



EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VISITS

Legal Framework

Employees must :

- take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety
- carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
- teachers also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances

Approval for visits

The Headmaster's agreement must be obtained before a visit takes place. It is mandatory to use the proforma in the Appendix entitled 'Checklist for School Day Visits'. Another proforma exists in the Appendix for risk assessing visits.

The Governors

Governors should:

- provide written guidelines for head teachers and teachers including advice on risk assessment
- assess proposals for certain types of visit
- provide emergency telephone contact for the duration of the visit where necessary
- ensure training needs have been addressed
- provide access to named staff for advice
- maintain appropriate insurance cover
- assess proposals for certain types of visit, which should include visits involving an overnight stay or travel outside the UK

Headmaster

The Headmaster should ensure that :

The Headmaster should ensure that visits comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the governing body and the school's own health and safety policy and that:

- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins
- the risk assessment has been completed
- staff training needs have been assessed
- the group leader has experience in supervising the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively
- group leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly
- ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate
- arrangements have been made for the medical and special educational needs of all pupils
- adequate first-aid provision will be available
- the mode of travel is appropriate
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover
- school contact has been nominated
- SMT have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures
- the nominated school contact has the names of all adults and pupils travelling in the group and the contact details of parents and the teachers' next of kin

Party Leader

The Group Leader should:

1. have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have regard to the health and safety of the group.
2. have been appointed by the Headmaster.

The Group Leader should also:

- obtain the head teacher's prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place
- follow school guidelines and policies
- appoint a deputy
- clearly define each teacher's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range
- be suitable competent to instruct pupils in an activity and be familiar with the location/where the activity will take place
- be aware of child protection issues
- ensure that adequate first-aid provision will be available
- complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents
- undertake a comprehensive risk assessment

- review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise head teacher where adjustments may be necessary
- ensure that teachers are fully aware of what the proposed visit involves
- ensure the ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate
- consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the pupils is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such eventuality
- ensure that all teachers have details of the school contact, emergency, procedures, medical information and contact details of all party members

Accompanying Teachers

Accompanying teachers should:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline
- consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

Adult volunteers

Non-teacher adults should:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- not be left in sole charge of pupils except where previously agreed as part of the risk assessment
- follow the instructions of the group leader and teacher supervisors and help with control and discipline

Responsibilities of pupils

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

- follow the instructions of the leader and other supervisors including those at the venue of the visit
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it.

Parents

Parents should:

- be told how they can help prepare their child for the visit by ski code fitness etc
- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s)
- sign the consent form

- give the group leader information about their child's emotional and physical health which might be relevant to the visit

PLANNING VISITS

Planning

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. The Headmaster will often delegate the detailed planning to the organiser of the visit or the group leader.

Risk assessment

An assessment should be completed well before the visit and should be approved by the Headmaster by the party leader.

A risk assessment for a visit need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained then the visit must not take place. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

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

The person carrying out the risk assessment should record it and give copies to all teachers/supervisors on the visit. The Headmaster should also be given a copy so that approval, can be given with a clear understanding that effective planning has taken place.

The group leader and other supervisors should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action as necessary.

The group leader should obtain a written or documentary assurance that providers such as tour operators have themselves assessed the risks and have appropriate safety measures in place.

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

- the type of visit/activity being undertaken
- the location and modes of transport

- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff
- the ratios of teachers to pupils
- the group members' age competence, fitness and the suitability of the activity
- the special educational or medical needs of pupils
- the quality and suitability of available equipment
- seasonal conditions, weather
- emergency procedures
- how to cope when a pupil becomes unable or unwilling to continue

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

- ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims of the visit
- obtain advice from the manager
- assess potential areas and levels of risk
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group
- become familiar with the area before taking a group of young people

If an exploratory visit is not feasible then the group leader will need to obtain specific information by the letter from the venue, from other schools who have recently visited it and from local organisations such as tourist boards.

