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# Going Out There

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Scottish Framework for Safe Practice  
in Off-site Visits

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Version 2.0

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This framework has been developed in partnership by the Scottish Government, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE), Education Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education, with input from other partners including voluntary organisations and providers

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## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Employer**

The Employer is the Local Authority.

The owner, governors or trustees are the employers in independent schools.

### **Chief Executive Officer**

The Officer with overall responsibility.

### **Director**

The Director is responsible to the Chief Executive Officer for the delivery of the Councils policy relating to Off-site Activities.

### **Head of Service**

The Head of Service is responsible to the Director and will have managerial responsibility for how the council policy is implemented by the Heads of Establishment.

### **Head of Establishment**

The Head of Establishment is responsible to the Head of Service and is the person with the immediate management responsibility for groups or individuals who are participating in off-site activities.

### **Visit Leader**

The Visit leader is responsible to the Head of Establishment and is the person with the main supervisory responsibility for leading participants in an outdoor experience or on an off-site visit. They are responsible for the young people before, during and after the off-site activity. The Visit Leader is responsible for the detailed organisation of the excursion according to the policies and procedures of the employer. They will present their plans to the Head of Establishment for approval. They must also ensure that parents make informed decisions regarding attendance and should arrange for briefing sessions as required.

### **Visit Assistant (e.g. parent helpers)**

The Visit Assistant(s) carries out supervisory duties as instructed by the Visit leader. They are an adult with responsibility for supervising participants during the visit and also, where specified, may be delegated to deputise for the visit leader in an emergency situation.

### **Technical Expert**

In the context of licensable adventure activities, this person is a highly qualified and experienced specialist who is responsible for providing specialist advice to providers on their safety management and staff competencies. (For more details, see HSE publication L77).

### **Parent / Guardian / Carer**

The parent / legal guardian / carer of the young person attending the visit.

### **Participants**

The children, young persons or clients as appropriate.

### **Provider**

A person, organisation or business responsible for the delivery of a service or activity to a group of young people.

### **Ratios**

The appropriate ratio of staff to pupils for a Visit is determined by the Risk Assessment.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Giving more children and young people access to outdoor learning and play opportunities provides invaluable life experiences which could not be achieved without 'going out there' more regularly and more frequently. This framework, which provides user-friendly processes compliant with health and safety legislation, aims to increase opportunities for all Scotland's children and young people to access their learning through off-site visits and the outdoors, improving learning outcomes for all.

Scotland's outdoor environment offers motivating, exciting, varied, relevant and easily accessible activities from pre-school years through to college and beyond. Through Curriculum for Excellence, the Scottish Government endorses the value of children and young people enjoying positive learning and play experiences in a wide variety of settings from galleries and museums to woodlands, parks and wild, natural spaces, as well as planned adventure and residential experiences. An enjoyable, creative, challenging learning journey helps children and young people learn by experience and grow as confident and responsible citizens who value and appreciate their local area and the wider environment of Scotland, which includes spectacular landscapes, rich natural heritage and a diverse built environment including landmarks of international significance.

There is a need for schools and other groups to make the most of the vast learning potential of the outdoors by 'going out there' and employers and those leading groups need to have confidence that the approach they are taking meets legal requirements and helps enable positive experiences for children and young people. While local authorities' guidance and regulations remain authoritative, it is expected that 'Going Out There' should be adopted as a common framework across Scotland by all those managing or organising visits or providing activities and venues. It seeks to increase confidence and co-operation and recognises in particular that the vast majority of outdoor learning involves routine visits to places in the local area. It does not cover work experience.

The framework has been developed in partnership by the Scottish Government, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE), Education Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education, with input from other partners including voluntary organisations and providers.

This framework refreshes and updates the Health and Safety on Educational Excursions (HASEE) guidance and its supplements which are now withdrawn. It replaces both HASEE and other related or predecessor guidance. It adopts a low bureaucracy, enabling approach to outdoor experience and off-site visits, reflecting the step change in the approach to educational visits detailed in the HSE High Level Statement, 'School trips and outdoor learning activities: Tackling the health and safety myths'.<sup>1</sup> The HSE statement makes clear that:

- The focus should be on how the real risks arising from such visits are managed rather than a focus on paperwork
- There is a need for a proportionate and sensible approach for planning and organising off-site activities
- Those managing visits should streamline the planning process and authorisation arrangements for visits that involve everyday risks
- HSE's primary interest is real risks arising from serious breaches of the law. Any HSE accident investigation will be targeted at these issues

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf>

## 1.2 Incidents and Accidents

Accidents and mistakes may happen on visits – but fear of prosecution has been blown out of proportion leading to a fear of taking children and young people off site and outdoors.

HSE has made prosecutions in rare cases where there was evidence of recklessness or a clear failure to follow sensible precautions. However, it is important that employers and leaders do not interpret this as meaning that to avoid prosecution they must eliminate even the most trivial risks. Employers and leaders are expected to deal with risk responsibly and proportionately.

If an incident on a visit leads to the death or serious injury of someone, HSE will normally investigate. Most serious accidents on visits involve underlying management failures and HSE always looks for these underlying causes. HSE does not investigate incidents in response to civil claims.

If things do go wrong during a trip, provided sensible and proportionate steps have been taken, it is highly unlikely that there would be any breach of health and safety law involved, or that it would be in the public interest for HSE to bring a prosecution.

## 1.3 Adopting this Framework

The framework has been developed to enable its widest possible adoption, integrating support for employers with planning and provision at local authority level and with management, delivery and practice at establishment level.

The framework is relevant to everyone who provides planned learning for children and young people in Scotland, whether as part of early years, school, through social work services and colleges, community learning and development, outdoor learning, adventure and play organisations or the voluntary sector.

Adoption of the good practice exemplified in the framework allows employers to fulfil their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974<sup>2</sup> for outdoor experiences and off-site visits for all participants.

## 1.4 Supporting Materials

The framework is supported by tools, resources and accompanying examples of good practice for the planning and evaluation of different levels of outdoor experience and off-site visits, which are straightforward and user-friendly to apply. This includes a series of generic consent forms and risk assessments which can be adapted to individual circumstances as appropriate by visit leaders, and are easily uploaded into online recording and approval tools where these are being used locally. The range of activities covered is as follows:

- Routine and Expected - regular activity as part of normal everyday practice in play and learning (including local off-site visits on foot, by private hire or public transport)
- One-off Day Visits
- Residential Activities
- Visits further afield such as international trips and experiences
- Adventure Activities

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

## **2. Effective Practice in Managing Outdoor Learning Safely**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The ability and competence of front line staff to plan and manage a dynamic situation in a safe and appropriate way is the key contributor to safe and successful practice in the different levels of outdoor experience and off-site visits.

This is underpinned by:

- Employers supporting Heads of Establishment
- Heads of Establishment supporting, identifying and deploying staff with the right competences and experience for leading different levels of off-site visit
- Staff being given training and other opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence in planning, organising and leading outdoor experiences or off-site visits
- All staff having access to resources of relevant and competent technical advice

It is anticipated that employers should adopt the above set of principles as common and effective practice and should provide support for Heads of Establishment and technical advice as required by local circumstances. By taking this approach, employers will be using a straightforward and common framework which will reduce bureaucracy and satisfy the duties on them under health and safety legislation.

### **2.2 Employers Supporting Heads of Establishments**

Employers have a clear duty to provide appropriate information, instruction and training to all their employees. Employers will monitor the effectiveness of their management and delivery of outdoor experiences and off-site visits. This should be a blend of systems-monitoring and on-the-ground-monitoring.

Employers will also support their employees in the delivery of activities by ensuring that the identification and assessment of the risks involved in participating in any outdoor experience and / or off-site visit have been completed prior to participation. As part of this process the employer will also ensure that proportionate control measures are understood and implemented to deal with the risks identified.

This will be further supported by providing generic risk assessments for common outdoor and off-site activities and visits.

### **2.3 Helping Heads of Establishment to Support Visit Leaders**

The employer's arrangements for planning, approval, monitoring, training and audit should support Heads of Establishment in assisting staff to lead outdoor experiences and off-site visits with increasing confidence and competence. Heads of Establishment should have ready access to their employer's policies and guidance and to specialist competent advice on visits, outdoor learning and excursions.

Supporting Heads of Establishment includes identifying and fulfilling their development needs in relation to:

- Clarifying their role in approval
- Identifying and deploying appropriate staff as Visit Leaders
- Managing the development of effective outdoor learning practice in their establishments, including risk education within the curriculum
- Increasing the range and level of outdoor experience and off-site visits offered as a normal part of everyday activity for all participants
- Monitoring the quality of outdoor experiences and off-site visits and the impact of various patterns of provision
- Enabling the development of staff knowledge, skills and confidence in planning, organising and leading outdoor experience or off-site visits
- Implementing appropriate safety management that weighs up both risks and benefits

## 2.4 Identifying and Deploying Staff

The Head of Establishment, who approves each visit, should match the demands of the different levels of off-site visit to the competencies and experience of individual staff who may be interested in participating in off-site visits.

For routine off-site visits in the local area or to local facilities no additional competencies over and above those of a competent professional working on-site should be required.

For residential visits, Heads of Establishment should decide who is competent to lead. However, staff may need experience of routine visits and of assisting with residential visits before acting as leader.

For overseas visits, Heads of Establishment should decide who is competent to lead. However, normally, staff will need experience of the above two types of visit and of assisting on an overseas visit before taking the leadership role.

For adventurous activities, the Head of Establishment should decide who is competent to lead. Staff should have competence in leading routine off-site visits. However, there may be a need for certain other defined competencies and skills for some adventurous activity visits. Advice on this must be sought from the local authority.<sup>3</sup>

The Head of Establishment will ensure appropriate management arrangements are in place prior to the visit.

## 2.5 Support and Development for Visit Leaders

The employer's arrangements for planning, approval, monitoring, training and audit should provide Visit Leaders with ready access to their employer's policies and guidance. This includes direct access to technical advice on visits and additional field monitoring assistance by a senior member of the establishment in some cases.

Arrangements should enable Visit Leaders to be clear about their role and to feel supported and confident in it. Where development needs are identified, these should be fulfilled.

