

# STANDARDS FOR LEAS IN OVERSEEING EDUCATIONAL VISITS

## INTRODUCTION

*HASPEV* sets out principles of good practice, leaving it to teachers' professional and local judgement how to apply those principles. The supplement has been prepared at the request of teachers and others for more *specific* guidance.

*Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers*, which the Department for Education and Skills ('the Department') sent to all schools and local education authorities (LEAs) in December 2001, sets out the responsibilities, under health and safety law, that employers and employees must meet and the powers, under education law, which help employers to ensure compliance.

With input from across all sectors, the supplement, like *HASPEV*, reflects good practice in all types of educational visit – no matter who is doing the providing or who the learning. The supplement is addressed to schools and LEAs. We refer to 'pupils' rather than 'young people' and to 'teachers' rather than 'youth workers' or 'mentors' (for example). But anyone involved with groups of young people on educational visits, including the staff of further education institutions, may find the supplement useful. 'Pupils' can also mean 'students' and 'teachers' can mean 'lecturers'. As in *HASPEV* 'parent' means all those having parental responsibility for a child.

Good practice can take a number of forms. LEAs, unions and others have issued their own guidance. The supplement does not seek to replace local or other professional guidance or regulations. Community and voluntary controlled schools should follow LEA guidance as a first recourse. No guidance should be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the law. That is for the courts.

Amendments to the good practice supplement will be needed from time to time. We will make these amendments to the website version of this supplement. The web version will thus become a "living" document, changing over time. Holders of the hard copy version of the supplement are advised to check the web from time to time to see whether amendments have been made - at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

Like *HASPEV*, the supplement can be adopted or adapted by LEAs or others for their own purposes. Please acknowledge the Department as the source for any such use and declare any local variation of the text.

Enquiries about the contents of this Supplement should be addressed to the Department's Pupil Health and Safety Team on 020 7925 5536.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document builds upon the good practice set out in *Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV)*. It benefits from major input by LEA outdoor education advisers. Teachers, head teachers, staff associations and unions, parents, pupils, and many others who have a keen interest in health and safety on educational visits provided additional material and comment.

The good practice set out in this document includes:

- the role of LEA outdoor education adviser;
- the role of educational visits co-ordinator in a school;
- roles of governors and head teachers;
- considering risk assessment at three levels:
  - generic
  - visit/site specific
  - ongoing
- advice on competence, delegation and monitoring.

Nothing in this document changes the existing duties that LEAs and schools have in relation to educational visits. Nor does it lay down any new mandatory requirements. Instead, it is intended to enable schools and LEAs to access good practice drawing on the advice we have received on what works well in practice. In addressing their existing legal responsibilities, schools and LEAs are invited to consider these suggested arrangements but are free to modify them in the light of their own needs and circumstances.

## LEGAL

1. *Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers* sets out the legal framework in which **employers** and **employees** work. It applies to all educational visits. We address this part of the supplement to the LEA as employer of staff in community, community special and voluntary controlled schools. The same principles apply for governors or proprietors as employers of staff in foundation, foundation special, voluntary aided or independent schools. Employers in the further and higher education sectors may also find the supplement useful, as would employers in the statutory and non-statutory youth sectors and the Connexions Service.

2. LEAs have no legal responsibility for the health and safety of pupils in foundation, foundation special, voluntary aided or independent schools. Nonetheless, we recommend that the employers in such schools make use of the LEA's expertise as necessary. We also request that LEAs make their advice available, as appropriate, to these schools, and also to others in their area, who have health and safety responsibilities for visits. LEAs may, if they wish, levy a small fee for this service.

## ROLES OF THE LEA AND THE SCHOOL

### Outdoor Education Adviser

3. It is good practice for LEAs to have an **outdoor education adviser**, or, failing that, for one of the LEA staff to have the functions of an outdoor education adviser in their job description. The adviser would need experience in education, teaching or youth work and to occupy a position of sufficient authority in the LEA to influence change and people. The role would normally involve:

