visit then details of the visit will also be sent, by the EVC to BELB for approval that all the procedures have been satisfactorily completed.
- Thereafter the Group leader can complete the planning organisation and bookings for the visit. When all details are complete they must be submitted for final approval. This should be a minimum of 7 days before the visit.
- Any incidents or accidents will be reported in accordance with the reporting requirements. ie
 - Should an accident occur it must be, recorded in the accident book at the venue.
 - It is advisable to obtain witness statements.

- The reason for this is that children have until their 21st birthday to make a claim for compensation, it may be many years until the claim transpires by which time many members of staff who witnessed the event may have left or moved on, making it very difficult to compile the necessary information.
 - Upon return to school an accident form must be completed, these are available in the main school office
- Leaders of visits that have involved considerable time or financial resources, such as residential visits, will produce a short report evaluating the travel and transport, facilities, quality of any providers and the success and value of the visit and submit this to the EVC.
 - All school staff will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when the policy is reviewed.

Summary of essential procedures

1. Group leader secures verbal approval for the visit from the Principal or EVC
2. Group leader forwards the EVA and EV1 form, to the EVC for approval
3. Group leader secure parental consent forms, including medical information, for all pupils involved and forwards these to the EVC
4. Group leader completes a risk assessment and forwards this to the EVC
5. Group leader compile a list of all pupils involved and forwards this to the EVC
6. Group leader takes on Residential/Foreign visits, a proforma that lists school contact numbers.
7. Group leader takes a First Aid kit on the trip.
8. In the event of an accident whilst on the trip, it the responsibility of the group leader to fill out an accident report form immediately upon return to school. (Accident report form is available from the office).

APPENDIXES

1. Emergency Procedures to be followed by group leaders in the event of serious or fatal injury.
2. Emergency procedure for school contact person
3. First Aid boxes
4. Risk Assessment
5. Staff pupil ratios
6. Residential Visits
7. Educational visits abroad
8. Supervision strategies, Close, Distant and Remote
9. Basic principles for safe practice for school visits
10. Definitions of hazardous activities

1. Emergency Procedures to be followed by group leaders in the event of serious or fatal injury.

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency
- If there are injuries, establish the extent and administer appropriate first aid
- Establish the name(s) of the injured and call the emergency services required
- Ensure that all other members of the party are accounted for and safe
- Advise other party staff of the incident, that the emergency procedures are in operation and what your consequent course of action will be.
- Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies casualties to hospital
- Ensure that the remainder of the party are constantly supervised and arrange for their early return to base
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with the emergency services until the incident is over and all members of the party accounted for
- Restrict access to telephones until contact is made with the Principal via the emergency contact person and until contact has been made with those directly affected.
- Convey full details of the incident to the school contact person, ie
 - Your name
 - Name of Group
 - Telephone number you are calling from
 - What happened
 - To Whom
 - Where
 - When
 - What has happened since
 - Action taken thus far
 - If a fatality is involved, has this been confirmed?
 - By Whom
 - Which local emergency services are involved.
 - Names and telephone numbers of those affected

- Where the media may try to become involved, there should be no discussion of the incident and no names or photographs should be handed over.
- Do NOT allow anyone, apart from medical services, to see any party member without an independent witness being present.
- Retain any equipment involved in an unaltered condition.
- Keep a written record of all that happens.
- Be as compassionate as possible, with anyone involved.
- Remember that no one, unless they are in a relevant official capacity, has the right to see anyone who does not wish to see them.
- Write down all relevant details as soon as possible, record all facts relating to the incident: time, date, those involved, what happened, witness details;
- Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.
- All accident forms should be completed
- maintain a record of subsequent events;
- notify the insurers;
- notify the tour operator or provider, where used.
- Inform parents of any delays that will be necessitated
- **A PHOTOCOPY OF THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE KEPT BY THE GROUP LEADER WHILST ON THE VISIT**

2. Emergency procedure for school contact person

In the event of a serious accident or incident involving a group on any form of school outing, it is paramount that the group leader should receive as much advice and support as he or she needs.

A serious accident or incident is defined as:

- an accident leading to a fatality, serious or multiple fractures, amputation or other serious injury
- circumstances in which a party member be at serious risk/serious illness; or
- any situation in which the press or media be involved.