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
- transport arrangements
- insurance arrangements
- information to the provider
- communication arrangements
- supervision ratios
- contingency measures for enforced change of plan
- information to parents
- preparing pupils
- emergency arrangements

First Aid

First aid should form part of the risk assessment. 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 suitability stocked first-aid box
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements

SUPERVISION

Ratios

The factors to take into consideration include:

- age and ability of group
- pupils with special educational 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
- competence and behaviour of pupils
- first aid cover

Staffing ratios for visits are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity, age, group location and the efficient use of resources. However, a general guide for visits to local historical sites and museums or for local walks, in normal circumstances, might be

Reception

- 1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3
- 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in school years 4 – 6
- 1 adult for every 15 –20 pupils in school year 7 onwards

The above are examples only. Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. There should be a minimum of one teacher in charge. Some non-residential visits and all residential visits with mixed groups will need a teacher from each sex.

Parents/Volunteers

Where a high adult pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and should be well known to the school and the pupil group. They should never be left alone or in sole charge of any pupils.

Competences if Leading an Adventure Activity

If the school is leading an adventure activity such as canoeing the governing body must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably competent to lead off instruct pupils in the activity. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) award where it exists.

Head Counts

Regular head counting of pupils should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. All supervisors should carry a list of all pupils and adults involved in the visit at all times.

Brightly coloured T-Shirts or a school uniform can help identify group members more easily.

Remote Supervision

The group leader remains responsible for pupils even when not in direct contact with them. Parents should be told, before the visit, whether any form of remote supervision will take place.

PREPARING PUPILS

General

Pupils who are involved in a visit's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Pupils should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.

Participation

Pupils should be encouraged to take on challenges during adventurous activities but should not be coerced into activities of which they have a genuine fear. Parents and pupils should be told in advance of the visit about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a pupil will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

Information to Pupils

Pupils should understand:

- the aims of the visit/activity
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules

- why safety precautions are in place
- what standard of behaviour is expected
- who is responsible for the group
- what not to bring back either within the UK or from abroad
- what to do if approached by anyone from outside the group
- rendezvous procedures
- what to do if separated from the group
- emergency procedures

For residential visits all group members should carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation in case an individual becomes separated. Pupils should be aware of who is responsible in any instances where the group leader has delegated responsibility to an instructor.

Preparing Pupils for Remote Supervision

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

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

Transport and Pupils

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

- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives
- wear your seatbelt and stay seated whilst travelling on transport
- bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions
- never lean out of or throw things from the window of the transport
- never distract or disturb the driver
- if you feel unwell tell a teacher or supervisor

Pupils With Special Educational and Medical Needs

Head teachers should make every effort to include pupils with special educational or medical needs in school visits, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone in the group.

Pupils With Medical Needs

All teachers supervising visits should be aware of a pupil's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures. The group leader should check that the insurance policy covers staff and pupils with pre-existing medical needs.

Pupils With Special Educational Needs

Any limitations or problems the pupil may have should be taken into account when carrying out the risk assessment. Off-site visits may pose additional difficulties for a pupil with SEN and the behaviour of some pupils may prove challenging. The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- is the pupil capable of taking part in and benefiting from the activity
- can the activity be adapted to enable the pupil to participate
- will additional/different resources be necessary?

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

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.

Information to Parents

Parents should be encouraged to attend a briefing meeting where written details of the proposed visit should also be provided. The following information on matters that might affect pupil health and safety should be given to parents:

- dates of the visit
- visit's objectives
- times of departure and return
- the location where the pupils will be collected and returned
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company
- the size of the group and the levels of supervision including any times when remote supervision may take place
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site
- details of provision for special educational or medical needs
- procedures for pupils who become ill
- names of leader and deputy of other staff and of other accompanying adults
- details of the activities planned

- standards of behaviour expected
- what pupils should not take on the visit or bring back
- details of insurance taken out for the group
- clothing and equipment to be taken
- details on the cost of the visit

Parental Consent

Group leaders should seek consent for:

- non-routine visits involving pupils in school years 1 – 3 (no matter how short the visit)
- adventure activities
- visits abroad
- other residential visits
- remote supervision

If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should not be taken on the visit. If the parents give a conditional consent the head teacher will need to consider whether the pupil may be taken on the visit or not. A parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group.