A key area for development of professional skills and competence in working outdoors or off-site is the ability of Visit Leaders to make dynamic risk assessments that take account of changing circumstances and events and cause them to respond appropriately. Training in risk management

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

and approaches to risk education, combined with developmental experience of planning, preparing for, and supervising visits should form part of professional learning opportunities for educators wishing to build capacity in this area. This should include opportunities to consider the many benefits of outdoor learning and the contribution that high quality outdoor learning makes to attainment, achievement and well-being across the curriculum. Access to advice and support should also be available.

## **2.6 Access to Technical Advice**

Employers must have access to technical advice on visit and activity safety matters. The adviser needs to have diverse experience of the range of outdoor activity and visit provision. They should be of sufficient authority to ensure that they can develop and take forward strategy, advice and guidance across all sectors and services. The role of the adviser would normally involve:

- A good practical knowledge of the challenges encountered by groups in all venues or environments
- Assessing risks and identifying sources of advice
- Monitoring the visits including observing visits or arranging for this to be done by appropriate staff
- Reviewing policies and procedures in the light of lessons learned, and sharing good practice more widely
- Identifying training needs
- Being a source of expert advice on visits generally and on adventure activities, expeditions and overseas visits specifically
- Where necessary, seeking and obtaining the advice of other people with particular specialist knowledge, e.g. transport or insurance
- A good understanding of the relevant legal responsibilities around visits

## **2.7 Approval for Visits**

Whilst the employer has health and safety responsibilities it would be normal practice to delegate approval of routine and simple day visits to the Head of Establishment. Residential trips (not including those which involve adventure activities) should be approved by the Head of Establishment before notification to the employer. Adventure activities and overseas trips would normally be treated differently with approval being sought from the local authority taking into account technical advice. (See the matrix for Visit Approval, Medical Information and Parental Consent in the Toolkits section of the website).

For advice on the arrangements for gaining approval, contact your local authority.<sup>4</sup>

## **2.8 Planning for Emergencies**

Employers must prepare and communicate emergency procedures for all off-site visits. Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a visit. Local Authority establishments should follow their authority's guidance on emergency planning procedures, which should include a definition of an emergency or serious incident. Independent schools should have their own emergency planning arrangements.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

Heads of Establishment and Visit Leaders must ensure that they are familiar with the requirements of their Local Authority emergency procedures.

Visit Leaders and Visit Assistants have a common law duty to act as a normal caring parent would. They should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employers are also under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably 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.

Employers are the local authority in most establishments which may be organising visits or other activities. The owner, governors or trustees are the employers in independent schools.

### **3.2 Employer's Responsibilities**

The employer has the following main roles:

- Provide these guidelines and other local authority guidelines to Heads of Establishment and Visit Leaders
- Provide access to technical advice where necessary
- Assess proposals for certain categories of visit (especially visits or travel outside the UK and adventure activities)
- Have emergency procedures in place for dealing with major incidents / emergencies
- Ensure training needs have been addressed
- Provide access to named staff for advice
- Have appropriate insurance cover in place
- Have in place procedures to monitor and review off-site visits and activities

### **3.3 Heads of Establishment's Responsibilities**

Heads of Establishment are expected to follow and implement this guidance to ensure their responsibilities are fulfilled and that outdoor learning experiences and off-site visits can occur frequently and regularly and are managed safely. Heads of Establishment should ensure that the visit leader is competent to manage and monitor the risks throughout the visit.

Heads of Establishment should also ensure that:

- The visit has suitable aims and effective ways of achieving them
- Appropriate child protection procedures are in place
- An appropriate risk assessment has been completed and proportionate safety measures are in place
- The needs of the staff and participants, including training needs, have been considered
- Parents have been appropriately informed
- The visit leader has suitable experience and competencies for the visit
- Visit Leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly
- Visit Assistants and other accompanying adults in a supervisory role are appropriately recruited and briefed (See Section 4.12)
- The ratio of other accompanying adults to participants is appropriate (See Section 4.3)
- The employer has approved the visit, if appropriate

- Arrangements have been made for the medical needs and additional support needs of all the participants
- The employer's policy on the administration of medicines has been followed
- Adequate first aid provision will be available
- The mode of travel and travel arrangements are appropriate
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover in place, if required
- Suitable contact arrangements are in place
- The emergency arrangements, if required, are in place and have been communicated to those who need to know
- There is a contingency plan, with clear lines of responsibility, which will cover incidents such as adverse weather, travel delays including a late return home

### **3.4 Visit Leader's Responsibilities**

Visit Leaders will consult with and seek advice and guidance from their local authority<sup>5</sup> and Head of Establishment with regard to up-to-date agreements about practice and procedure in off-site visits.

Those in charge of participants have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would and to do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group.

The Visit Leader has responsibility for:

- Having overall management responsibility during the visit - even if they are not physically supervising a part of the visit
- Preparing a Visit Plan (See Section 4.2)
- Obtaining approval of the Visit Plan from the Head of Establishment
- Following employer policies and guidelines
- Matching the off-site visit to the needs and abilities of all participants being mindful of equality and inclusion
- Obtaining sufficient information about participants to deal with any medical or behavioural needs
- Adequate first aid provision will be available
- Ensuring that any outside provider has relevant information about participants
- Appointing and briefing Visit Assistants, deputies and other adult supervisors where appropriate
- Being able to control, lead and instruct participants of the relevant age range
- Being trained in child protection issues

### **3.5 Visit Assistant's Responsibilities**

Visit Assistants, including parents and carers supporting visits as well as volunteers working for service providers, have an important role in supporting and enabling outdoor learning experiences and off-site visits. They can help with the running of an activity and be part of the supervision ratio where competent to do so. Often in adventurous activity settings Visit Leaders / assistants / volunteers need to be included in the operational ratios. Visit Assistants should be carefully selected and be briefed and prepared for their role (See section 4.12)

Visit Assistants supervising participants must:

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

- Be made aware of the Visit Plan and any relevant risk assessments
- Understand how they can ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group
- Only be left in sole charge of participants where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment
- Follow the instructions of the Visit Leader and help with control and discipline
- Inform the Visit Leader if concerned about the health or safety of participants at any time during the visit

### **3.6 Parents' Responsibilities**

Parents should be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should participate in any visit and will need to:

- Provide the Visit Leader with emergency contact number(s)
- Give consent or inform the establishment if they decide to opt out
- If necessary, give the Visit Leader additional up to date information about their child's emotional, mental / psychological and physical health
- Prepare their child for the visit, especially when the establishment has identified the need for different clothing, rules and eating arrangements

### **3.7 Participant's Responsibilities**

In agreement with parents, the Visit Leader and the group, participants will:

- Not take unnecessary risks
- Follow the instructions of the Visit Leader, visit assistants and other supervisors including those at the venue
- Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly
- 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 Visit Leader, Visit Assistant or venue supervisor about it
- Comply with the participants' Code of Conduct (where one exists)

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

## **4. Planning Visits**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Whatever type of visit is being undertaken - a trip to a local park, museum or swimming pool, or a residential stay in the UK or abroad - time given for preparation will ensure good planning, maximise the potential benefits of the experience and help minimise the risk from any incidents.

The planning and approval of visits should be proportional to the activity. More complex activities will require more planning, involve more people and take more time. Heads of Establishment must satisfy themselves that the person planning the visit is competent and has the necessary relevant experience or access to appropriate technical advice.

### **4.2 Preparing a Visit Plan**

A Visit Plan needs to be in place for all off-site visits. The Visit Plan outlines who is to do what, and when. The amount of content and detail in the Visit Plan will be determined by the nature of the trip. It is sufficient for Routine and Expected visits to be covered by a Visit Plan which is reviewed on an annual basis.

The Visit Plan will, as well as keeping everyone safe, help to ensure a successful and meaningful visit by focussing on the benefits of the activities and clearly setting out the aims and objectives.

The Visit Plan can be thought of as being in three parts:

- Prior to the visit
- During the visit
- Following the visit

The Visit Plan will form the basis of the information required by the Head of Establishment for granting approval.

Examples of Visit Plans and what should be contained in them can be found within the toolkits for each type of visit.

### **4.3 Establishing Ratios**

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

- The participants, including Visit Assistants and Visit Leader (See Section 4.11)
- Previous experience (of participants and leaders)
- The venue
- The activity
- Getting there
- The time of year
- Medical and behavioural issues

Supervision ratios should be appropriate for the nature and aims of the visit, for the age and stage of the participants, and be agreed in the context of a risk assessment. The establishment of ratios is best determined through discussion between Heads of Establishment and Visit Leaders.

The Head of Establishment is ultimately responsible for ensuring and approving an appropriate ratio of adults, including Visit Leaders and Visit Assistants, to children and young people taking part. Specialist advice should be sought via the employer depending on the circumstances.

#### **4.4 Communicating with Parents**

The majority of off-site visits are a normal part of educational and other service provision (e.g. youth clubs) and are referred to within this guidance as 'Routine and Expected Visits'. The aim of this document is to keep the need for procedures to the minimum possible. When children join an establishment or group, parents should be informed about the range of activities that form part of the programme or curriculum. It should be explained that parents will be kept informed about the general plans for Routine and Expected visits, but that they will not necessarily be informed every time their child goes off-site.

Most establishments will have agreed with participants and parents the need for adequate outdoor clothing and footwear to be provided for all year round off-site activity as a normal part of everyday experience.

For any visit which cannot be classified as Routine and Expected, parents must have been appropriately informed, in order that they will know where participants will be, and have prepared them for the experience

Further guidance on providing information to parents can be found within the relevant visit section.

#### **4.5 Parental Consent and Medical Information**

A summary of visit types, with recommendations regarding parental consent and medical information, can be found in the matrix on Visit Approval, Medical Information and Parental Consent within the Toolkits section of the website.

The majority of off-site visits are a normal part of educational and other service provision and within this guidance are referred to as 'Routine and Expected Visits'. For this category of trip the process of gaining consent and informing parents should be kept as simple as possible and must not be restrictive. Recommendations for good practice can be found within Section 8 "Routine and Expected Visits".

Visit specific parental consent is usually only requested for activities or visits that involve a higher level of safety management. These include:

- Residential visits
- Adventure activities
- Hazardous environments
- Visits abroad
- Remote supervision or unaccompanied visits

Recommendations for good practice can be found within the relevant visit section and sample consent forms for these different types of activities and visits can be found in the toolkits.