Serious incidents are fortunately rare – this can however lead to complacency that must be guarded against. Therefore, you will need to “think on your feet”. This could be difficult under pressure and the following guidelines will help.

1. Be prepared:

You must have immediate access to these procedures and the information and means to use them, at all times.

- Make sure you are familiar with all the LA guidelines for off-site activities.
- Contact the 24-hour LA Emergency Helpline.

2. Answering the Emergency Call

You will need to gain and record the following:

- Name of Group
- Name of Group leader/Caller
- Telephone number the caller is speaking from
- What happened
- To Whom It May Concern
- Where
- When
- What has happened since

If a fatality is involved or suspected

- Has this been confirmed?
- By whom?
- Which emergency services are involved?
- Have the Police informed any next of kin?

3. General Advice

Advise the group leader to follow instructions from the local police/emergency services but unless they specifically request otherwise, your advice to the group leader should be to:

- keep the party together;
- co-ordinate any contact with parents or any outside bodies;
- refer media attention to the police or County Councils Media Team – do not answer questions.

Remain available: if it is necessary for the party to change location they must advise you of the new telephone number.

3. FIRST AID BOXES

It is essential to carry adequate First Aid kits for the group.

First Aid boxes should contain a sufficient quantity of suitable first aid materials and NOTHING ELSE (antiseptic creams and liquids are not suitable). The contents should be checked regularly by the first aider or appointed person and replenished when necessary. Sufficient quantities of each item should be in every first aid box and in most cases will be:

- Twenty individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes)
 - SIX individually wrapped triangular bandages
 - SIX safety pins
 - SIX medium size individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings (approx 10cm x 8cm)
 - TWO large individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings (approx 28cm x 17.5cm)
 - Disposable plastic gloves
- ◆ Where mains tap water is not readily available for eye irrigation, sterile water or sterile normal saline (0.9%) in **sealed disposable containers** should be provided. Each container should hold at least 300ml and should not be re-used once the sterile seal is broken. At least 900ml should be provided. **Eye lotions - eye baths - eye cups - refillable containers should not be used for eye irrigation.**

Travelling First Aid Kits

In such a situation, the group leader would be discharging a duty of care and acting in loco parentis if they administered the type of help and care that a parent would give to his/her own child. The principle should be to hand the patient over to more expert medical aid (be that rescue services, a doctor, etc) in as good a condition as possible.

In addition to any of the contents listed in the First Aid Box, the trained first aider might wish to carry certain items, stored in a separate container, with each item clearly marked with the pupils name and dosage requirement, which he or she has been trained to use such as:

- Paracetamol
- Saline Solution
- Crepe bandages
- Plastic bags and ties for disposal of soiled items
- Scissors (must be blunt ended)
- Individually wrapped hypo-allergenic waterproof elastoplast-type dressings
- Individually wrapped hypo-allergenic moist cleansing wipes

• If painkillers are carried, prior parental consent should be sought.

4. Risk Assessment

Implicit to the planning of any Educational Visit is risk assessment, consideration must be given to the dangers and difficulties that may arise, and control measures must be put into place to reduce them.

The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify the significant hazards and risks posed by the visit and, as far as is reasonably practicable, to take measures to reduce those risks to an acceptable level.

Written risk assessments should be kept in proportion to the risks involved, should be simple and should be understood and implemented by all those involved in the visit.

It is good practice to involve all Leaders in the risk assessment process; risk assessments produced by one person are rarely read or understood by others on the visit. It may be productive to think of a risk assessment as the minutes of a meeting where significant issues relating to the health, safety and well being of young people and Leaders were discussed.

The risk assessment must take into account:

- The type of visit / activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.
- The location, route and method of transport.
- The competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff.
- The ratio of teachers and supervisory staff to pupils.
- The pupils ages, competence and fitness and the suitability of the activity.
- Pupils with SEN or medical needs.
- Quality and suitability of equipment.
- Seasonal conditions and timings.
- Emergency procedures.
- Risks should be monitored throughout the duration of the visit.