- a good understanding of the legal responsibilities and powers of the LEA and its schools for all kinds of educational visits;
- a good knowledge of the practical difficulties facing school groups in all venues or environments including the lower risk ones;
- being competent to assess the risks of all the visits that their schools undertake;
- monitoring the educational visits carried out by the LEA's schools: this should include visiting schools on a sample basis and observing activities;
- reviewing policies and procedures in the light of lessons learned and sharing good practice more widely;
- monitoring the work of educational visit co-ordinators (see below) in schools to help to identify training needs and appropriate levels of delegation;
- determining which visits will require LEA approval and which may be approved by the school;
- approving (or disallowing) visits where the task of approval has not been assigned to school level;
- notifying schools of the minimum adult:pupil ratios required by the LEA and whether the ratios can include competent adults other than competent school staff;
- providing expert advice on visits generally and on adventure activities, expeditions and overseas visits specifically;
- providing schools with the LEA's statement of policy and guidance. This should be based on risk assessment and set out the control measures required;
- ensuring that educational visit co-ordinators, group leaders and other school staff and other adults involved in educational visits are assessed as competent in their specific tasks;
- ensuring that training is available for those who need that competence;
- making sure that arrangements are in place to obtain the necessary Criminal Records Bureau disclosures (see paragraphs 82-86);
- making sure that arrangements are in place for informed parental consent.

4. The adviser might seek and obtain the advice of other people, in whatever sector, who are competent in assessing the risks of a particular activity or type of visit.

### **Educational Visits Coordinator**

5. It is good practice for each school to have an **educational visits coordinator (EVC)**. This may be the head teacher. It could equally be a teacher or other member of school staff – in which case the EVC will be appointed by and act on behalf of the head teacher. This does not mean that the school should create and fund a new post. Rather, the formal recognition of the EVC function will help the school fulfil its health and safety obligations for visits. The EVC will be involved in the planning and management of educational visits including adventure activities led by school staff.

### **General Functions of the EVC**

6. The functions of the EVC are to:

- liaise with the employer to ensure that educational visits meet the employer's requirements including those of risk assessment;
- support the head and governors with approval and other decisions;
- assign competent people to lead or otherwise supervise a visit;
- assess the competence of leaders and other adults proposed for a visit. This will commonly be done with reference to accreditations from an awarding body. It may include practical observation or verification of experience;
- organise the training of leaders and other adults going on a visit. This will commonly involve training such as first aid, hazard awareness etc;
- organise thorough induction of leaders and other adults taking pupils on a specific visit;
- make sure that Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are in place as necessary – see paragraph 82-86;
- work with the group leader to obtain the consent or refusal of parents and to provide full details of the visit beforehand so that parents can consent or refuse consent on a fully informed basis;
- organise the emergency arrangements and ensure there is an emergency contact for each visit;
- keep records of individual visits including reports of accidents and 'near-accidents' (sometimes known as 'near misses');
- review systems and, on occasion, monitor practice.

### **EVC Competence**

7. The member of school staff designated as the EVC should be specifically competent. The level of competence required will relate to the size of the school and the types of educational visits proposed. For example, the needs of a small infants

school will differ from those of a large secondary school with an active Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme.

8. Evidence of competence may be through qualification and/or the experience of practical leadership over many years of outdoor education.

### **Role of LEA in relation to EVCs**

9. These roles will work best when the LEA outdoor education adviser:

- works with the head teacher to assign a member of staff to EVC duties and then to arrange the induction of that person;
- gives advice and guidance to the EVC;
- gives the EVC access to appropriate training;
- helps the EVC give access to specific training for staff leading or otherwise supervising educational visits;
- ensures relevant risk assessments are complete, up to date and in accordance with LEA guidance and that the EVC is aware of their findings;
- monitors the work of the EVC.

### **Role of the Governing Body**

10. See *HASPEV* paragraphs 19-20. Where the governing body is the employer the governors' responsibilities will be the same as those suggested for the LEA. In addition, it is good practice for all governing bodies to:

- ensure that guidance is available (e.g. from the Department and/or LEA as appropriate) to inform the school's policy, practices and procedures relating to the health and safety of pupils on educational visits. These should include measures to obtain parental consent on a basis of full information, to investigate parental complaints, and to discuss and review procedures including incident and emergency management systems. As necessary governors may seek specialist advice, though governors should not normally be expected to approve visits;
- ensure that the head teacher and the EVC are supported in matters relating to educational visits and that they have the appropriate time and expertise to fulfill their responsibilities;
- ascertain what governor training is available and relevant;
- agree on the types of visit they should be informed about;
- ask questions about a visit's educational objectives and how they will be met. Are the objectives appropriate to the age and abilities of the pupil group? The Governors should challenge the nature of the venture when the educational objectives are not clear or where the means to meet them do not appear to be realistic. It is not expected that governors should become directly involved in risk assessment and related matters unless they have an appropriate competence. Governors offering professional advice to schools, should be



aware that their professional indemnity insurance is unlikely to cover them for unpaid advice;