General issues to consider include:

- any allergies phobias the pupil may have
- any medication pupil is taking (if so what the dosage is and who is to administer it)
- whether the pupil administers their own medication
- the name, phone number of the pupil's GP
- any special/medical dietary requirements
- whether the pupil suffers from travel sickness
- toileting difficulties
- night time tendencies such as sleepwalking (for residential visits)
- any other information which the parent thinks should be known
- the parental home and daytime phone numbers and addresses
- an alternative contact, with their phone number

Medical Consent

Parents should be asked to agree to the pupils receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. It is sensible to include a translation of the medical consent, as signed by the parent in the relevant foreign language.

Other Consent

Parental consent should be obtained for the transporting of pupils in the private vehicle of another pupil on the visit.

Early Return

The group leader should tell parents if they would be expected to fund the early return of a pupil whose conduct gives cause for concern on a visit.

Contact with Parents during the Visit

The Headmaster should ensure that parents can contact their child via the school contact and the group leader in the event of a home emergency and that they have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the visit or a late arrival home. Parents should therefore:

- be aware of the emergency contact arrangements at home (Particularly important during holiday periods when the school may be closed) and at all the venues the group will visit
- provide contact numbers for day and night use in an emergency

Pupils' Contact With Parents

Group leaders should arrange for parents to be told by the school of the group's safe arrival. Such arrangements should be agreed with parents and pupils before the visit takes place.

PLANNING TRANSPORT

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

- passenger safety
- number of driving hours required for the journey and length of the driver's day (including non-driving hours)
- type of journey – will the visit take place locally or will it include long distance driving i.e. motorways

Supervision of Transport

Supervision of transport should be considered as part of the risk assessment for the journey. The driver should not normally however be responsible for supervision. This may be sufficient if a small number of older children are being taken on a short journey. All group members should be made aware of the position of the emergency door and first-aid and anti-

fire equipment on transport. Factors that the group leader should consider when planning transport include:

- level of supervision that will be necessary on buses/coaches
- safety when crossing roads as part of the journey pupils should know the Green Cross Code
- safety on buses, trains, ferries and boats – the group leader should make clear to pupils how much freedom they have to roam. Pupils should also be made aware of what to do in an emergency and where emergency procedures are displayed
- safety of the group in the event of an accident or breakdown
- head counts by the group leader should always be carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport
- responsibility for checking that seat belts are fastened
- consider whether a visible and easily recognisable article of clothing should be worn in common by pupils
- travel sickness tablets should only be administered to a pupil with previous authorisation from the parents

Hiring Coaches and Buses

The group leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches are hired from a reputable company. When booking the group leader should ensure that seat belts are available for pupils

Private Cars

Teachers must ensure their passengers' safety and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying the pupils. The driver is responsible for making sure that pupils have a seat belt and use it at all times.

School Minibus Driver

The driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit. The minibus driver must be qualified to drive a minibus and have a valid and clean driving and the management of passengers.

Each driver must complete the Minibus check form (see Appendix) prior to each journey and should be aware of the various speed and luggage weight restrictions applicable to the school minibuses. The school is currently exploring the RoSPA training requirements for minibus drivers.

TYPES OF VISIT

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

- whether the provider is legally required to hold a licence for the activities it offers and if so
- that the provider actually holds a licence

The following activities – need a licence when commercial companies sell them, or when local authorities provide them with or without a charge

Caving

Climbing - to include sea-level traversing, abseiling scrambling over natural terrain or man-made structures

Trekking - on foot, horse, cycle, skis, skates or sledges

Watersports - to include sailing, canoeing, kayaking, rafting and windsurfing

Adventures Activities Using Non-Licensable Providers

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 pupils of the group's age range on the activity. Competence could be demonstrated by holding the relevant NGB award where it exists or through successful participation in an 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 National Governing Body for the activity where this is appropriate
- clear management of safety systems is in place
- there is appropriate provision for first aid
- there are emergency procedures that the provider's staff are competent in the procedures and will hold emergency phone numbers and addresses of the group members and that the group will have a fire drill as soon as possible on arrival at the provider's base