For Routine and Expected visits, and the majority of Day Visits, the medical information which has been obtained at the start of a school session (or other appropriate point) is sufficient. As part of this, parents should have been asked to agree to the participant receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. Employers should have a standard form for use in establishments.

It is recommended that for more complex visits parents are asked to provide an update on any medical issues as part of the trip specific consent.

## **4.6 Preparing Participants**

It is good practice to prepare participants so that they understand the aims and nature of the visit. Risk Education is an important aspect of young people's development and participants should take part in planning, implementing and evaluating their own contribution to visits where possible.

Consideration should be given to ensuring that participants understand:

- The nature and demands of the visit
- The supervision arrangements, including which adult is responsible for them
- The standards of behaviour expected at all times and not just during activities
- What to do in the event of an accident / incident
- Their role in ensuring the safety of all participants
- The Code of Conduct (if there is one)

## **4.7 Supervision**

The Visit Leader has overall responsibility for supervision during a trip. Breaks from this responsibility during the visit need to be clearly identified, with clear hand over arrangements, and co-ordinated by the Visit Leader. All adults who are in a supervisory role have a duty of care for the group at all times. There is no break from this responsibility during the trip.

There are numerous methods of supervising groups and examples can be found within the toolkits but general consideration should be given to the following:

- Establishing rendezvous points
- Carrying out regular head counts
- Wearing easily identifiable clothing
- Having a buddy system
- Splitting large groups in to smaller groups with an identified leader

The risk assessment process should identify suitable levels and methods of supervision. Consideration should be given to keeping parents informed about the supervision arrangements.

There may be times during a visit where the participants come under the care of a third party (e.g. a coach driver or outdoor instructor). In these circumstances, however, it must be realised that the Visit Leader still retains ultimate responsibility. If any concerns arise, the Visit Leader should discuss them directly with the third party in the first instance and then withdraw the group from the care of the third party if the problems are not resolved.

## **4.8 Remote Supervision**

Remote supervision is the term used when the leader is not directly present with participants. Remote supervision comes in varying degrees and is used in a variety of circumstances. In its simplest form participants may be given time to look round a museum on their own: at the other end of the spectrum, young people may take part in wild country expeditions where they have limited contact with their leaders for long periods of time.

Working without immediate supervision can help learners to develop independence and self-reliance. When such activity is planned the Visit Leader must be confident that learners have the appropriate skills to operate without undue risk. Training and briefing should reflect this.

Visit Leaders remain responsible for participants even when not in direct contact with them. They should not underestimate the challenges of remote supervision. It requires extra planning and contingencies to be put in place. This should be reflected in the Visit Plan.

## **4.9 Unaccompanied Visits**

There may be occasions when young people take part in visits without any accompanying leader for the entire trip. Before such visits are considered, careful thought should be given to why this is deemed to be appropriate.

It may be considered that such a visit is appropriate in the following circumstances:

- It will benefit the participant's personal development
- It is part of a planned programme to reach an agreed outcome
- The proposed participants are of an age commensurate with the level of self-reliance required
- The proposed participants are assessed to have previously displayed appropriate behaviour
- The proposed participants have been fully briefed with regards to what to do in the event of delays, missed transport links, incidents or accidents etc.
- The proposed participants have been allocated a 24/7 emergency contact support person from the organising establishment
- The proposed participants have received skills training that is appropriate to the level of self-reliance required

## **4.10 Exploratory Visit**

A Visit Leader needs to be confident that the location and facilities are suitable for their plans. In most cases this will involve a prior visit. However, in consultation with the Head of Establishment, an experienced Visit Leader with good reasons to be confident in their own judgement may decide to use a location that has not been previously visited.

## **4.11 Gender of Accompanying Staff**

With a mixed gender group it is preferable to have a gender mix of leaders. However there are many circumstances where this is not possible or essential. Consideration of this issue should be part of the risk assessment process. Parents should be informed of and have given consent to the staffing arrangements.

## 4.12 Vetting Accompanying Adults

Parents and other volunteers are often an essential part of supervision ratios. When they assist on visits they are called “accompanying adults”.

The main decision that has to be made is whether an accompanying adult needs to be vetted.

The essential factor in this decision is whether the accompanying adult is doing ‘regulated work’. This term is explained in Chapter 2<sup>6</sup> of the Disclosure Scotland guidance under ‘Protection of Vulnerable Groups’ (PVG). If an accompanying adult is carrying out regulated work then they must be vetted.

There is a five step assessment process in order to determine whether or not someone is doing regulated work. This five step process must be applied in all cases.

There are some worked examples in within the Toolkits section of the website.

In those cases where an application to join the PVG Scheme is not required, a basic disclosure could be used instead. Visit Leaders should know and follow their employer’s child protection arrangement in these matters.

## 4.13 Using an External Provider

The term ‘external provider’ can include museums, local farms, activity providers, residential centres, tour operators, expedition providers etc.

Good communication with any external provider is essential to ensure that the visit matches expectations and runs according to plan. The following steps can assist with this process.

In the planning stage the Visit Leader should consider:

- Using a reputable provider
- Liaising with the provider to discuss the aims and the needs of the group
- Establishing whether the provider requires to be vetted (see section 4.12 )
- Checking adequate insurance is in place (see Section 7)

Prior to the visit the Visit Leader should consider:

- Liaising with the provider in order to find out what is expected of them or their party (e.g. where to go, what to bring, etc.)
- Providing any relevant information to the provider such as the group’s age-range, relevant medical conditions, additional support needs, competence
- Confirming whether risk assessments are in place
- Compliance with local authority child protection policy

The Visit Leader retains ultimate responsibility for participants at all times during off-site visits, even when the group is under instruction by staff from the provider. Visit Leaders should remember that they are still expected to act as a normal caring parent, and must raise any concerns about the activity with any third party providers.

Additional information regarding providers of transport can be found in Section 6.

Additional information regarding providers of adventure activities can be found in Section 12.

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<sup>6</sup><https://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/disclosureinformation/pvgscheme.htm>

If using specialised service providers such as tour operators and expedition providers, more detailed information can be sought through the local authority.<sup>7</sup>

#### **4.14 Inclusion**

Where it is reasonably practicable all children should be able to access the opportunity to participate in off-site visits. Visit Leaders should be aware of, and follow their employer's equality and inclusion arrangements.

A school is less likely to discriminate if it plans a trip taking into account the need to include all pupils irrespective of their protected characteristics rather than if it arranges a trip and then tries to adapt it to make it inclusive.

In the early planning stages it is important to consider how accessible any trip is in terms of cost, venue, activities etc. Whilst it is not necessary for every participant to be able to take part in every activity, it is necessary to make reasonable adjustments and consider alternatives to make the visit more inclusive.

In some circumstances, additional staff may be required to allow an individual to participate – this needs to be taken in to account in the early planning stages when considering staffing and costs and must not be an additional cost as a result of any individual choosing to participate.

#### **4.15 First Aid**

Access to first aid<sup>8</sup> should form part of the Visit Plan.

For many every day activities, there is no need for a qualified first aider as there is easy access to professional help and other staff who have been first aid trained. If difficulties in accessing professional help are anticipated then further consideration is required. For specific information on how this is applied in your local authority contact your adviser<sup>9</sup>.

A suitably stocked first aid kit<sup>10</sup> should be taken on all visits.

All adults in the group should know how to contact the emergency services and have the means to carry it out. They should be aware of the limitations of mobile phones in remote locations.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/faqs.htm#first-aid-box>

## 5. Risk Assessment

### 5.1 Introduction

It is important to have procedures that encourage participation.

Risk assessment should focus on real risks, rather than on those that are trivial or the result of over-protectiveness. Exposure to real risks should be offset against the benefits of undertaking the visit.

The risk assessment should be adequate and proportionate, nothing more and nothing less. It should only deal with significant and foreseeable risks. It does not require the use of technical formulae and professional health and safety expertise should only be needed in the more complex or specialist cases.

### 5.2 Preparing Risk Assessments

The employer has a legal responsibility to ensure risk assessments are in place for off-site visits and to have a system that ensures these are being implemented. It is appropriate for the employer to provide generic risk assessments and these could be incorporated into an online recording tool where these are being used. This task may be assigned to an appropriately competent person.

Generic risk assessments provide an overview of the foreseeable risks that might be met on a visit with the aim of managing risks so that they are acceptable. In general 'acceptable' would be free from significant risk of death or permanently disabling injury.<sup>11</sup>

Leaders should use a generic risk assessment as a starting point, and add any significant and foreseeable risks specific to their visit. This should take in to account:

- The aims and benefits of the visit
- The participants (including leaders and helpers)
- The venue
- The activity
- Getting there
- Time of year

Routine and Expected Visits are by their nature low risk activities and should be quick and easy to risk assess. Higher risk activities require more detailed risk assessments which record how the risks will be reduced to an acceptable level.

The findings of the risk assessment and the relevant precautions / controls, should be agreed with and understood by all participants including Visit Assistants (and parents where appropriate).

A range of generic risk assessments and sample specific risk assessments can be found within the Toolkits section of the website.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm>

### **5.3 Dynamic Risk Assessment**

Despite the best planning, the unexpected may happen during a visit and Visit Leaders have to be prepared to change and adapt as required. Experience and training will enable sound judgements to be made.

The Visit Leader and Visit Assistants should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action as necessary. This is called dynamic risk assessment and includes knowing when and how to apply contingency plans where they are needed. It also includes heeding advice and warnings from those with specialist expertise or local knowledge (especially with regard to higher-risk activities).

The actions taken as a result of dynamic risks assessment may be recorded after the visit so that they can inform future planning.

### **5.4 Using an External Provider**

All external providers must have risk assessments in place. Depending on the nature of the visit and activities to be undertaken the Visit Leader needs to consider whether they need sight of these.

For example there is no need for Visit Leaders to request copies of risk assessments from external providers such as museums and swimming pools where there is normal public access. However it would be prudent to discuss safety arrangements and precautions with the provider for activities or venues of a less routine nature.

It is not necessary to ask for risk assessments from transport providers.

