

POLICY STATEMENT



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| Policy | Educational trip policy |
| OFSTED Standard No | |
| School Department | Admin |

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| Date Written | 5 th April 2017 |
| Written by | G Sutton |
| Approved by | SMT |
| Date of Approval | 5 th April 2017 |
| Next major review date | 14 th December 2017 |
| Location and disseminations | A copy of the policy can be found, in the school admin office and on the school website. |
| The context of the policy and its relationship to other policies | This policy should be considered in conjunction with other written policies on behaviour, health and safety, medicines, school visits, child protection and safeguarding. |

Educational trip Policy

Educational trip form link: <https://goo.gl/forms/9okFwVA3womdnjOU2>

Responsibility for Visits

Legal Framework

Formulating its policy, the school has paid regard to the DCSF document, Guidance on Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers and all relevant HSE laws, regulations and guidelines

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of work employees. Employers are also under a duty to ensure, so far, as is reasonable practicable, the health and safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. This includes participants in off-site visits.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, made under the 1974 Act, require employers to:

- Assess the risks of activities (see Risk Assessment)

- Introduce measures to control those risks
- Tell their employees' about these measures
- Also under the Health and Safety legislation employees must:
- Take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety
- Co-operate with their employers over safety matters
- Carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
- Inform the employer of any serious risks

These duties apply to all school visits. Teachers and other staff in charge of students also have a common law duty to act, as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Principal/ Designated Safeguarding Lead should ensure that visits comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the management of the school's own health and safety policy.

Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead should ensure that the group leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

The Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead should be clear about their role if taking part in the visit as a group member/supervisor. They should follow the instructions of the group leader who will have sole charge of the visit.

Principal/ Designated Safeguarding Lead should ensure that:

- Adequate child protection procedures are in place
- All necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins
- The risk assessment has been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place
- Training needs have been assessed by a competent person and the needs of the staff and students have been considered
- The group leader has experience in supervising the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- The group leader or another teacher is suitably competent to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place. See School-led adventure activities
- Non-teacher supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children
- Ratio of supervisors to students is appropriate
- Parents have signed consent forms where applicable
- Arrangements have been made for the mechanical needs and special educational needs of the students
- Adequate first-aid provision will be available
- The mode of transport is appropriate
- Travel times out and back are known including pick-up and drop-off points
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- They have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name
- A school contact has been nominated (this may be the Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead) and the group leader has details

- The group leader, group supervisors and nominated school contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures
- The group leader, group supervisors and nominated school contact have the names of all the adults and students travelling in the group, and the contact details of parents and the teachers' and other supervisors' next of kin
- There is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home

Group Leader

One teacher, the group leader, should have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have regard to the health and safety of the group. The group leader should have been appointed or approved by the Principal or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The group leader should:

- Obtain the Principal /Designated Safeguarding Lead prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place.
- Follow school regulation, guidelines and policies
- Appoint a deputy
- Clearly define each group supervisor's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned
- Be able to control and lead students of the relevant age range
- Be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity and be familiar with the location/centre where the activity takes place. See School-led-adventure activities
- Be aware of child protection issues
- Ensure that adequate first-aid provision will be available
- Undertake and complete the planning and preparations of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents
- Undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment. See Risk assessment
- Review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise Principal /Designated Safeguarding Lead where adjustments may be necessary
- Ensure that teachers and other supervisors are fully aware of what the proposed visit involves
- Have enough information on the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed
- Ensure the ratio of supervisors to students is appropriate for the needs of the group. See Ratios
- Consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the students is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality
- Ensure that group supervisors and school contact have a copy of the emergency procedures
- Ensure that the group's teachers and other supervisors have the details of students' special educational or medical needs which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively
- Observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below.

Teachers

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the School management whether the visit takes place within the normal hours or outside those hours, by agreement with the Principal or management.

Teachers must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances. They should:

Follow instruction of the group leader and help with control and discipline

Consider stopping the visit or the activity, notifying the group leader, if they think the risk to the health and safety of the students in their charge is unacceptable

Adult Volunteers

Non-teacher adults on the visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit. Non-teacher adults acting as supervisors must:

- Have an enhanced DBS clearance and have made a disqualification by association.
- Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- Not be left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment
- Follow the instructions of the group leader and teacher supervisors and help with control and discipline
- Speak to the group lead or teacher supervisors if concerned about the health and safety of students at any time during the visit

Responsibilities of Students

The group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- Not take unnecessary risks
- Follow the instructions of the leader and other supervisors including those at the venue of the visit
- Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly
- If abroad be sensitive to local codes and customs
- Look out for anything that might hurt or threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the group leader or supervisor about it

Any students whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these students should be fulfilled in other ways wherever possible.