5. Staff pupil ratios

Staff pupil ratios are difficult to prescribe as needs differ according to the type of visit or the planned activity. The factors that must be taken into account are:

- Sex, age, ability and competence of the group.
- Pupils with medical needs or SEN.
- The type of activity and the hazards associated with it.
- The length and type of journey.
- Type of accommodation to be used.
- The competence of staff both generally and in specific activities.
- The requirements of the venue to be visited.
- The competence of the pupils and their standards of behaviour.
- Provision for first aid.

Suggested Ratios

There must always be a minimum of two adults accompanying any group.

For visits with pupils aged 11+, there should be minimum of 1 staff : 15/20 pupils.

All residential, or trips abroad, must have a minimum of 2 staff and a 1:10 ratio

These ratios are for guidance only, a higher ratio may be appropriate for a higher risk activity.

6. Residential Visits

All of the considerations for a day visit will apply, as well as the specific points that follow:

- **The roles, duties and expectations of accompanying staff and helpers** should be clearly defined and understood so that everyone is involved and clear about what they are expected of them. This should be done through formal meetings rather than on an ad hoc basis. This is particularly true for inexperienced staff and adult helpers who may not appreciate that residential visits require a great deal of commitment and goodwill if they are to be successful.
- **Parents need to be fully informed of the type of visit proposed.** This is best done through an initial letter followed by a parents' meeting at which they should be informed of the following:
 - Reason and purpose of the visit;
 - Nature of the programme (this must include details of all activities);
 - Nature of the supervision arrangements;
 - Expectations of behaviour (Code of Conduct)
 - Method of travel, including names of coach companies, airlines, etc, as appropriate;
 - Insurance arrangements;
 - Cost and methods of payment;
 - Pocket money and any arrangements for giving it out;
 - Address and telephone number of venue;
 - Type of accommodation, i.e. bunks, shared facilities, etc;
 - Clothing requirements via a kit list (stress that clothing and other possessions should be clearly marked);
 - Emergency contact telephone number;
 - Procedures for storage and administration of medication
 - Banned items i.e. jewellery, mobile phones etc
 - the use of cameras/video cameras
 - sun protection requirements
 -

This information should be confirmed in writing and parents/guardians should then be asked to complete and sign:

- A consent form including all relevant medical information

On Arrival at the Residential Centre

When arriving at a staffed residential centre, the group leader should meet the centre manager, or someone of similar status and agree on any routines and regulations that have not been previously given. **The Group leader should ensure that any requests or stipulations agreed in writing prior to the journey (i.e. leaders' qualifications, fire regulations, first aid arrangements, etc.) still apply.**

- Define limits early - remember the group is new to the site - explain boundaries/limitations - say what you want but do so only after consultation. with the Centre Manager, and leaders of other parties if appropriate.
- Explain duty rotas and procedures in relationship to the site.

Fire Evacuation

The following points need to be noted:

- Check that all exit routes from dormitories and other sleeping accommodation is clearly indicated.
- The posted instructions are clear and have been read to new visitors and are understood.

- A leader of responsible age is appointed to each dormitory who will possess a reliable torch where emergency lighting is not provided.
- A fire drill is held during the first day for new visitors.
- The arrangements for calling the fire brigade are adequate and understood and that someone has the duty to make such a call on hearing the alarm where there is no member of the permanent staff on-site who already holds this duty.
- This person knows the location of the nearest telephones and the full address of the building/camp to enable prompt response by the fire brigade.
- All occupants are familiar with emergency procedures and escape routes.

7. EDUCATIONAL VISITS ABROAD

Supervisory Ratio - Accompanying Adults

Careful consideration should be given to this point and the activities to be carried out should be properly evaluated, to ensure that sufficient staff are available for supervision at all times. To implement this, a ratio of staff to young people of at least 1:10 will be needed for visits abroad. The majority of commercial school tour operators now offer an automatic supervisory place ratio of one adult to ten paying young people. These supervisory places should only be available for members of staff or designated supervisory adults.

At least two members of staff must accompany any group abroad, one of them clearly designated as group leader. A mixed group must be accompanied by male and female adults except where pupils are less than 11 years of age (i.e. year 6 and below) in which case they may be accompanied by two female staff. The group leader should be an experienced teacher and should be satisfied that there is sufficient experience and expertise in the staff team accompanying him/her.