## **6. Transport**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The Visit Leader must give careful thought to planning transport. It is important to ensure that the travel plan is suitable for the age and nature of the participants. Consideration should be given to the following:

- The length, nature and complexity of the journey and implications for supervision etc.
- Selecting the right mode(s) of transport including use of public transport
- Using a reputable transport provider
- Contingency plans
- The time of year and weather
- The needs of any participants with limited mobility

Service providers such as transport operators are all subject to regulation and inspection and Visit Leaders can use them in the same way as any member of the public. There is no requirement to obtain risk assessments from transport providers.

### **6.2 Supervision on Transport**

The Visit Leader is responsible for the party at all times including maintaining good discipline whilst travelling, and during any unsupervised periods (e.g. motorway services, ferries etc.). The level of supervision that is necessary should be considered as part of the risk assessment, taking in to account:

- The age and nature of the participants
- The mode of transport and the implications for supervising participants
- The length, nature and complexity of the journey

When planning transport, consideration should be given to the following:

- Preparing participants for the journey
- The comfort and safety of participants

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

### **6.3 Hiring Coaches and Buses**

Visit Leaders should consult their employer's guidance for any specific procedures.

Coaches and buses should be hired from a reputable company. Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed. Compliance with the various legal requirements is their responsibility not the hirer's.

When planning a long journey Visit Leaders should ensure they agree a plan in advance with the company, for driver hours and rest periods.

Visit Leaders are responsible for immediately raising any concerns over driver behaviour (speeding, tiredness, aggressive driving, attitude etc.). If there is no satisfactory resolution consideration has to be given to stopping the journey.

## 6.4 Licences and Permits for Driving Minibuses

Visit Leaders should refer to their employer's policy or consult the transport manager.

Drivers of any vehicle must ensure that they have the correct entitlement on their licence. The law on driver licensing no longer permits car drivers who pass their test after 1 January 1997 to drive vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats without passing a Passenger Carrying Vehicle<sup>12</sup> (PCV) driving test.

Some local authorities allow establishments to apply for a section 19 permit<sup>13</sup>. This permit allows drivers who passed their test after 1997 to drive a minibus under the following conditions:

- The driver must be 21 or over
- The driver must have held a category B (car) licence for at least 2 years
- The driver receives no payment or consideration for driving the vehicle other than out-of-pocket expenses
- The minibus has a Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM) not exceeding 3.5 tonnes (4.25 tonnes including any specialised equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers)

The driver must have the D1 category on their licence for minibuses that have a MAM of over 3.5 tonnes.

## 6.5 Establishment Minibus

The minibus should be properly maintained in accordance with the employer's arrangements.

Although the Head of Establishment is ultimately responsible for the establishment's minibus, the driver is responsible for the vehicle when driving it. The minibus driver must be qualified to drive a minibus and have a valid driving licence (see Section 6.4).

It is advisable for all those who may drive the establishment minibus to receive training in minibus driving and the management of passengers such as that provided under the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MIDAS).<sup>14</sup>

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

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/WhatCanYouDriveAndYourObligations/DG\\_4022619](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/WhatCanYouDriveAndYourObligations/DG_4022619)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.dft.gov.uk/vosa/repository/Application%20for%20a%20Section%2019%20Standard%20or%20Large%20Bus%20Permit%20Guidance%20Notes.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.ctauk.org/training/midas.aspx>

## 6.6 Private Cars

Visit Leaders and others who drive participants in their own car must ensure their passengers' safety in line with legal requirements. This includes:

- Ensuring that front and back passengers wear properly adjusted seat belts
- Having appropriate seating in place for children (including booster seating and seatbelt adjustment devices)
- Ensuring that the vehicle is roadworthy and has a valid MOT
- Ensuring that there is appropriate insurance cover for carrying the participants. This will require cover for business purposes. (Heads of Establishment should check this is in place)

Anybody using their own car to transport participants should be carefully selected, and vetted if appropriate, by the Head of Establishment.

If using private cars to transport participants it is essential that parents are informed of the arrangements, to enable them to make an informed decision.

When using private cars, it is advisable that the driver is not put in a position where they are alone with a participant. The Visit Leader should arrange a central dropping point for all participants rather than individual home drops.

## 7. Insurance

### 7.1 Introduction

The employer should make clear to Heads of Establishments and Visit Leaders the extent of their insurance provision for off-site visits.

The Visit Leader must ensure, well before the group departs, that adequate insurance arrangements are in place covering all planned activities.

It is important to consult your local authority<sup>15</sup> to establish the level of insurance cover that is provided by your employer's insurer. This may come in varying levels:

- Some local authorities have insurance cover for all participants for all off-site visits
- Some provide cover only for specific activities
- Some provide no cover

### 7.2 Using an External Provider

If an off-site trip involves an external provider (e.g. outdoor activity provider, residential centre), the Visit Leader should establish the level of insurance provided by their own employer in order to determine whether additional insurance is required.

Service providers such as transport operators are all subject to regulation and inspection and Visit Leaders can use them in the same way any member of the public would without the need to check insurance.

The Visit Leader should consult their own local authority to confirm requirements.<sup>16</sup>

### 7.3 Using a Travel Company

If your off-site trip involves a travel company, the Visit Leader should establish the level of insurance provided by their own employer in order to determine whether additional insurance is required.

If the employer provides adequate cover, the Visit Leader will not need to obtain additional insurance through the travel company.

If additional cover is required the travel company will be able to advise on insurance requirements. However, the following are examples of points to consider when arranging insurance:

- Are there any exclusions?
- Is liability cover provided?
- Is personal accident cover provided?
- Is there cover for damage to / loss of hired equipment?
- Is there any excess? (The first part of a claim which is not covered – who would pay this?)

The Visit Leader should consult their own local authority requirements to confirm requirements.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

## **7.4 Information for Parents**

Parents should be given details of insurance cover.

For Routine and Expected Visits this can be done on an annual basis through the school handbook. For other categories of visits, details of the level of insurance cover should be included in the visit specific information provided to parents.

Parents need to be advised about any specific additional cover they may want to arrange such as loss of personal belongings.

## **8. Routine and Expected Visits**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The Scottish Government have recognised the need for young people to be regularly involved in outdoor activity and learning. This will involve establishments taking young people off-site.

Many of these off-site visits will be routine, and will become an accepted and expected part of the curriculum. Within this guidance, these types of visits have been termed 'Routine and Expected Visits' and establishments should ensure that the process for running them is simple.

Routine and Expected Visits will generally be to local venues, involve easily managed activities, happen on a regular basis and be completed within the normal session times.

A flowchart for planning and organisation of this category of visit can be found in the Toolkits section of the website).

### **8.2 Approval**

Approval for Routine and Expected Visits is the responsibility of the Head of Establishment (see the matrix on Visit Approval, Medical Information and Parental Consent in the Toolkits section of the website).

### **8.3 Visit Plans**

There should be a collaborative approach within establishments to develop Visit Plans for the range of venues likely to be used on a regular basis.

Heads of Establishment should work with staff to develop an agreed approach to travelling on foot, to crossing roads or in the use of transport in their locality. Models of effective practice should also be developed and agreed for responding to local conditions and events. Approaches to risk education for children and young people should also be developed.

These plans should be reviewed regularly and adapted if required. They should be considered as working documents that are influenced by any incidents or lessons that have been learned. Sample Visit Plans can be found within the Toolkits section of the website.

### **8.4 Risk Assessment**

Heads of Establishment should work with staff to develop risk assessments for the range of venues likely to be used on a regular basis. Routine and Expected visits are by their nature low risk activities and should be quick and easy to risk assess adopting a common sense approach.

Risk assessments should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Routine and Expected Visits might include venues such as museums and swimming pools. Such external providers are required to carry out a risk assessment of their own premises and activities. They must then implement appropriate measures to ensure that their activities are safe. There is no need for Visit Leaders to request copies of these risk assessments.

Sample risk assessments can be found within the toolkit.

## **8.5 Information for Parents / Parental Consent**

When children join an establishment or group, parents should be informed about the range of activities that are part of the programme or curriculum. Parents should be advised that they will be informed about the general plans for Routine and Expected Visits, but that they will not necessarily be told every time their child goes off-site. Establishments should explain this to parents as part of the induction in to the establishment.

Participants and parents should be informed about the need for adequate outdoor clothing and footwear to be available throughout the year to enable Routine and Expected Visits to become a normal part of everyday experience.

Consent for Routine and Expected Visits should be gained at induction or on an annual basis.

If a visit requires any specific arrangements then parents should be informed.

## **8.6 First Aid**

Heads of Establishment should work with staff to agree the level of first aid provision that is required for a Routine an Expected Visit. The following factors should be considered;

- How quickly medical care can be accessed
- Any known medical needs

Where the risk assessment determines the risk is low, it may not be necessary to provide a trained first aider. By contrast, if the risk assessment indicates a raised or high level of risk it will necessary for one or more of the accompanying staff to hold a first aid certificate.

## **9. One-off Day Visits**

### **9.1 Introduction**

Visits which are a one-off experience or which are not 'Routine and Expected' (see Section 8) require additional planning considerations.

One-off Day Visits might include an annual trip to a visitor attraction, attending an event, etc. and are more likely to extend beyond the normal session time.

### **9.2 Approval**

Approval for One-off Day Visits is the responsibility of the Head of Establishment (see the matrix on Visit Approval, Medical Information and Parental Consent in the Toolkits section of the website).

### **9.3 Visit Plans**

The Visit Leader is responsible for completing a Visit Plan for a One-off Day Visit.

The Visit Plan should outline who is to do what, and when. The amount of content and detail in the Visit Plan will be determined by the nature of the trip. The Visit Plan will, as well as keeping everyone safe, help to ensure a successful and meaningful visit by clearly setting out the aims, objectives and benefits of the activities.

A sample plan can be found within the Toolkits section of the website.

### **9.4 Risk Assessment**

It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader to prepare a specific risk assessment for a One-off Day Visit.

Visit Leaders are responsible for recording significant and foreseeable risks specific to their visit. This should take in to account:

- The participants (including leaders and helpers)
- The venue
- The activity
- Getting there
- Time of year

The findings of the risk assessment and the relevant precautions / controls, should be agreed with and understood by all participants including Visit Assistants (and parents where appropriate).

A One-off Day Visit is likely to involve going to visitor attractions such as museums, zoos etc. Such external providers are required to carry out a risk assessment of their own premises and activities. They must then implement appropriate measures to ensure that their activities are safe. There is no need for Visit Leaders to request copies of these risk assessments.