Day Parents

Day parents should be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should go on the visit. The group leader should ensure that day parents are given sufficient information in writing well before the visit takes place.

Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language.

Parents will need to:

- Provide the group leader with emergency contact numbers
- Sign the consent form

Give the group leader information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit (usually by means of the consent form)

Staff taking Medication

Staff taking medication during the school day should inform the nurse they are carrying/taking prescription drugs. This will be kept confidential. Similarly, staff on trips should inform the Nurse/trip leader if prescription drugs are needed/being taken as this could be a lifesaving situation! The nurse will only disseminate information on a need to know basis.

Planning Visits

Planning

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum or swimming pool, or includes a residential stay in the UK or abroad, it is essential that formal planning take place before setting off. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them. For residential visits at home or abroad, or for potentially hazardous activities, the school management should satisfy itself that the visit has been planned effectively and that risks are minimised.

Risk Assessment

In practice, risk assessments, should be carried out by the group lead. An assessment should be completed well before the visit, and should be approved by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

A risk assessment for a visit need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. The person assessing the risks should be competent to do so.

A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Students must not be placed in situations, which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk.

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?

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

Detailed advice on risk assessment can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive, which has issued a revision of this booklet, Five steps to Risk Assessment.

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 students
- The group members' age, gender, competence, fitness and temperament and the suitability of the activity
- The special educational or medical needs of students
- 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

Ideally 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:

- Licences and insurance of people running the venue/activity such as climbing, water sports, should be checked before a decision to go is made
- 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 students 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. A trip would not be applicable if the appropriate licence and insurance checks of the organisation cannot be made

Other considerations

Other factors 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.

- First aid and medical information
- Transport arrangements
- Insurance arrangements
- Information to the provider
- Communication arrangements
- Supervision ratios
- Contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return
- Information to day parents and boarders parents when applicable
- Preparing students
- Emergency arrangements
- Arrangements for sending students home early

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 any kind of visit 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.

The minimum first-aid provision for a visit is:

- A suitably stocked first-aid box
- A person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements

Other considerations when considering first-aid needs should include:

- The numbers in the group and the nature of the activity
- The likely injuries and how effective first aid would be
- The distance of the nearest hospital
- Medical / dietary requirements of staff and pupils

First aid should be available and accessible at all times. The Health and Safety Executive recommends the following minimum contents for a travelling first-aid box where no special risk has been identified;

- A leaflet giving advice on first aid
- Six individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings
- One large sterile unmedicated wound dressing approx. 18 cm X 18cm
- Two triangular bandages
- Two safety pins
- Individually wrapped moist cleansing wipes
- One pair of disposable gloves
- A resuscitator (for hygienic mouth to mouth resuscitation) would also be useful.

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

Supervision

Ratio

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

- Sex, age and ability of group
- Students 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 students
- First aid cover

1 adult for every 15 student aged 11 years +, 1 adult for every 17 student aged 15+, 1 adult for every 24 students 17+ *Overnight accommodation* 1 adult for every 10 students

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.

Parents and Volunteers

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

Where a high adult/student ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents/volunteers may be used to supplement the supervision ration. They will all be in possession of a valid enhanced DBS and will have filled in a disqualification by association form. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the student group. Anyone who has not had a criminal conviction check should never be left in sole charge of pupils.

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

Supervisors' responsibilities

All adult supervisors, including teachers and parent/volunteer helpers, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. It may be helpful to put this in writing. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any students who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those likely to cause trouble. Teachers retain responsibility for the groups at all time.

Competences if leading an adventure activity

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the school management must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably competent to lead or instruct students in the activity, bearing in mind that some students may be novices. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) award where it exists.

Head Counts

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of students should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. All supervisors should carry a list at all times. Students School uniform will help identify group members more easily. Students should not wear name badges. However it may be useful to use bands displaying the school name and contact details. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and times and explain to students what to do if they become separated from the group.

Remote Supervision

The aim of visits for older students may be to encourage independence and investigative skills, and some of the time on visits such as trips abroad and fieldwork may be unsupervised. The group leader should establish during the planning stage of the visit whether the students are competent in remote supervision and should ensure parents have agreed this part of the visit. The group leader remains responsible for students even when not in direct contact with them.