Other issues to consider with all adventure activity providers

The group leader should agree the arrangements for supervision and recreation during the evenings and between adventure activities. Clear handover and handback procedures should be in place. The group leader and teachers retain ultimate responsibility for pupils at all times during adventure activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff. Assurances may be sought that the provider has:

- checked the suitability of the staff, work with young people
- the appropriate security arrangements

School-led Adventure Activities

If a member of the school staff is to organise, lead and instruct pupils on adventure activities. The governing body should satisfy themselves that:

- the group leader and other supervisors are competent to act as leaders and/or instructors of pupils in the activity. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant NGB award where it exists.

Remote Supervision During Adventurous Activities

The group leader should be satisfied that the pupils have the necessary skills experience, confidence, physical ability and judgement to be left without direct supervision.

Coastal Visits

Many of the incidents affecting pupils have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. The group leader 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 routes 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 out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflow etc
- some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. 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 group should keep to the path — at all times

Swimming in the Sea or other Natural Waters

They should only be allowed as formal and supervised activities, preferably in recognised bathing areas, which have official surveillance i.e. qualified lifeguard cover. Pupils should always be sight of their supervisors. One supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance. The group leader, or another designated teacher should hold a relevant life saving award where lifeguard cover may not be available. The group leader should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group before the activity takes place.

The group leader should:

- be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers
- ascertain for themselves the level of the pupil's swimming ability
- be aware of the local conditions, currents, weeds, a shelving, uneven or unstable bottom – using local information from the lifeguard, coastguard, harbourmaster, police or tourist information office
- designate a safe area of water for use by the group
- be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water
- be aware of the dangers of padding
- ensure that pupils have not eaten (least half an hour) before swimming
- adopt and explain the signals of distress and recall

Swimming Pools

Group leaders should follow the recommended safe supervision levels — the pool for their pupils. A minimum ratio should be 1 adult to 12 pupils in school years 4 to 6, and 1 adult to 20 for school years 7 onwards.

If considering the use of a swimming pool not used before it is advisable to observe and check the following:

- is there constant pool supervision by a sufficient number of qualified lifeguards?
- where there is no lifeguard the group leader should stay at the poolside at a raised location. In such circumstance, the group leader, or a designated teacher, should have a relevant life saving award and be accompanied by an appropriate number of supervisors?
- is the water temperature appropriate?
- is the water clear?
- are there signs clearly indicating the depth – is there a shallow end and is the water there shallow enough?
- does the deep end allow for safe diving?
- is there a poolside telephone?
- are there a resuscitator and other pieces of first-aid and rescue equipment, and is there someone trained to use them?
- is there a changing room for each sex?
- are the changing and showering facilities safe and hygienic?
- can clothes be stored securely?
- have the pupils been instructed how to behave in and around the water?

Parental consent does not mean that group leaders should not check for themselves the level of a pupils' swimming ability.

Farm Visits

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.

Check that the farm is well-managed, that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare, that it maintains good washing facilities and clean ground and public areas. Consider the merits of an exploratory visit.

There are some basic safety rules. Never let pupils:

- 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
- sample any animal foodstuffs
- drink from farm taps
- ride on tractors or other machines
- play in the farm area

Field Studies

The scope of field studies means that the group leaders, who will usually be subject specialists, should also be competent to lead and instruct their pupils within urban and non-urban environments at minimal risk.

Residential Visits

Issues for the group leader to consider include the following:

- The group should ideally have adjoining rooms with teachers' quarters next to the pupils – the leader should obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance
- there must be at least one teacher from each sex for mixed groups
- there must be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for pupils and adults
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the group's use
- ensure that the whole group are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routine, and that everyone can identify key personnel
- security arrangements – where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors
- the manager should be asked for assurances that the staff, including temporary workers, have been checked as suitable for work with young people
- locks on doors should work in the group's rooms but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times
- there should be drying facilities

- there should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage, equipment etc, and the safe keeping of valuables
- adequate lighting – it is advisable to bring a torch
- there should be a provision for pupils who fall sick
- balconies should be stable, windows secure and electrical connections safe
- where possible pupils should not be lodged in ground floor rooms
- the fire alarm must be audible throughout the accommodation
- there should be recreational accommodation/facilities for the group
- there should be an appropriate number of group supervisors on standby duty during the night

Before booking hotel abroad, the group leader should confirm it has fire exits and lifts with inner doors and that it meets local regulations. After arrival at any accommodation it is advisable to carry out a fire drill as soon as possible.