Adults other than members of staff (i.e. husband/wife or teacher/youth worker, parent, student, foreign language assistant) may usefully accompany the group but the ultimate responsibility for the young people's welfare and safety lies with the teachers involved and in particular with the Group leader. Adults may only accompany the party as supervisors if they have no other commitment throughout the whole of the visit. Wherever possible, a second teacher should be designated as a deputy leader, be fully associated with the planning and organisation of the visit and be prepared to take responsibility for the group in case of emergency

All adults should have been clearly briefed by the Group leader so that roles, duties and responsibilities are understood and accepted. All adults should be aware of their own role and duties, both to ensure that they feel involved and to give adequate supervision.

Group Composition/Parental Involvement

Information by letter to parents about the proposed educational visit should, in the case of visits abroad lasting more than two days, be complemented by a parents' meeting at which issues can be clarified.

Ground rules for the visit should be clearly established at an early stage. Parental consent forms should be completed and relevant medical/diet details should be obtained in good time before the journey begins. The Group leader must compile a full list of names, addresses and contact telephone numbers of parents/carers in case of emergency. A copy of this list should be left with the home based contact and the Health and Safety Team.

Financial Arrangements

Steps should be taken at an early stage to secure an initial deposit from party members and to allow for regular payment by instalments by agreed dates. Receipts and payments must be fully documented and the account details must be available for scrutiny by the Principal. A teacher should never - even temporarily - pay such money into his/her own account. When initially estimating the overall cost of a journey, it is best to include all expenses (including i.e. pocket money) and to give a realistic global figure to parents. A refund in the case of an over-estimate is always more acceptable than a supplementary charge.

The best exchange rates for foreign currency are usually obtained in this country. Where the visit will involve a need to pay large bills abroad, this is best done by Bankers' Draft.

Within European Community countries, reciprocal health insurance arrangements apply. It is important that parents should obtain a Form E111 (Certificate of Entitlement) in respect of their children from their local DHSS office or post office in good time before the journey begins. Group leaders should collect and safeguard these forms in respect of all members of the group so that they are readily available if required in the foreign country.

NB It is advisable to take photocopies of Form E111 (together with the originals) when travelling to an EC country. The original should always be retained by the Group leader and a copy be given to authorities abroad (i.e. local sickness insurance office) if necessary.

Great emphasis should be placed on traffic risks abroad, particularly when crossing roads. Work should be done on this before the visit, with reminders when in the foreign country (i.e. mandatory use of recognised crossings). Younger children should not be allowed to cross roads unsupervised in the early stages of the stay

Collective Passports

A 'collective passport' (or group passport) can be issued to approved students, under the age of 18 years, whom are British Nationals travelling abroad as a group. An adult leader and a deputy leader, each of whom must hold an individual passport and be over the age of 21 years, must accompany the group.

Collective passports can be useful; however in the unlikely event that a pupil included on one may need to return home early or remain in the country after the rest of the party have returned home, the British Embassy will have to be contacted to enable an emergency passport to be issued. The deputy group leader must remain with the pupil, or accompany them home earlier if required.

Before travelling abroad please ensure that the telephone number for the British Embassy in the country to be visited is obtained and carried by the group leader and deputy in case of an emergency.

Supervision of Pupils on the Journey and in Foreign Centres

Accompanying staff must accept responsibility for the good behaviour of their groups both on the journey and while abroad.

It will greatly ease supervision if each accompanying adult takes responsibility for a sub-group, with the Group leader or deputy being personally responsible for any young people who might create difficulties. Each sub-group leader will naturally have a list of the young people in his/her group, while the Group leader has a complete list, augmented by a card for each person giving personal details and a passport sized photograph. If a member of the party should go missing the local police

would then have some concrete details to work from. Impress on everyone that if lost they should go for help to a public building (shop/museum) or find a person in uniform and not approach passers-by in the street.

Emergencies - the Duty Officer System

The Principal must ensure that group leaders have telephone numbers for a 24-hour standby person based contact. The home emergency contacts must be available 24/7. Groups must not be in the position of having to speak to an answer phone, leaving a message. A hierarchy of contacts is most desirable.