Preparing Students

General

Students 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 students is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Students should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail.

Participation

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

Students whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity.

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, sex, religion etc. All should be encouraged to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible.

Information to Students

The group leader should issue a student information sheet containing:

- Leader contact names and numbers
- The aims and objectives of the visa/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 students
- Appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct
- Who is responsible for the group
- What not to bring back whether within the UK or from abroad
- What to do if approached by anyone from outside the group
- Arrive on time and wait for the transport in a safe place
- Do not rush towards the transport when it arrives
- Wear your seatbelt and stay seated whilst travelling on transport
- Never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or driving controls
- Bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions
- Never attempt to get on or off the moving transport
- Never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic
- Never run about or pass someone on steps or stairs while transport is moving
- Never kneel or stand on seats
- Never distract or disturb the driver or impede the driver's vision
- Stay clear of doors after boarding or leaving the transport
- After leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road
- If you have to cross roads to get to the transport in the UK always use the Green Cross Code
- If you feel unwell tell a teacher or supervisor

The group leader should ensure that students know what to do if they miss the scheduled departure time, and moreover staff know what to do when a student is lost/very late.

Students with medical needs

Additional safety measures to those already in place in the school may be necessary to support students with medical needs during visits. Arrangements for taking medication and ensuring sufficient supplies for residential visits may be required.

All teachers supervising visits should be aware of a pupil's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures. Summary sheets held by all teachers, containing details of each student's needs and any other relevant information provided by parents, is one way of achieving this. In practice, it is best for ONE member of the teaching staff to assume responsibility for the administration of medicines. If appropriate, a volunteer teacher should be

trained in administering medication, if they have not already been so trained, and should take responsibility in a medical emergency.

Communicating with parents

Day and Boarders' parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or visit unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum which parents have already been informed about through the school prospectus or a letter. Seeking annual consent for such routine visits may be appropriate.

Information to parents

Before residential visits, or when the students are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities, parents should be given details of the proposed visit.

Parental consent

- Group leaders should seek consent for:
- Non-routine visits involving day students
- Adventure activities
- Visits abroad
- Other residential visits
- Remote supervision

If parents withhold consent absolutely, the students should not be taken on the visit but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the student in some other way wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent the Principal will need to consider whether the student may be taken on the visit or not.

A parental consent form should be completed for each student in the group. Besides conveying the parents' consent it could also form the basis for obtaining details required. If a tour operator is used it may be sensible to ask them what information to obtain. General issues to consider include:

- Any allergies/phobias the student may have
- Any medication the student is taking (if so what the dosage is and who is to administer it).
- Whether the student administers their own medication's ability to swim in the pool or sea and their level of safety awareness
- Any other information which the parent thinks should be known
- The parental home and daytime phone numbers and addresses and alternative contact number

Medical consent

This should form part of the parental consent form. Parents should be asked to agree to the student's receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If parents do not agree to this, the Principal may decide to withdraw the child from the visit – given the additional responsibility this would entail for the group leader.

Planning Transport

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 students are being taken on a short journey. All group members should be made aware of the position of the emergency door and first-aid and anti-fire equipment on transport. The group leader should also be aware of alternative routes or means of travel in the event of delay or cancellation.

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

- Safety when crossing roads as part of the journey – the group leader should ensure that students know how to observe the safety rules set out in the Highway Code and the Green Cross Code. Pedestrian crossings and traffic lights or footbridges should be used to cross roads, whenever possible.
- Safety on buses, trains, ferries and boats – the group leader should make clear to students 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.
- Safety of the group in the event of an accident or breakdown – the group should remain under the direct supervision of the group leader or other teachers wherever possible.
- Head counts, by the group leader or another delegated teacher or supervisor, should always be carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport.
- Responsibility for checking that seat belts are fastened
- Students should be made aware that they are not allowed access to the driving area at any time.

Hiring Coaches

Use Empress Coaches whenever possible. The group leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed.

Private Cars

Students are not to be transported in their own cars.

School Minibus Driver

Although the school management is ultimately responsible for the school minibus, the driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit. The minibus driver must be qualified, check with Transport Manager that all is clear for you to drive a minibus and have a valid driving licence. The Principal should ensure that teachers driving school minibuses have a rest period before driving. Minibus drivers must always adhere to transport regulations.