Sample risk assessments can be found within the toolkit the Toolkits section of the website.

## **9.5 Information for Parents / Parental Consent**

For One-off Day Visits specific information has to be provided to parents and should include:

- The aims and benefits
- The activity and its learning objectives
- The venue
- Travel arrangements
- Insurance cover
- Supervision arrangements

It is recommended that parental consent for the majority of off-site visits is gained at induction or annually. This can include One-off Day Visits.

The exceptions to this are One-off Day Visits that include adventure activities or visits to hazardous environments (see Section 13). On these occasions specific trip parental consent has to be obtained and this should include a request for up to date medical information which may have an impact on the visit (see matrix on Visit Approval, Medical Information and Parental Consent in the Toolkits section of the website).

## **9.6 Emergency Details**

Visit Leaders should ensure that they carry the following up-to-date information for all participants (including accompanying adults):

- Relevant medical information
- Emergency contact details
- Any other information relevant to the specific visit

This can be obtained from the annually updated information provided to schools.

For One-off Day Visits which include outdoor activities or venues with specific considerations it may be appropriate to ask parents for up to date information which may have an impact on the visit (e.g. fear of heights, allergies to animals etc.).

## **9.7 First Aid and Medical Facilities**

Heads of Establishment and Visit Leaders need to take the following factors into account when deciding the level of first aid provision that is required on a One-off Day Visit:

- The type of medical facilities that are available
- How quickly medical care can be accessed
- The aims and objectives of the visit
- The age of the participants
- Any known medical needs

Where the risk assessment determines the risk is low, it may not be necessary to provide a trained first aider among the accompanying staff. By contrast, if the risk assessment indicates a raised or high level of risk it will necessary for one or more of the accompanying staff to hold a first aid certificate.

It should be noted that there are different levels of first aid training and qualification. Visit Leaders should consult their local authority<sup>18</sup> to establish the level of first aid requirement. This is particularly relevant for higher risk activities.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

## **10. Residential Visits**

### **10.1 Introduction**

A residential experience can be an extremely valuable learning opportunity and should be part of the progressive outdoor learning experiences provided for young people.

Residential Visits include any form of overnight stay regardless of the type of accommodation.

### **10.2 Approval**

Residential Visits should be approved by the Head of Establishment before notification to the employer. Each local authority will have different arrangements for this process and advice should be sought.<sup>19</sup>

### **10.3 Visit Plans**

The Visit Leader is responsible for completing a Visit Plan for a Residential Visit.

The Visit Plan should outline who is to do what, and when. The amount of content and detail in the Visit Plan will be determined by the nature of the trip. The Visit Plan will, as well as keeping everyone safe, help to ensure a successful and meaningful visit by clearly setting out the aims, objectives and benefits of the activities.

A sample plan can be found within the Toolkits section of the website.

### **10.4 Risk Assessment**

It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader to prepare a specific risk assessment for a Residential Visit.

A residential establishment is required to have risk assessments in place for their own premises. There is no need for Visit Leaders to request copies of these risk assessments.

Visit Leaders are responsible for recording significant and foreseeable risks specific to their visit. This should take in to account:

- The participants (including leaders and helpers)
- The venue
- The accommodation (in terms of how it affects the group)
- The activity
- Getting there
- Time of year

The findings of the risk assessment and the relevant precautions / controls, should be agreed and understood by all participants including Visit Assistants (and parents where appropriate).

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

As part of the risk assessment careful consideration has to be given to establishing leader : participant ratios. Various factors could affect the ratios during a visit such as staff or participant illness, or the need to provide 1:1 supervision. It is the responsibility of the Head of Establishment and Visit Leader to ensure that adequate levels of supervision can be maintained in these circumstances.

Sample risk assessments can be found within the Toolkits section of the website.

## **10.5 Supervision**

Residential Visits entail additional requirements for supervision. Consideration has to be given to the following:

- Establishing ratios (taking in to account the need to provide 24 hour responsibility)
- Gender of the accompanying staff
- Vetting accompanying adults
- Periods of remote supervision

Further information can be found on these points in Section 4.

Supervision during a Residential Visit will require a range of supervisory techniques. Heads of Establishment should ensure Visit Leaders have sufficient knowledge and experience to carry out the very varied role that Residential Visits demand.

The Visit Leader and accompanying staff should allow sufficient time in the planning stage to discuss the supervision arrangements. Consideration should be given to a supervision rota, with identified hand-over arrangements, to ensure that it is clear at all times who has supervisory responsibility. This should be co-ordinated by the Visit Leader.

## **10.6 Information for Parents**

For Residential Visits specific information has to be provided in writing to parents and should include:

- The activities and the learning objectives
- The venue
- Domestic and sleeping arrangements
- Medical provision
- Supervision arrangements
- Travel arrangements
- Insurance cover
- Behaviour code

In addition to written information Heads of Establishment and Visit Leaders should consider holding a meeting where these points can be discussed. The nature of the visit, the age and experience of the participants and the length of visit will affect this decision.

Communication with parents should include making them aware of procedures for dealing with misbehaviour or behaviour that gives Visit Leaders cause for concern.

## 10.7 Parental Consent

Parental consent has to be obtained for a Residential Visit. Detailed information has to be provided regarding the visit (see Section 10.5) to enable parents to give informed consent.

As part of the consent form parents should be made aware of, and agree to, the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour. A sample consent letter can be found in the Toolkits section of the website.

In addition up-to-date emergency information should be requested (see Section 10.10).

## 10.8 Preparing Participants

It is particularly important for a Residential Visit to ensure that participants are adequately prepared. Sufficient time should be given to enable participants to be informed and hold discussion about:

- The aims and benefits of the visit
- The nature and demands of the visit
- The domestic and sleeping arrangements
- The supervision arrangements, including which adult is responsible for them
- The standards of behaviour expected at all times and the subsequent sanctions
- What to do in the event of an accident/incident
- The individual's role in ensuring the safety of all participants

If for any reason a participant has to return home early participants, parents and accompanying staff should agree in advance how this will be carried out and who will meet the cost.

## 10.9 Points to Consider about Accommodation

In the planning stage the Visit Leader should consider whether the accommodation:

- Fits with the aims and objectives of the visit
- Suits the needs and requirements of all participants (including disabled access)
- Is suitable for the gender mix of the group
- Provides adequate security and privacy for all participants
- Complies with appropriate safety standards for the nature of the visit

Prior to the visit the Visit Leader should if possible / appropriate:

- Make a prior visit
- Obtain a floor plan showing the location of the group's rooms. Ideally the rooms should be close together with the leaders' quarters located to enable adequate supervision
- Allocate rooms to participants

On arrival the Visit Leader should:

- Carry out a fire drill as soon as possible to ensure all participants are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation and its fire precautions/exits
- Check the accommodation to ensure it is safe and fit for purpose
- Check for any potential hazards (balconies, electrical connections, access to other rooms etc.) and if necessary establish control measures to deal with these. Where the hazards are extreme or

cannot be managed adequately consideration has to be given to insisting on alternative accommodation

- Ensure all participants are aware of the system to ensure their overnight security
- Ensure participants are aware how to obtain assistance if required during the night

## **10.10 Emergency Details**

On a Residential Visit it is important that the Visit Leader has adequate knowledge and information about participants to ensure their well-being. Parents should be given the opportunity to pass on relevant information on the consent form and by more informal approaches.

The Visit Leader should ensure that they carry up-to-date information for all participants (including accompanying adults) on the following:

- Relevant medical information
- Emergency contact details
- Any other information relevant to the specific visit

It is essential that this information is shared with accompanying adults, and external providers, where appropriate.

For Residential Visits which include outdoor activities or venues with specific considerations it may be appropriate to ask parents for information which may have an impact on the visit (e.g. fear of heights, allergies to animals etc.).

## **10.11 First Aid and Medical Facilities**

The aims and objectives of the visit can influence the degree of risk that parents and participants will find acceptable. For example parents of a primary aged pupil going on a Residential Visit could reasonably expect similar access to medical care as their child would have at home. By contrast, the parents of an older child taking part in an unaccompanied walking expedition in a remote area would accept that access to medical care is limited.

When considering the location of a Residential Visit it is an important part of the risk assessment to consider:

- The type of medical facilities that are available
- How quickly medical care can be accessed
- The aims and objectives of the visit
- The age of the participants
- Any known medical needs

Heads of Establishment and Visit Leaders need to take these factors into account when deciding the level of first aid provision that is required. Where the risk assessment determines the risk is low, it may not be necessary to provide a trained first aider among the accompanying staff. By contrast, if the risk assessment indicates a raised or high level of risk it will necessary for one or more of the accompanying staff to hold a first aid certificate.

It should be noted that there are different levels of first aid training and qualification. Visit Leaders should consult their local authority<sup>20</sup> to establish the level of first aid requirement. This is particularly relevant for higher risk activities.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

## **11. Overseas Visits**

### **11.1 Introduction**

Overseas visits include all visits outside the UK. They are almost certain to include a residential element, and are likely to involve other activities which are of a sporting, cultural, or adventurous nature.

Visiting other countries is one of the best ways of gaining a fuller understanding of one's place in the world, and offers a chance to explore the culture, challenges and opportunities that exist away from these shores.

Overseas visits should be seen as a progression after learning about our own local environment, other regions of Scotland, and the UK. The key benefits of educational visits to other countries are more likely to be achieved by older pupils and young adults.

Each visit overseas will require careful planning, realistic budgeting, and a thorough appreciation of the self-reliance and judgment needed when operating out with the UK. Therefore it is likely that leaders will have had considerable experience of organising visits within the UK before leading visits overseas, especially to developing countries. Advice from Employers should be sought regarding local arrangements.

The standard of Health and Safety applying to Overseas Visits, regardless of location, activity or event, should strive to reflect that of the UK wherever possible. Where it is not possible to guarantee parity of standards, such as fire safety in accommodation, every effort should be made to mitigate or manage the exposure to risk. Parents and participants should be informed about any differences in standards that are anticipated.

The dangers of disease, civil unrest and terrorism can be checked out early on in the planning process through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Travel Advice website<sup>21</sup>. However, there are constant changes to the levels of risk and the countries and areas they relate to, so this is something that needs to be revisited regularly prior to departure.