Support from the British Consul

The group leader should, before the visit commences, obtain from the Foreign Office, London (Monday to Friday, telephone 020 72703000) the address and telephone number of the British Consul and thus be assured of help from an English speaking person with knowledge of local services and regulations and access to emergency funds. In the event of death or serious injury to any member of the party, the British Consul should be contacted immediately. He/she will inform the Foreign Office, which has a 24-hour open line service.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office website should be visited both in the early stages and at regular intervals whilst planning a visit to countries that are further a field or that have experienced disasters, conflicts, terrorism, civil unrest or health problems in recent years.

Information regarding safety of tourists is available on the FCO site and is often the basis upon which insurance companies decide whether or not they will cover visits to such countries.

Cancelling visits at a late stage may incur major financial penalties, which may fall outside insurance cover.

Staffing

Staffing levels need to take into account the effect of staff illness or injury. Small groups with minimum staffing are particularly vulnerable in this respect and serious consideration should be given to increased staff ratios. Consideration should also be given to the ease with which a substitute member of staff may be dispatched during the visit, should they be required to cover an incident, emergency or to replace a member of staff. Organisers must ensure that all staff are professionally reliable and appropriately experienced.

The visit leader must be an employee of the LEA and normally a teacher or youth worker. Some staff accompanying may be adult helpers/volunteers and if this is the case the following points should be considered:

- All helpers must be thoroughly briefed and understand their role in relation to the visit.
- All helpers / volunteers on residential visits must be CRB checked.

Language capability

It is important that there is someone who can act in the interests of the party who is available 24 hours and able to communicate fluently. Visit leaders should ensure this is in place prior to the visit.

Using an independent provider such as a tour operator

Visit leaders should ensure that a satisfactorily completed Appendix 07 - Independent Provider's Questionnaire has been obtained prior to making any financial commitment.

It is essential that the financial bonding, accounting and contractual guidance in Section C is applied in full.

If using an operator based abroad, organisers should be aware that the above Package Travel Regulations are based on an EEC Directive, which applies to all countries of the European Economic Area. Organisers must seek verification that the operator satisfies the relevant national legislation implementing the Directive.

Where difficulties are perceived with aspects of the provision, then organisers should make a written record of events in case a subsequent claim is necessary.

Preparing young people

Thorough preparation of young people for an overseas visit will contribute immensely to enjoyment, educational value and safety. Issues to consider will include:

language - even a few common phrases will help;
cultural differences such as dress codes, rules, local customs, behavioural norms and attitudes to alcohol; in some countries, the risks associated with tap water and some foods, such as unpeeled fruit and raw vegetables, need explaining;

communication - differing telephone systems, simple phrases, card with accommodation address, action in an emergency

Documentation

It is essential that visit leaders take with them (where appropriate):

- travel tickets, passports and visas;
- a copy of the contract with the centre/hotel etc.;
- medical papers, e.g. European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) and significant medical histories;
- parental consent forms and permission for the visit leader to authorise emergency treatment on parents/carers' behalf;
- the telephone numbers and addresses, at home and in the school/centre, of the Head and emergency contact;
- the names of parents/carers and the addresses and telephone numbers at which they can be contacted;
- copies of a list of group members and their details;
- details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number;
- the name, address and telephone number of the group's accommodation;
- location of local hospital/medical services.

It is important that copies of all the above, including serial numbers of travel documents, passports etc, be taken and kept separately in the event of loss of originals.

Copies of most of the above information should be left at the school/centre for the duration of the visit. School/centre emergency contact arrangements must ensure accessibility to such information at all times during the visit and to the LA emergency contact.

Travel

Travel by air or ferry needs careful organisation. Situations have occurred where airlines have attempted to split a party onto different aircraft. It is essential that this be resisted. Any special needs, such as wheelchair access, will need checking at the time of booking.

On ferries and in airports, it is easy for members to become 'lost'. Careful group management, frequent head counts, or sub-divided, adult-supervised groups and an easily identified group location will help.

Minibus driving abroad

Recent tragic incidents involving coach and minibus transport abroad make it essential that organisers apply, in full, the regulations and guidance of the County Council.

It is particularly important that all party members are reminded of the dangers of unfamiliar, right-hand drive traffic. Special care is needed where the doors of UK vehicles open on the offside in right-hand drive countries.