The minibus driver must:

- Observe LEA and/or school management guidance
- Not drive when taking medication or undergoing treatment that might affect their ability or judgement
- Know what to do in an emergency
- Know how to use fire fighting and first-aid equipment
- Avoid driving for long periods and ensure that rests are taken when needed
- Clarify and comply with transport regulation and the requirements of the vehicle's insurance cover
- Take into consideration the effects of teaching and the working day
- Have regular medical checks eg. Eyesight

Maintenance and checks of the school minibuses

The school management is responsible for the school minibuses. All bureaucracy re minibuses and their operation have been delegated to the School's Transport Manager, who is responsible for weekly checks and simple maintenance.

Insurance

General

The group leader must ensure well before the group departs, that adequate insurance arrangements are in place. Check with the School accounts manager.

Insurance and parents

The group leader should write to the parents to tell them which responsibilities the school accepts and the scope of any insurance cover the school is to arrange.

Additional arrangements may be necessary to obtain insurance cover for activities abroad and activities of a potentially hazardous nature. The group leader should scrutinise carefully the list of exclusions in the policy. If there is any doubt about the cover the insurer should be asked for clarification.

The group leader should ascertain the details of the insurance held by a tour operator.

Additional cover may be necessary for participants with medical conditions. The group leader should check this with the insurance company before departure.

Types of visit

Adventure activities using licensed providers

When planning to use adventure activity facilities offered by a commercial company or by a local authority the group leader should follow the policy of the school and check:

- Whether the provider is legally required to hold a licence for the activities it offers and, if so,
- That provider actually holds a licence

The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority can check on the licence status of a provider.

Their address is: Adventure Activity Licensing Authority, 17 Lambourne Crescent, Llanishen, Cardiff CF4 5GG Tel 01222 755715 Fax 01222 755757. Their Internet site is at:

<http://www.aala.org>

Many of the activities that pupils take part in will be covered by health and safety legislation alone. However the following activities – where undertaken by young people under 18 years unaccompanied by a parent – need a licence.

Holding a licence means that a provider has been inspected and the Licensing Authority are satisfied that appropriate safety measures are in place.

Adventure Activities using non-licensable providers

Not all providers are required to hold a licence. Voluntary bodies and schools providing for their own members and students respectively are exempt.

Commercial bodies and local authorities are also exempt if their activities fall outside the scope of the regulations. Not holding a licence does not imply a lack of safety. It might simply mean the provider or the activity is not licensable.

If proposing to use a non-licensable provider, the group leader should obtain assurances in writing from the provider that:

- Risks have been assessed and that the provider's staff are competent to instruct and lead students of the group's age range on the activity. Competence could be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body award where it exists or through successful participation in an NGB approved in-house scheme
- The equipment is appropriate and that its safe condition is checked before each use
- Operating procedures conform to the guidelines of the NGB for the activity where this is appropriate, including use of equipment, safety and emergency procedures.

The group leader and teachers retain ultimate responsibility for students at all times during adventure activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff. The providers are responsible for the safe running of an activity. Clear handover and handbook procedures should be in place.

The group leader and teachers should have sufficient information on what the activity involves before it takes place. They should approach the instructor at an appropriate safe interval if they are concerned that the students may be at unnecessary risk.

School-led Adventure Activities

If a member of the staff is to organise, lead and instruct students on adventure activities they should complete the checks set out under Risk assessment.

The School Management should satisfy themselves that:

- The group leader and other supervisors are competent to act as leaders and/or instructors of students in the activity
- The group leader is competent in safety procedures and the planning of adventurous visits
- An appropriate risk assessment has been completed
- The supervision will be appropriate
- There is adequate first-aid provision, expertise and equipment within the group

- The emergency procedures include activity – specific measures and that supervisors are competent to carry them out
- The equipment is appropriate, safe and in good condition

Remote supervision during adventurous activities/field trips

The scope of field studies means that the group leaders, who will usually be subject specialist, should also be competent to lead and instruct their students within urban and non-urban environments at minimal risk. Some activities – such as those under the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards – or field trips require students to work in small groups without direct supervision. Particular attention needs to be given to the information provided to students before supervision can be withdrawn.

The training given to students must be sound and thorough and should be assessed separately. The instructor should have the appropriate qualifications or experience to provide training in the activity. The group leader should be satisfied that the students have acquired the necessary skills and have the necessary experience, confidence, physical ability and judgement to be left without direct supervision.

The withdrawal of direct supervision should be a gradual four stage process.