VISITS ABROAD

General

Travelling abroad can be hugely rewarding for pupils and adults alike, but it is important that careful preparation takes place. Much of the earlier advice in applies to visits abroad, but there are some additional factors that need to be considered, not least because the legislation may be different from that of the UK. Group leaders should always comply with the school policy on visits abroad. School visits abroad can be made in a number of ways.

Organising Your Own Visit

At this time the legal position of packages arranged as part of an educational course is subject to the effects of a future judgement in the European Court of Justice. The Headmaster should be aware of these regulations in case they are in scope.

Organising Your Own Transport

Group leaders should ensure that drivers taking groups abroad are familiar with driving the 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. 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
- special documentation is required for minibuses taken abroad
- all group members should be aware of unfamiliar right-hand drive traffic. 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.

Using a Tour Operator

Before using a tour operator group leaders should ensure it is reputable. Ascertaining this should form part of the risk assessment. 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.

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 from:

- the provider
- other schools who have use the facilities/been to the area
- travel agents/tour operators
- the Internet, books and magazines

Preparing Pupils for Visits Abroad

Factors to consider for visits abroad include:

- language – particularly common phrases
- food and drink – group members should be warned of the dangers of drinking tap water in certain countries. In some countries it is safer to drink bottled water, and care needs to be taken with raw vegetables, salads and unpeeled fruit, raw shellfish, underdone meat or fish
- money- how to carry money and valuables discreetly. If larger amounts of money will be needed, it is advisable to take travellers cheques
- how to use phones abroad, money required (a BT contact card allows calls to be charged to the home number) and the code for phoning home
- what to do in an emergency

Vaccinations

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

Insurance

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

Foreign Legislation

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

Language Abilities

One of the adults with the group should be able to speak and read the language of the visited country. It is also advisable that pupils have a basic knowledge of the local language before the visit.

Visas/Passports

The group leader should ensure that all members of the group have valid passports and visas (if appropriate) in the early stages of planning the trip. Photocopies of the group's passports should be made in case someone other than the designated leader has to accompany an injured pupil back to the UK.

Nationality

Pupils who are not nationals of any EU member state may need a visa to travel from the UK to another member state. However, they may receive visa exemption if they are members of a school group. Details are available from the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges.

Emergency Medical Facilities

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. 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.

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 group's documents in a sealed waterproof bag
- a copy of the contract with the centre
- medical papers e.g. form E111s and significant medical histories
- parental consent forms and permission for group leader to authorise emergency treatment on parental behalf
- the phone numbers and addresses, at home and in school, of the head teacher 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

The group leader may wish to ask parents for passport size photographs of the pupils. It might be useful to have photographs of the adults in the group as well.

Information Retained at the 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
- emergency contact numbers

It is the Headmaster'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. Independent school bursars should also hold the information.

During the Visit

It is advisable for pupils to carry a note in the relevant foreign language for use if they get lost, asking the reader to re-unite them with the group at the accommodation or to take them

to the police station. They should also carry the group leader's name and the duty contacts phone number.

All group members should carry an appropriate amount of foreign currency.

Emergencies

The group leader must ensure that all members of the group know what action to take if there is a problem. The group leader and supervisors should know where the nearest British Embassy or Consulate is located and the telephone number.

Group leaders need to be aware that some diseases are more prevalent in some countries than in others and should know what action to take should a member of the group become infected.

Many of the health problems of pupils on longer visits are caused by lack of food, of liquid or of sleep. If appropriate, parents should be asked to provide suitability factored sun protection creams and sun hats/glasses. Group members should be advised about the dangers of over-exertion in the heat and of dehydration. Warm climates it is important to keep fluid levels high, take extra salt and wear loose lightweight clothing.