Extended road travel will require regular, supervised stops to reduce fatigue and the likelihood of illness.

8. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Close/Direct Supervision

- Here the activity undertaken by Group Members is in close or direct contact with their Group Leader/supervisors. Large groups should have a simple communication system in place that allows the Group Leader to be free of immediate supervision, so as to allow time to check all is well with all group members and permit immediate intervention when necessary (e.g. during emergencies). Examples that require this level of supervision may include visits involving young or inexperienced Group Members, Group Members with special educational or behavioural needs, when undertaking particularly hazardous activities
- Group movement management systems must be agreed, known and suitable instructions given to all pupils/young people e.g. getting on and off transport, collection points and rendezvous places, crossing roads, walking in urban contexts
- Behaviour management systems must be known and suitable instructions given to all pupils/young people e.g. reinforcement, reward strategies; incident intervention strategies; codes of conduct (general and particular to activities). This may involve the final sanction of returning to base or returning to the parents.

Distant Supervision

- Where there has been a history of a particular group/type of visit working well using the above strategy and the visit risk assessment identifies it as an acceptable control, a distant supervisory strategy may be employed.
- Before considering distant supervision there must be a reasonable expectation of suitable behaviour by pupils/Group Members (evidenced from working with them previously or elsewhere, not just hoped for).

- Group Members may work in small parties with leaders or supervisors continuously monitoring the group and intervening where necessary. Examples may include visiting a museum or non-hazardous fieldwork (e.g. away from water).
- The geography/physical area of location visited should be clearly defined.
- Group numbers must be clearly established
- Group Member behaviour and code of conduct must be reinforced along with expectations for the group prior to the visit.
- All Group Members must know who the Group Leader and Supervisors are and where they will be; some should be in a known location, others should be monitoring or moving through the activity area.
- Group Members must be clear about what to do if lost or if there is an incident or emergency.
- All Group Members should know their responsibilities and what the behavioural expectations are.
- Parents must be informed before the visit if any form of distant supervision will take place.

Remote Supervision

- The aim of Educational Visits for older pupils may be to encourage independence and the development of investigative skills. Some adventurous activities such as those under the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme require pupils to work in small groups without direct supervision.
- Remote supervision entails the Group Leader or Supervisors not being with the group during stages of the venture; it often involves monitoring from a distance as well as agreed meetings or rendezvous.
- Remote supervision is technically harder to manage than other supervision strategies and this requires a well qualified and experienced leader to provide suitable Group Member training in the activity prior to the visit.
- Particular attention needs to be given to information provided to pupils/young people before direct/distant supervision can be withdrawn. Training given to pupils/young people must be sound and thorough and individual capabilities should be assessed.
- The Group Leader must establish during the visit's planning stage whether each pupil/young person is competent for remote supervision.
- The Group Leader must be satisfied that all pupils have acquired the necessary skills and have the necessary experience, confidence, physical ability and judgement to be left without direct or distant supervision.
- Remote supervision should normally only be implemented at the end of a phased development programme.
- The withdrawal of direct supervision should be a gradual four-stage process; the group's success in coping at each stage should be reviewed before proceeding to the next stage.
- The four stages include the Group Leader/competent Supervisor: -
 - Accompanying the group.
 - Shadowing the group.
 - Checking regularly at agreed locations.
 - Checking occasionally at agreed locations.
- The Group Leader remains responsible for pupils/Group Members whether or not they are in direct contact with the group.
- Any monitoring system must allow for intervention if or when needed. Group support systems should be in place locally as well as at home-base should an incident or emergency take place.
- Parents must be informed before the visit if any form of remote supervision is to take place.
- For further information see the DfES Guidance document 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational visits' (1998) Chapter 4 'Remote supervision during adventurous activities'.
- In addition when supervision is remote: -

- Groups must be sufficiently trained and assessed as competent for the level of activity to be undertaken including any first aid and emergency procedures, will be familiar with the environment or similar environments and have details of the rendezvous points.
- Clear and understandable boundaries are set for the group.
- There must be clear lines of communication between the group, the Group leader and the school. They should not rely exclusively on mobile phones.
- The Group Leader or competent Supervisor should monitor the group's progress at appropriate intervals.
- The Group Leader or competent Supervisor will be in the activity area and be able to reach the group promptly should the group need support in an emergency.
- There should be a recognised point at which the activity is completed/terminated.
- There should be clear arrangements to terminate the activity when it cannot be completed safely.

9. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR SAFE PRACTICE FOR SCHOOL VISITS

All school visits carry elements of danger or risk, whilst adopting principles of safe risk will not necessarily prevent accidents or incidents, they will assist in ensuring the likelihood is reduced to acceptable levels.

1. Carry out a risk assessment that considers the Health, Safety and Welfare of all adults/pupils participating in the activity.
2. Ensure that there is a clearly identified purpose for the whole visit, appropriate to the age and ability of the group.
3. The qualities of leadership, judgement, anticipation and control are essential on the part of staff and assistants, particularly the group leader.
4. Ensure that you comply with any statutory regulations.
5. Work within the guidance and standards of competence recommended by national governing bodies and other recognised organisations.
6. Ensure that appropriate personnel, group equipment and clothing is available, where appropriate.
7. If uncertain about 'safe practice' seek professional advice.
8. Take a responsible attitude toward the environment.
9. Good discipline throughout the whole of the visit is essential. A code of conduct in relation to smoking, alcohol and behaviour between sexes needs to be clearly established and understood.
10. Keep parents and pupils informed about proposed visits, gain approval from the LA where appropriate.
11. Adequate supervision must be maintained at all times, but can be close or remote supervision.
12. Carry a list of the contact numbers for each person on the visit, and the emergency contact information for the school and the LA.
13. Know your group.
14. Carry out a pre-visit to the venue, assess the risks and put control measures in place.
15. Assess the conditions of the day, change the day's activity if necessary, and do not take unnecessary risks.
16. Record and learn from accidents, incidents and near misses.
17. Review the risk assessment on returning to school.

SUMMARY

The following procedures should be followed for all school trips:

- Written permission must be obtained from parents, for each child prior to a school trip, annual permission for regular visits.
- Staffing ratio levels must be maintained throughout the visit.
- First Aid should be accessible either through an appointed person with the visit or by the venue facilities. Copies of information containing emergency contact/medical/allergy details should be available at all times.
- A head count should take place before leaving school (or on the coach) and at regular intervals throughout the whole visit. Transport should not be allowed to depart until two adult members of the party have independently counted and agreed that all pupils are present.
- Toilet facilities must be provided at regular intervals.
- Food and drink should be provided at regular intervals. On very hot days it may be necessary to provide extra drinks.
- Where applicable, meeting points should be pre-designated and specific times arranged for party assembly. These times should be strictly adhered to.
- Where applicable, the transport must be fully insured, the drivers documentation valid and all seats should be forward facing and have seat/lap belts fitted. The maximum seating capacity of the vehicle must not be exceeded and pupils must never travel standing.

Pupils should be informed of any rules and regulations relating to the visit. All adults should know which pupils they are responsible for and likewise the pupils should know to whom they are accountable. Where necessary written guidance should be issued to pupils and parents.

The school should however recognise that it is in the nature of the behaviour of children and teenagers that instructions may be disobeyed through forgetfulness or wilful disobedience. It should also be recognised that through their inexperience children and teenagers are unable to make a reasonable analysis of potential risks, and thus may need to be protected by their own behaviour. Therefore, teachers should not proceed on the basis that all children will obey instructions, but will take the necessary steps to ensure that instructions are followed at all times.

(10) Definitions of hazardous activities

- Airborne activities
- Camping
- Canoeing
- Canyoning
- Caving (including mines and quarries)
- Climbing
- Coastering or Sea Level Traversing
- Field Study Courses (No certificate is necessary for field study work generally, but where this is to take place in mountainous areas, the leader should hold the appropriate qualification)
- Ghyll scrambling
- Gorge walking
- Mountain or moorland walking
- Mountain biking
- Pony trekking
- Power boat/jet skiing
- Rafting
- River running

- Ropes courses
- Sailing
- Sea/open water swimming
- Skiing
- Sub aqua/snorkelling
- Surfing
- Water related environment conservation and field study work
- Water skiing
- Windsurfing