- Accompanying the group
- Shadowing the group
- Checking regularly at agreed locations
- Checking occasionally at agreed locations

Coastal Visits

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting students have occurred by or in the sea. The group leader should 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 route should be checked.
- Ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags
- Establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated
- Look for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc
- Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds
- Cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The groups should keep to the path at all times.

Swimming in the sea or other natural waters

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group. Students should always be in sight of their supervisors. One supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance

The group leader, or another designated teacher in the group, should hold a relevant lifesaving award.

The group leader should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group before any coastal/water activity takes place

The group leader should:

- Be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers. Designate a safe area of water for use by the group
- Be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water
- Ensure the activity is suitable for the students especially any with disabilities

Use of swimming pools on trips

Group leaders should follow the recommended safe supervision levels at the pool for their students. A minimum 1 adult to 15 Form 1 onwards

If considering the use of a swimming pool it is advisable to observe and check the following:

- Is there constant pool supervision by a sufficient number of qualified lifeguards?
- The group leader should stay at the poolside at a raised location. In such circumstances, the group leader, or a designated teacher, should have a relevant lifesaving award
- Is the water temperature appropriate?
- Is the water clear?
- Are there signs clearly indicating the depth?
- Does the deep end allow for safe diving?
- Have the students been instructed on how to behave in and around the water?

Farm Visits

Farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm should be carefully planned. The risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections. Always take plenty of anti-bacterial hand gel with the group.

There are some basic safety rules. Never let students:

- Place their faces against the animals or put their hands in their own mouths after feeding the animals
- Eat until they have washed their hands
- Drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities)
- Ride on tractors or other machines
- Residential visit

Residential visits

A good rule of thumb - ratio is 1 teacher to every 10 students. Issues for the group leader include the following:

- The group should ideally have adjoining rooms with teachers' quarters next to the students
- There must be at least one teacher for each sex for mixed groups
- There must be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for students and adults
- Ensure there is appropriate and safe heating and ventilation
- Ensure that the whole groups are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits (are instructions in English or otherwise clear)
- Locks on doors should work in the group's rooms but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times

- There should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage, equipment etc. and for the safe keeping of valuables
- Adequate lighting – it is advisable to bring a torch

The group leader should be aware of local fire procedure, including all exits.

Visit abroad

Organising your own visit

A group leader may decide to organise a package abroad without the help of an outside body. Package organisers have responsibilities under Directive 90/314/EEC. This is implemented in the UK by the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 (The Package Travel Regulations). These regulations apply to packages sold or offered for sale in the UK. They define a package as a combination of any two of: accommodation, transport, or other tourist services not ancillary to transport.

Most package arrangements come with scope of the regulations unless they are 'occasional' or part of an educational course programme as compared with a leisure activity such as skiing.

Organising your own transport

Group leaders should ensure that drivers taking groups abroad are familiar with driving the coach or minibus in the countries being visited and those en route. EC regulations require the fitment and use of a tachograph and prescribe maximum limits on driving time and minimum requirements for breaks and rest periods. These regulations apply for most drivers of school passenger vehicles when undertaking an international journey. Different licence requirements would normally apply for driving abroad. DTLR can provide advice on the relevant transport legislation.

Factors to consider when travelling abroad include:

- The need to be aware that different legislation and regulations may apply for drivers' hours and record-keeping purposes, particularly in non-EU countries
- EU drivers' hours and tachograph regulations normally apply to any vehicle with 9 or more passenger seats on journeys through EU countries and some countries outside the EU. In other countries, drivers must observe the domestic rules of the countries being visited
- Special documentation is required for minibuses taken abroad
- All group members should beware of unfamiliar right-hand drive traffic. The passenger doors on UK minibuses and coaches may not open on the kerb side in countries where travel is on the right hand side of the road. Extra care will be necessary when the group is climbing in and out of the vehicle. Detours may be necessary to ensure safety
- Carry capacity and loading requirements
- DTLR can provide information on legal requirements for travel abroad

Using a tour operator

Before using a tour operator the group leader should ensure it is reputable. Ascertaining this should form part of the risk assessment. The Civil Aviation Authority licenses travel organisers

and tour operators selling air seats or packages with an air transport element (Air Travel Organisers Licence or ATOL)

A travel agent does not need to be an ATOL holder if acting only as an agent of an ATOL holder. But if so the group leader must check whether or not the whole package being supplied is covered by the ATOL. If it is not, the organiser must show evidence of other forms of security to provide for the refund of advance payments and the costs of repatriation in the event of insolvency.

