

## **Visits and Trips – General Procedures**

1. PLANNING THE VISIT OR TRIP
2. APPROVAL PROCESS
3. DURING THE VISIT OR TRIP
4. AFTER THE VISIT OR TRIP

### **1. PLANNING THE VISIT**

Whatever the type or length of a visit, thorough planning is essential and its steps are highlighted under the headings below.

- Preliminary visits
- Supervision – Ratios and Composition of the Party
- Medicines and Medication
- First Aid
- Transport
- Supervision of pupils on the journey and at the visit destination
- Insurance
- Mobile Phones
- Risk Assessment
- Emergency Procedures
- Parental Consent
- Costing

### **Preliminary visits**

Wherever possible, the staff planning a visit or trip might make a preliminary visit to the venue in order to familiarise themselves and make a proper assessment of its suitability. Where this is not possible, the leader must obtain information about the places to be visited with particular regard to potential hazards. Written notes should be made of this visit or enquiry.

### **Supervision**

Supervision needs should consider staffing levels and suitability of accompanying adults. All trips or visits must have a clearly identified Group Leader who is responsible for the organisation and leadership of the staff and students on the visit or trip.

### **Ratios**

Pupil ratios are difficult to prescribe as needs differ according to the type of visit or the planned activity and, therefore, full consideration should be given to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources

DfES guidance suggests:

- 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils (years 4 –6);
- 1 adult for every 15 – 20 pupils (year 7+).
- Minimum 1:10 for visits to countries other than that of residence.

***There will always be a minimum of two adults*** (one of whom must be a teacher or teaching assistant) with the group.

### **Duty of Care**

The level of duty of care required by a teacher is that of a reasonable, prudent and careful parent; it should be noted that this is the level of responsibility that is the expectation of all teachers during their work, not solely during trips and visits. However, during a trip or visit, it should be noted that pupils remain with the teacher and cannot be delegated to coaches, instructors or volunteers acting on behalf of the teacher or the school, although the technical duty of care may be delegated to, for example, a ski instructor.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behavior of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the group leader will discuss with the Headteacher the possibility of excluding the child from the activity.

### **Composition of the Party**

The Group Leader must ensure that adult members of the party have reasonable preliminary, theoretical and practical preparation appropriate to the age of the group and the nature of the activities. This should include consideration of potential emergencies and associated actions to be taken.

All activities must be supervised by people of suitable competence and for some activities the teacher may be required to hold a suitable qualification for that activity.

The Group Leader plays a central role in all aspects of the visit or activity; competence as a leader will result from:

- experience/knowledge of the environment/venue to be visited;
- experience of the activities to be undertaken;
- having led similar educational visits;
- knowledge of the pupils involved;
- appropriate training;
- leadership skills and other personal qualities.

### **First Aid**

The level of first aid provision required must be risk assessed. This means that the Group Leader must ensure that adequate first aid arrangements are made, bearing in mind the location and nature of the activity. Additional needs may need to be identified depending on the activity and location. All adults in the group will know how to contact the emergency services.

## **Medical, Health and Dietary Information**

The Group Leader should be aware of medical issues and/or allergies within the group, especially any of a serious nature, and ensure that all staff are appropriately briefed where necessary. The school will hold medical information on the Administration System for all students and these can be printed off and taken on visits, although care must be taken with this confidential information. Included in this information which must be carried by the Group Leader at all times should be emergency contact details for all students, a copy of the school's personal insurance claim form and specific information for identified students.

For school trips the Group Leader should collect additional medical and emergency information after evaluating the type of activities planned and the duration and destination of the trip. In addition, school trips may need supplementary information on health or dietary requirements.

## **Medicines and Medication**

In general, medicines required by students during the visit or trip should be clearly labelled with name and dosage and handed to the Group Leader. For certain conditions, however, this procedure may be wholly inappropriate and potentially harmful, i.e. asthma and diabetes. If medication is to be administered to a pupil during a school visit or activity then good practice should be followed.

## **Transport**

For all educational visits and trips transport requests will be made through the school office, using the school provider, after school approval has been given. All buses must meet standard safety provision for each child.

## **Insurance**

The Group Leader will clarify with the school's H&S Adviser that the type and level of insurance provided by the school is comprehensive and appropriate for the type of visit and activities planned.

## **Mobile Phones**

The Group Leader is responsible for ensuring that there are enough mobile phones within the group including school mobile phone, and delegate responsibility for maintenance of batteries. In certain locations a group may not be able to rely on a mobile phone for emergency situations as the signal may be out of range.

## **Risk Assessment**

Implicit to any visit or trip planning is risk assessment. Full consideration must be given to the dangers and difficulties that may arise, and the Group Leader should control measures that must be put into place in order to reduce them.

When making a risk assessment, the following must be taken into account:

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

The risk assessment is made to guide and help ensure the safe and successful functioning of a trip or visit and, therefore, all supervisors of the group should be fully aware of the assessed risks and identified actions.

### **Emergency Procedures**

The Group Leader will make all accompanying adults aware of the emergency procedures that will apply. Each adult on the trip should be provided with the telephone number for contacting the emergency services. The Headteacher must ensure that group leaders have telephone numbers for emergency contacts within the school which are available. Groups must not be in the position of having to leave a message on an answer phone, and at least two emergency telephone numbers should always be available. During the school day the emergency contact number may be the school number but must not be the answer phone.

The school will issue a school mobile telephone in addition to other private phones on the trip.

The following information should be held at all times by the group leader, the 24 hour contact person/s and the school office:

- A list of the names and parental emergency contact numbers of all participating children and an emergency contact number for accompanying adults.
- A programme/itinerary for the visit.
- Details of travel arrangements, including return time.
- Contact number for the residential accommodation.