### **11.2 Approval**

Prior consent in principle from the Head of Establishment, and Employer if appropriate, should be obtained prior to making any commitment to young people, parents or third parties. This will require both the Head of Establishment and the Employer to be satisfied that all necessary planning and preparation are in place before approving the visit.

Overseas Visits must comply with the Employer's policy regarding taking young people outside the UK and advice should be sought in the early planning stage.

### **11.3 Visit Plans**

Comprehensive planning and preparation is the most important aspect in ensuring a successful visit. The Visit Leader is responsible for compiling a Visit Plan which documents all aspects of the trip – the amount of detail will be determined by the nature of the trip. Sample Visit Plans can be found in the toolkit.

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<sup>21</sup> [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

The early planning process should consider the following:

### **Purpose**

The Visit Plan should outline the aims, objectives and benefits of the visit and provide evidence that the purpose of the visit is compatible with the competences of the Leadership Team and the age and experience of participants.

### **Using a tour operator**

If a tour operator or specialist provider is being used, it is important that they have the appropriate industry accreditation:

- ABTA<sup>22</sup>
- ATOL<sup>23</sup>
- EPA<sup>24</sup>
- STF<sup>25</sup> and BS8848<sup>26</sup>

In addition it is important to seek references from other groups that have used a provider.

### **Location & Environment**

It is essential that the location and environment to be visited have been researched thoroughly. This can be done through:

- Prior knowledge from previous visits
- Contacting other organisations that have visited the location recently
- Researching guidance provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)<sup>27</sup>, and organisations such as the British Council or Embassies<sup>28</sup>.

### **Financial Viability**

At the planning stage an accurate costing must be established and a realistic decision made regarding the viability of the proposed visit. Where contributions are expected from parents the information provided must be transparent and realistic, and should include hidden costs such as spending money, visas, inoculations, and additional activities and entrance fees. Contingency monies should be built into the budget for potential emergencies or unseen expenditures.

If fundraising activities are to contribute to financing the trip, the commitment required from participants has to be made clear from the outset. If support is being sought from external sources (grants, sponsorship etc.) this should be secured before proceeding, to avoid unexpected costs once a commitment from parents/participants has been made. Parents must also be made aware of any payment plans and the consequences of withdrawing from the visit once initial payments have been made.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://abta.com/resource-zone/publication/health-and-safety-technical-guide>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=27>

<sup>24</sup> <http://expeditionprovidersassociation.co.uk/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.schooltravelforum.com/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://shop.bsigroup.com/en/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030185211>

<sup>27</sup> [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations>

## **Passport and Visa Requirements**

Visit Leaders must check the requirements and restrictions on passports, visas and participant's nationalities at an early stage in the planning process.<sup>29</sup>

## **Inclusion**

Where it is reasonably practicable all children should be able to access the opportunity to participate in Overseas Visits. Visit Leaders should be aware of, and follow their employer's equality and inclusion arrangements.

A school is less likely to discriminate if it plans a trip taking into account the need to include all pupils irrespective of their protected characteristics rather than if it arranges a trip and then tries to adapt it to make it inclusive.

It is important to consider how accessible any trip is in terms of cost, venue, activities etc. Whilst it is not necessary for every participant to be able to take part in every activity it is necessary to make reasonable adjustments and consider alternatives to make the visit more inclusive.

In some circumstances additional staff may be required to allow an individual to participate – this needs to be taken in to account in the early planning stages when considering staffing and costs and must not be an additional cost as a result of any individual choosing to participate.

## **Insurance**

There may be a range of insurance options available however it is important to check with the LA Technical Adviser in the early planning stage to check whether the LA has appropriate insurance cover in place. This should include the following: General Travel Insurance, Public Liability, Third Party Insurance and Medical, Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance.

Where a LA has comprehensive insurance cover in place, additional insurance offered by a tour company is not necessary. Parents should be made aware of exactly what is and isn't covered by insurance.

## **Accommodation**

In the planning stage the Visit Leader should investigate the availability and suitability of accommodation either through research or by contacting a tour operator. Be aware that standards in some countries are very different to those found in Western Europe and North America.

The Visit Leader should consider whether the accommodation:

- Fits with the aims and objectives of the visit.
- Suits the needs and requirements of all participants (including disabled access).
- Is suitable for the gender mix of the group.
- Provides adequate security and privacy for all participants.
- Has easy access to toilets and washing facilities.
- Complies with appropriate safety standards for the nature of the visit.

Further information about checks that should be made in the planning stage and on arrival at a venue can be found in Section 11.11.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports>

## Health

In the early planning stages and prior to departure it is important to:

- Check for pre-existing medical conditions of staff and participants
- Research the medical provision available at the location
- Check requirements for vaccinations and preventative medication
- Explore the possible use of a European Health Insurance Card

Further advice is available from the NHS fitfortravel website<sup>30</sup>.

## Personal safety

There are countries and areas in the world that are not suitable for LA led visits because it could expose participants to unacceptable risks. This can be a fluid and sometimes rapidly changing situation and thorough research has to be done at all stages of the planning process leading up to departure. Heads of Establishment and Visit Leaders have to be confident, that in visiting a particular area of the world, that the risks do not outweigh the benefits.

Participants should be made aware of their responsibilities in terms of keeping themselves and other group members safe. Further details can be found in 11.9 – Preparing Participants

## 11.4 Risk Assessment

It is the responsibility of the Visit Leader to prepare a specific risk assessment for all aspects of an Overseas Visit for which they are taking direct responsibility. It is very difficult to do this without a pre visit, or comprehensive researching of any relevant information available from: travel agents, tour operators, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Embassies, The British Council, or from other leaders who have undertaken similar trips.

Tour operators are responsible for risk assessing the aspects of the trip for which they are responsible. Visit Leaders should check that risk assessments are in place.

Visit Leaders are responsible for recording significant and foreseeable risks specific to their visit. This process should where possible involve accompanying adults and participants.

This should take into account:

- The participants (including leaders and helpers)
- The venue
- The culture
- The accommodation (in terms of how it affects the group)
- The food and drinking water
- Possible medical emergencies
- The activity
- Transport (to get there and in-country)
- Time of year

The findings of the risk assessment and the relevant precautions / controls, should be agreed and understood by all participants including accompanying adults (and parents where appropriate) and be reflected in the Visit Plan.

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/school-groups.aspx>

Sample risk assessments can be found within the Toolkits section.

## **11.5 Establishing Ratios**

As part of the risk assessment, careful consideration has to be given to establishing leader:participant ratios. Section 4.3 details the factors that could influence this decision but Overseas Visits may also need to take the following in to account:

- Increased risk of illness (staff and / or participants)
- More complex travel arrangements
- Possible delay in staff on 'stand by' being able to join group
- Inefficient communications systems

It is the responsibility of Heads of Establishment in discussion with Visit Leaders to ensure that adequate levels of supervision can be maintained should any situation arise during the trip which requires the undivided attention of one or more staff.

In some circumstances tour operators provide leaders / guides for the duration of the visit or for specific parts of a visit. Whilst this may influence decisions about ratios, consideration has to be given to the importance of accompanying adults knowing participants.

## **11.6 Information for Parents**

For Overseas Visits the process of informing parents and participants will need to start well in advance of the visit. In some instances this may be one or two years prior to departure. Specific information should be provided in writing to parents including:

- The purpose of the visit
- The proposed itinerary and the learning objectives
- The venue
- The costs
- Passport and visa arrangements
- Domestic and sleeping arrangements
- Health provision
- Supervision arrangements
- Travel arrangements
- Insurance cover
- Behaviour code

In addition to written information Heads of Establishment and Visit Leaders should hold a meeting/s where these points can be discussed.

Communication with parents should include making them aware of procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, or behaviour that gives Visit Leaders cause for concern, and the financial consequences of their child having to be returned home from an Overseas Visit.

## **11.7 Parental Consent**

Parental consent must be obtained for an Overseas Visit. Detailed information must be provided regarding the visit (see Section 11.6) to enable parents to give informed consent. It is important to remember that parents are giving consent for the itinerary and activities that they have been informed about. Whilst opportunities may arise to do additional activities once on the visit, care needs to be exercised to ensure that parental consent is not being abused.

As part of the consent form parents should be made aware of / and agree to, the procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. A sample consent letter can be found in the Toolkits section of the website.

## **11.8 Alternative activities / changes to plans**

Overseas Visits can often bring opportunities to take part in unplanned activities (local festivals, leisure activities etc.) or for plans to have to change. It is important that any changes to plans do not vary considerably from what parents have given consent for, and that you do not take part in unplanned activities which would have required parents to have given informed consent.

## **11.9 Preparing Participants**

It is particularly important for an Overseas Visit to ensure that participants are well prepared. Sufficient time should be given to enable participants to be informed and hold discussion about:

- The aims, objectives and benefits of the visit.
- The nature and likely demands of the visit.
- The domestic and sleeping arrangements.
- The supervision arrangements, including which adult is responsible for them.
- The standards of behaviour expected at all times and the subsequent sanctions.
- What to do in the event of an accident / incident.
- Everybody's role in ensuring the safety of all participants

## **11.10 Transport**

Travel to and from the visit location as well as travel throughout the duration of the visit requires careful planning. Section 6 provides generic guidance regarding transport but for Overseas Visits the following information should also be considered.

### **Inter-country**

Overseas Visits can often include travelling across borders be it by air, train, road or ferry. Within Europe this might not be a major concern but in the developing world this can potentially bring about a host of different challenges. The following are examples which may require consideration during the planning stage of any overseas visit:

- Health screening when entering other countries
- Visas and passports
- Access to local currency immediately on arrival

- Different baggage allowances
- Different customs allowances and banned items
- Use of cheap local airlines with potentially inflexible tickets
- The security of possessions, especially in terminals and on public transport

### **In-country transport**

All potential modes of transport have benefits and drawbacks depending on the country and the purpose of the visit. In some countries the safety of participants can be compromised by poor driving standards, badly maintained roads, and other road users and this issue must be outlined to participants and parents to ensure they are able to give informed consent.

Hired transport – The Visit Leader must as far as possible be assured that vehicles are well maintained and fit for purpose and that measures will be put in place to address the potential dangers of driver fatigue and over loading.