Contacts at Home

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

Travel by air

Taking a school group on an aircraft requires careful planning and preparation. The group leader should resist any attempt by the airline to split the group between different aircraft.

Trips that finish after the end of the normal school day

Pupils who are not collected from school after any activity / trip organised by a member of staff after school hours are the responsibility of that member of staff. If pupils have not been collected from an evening activity, the member of staff in charge should then contact the parents by telephone. A copy of the pupil address list can be found in Matron's Office by the telephone. If this is unsuccessful, the Headmaster should be informed. It is also the duty of the member of staff concerned to check that all pupils have been picked up.

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR SCHOOL TRIP INCIDENT

General

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

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

If an accident happens, the priorities are to:

- assess the situation
- safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- attend to the casualty/ies
- inform the emergency services, followed by the headmaster or designated school contact.

Who will take charge in an Emergency

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

Pre-arranged school home contact. The school contact's main responsibility is to link the group with the school, the parents and the governors and to provide assistance as necessary. The Headmaster of designated school contact should have all the necessary information about the visit.

Emergency Procedures Framework

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

Emergency Procedures Framework During the Visit

If an emergency occurs on a school visit the main factors to consider include:

- establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible

- ensure that all the group are safe and looked after
- establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them
- ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures
- ensure that an adult accompanies casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together by the teacher
- inform the headmaster or designated school contact. The school contact number should be accessible at all times during the visit
- details of the incident to pass on to the school should include: nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, names of casualties and details of their injuries, names of others involved so that parents can be reassured, action taken so far, action yet to be taken (and by whom)
- ascertain telephone numbers for future calls with the designated contact. Mobile phones, though useful, are subject to technical difficulties, and should not replace usual communication procedures
- notify the British Embassy/Consulate if an emergency occurs abroad
- notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required (this may be done by the school contact)
- notify the provider/tour operator (this may be done by the school contact)
- write down accurately and within 24 hours all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence
- keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident
- complete the relevant accident report form as soon as possible
- no-one in the group should speak to the media. Media enquiries should be referred to the Headmaster or designated media contact in the home area
- no-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.

Emergency Procedures Framework for School Base

Prior to the visit, the name and school and home telephone numbers of the Headmaster or designated school contact should be identified. The Headmaster and group leaders should bear in mind that the contact lines may become busy in the event of an incident and that alternative numbers to ring would be useful.

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. 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
- liaison with governing body. The school contact should act as a link between the group and Chair of Governors and arrange for the group to receive assistance, if necessary
- liaison with media contact. If a serious incident occurs, the school contact should liaise with the designated media contact as soon as possible
- the reporting of the incident using appropriate forms, if necessary. Some incidents are reportable under (RIDDOR)

Media Contact

Each trip should have a designated person to deal with media enquiries – this is usually through a school governor or member of the Senior Management Team. The media contact should liaise with the school contact the group leader and, where appropriate, the emergency services. In the event of an emergency all media enquiries should be referred to the media contact. The name of any casualty should not be given to the media.

After a Serious Incident

It is not always possible to assess whether group members not injured or directly involved in the incident have been traumatised or whether other pupils or staff in the school have been affected. In some cases reactions do not surface immediately. Schools have sometimes found it helpful to contact local community support services and to seek professional advice on how to help individuals and the school as a whole cope with the effects of a tragedy.

PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR SCHOOL TRIP INCIDENT

Hierarchy of school contacts in the case of an emergency

First School Contact	Jonathan Carroll, Headmaster	01628 594300 01628 631366 07747 025284	School Evenings School Mobile
Second School Contact	Beverly Jones Deputy Head	01628 594314 07790 957568 01491 574957	School Mobile Home
Third School Contact	Lynne Rothwell Head of Pre-Prep		Mobile Home
Fourth School Contact	Steve Robinson Director of Studies		School Home Mobile
First Media Contact	Jonathan Carroll, Headmaster	01628 594300 01628 631366 07747 025284	School Evenings School Mobile
Second Media Contact	Ed Parrott, Chairman of Governors	01628 633379 07810 648049	Home Mobile