### **Parental Consent**

The parents of children taking part in an off-site visit or trip must be provided with full and concise information about the activity their child will undertake. For visits taking place entirely within a normal school day it is sufficient to obtain parent consent on an annual basis, followed by specific information informing parents of visit details, specific arrangements and allowing the opportunity for parents to withdraw their consent for participation in the visit. Where the visit extends beyond the normal school day written permission from the parent must be obtained.

It is advisable that clarification is gained with regard to the taking and publication of photographs of students on school trips.

## Costing

Prior to organising an off-site visit or trip staff should ensure that the total costs are determined. The total costs associated might include transport, entrance fees, insurance, and provision of any resources or equipment specific to the activity and costs relating to adult helpers. Funding for day visits will be mainly provided by our school, although parental contributions may be sought, whilst off-site residential trips are almost exclusively supported through parental payments. If a staged payment plan is proposed then the timetable for the payments should allow for the Headteacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time. Also consideration should be given on the possibility of refunding payments on cancellation or withdraw from a visit or trip.

## 2. APPROVAL PROCESS

The approval process has three stages;

- a) **Initial Agreement** to the educational worth of the proposed visit or trip and that, with limited information, it appears viable and aligned with the school's calendar.
- b) **Agreement to Action** that the visit or trip is financially viable and the location is available on the required dates.
- c) **Approval** that the visit or trip has been planned and organised according to the school policy and it can take place.

### a) Initial Agreement

When a member of staff proposes a visit or trip they should present the educational objectives and basic details known at this early stage of planning to the head teacher e.g. location, number and age of students, date, duration, approximate costs, type of activities undertaken. Sufficient details must be provided to allow an informed decision to be made on the worth and viability of the Visit/Trip. If initial agreement is given by Head teacher, then the next stage of planning can start.

### b) Agreement to Action

The Group Leader after receiving the updated information from the school office will decide whether the visit/trip is still viable and, if it is, then full planning can go ahead by signing the section Agreement to Action. If *Agreement to Action* is given the Group Leader should start the organisation process as outlined in *Planning the Visit or Trip* of this policy. Completion of all the steps in the planning process should be recorded on the *Checklist*.

### c) Final Approval

After completing all planning and preparation the Group Leader must forward the completed checklist and all supporting documentation to the head teacher for signing of *Final Approval*. In order to ensure that any necessary amendments to plans, or re-evaluations of risk assessments can be completed in sufficient time before the trip/visit, it is essential that all documentation is presented for approval at least:

- seven days before a **day visit**
- four weeks prior to **residential trip**

### 3. DURING THE VISIT

All visits and activities, regardless of the duration, destination or nature of the activity have basic supervisory expectations that will support their safe, efficient and enjoyable functioning.

#### **Supervision of pupils**

Accompanying staff must ensure the good behavior of their groups both on the journey and during the visit. It will greatly ease supervision if each accompanying adult takes responsibility for a sub-group, with the Group Leader or deputy being personally responsible for any young people who might create difficulties.

Throughout a visit there should always be regular head counts, particularly before leaving any venue. The Group Leader must carry a list of all pupils and adults on the visit, at all times. It is important to recognise that children may not follow rules and instructions through forgetfulness or wilful disobedience. It should also be acknowledged that, through their inexperience, children and maybe unable to make a reasonable analysis of potential risks, and thus they may need to be protected from their own behavior. Therefore, especially on school trips and activities, supervising adults should not proceed on the basis that all children will obey instructions, and must take the necessary steps to ensure that instructions are followed at all times.

Pupils should NEVER wear name badges as this makes them vulnerable to strangers pretending to know them. Badges displaying the school name and its emergency contact number can be useful.

#### **On-going Risk Assessment**

Risk assessment is an on-going process; it should not be regarded as a one off exercise prior to the visit. It is important to be prepared to amend the planned course of action in the event of changing or unforeseen circumstances.

#### **Recording Accidents**

Accidents are 'unplanned events' and, therefore, not every eventuality can be accounted for in the risk assessment. Should an accident occur it must be, if applicable, recorded in the accident book at the venue. Upon return to school the accident should also be recorded in the school's accident book, and if appropriate, the school's H&S Adviser should inform the Health and Safety Committee.

If the accident resulted in a major injury i.e. fracture, concussion, hospital treatment etc. it is advisable to obtain witness statements.

#### **Emergency Situation**

- In the event of an emergency situation the Group Leader or delegated accompanying adult must
- contact the school at the earliest possible opportunity.
- In the immediate aftermath it is important to focus on;
- Care of the Individual
- Ensure the treatment, safety and welfare of the individual
- Care of the Group

- Ensure the safety and welfare of the group
- Contact emergency services as soon as possible
- Communication
- Contact school as soon as possible
- Not to speak to the media
- Not to allow anyone in the group to communicate with anyone outside the group (including parents) until authorisation and agreement with school has been obtained.
- Maintain contact with the school.

#### 4. AFTER THE VISIT

Review and evaluation of the visit or activity, and of the risk assessments, is important in order to note any lessons learned and to inform future good practice. The planning of any particular visit should start from the evaluation of the previous visit.

#### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL TRIPS

Residential visits should only take place in centres that meet recognised safety standards and are authorised for hosting such activities.

A visit to the residential centre, prior to the activity, is advisable but not always possible.

If such a visit is not an option then the group leader will ask for written references from previous groups, or, preferably, ask for the names and addresses of the last three schools who have visited. Endeavour to collect promotional material and photographs that can be used to inform staff or be displayed at a parents' meeting.

When selecting a suitable and appropriate centre whilst safety is obviously paramount, it is also necessary to consider the quality of the programme offered in terms of educational content and participant involvement.