Public transport - Whilst some countries have high standards of provision others can have unreliable and overcrowded transport. It will be necessary to research the situation thoroughly before committing to using public transport, with particular focus on whether the group can be adequately supervised in a potentially uncontrolled situation. The impact of a large group of young people on other travellers also needs to be considered.

Self-drive hire vehicles – Plan to use reputable hire companies and find out the legal requirements for driving in each country concerned. Previous experience of driving in the country is highly desirable before driving vehicles containing participants.

## **11.11 Accommodation**

Prior to the visit the Visit Leader should if possible / appropriate:

- Make a prior visit
- Ask the tour operator for detailed information
- Compile a risk assessment.
- Obtain a floor plan showing the location of the group's rooms. Ideally the rooms should be close together, with the leaders' quarters located nearby or adjacent to enable adequate supervision.
- Allocate rooms to participants.
- Ensure the Code of Conduct covers behavioural expectations when in their rooms.
- Provide information for parents and participants about the type, quality and organisation of the accommodation.

On arrival the Visit Leader should:

- Carry out a fire drill as soon as possible to ensure all participants are aware of the layout of the building, its fire precautions / exits, and the fire assembly point.
- Check for any potential hazards (balconies, electrical connections, access to other rooms, external noise etc.) and if necessary establish control measures to deal with these. Where the hazards are extreme or cannot be managed adequately consideration has to be given to insisting on alternative accommodation
- Check that the bedding provided is clean.
- Ensure all participants are aware of the system to ensure they are secure overnight.
- Ensure that the participants are aware how to obtain assistance if required at any time.

## **11.12 Adventure Activities**

Adventure Activities abroad, whether organised by the Visit Leader or by a tour operator, require careful consideration. In many countries there are equivalent standards and / or regulations to those found in Scotland. However, in many other places the standards of safety required of providers are more limited or even non-existent. Pertinent questions will need to be asked to provide assurances to parents that activities will be well-organised, safely carried out, and that any differences of operation are acceptable. Visit Leaders will almost certainly have to seek advice from their employer about this aspect at an early planning stage.

## **11.13 Food and drinking water**

Food, drink and hygiene overseas can vary considerably from the UK. It is advisable to identify potential hazards in advance and to make arrangements to mitigate any risk. A pre-visit or seeking information from previous visitors will be useful sources of information, as are travel guides and the internet. Information about potential risks should be shared with participants and parents.

## **11.14 Language and local customs**

It is an important part of any excursion abroad to investigate and understand the cultural differences of the country you intend visiting. The aim should be to familiarise the participants in the habits and customs of the country so that they can interact in a socially aware way ensuring that they do not offend local customs. With this in mind a basic knowledge of the language can greatly enhance the experience of the visit for the participant.

Visit Leaders should be able to communicate effectively in the native language of the country or through a translator in order to manage the business relating to the Visit or any problems arising.

It is also important to know the laws that apply to your participants in the country visited, such as the age of consent, or the age at which alcohol can be bought and consumed.

## **11.15 Weather, climate and clothing**

Research the conditions prevailing at the time of the planned visit. This information should be used to inform participants and parents about any particular clothing/equipment requirements for the planned activities and to raise awareness of any significant risks.

## **11.16 Currency and contingency funds**

It will be important to consider how spending money and contingency funds will be kept safe and accessed throughout the trip. The following questions are examples of what should be considered by the staff team:

- Do we take shared responsibility for carrying spending money to reduce risks of theft?
- Do we have access to a credit card as part of the contingency fund?
- How would we pay for medical care if required?
- When/how do we exchange currency?

- Is there a safe in our accommodation?

### **11.17 Communication**

In addition to the guidance in Section 14 (Emergency Procedures) the communication system for an Overseas Visit has to be flexible yet robust. It is necessary to have a plan in place to enable routine and emergency communications with consideration being given to different time zones, mobile coverage, costs etc.

It is important that the Visit Leader and Establishment Based Contact have agreed the protocol for communication prior to departure. Research has to be done to ensure that any plans are realistic and workable.

It is essential that participants and parents are clear about how and when communication will be possible and/or allowed. Participants should be made aware of the potentially expensive costs of calls and data roaming when abroad.

### **11.18 Emergency Details**

During an Overseas Visit it is important that the Visit Leader has adequate knowledge and information about participants to ensure their wellbeing.

Parents should be given the opportunity to pass on any relevant information on the Consent Form and by more informal approaches in the case where there is a need to provide more sensitive information discreetly.

The Visit Leader must carry up-to-date information for all participants (including accompanying adults) on the following:

- Relevant medical information.
- Emergency contact details.
- Any other information relevant to the specific visit, such as behavioural and psychological knowledge.

It is essential that this information is shared with all the accompanying adults and external providers as appropriate.

For Overseas Visits that involve adventurous activities or venues with specific identifiable risk, it may be appropriate to ask parents for information that may have an impact on the Health and Welfare of the participant (e.g. fear of heights, allergies to animals etc.)

### **11.19 First Aid and Medical Facilities**

Access to medical assistance and facilities, and the standard of those facilities, needs to be outlined to participants and parents in the early planning stage. The aims and objectives of the visit can influence the degree of risk that parents and participants will find acceptable.

For example parents of a young person going on an Overseas Visit to Europe could reasonably expect access to similar medical care to that available in the UK. By contrast, the parents of a young

person taking part in a visit to a developing country would need to accept that access to medical care is limited.

When considering the location of an Overseas Visit it is an important part of the risk assessment to consider:

- The type of medical facilities available
- How quickly medical care can be accessed
- The aims and objectives of the visit
- The age of the participants
- Any known medical needs

The risk assessment process will assist Heads of Establishment and Visit Leaders to agree the level of first aid provision that is required.

Although it would always be advisable to have a trained First Aider accompanying any Overseas Visit, it may be the case, that where the risk assessment determines the risk to be low, it may not be necessary to provide a trained first aider among the accompanying staff.

By contrast, if the risk assessment indicates a raised or high level of risk it will be necessary for one or more of the accompanying staff to hold a first aid certificate.

It should be noted that there are different levels of first aid training and qualification. Visit Leaders should consult with their local authority to establish the level of first aid required.

## **11.20 Natural Water Swimming Activities**

Swimming and paddling in natural waters such as rivers, canals, the sea or lochs can present significant hazards and the Visit Leader must prepare a risk assessment detailing any significant hazards and how they will be controlled. If this is a planned activity it is expected that the Visit Leader, or other designated supervisor in the group, will have had the appropriate training as recommended by the RLSS or other appropriate National Governing Body to supervise this activity.

Approval should be given initially by the Head of Establishment before being submitted to the local authority to confirm the safety of swimming in natural waters.

Unplanned swimming in natural waters such as the sea, lochs, rivers etc. should be avoided and this should be made clear to participants in the planning stage.

## **11.21 Unsupervised Swimming Pools and Pools Abroad**

There are generally varying levels of provision in terms of facilities and safety management provided in swimming pools overseas. When planning to use an unknown swimming pool for the first time the Visit Leader will need to consider the following:

- Is the supervision provided by the owner / operator adequate?
- Is life-saving equipment available?
- Are there adequate means of summoning help?
- Is the water clear?
- Are the changing facilities adequate?

When considering whether to use a swimming pool that is unsupervised it is also essential to consider the depth, layout and size of the pool.

The risk assessment process should list the control measures for these factors and identify whether they are adequate to allow the activity to proceed.

Approval should be given initially by the Head of Establishment before being submitted to the local authority to approve the use of an unsupervised swimming pool abroad.

## **11.22 Exchange visits and Home-stays**

The Planning of Overseas Visits that entails accommodating participants with Host Families introduces additional considerations. These include:

- Choice of host families. If working with a partner school, or agent, they should normally undertake this role.
- Matching each participant to a suitable family.
- Vetting host families. In the EU there are normally systems in place to allow this to take place. If working with a partner school, or agent, they should undertake this role. Where no system exists it will be necessary to cover the possible consequences in the risk assessment, and provide detailed information to parents to enable them to give informed consent.
- Setting up a communication system. This should include having a system so that participants can request staff support should they feel vulnerable or unsafe.
- Ensuring that the itinerary and activities whilst with the host families are compatible with the overall ethos and are acceptable to the parents.
- Checking that the accommodation arrangements are suitable. Participants should have his / her own bedroom that is not part of a passage to other bedrooms, and a lockable bathroom.
- Checking that additional support needs can be adequately accommodated.
- Ensuring that at an early stage there are good communication channels with key personnel at the location and in the exchange country.

## 12. Adventure Activities

### 12.1 Introduction

Adventure Activities should form part of the natural progression of outdoor learning opportunities offered to young people. They can contribute greatly to the personal and social development of an individual as well as increasing their understanding of risk management.

Adventure Activities can be part of any category of visit and reference should be made to the relevant procedures within each specific type of visit.

If planning a visit which will include an adventurous activity, the Visit Leader is advised to seek advice from their local authority.<sup>31</sup>

### 12.2 Approval

Where Adventure Activities are part of a visit, approval should be given initially by the Head of Establishment and then by the local authority<sup>32</sup> to confirm the safety of the adventure element.

### 12.3 Licensing

Under some circumstances providers of Adventure Activities to young people are required to hold a licence. At present this situation is under review. Further information can be found on the AALA website regarding the situation in Scotland.<sup>33</sup>

The Visit Leader needs to be aware that some activities fall “within scope of the licence” and that anyone who provides these activities must be inspected by the Adventure Activity Licensing Service and hold a current licence. Details of licences and their validity can be found on the HSE website.<sup>34</sup>

During inspections the Inspector must be satisfied that appropriate safety measures are in place for the provision of the specified licensed adventure activities. The Visit Leader does not need to make any further checks.

The AALA website gives access to the list of licensed providers and activities that are “in scope”.<sup>35</sup>

If planning a visit which will include an adventurous activity, the Visit Leader is advised to seek advice from the local authority.<sup>36</sup>

### 12.4 Adventure Activity Qualifications

Many Adventure Activities are overseen by National Governing Bodies. These organisations control the training and assessment of leaders and have a system of progressive qualifications. Further

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/index.htm>

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.aals.org.uk/aals/provider\\_search.php](http://www.aals.org.uk/aals/provider_search.php)

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/index.htm>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

guidance can be found on the HSE website<sup>37</sup> but the local authority<sup>38</sup> should be consulted regarding the requirements within each local authority.