There are seven bonding bodies approved by the Department of Trade and Industry:

- Association of British travel Agents (ABTA)
- Federation of Tour Operators Trust (FTOT)
- Travel agents/tour operators
- Passenger Shipping Association (PSA)
- The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)
- Yacht Charter Association (YCA)
- The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust (ABTOT)

Sources of further advice for school travel abroad

- The Schools and Group Travel Association (SAGTA) is an independent association with members' code of good conduct and safety rules. All its members are in ABTA
- Alternatively, there are voluntary bodies established to promote school journeys, such as the School Journey Association

Planning and Preparation

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

- The provider
- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Travel Advice Unit
- Other schools who used the facilities/been to the area
- National travel offices in the UK
- Embassies/consulates

Staffing the visit

A minimum ratio 1 adult to 10 students should be followed and at least two of the adults should be teachers. There should be enough adults in the group to cover an emergency. Mixed gender groups should have at least one male and one female teacher

Preparing students for visits abroad

Factors to consider for visits abroad include:

- Language – particularly common phrases
- Culture eg body language, rules and regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender etc
- Drugs, alcohol-usage
- Food and drink – group members should be warned of the dangers of drinking tap water in certain countries

- Money – how to carry money and valuables discreetly eg: money belts
- 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 discuss the trip with the group leader who will be taking the students 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. The Department of Health gives advice on vaccination requirements in their publication, Health Advice to travellers anywhere in the world.

Insurance

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

Language abilities

One of the adults with the group should be able to speak and read the language of the visited country. If not, it is strongly recommended that the leader or another adult learns enough of the language to hold a basic conversation and knows what to say in an emergency. It is also advisable that students have a basic knowledge of the local language before the visit.

Visa/Passports

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

Photocopies of the group's passports should be taken for emergency use. Otherwise there can be problems if someone other than the designated leader has to accompany an injured student back to the UK. Visa waiver forms are available from Schengen state visits. Contact the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges.

Emergency medical facilities

Some of these are available through reciprocal health care arrangements in European Community (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 Free Phone 0800 555777.

It is advisable to take a contingency fund as sometimes treatment must be paid for in advance and money has to be claimed back later. Make sure all insurance documents are carried by the group leader.

Paperwork

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

- Travel tickets, passports, and visas. It is also advisable to carry a separate list of the numbers of any travel documents/passports, and photocopies of all the groups documents in a sealed waterproof bag.
- A copy of the contract with the centre/hotel etc, if appropriate

- Medical papers eg form E111s, significant medical histories and permissions for emergency medical care
- Parental consent forms and permission for group leaders to authorise emergency treatment on parental behalf
- The phone numbers and addresses, at home and in school, of the Principal and of the school contact
- The names of parents and the addresses and telephone numbers at which they can be contacted (home and workplace)
- 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

Information retained at school

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

- The itinerary and contact telephone number/address of the group
- A list of group members and their details
- Contact names, addresses, telephone numbers of the parents and next of kin. Copies of parental consent forms
- Copies of travel documents, insurance documents, medical papers
- A copy of the contract with the centre/hotel etc, if appropriate

It is the School's Management's responsibility to ensure this information is available at all times. This is particularly important if the visit takes place when the school is closed.

One of the school Management team should be the named contact back in England for the duration of the trip.

During the visit

All students to carry an A4 information sheet at all time, plus ID card

All group members should carry an appropriate amount of foreign currency at all times eg money for telephone (or a phone card)

Emergencies

The group leader must ensure that all members of the group know what action to take if there is a problem

Contacts at home

It is advisable to have a teacher/contact at home 'on call' with a valid passport, who could go to the area being visited to provide support to the group in the event of an emergency.

Emergency procedures

Teachers in charge of students during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the students 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.

If an accident happens, the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- Attend to the casualty
- Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know the incident

Who will take charge in an emergency?

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

Pre-arranged school home contact. The school contacts main responsibility is to link the group with the school, the parents and to provide assistance as necessary.

Emergency Procedures framework for school base

The main factors for the school contact to consider include:

- Ensuring that the group leader is in control of the emergency and establishing if any assistance is required from the school base
- Contacting parents. Details of parents' contact numbers need to be available at all times while the group is on the visit. The school contact should act as a link between the group and parents. Parents should be kept as well informed as possible at all stages of the emergency.