If planning a visit which will include an adventurous activity, the Visit Leader is advised to seek advice from the local authority<sup>39</sup> to ensure that an appropriate qualification is held for the activity.

## 12.5 Establishment-led Adventure Activities

Visit Leaders wishing to organise and deliver their own Adventure Activities should:

- Hold the relevant qualifications or have the necessary experience. It is acceptable to have been assessed and approved by an appropriate Technical Expert and have a signed statement of competence
- Prepare the relevant risk assessments
- Ensure that any equipment and supervision are in line with advice provided on their training and / or assessment courses.

If planning a visit which will include establishment-led adventurous activity, the Visit Leader is advised to seek advice from the local authority.<sup>40</sup>

Approval should be given initially by the Head of Establishment and then by the Technical Adviser to confirm the safety of the adventure element.

## 12.6 Information for Parents / Parental Consent

For any visit which involves Adventure Activities specific information has to be provided in writing to parents and should include:

- The activities and the learning objectives
- The venue
- Medical provision
- Supervision arrangements
- Travel arrangements
- Insurance cover

Parental consent has to be obtained for any visit which involves adventure activities. Detailed information has to be provided regarding the visit in order to enable parents to give informed consent.

## 12.7 Preparing Participants

It is particularly important for any visit which involves Adventure Activities to ensure that participants are adequately prepared. Participants should be informed about:

- The nature and demands of the visit

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/index.htm>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

- The supervision arrangements, including which adult is responsible for them
- The standards of behaviour expected at all times
- What to do in the event of an accident / incident

The Visit Leader should ensure that:

- The aims and objectives of the visit are clear
- The planned activity matches the age and ability of the participants
- The participants are adequately trained for the venture

## 12.8 Remote Supervision during Adventure Activities

Remote supervision is the term used when the Visit Leader is not directly present with participants. Working without immediate supervision can help learners to develop independence and self-reliance.

If Remote Supervision is used as a part of the delivery of Adventure Activities the Visit Leader and / or the instructor should have significant experience in the relevant activity and should consult the local authority<sup>41</sup> in the planning stages.

Visit Leaders remain responsible for participants even when not in direct contact with them. They should not underestimate the challenges of remote supervision. It requires extra planning and contingencies to be put in place. This should be reflected in the Visit Plan.

When such activity is planned the visit leader must be confident that learners have the appropriate skills to operate without undue risk. Training and briefing should reflect this.

The Visit Leader in conjunction with a suitably qualified instructor should be satisfied that the participants have acquired the necessary skills, experience, confidence, fitness 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

Particular attention needs to be given to the information provided to parents and participants before using remote supervision.

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

## **13. Venues with Specific Planning Considerations**

### **13.1 Coastal Visits**

Visit to coastal areas can be hugely enriching however they require additional consideration in the planning stages. This type of visit includes the following areas:

- Cliff top and coastal paths
- Beach / rock pools
- Tidal areas
- Causeways
- Harbours

In some locations it can be important to be able to assess the dangers using specific technical or local knowledge. The Visit Leader must prepare a risk assessment detailing any significant hazards and how they will be controlled.

Approval should be given initially by the Head of Establishment before being submitted to the local authority<sup>42</sup> to confirm the safety of the coastal element.

### **13.2 Natural Water Swimming Activities**

Swimming and paddling in natural waters such as rivers, canals, sea or lochs can present significant hazards and the Visit Leader must prepare a risk assessment detailing any significant hazards and how they will be controlled.

The Visit Leader, or another designated supervisor in the group, must have had appropriate training as recommended by the RLSS or other appropriate National Governing Bodies.

Approval should be given initially by the Head of Establishment before being submitted to the local authority<sup>43</sup> to confirm the safety of swimming in natural waters.

### **13.3 Unsupervised Swimming Pools and Pools Abroad**

Swimming pools in hotels and abroad are likely to have varying levels of safety and facilities. When planning to use an unknown swimming pool for the first time the Visit Leader will need to consider the following:

- Is the supervision provided by the owner / operator adequate?
- Are there adequate means of summoning help?
- Is the water clear?
- Are the changing facilities adequate?

When considering whether to use a swimming pool which is unsupervised it is also essential to consider the depth, layout and size of the pool.

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

The risk assessment process should list the control measures for these factors and identify whether they are adequate to allow the activity to proceed.

Approval should be given initially by the Head of Establishment before being submitted to the local authority<sup>44</sup> to confirm the safety of the unsupervised swimming pool / pool abroad.

### 13.4 Farm, Agricultural and Animal Visits

Visits to farms can present particular issues in relation to health. Animals naturally carry a range of micro-organisms, some of which can be transmitted to humans, in whom they may cause ill health and which in some cases may be severe or life threatening. These are referred to as zoonotic diseases and commonly include E.coli O157 and cryptosporidium.

The following sources of information will provide Visit Leaders with what they need to know before farm visits and what precautions they can take to stay safe. Visit Leaders should also refer to their employer's policy.

- Avoiding ill health at open farms - Advice to farmers: The full code of practice is available at [www.face-online.org.uk/CodeofPractice](http://www.face-online.org.uk/CodeofPractice).<sup>45</sup> A shorter summary document and a teacher's supplement are also available to download. This document replaces AIS23: 'Preventing or controlling ill health from animal contact at visitor attractions' which has been withdrawn
- Farmwise - Health and Safety Executive MISC165<sup>46</sup>
- Guidelines for Farm Visits<sup>47</sup> - The Royal Highland Education Trust
- Further information about farm visits, and in particular access to benefit-risk assessment forms for farm visits, can be found on the Education Scotland<sup>48</sup> website

If any child or member of the group shows signs of illness (i.e. sickness or diarrhoea) after a visit, advise them or their parent/guardian to visit the doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals.

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.sapoe.org.uk/category/sapoe-local-authority-areas>

<sup>45</sup> [www.face-online.org.uk/CodeofPractice](http://www.face-online.org.uk/CodeofPractice)

<sup>46</sup> [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg270.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg270.htm)

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.rhet.org.uk/Teachers/Farm+Visits>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/approaches/outdoorlearning/healthandsafety/guides/activityguidance/farmvisits.asp>

## **14. Emergency Procedures**

### **14.1 Introduction**

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a visit. Local authority establishments should follow their authority's guidance on emergency planning procedures, which should include a definition of an emergency or serious incident.

Independent schools should have their own emergency planning arrangements.

### **14.2 Preparation**

Prior to departure on any visit, information should be left with a pre-arranged Establishment-Based Contact. This information should include:

- Group names
- Visit location and itinerary
- Expected timings
- Transport arrangements
- Emergency contact details for participants
- Medical information regarding participants

Where appropriate this information should be carried by the Visit Leader and other Visit Assistants. If the visit is in the local area within normal session hours there is no need for the Visit Leader to carry emergency contact details as these will be readily available at the base should they be required.

### **14.3 Establishment-Based Contact**

The Establishment-Based Contact has a key role in the Emergency Procedure. It is their role to ensure that:

- Information regarding a visit is kept in a secure but accessible location
- If a visit is returning out-with normal hours, or involves an overnight, that visit information is readily accessible
- They know who to contact if an accident or incident is of a serious nature
- They are available 24/7 throughout the duration of the visit

The nature, duration and type of visit will determine the most appropriate Establishment-Based Contact. For visits of a longer duration or those involving higher risk activities it is recommended that more than one Establishment-Based Contact is provided.

### **14.4 Immediate Action in an Emergency**

In the event of an emergency the immediate priorities of the Visit Leader or any Leader who has to deputise for them, are to:

- Assess the situation

- Safeguard the uninjured members of the party including the leaders
- Attend to the casualties
- Inform the Emergency Services
- Inform the Establishment-Based Contact
- Continue to manage the situation to the best of their ability

## 14.5 External Contact

If an incident or accident is likely to attract media attention, it is important wherever possible that communication with the media and other external agencies is undertaken by someone trained in this role. The following points should be considered:

- Nobody in the party should speak to the press
- Media enquiries should be referred to a designated media contact
- Opportunities for external agencies to get access to group members and leaders should be minimised
- Group members should be discouraged from phoning home in the immediate aftermath of an Incident - inaccurate or incomplete information might cause unnecessary speculation and anxiety. However a responsible person should do so on their behalf to provide reassurance if there is potential for a media leak
- Casualty names should not be released externally
- Nobody should discuss legal liability with other parties
- Group members should be discouraged from taking personal photographs of accident sites

## 14.6 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 participants or staff in the establishment have been affected. In some cases reactions do not surface immediately. Establishments in this situation have sometimes found it helpful to contact local community support services and to seek professional advice on how to help individuals and the establishment as a whole cope with the effects of a tragedy.

Following any serious incident in which an authority's emergency procedures have been utilised, it would be appropriate to conduct a review of the incident and how it happened, and of how the procedures were implemented. Any lessons to be learned should be incorporated into risk assessments, operating procedures and emergency planning arrangements.

The purpose of the review should be to:

- Establish the facts
- Determine whether there are lessons to be learned
- Provide information to parents
- Exchange information with statutory investigation bodies as required e.g. police, Health & Safety Executive
- Manage media enquiries

## **14.7 Reporting Accidents and Incidents**

The employer's accident reporting procedures should be used to record all accidents and incidents.

Any near-misses must be reported to the Head of Establishment and recorded as appropriate. Any lessons learned as a result of a 'near miss' should be incorporated into risk assessments, operating procedures and emergency planning.

The documents contained in the following sections can be found in the “Toolkits” section of the Going Out There website: <http://www.goingoutthere.co.uk/toolkits>

- 15. Generic Risk assessments**
- 16. Toolkit – Routine and Expected Visits**
- 17. Toolkit – Day Visits**
- 18. Toolkit – Residential Visits**
- 19. Toolkit – Overseas Visits**
- 20. Toolkit – Adventure Activities**

## **21. Appendix: Further Resources**

HSE – School Trips: Tackling the Health and Safety Myths

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.htm>

HSE – Case Studies – Real Life Examples

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/case-studies.htm>

HSE 5 Steps to Risk Assessment and Risk Assessment and Policy Template

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/fivesteps.htm>