- ensure that visits are approved as necessary by the LEA before bookings are confirmed;
- help to ensure that early planning and pre-visits can take place and that the results can be acted upon. Note - many complex or costly ventures require an 18-24 month planning period before departure;
- ensure that bookings are not completed until external providers have met all the necessary assurances. Also, ensure that specific items in the risk management - for example, overnight security, room and floor plans - are checked prior to departure;
- ensure that the head teacher and the EVC have taken all reasonable and practicable measures to include pupils with special educational needs or medical needs on a visit.

### **Responsibilities of the Headteacher**

11. In addition to the tasks at paragraphs 21-23 of *HASPEV*, it is good practice for head teachers to:

- delegate tasks to the EVC, having regard to the duties of the EVC suggested earlier in this part of the supplement;
- agree who will approve a visit at school level or submit it to the LEA for approval if so required. It makes sense for the EVC to perform this function and for the head teacher to countersign. But the head teacher may entrust the task wholly to the EVC, who will then sign on the head teacher's behalf;
- consider using the model forms in *HASPEV* that can be adapted for LEA or school use. Some of these forms will need adapting where functions are exercised by the EVC rather than by the head teacher;
- ensure that arrangements are in place for the governing body to be made aware of visits so that questions can be asked as necessary;
- ensure that arrangements are in place for the educational objectives of a visit to be inclusive, to be stated in the pre-visit documentation, and to be made known to all relevant parties;
- be aware of the need to obtain best value. Appropriate consideration must be given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships;
- ensure that issues identified by exploratory visits have been satisfactorily resolved within the risk assessment;
- ensure that the accreditation or verification of providers has been checked;
- ensure that visits are evaluated to inform the operation of future visits;
- ensure that the EVC keeps him or her informed of the progress of the visit

and that this information is relayed to governors (and to parents as necessary);

- check that the EVC has designated an appropriately competent group leader who will meet the LEA's criteria. Bear in mind that the LEA's outdoor education adviser will normally assess a teacher's competence in a specific activity. The EVC will be able to assess a teacher's supervisory ability. The head teacher should make a judgement on a member of staff's competence and suitability to lead a visit. Discipline on an educational visit may, at times, have to be stricter than in the classroom;
- for less routine visits, the headteacher will need to ensure that the EVC can obtain advice from an appropriate technical adviser as necessary;
- ensure that there is a contingency plan (plan B), covering for example the implications of staff illness and the need to change routes or activities during the visit (see below). The consent form should carry details of plan B;
- make time available for the EVC to arrange for the induction and training of staff and volunteers and ensure that staff receive the induction and training that they need before the visit;
- allocate sufficient resources to meet identified training needs, including attendance at courses arranged or held by the LEA. INSET sessions relating to educational visits may be organised;
- ensure that visit evaluation is used to inform training needs. Further staff training should be made available where a need is identified;
- arrange for the recording of accidents and the reporting of death or disabling injuries as required. Accident and incident records should be reviewed regularly, and this information used to inform future visits;
- help to ensure that serious incidents, accidents and near-accidents are investigated – see paragraphs 70-76;
- ensure teachers are made aware of and understand LEA guidance on emergency planning and procedures. Training and briefing sessions must be provided for school staff;
- ensure that the school has emergency procedures in place in case of a major incident on an educational visit. These should be discussed and reviewed by staff. Ensure that pupils, parents, group supervisors and others are given written details of these procedures;
- ensure that the school contact has the authority to make significant decisions. He or she should be contactable and available for the full duration of the visit 24 hours a day. He or she should be able to respond immediately at the school base to the demands of an emergency and should have a back-up person or number;
- ensure that the EVC briefs the leader and supervisors about the emergency procedures as part of the risk assessment briefing and that the leader and supervisors have ready access to them during the visit;

- ensure that the EVC impresses upon parents the importance of providing their own contact numbers, more than one, which will enable the parents to be contacted in case of emergency;
- establish a procedure to ensure that parents are informed quickly about incident details through the school contact, rather than through the media or pupils;
- recognise that support must be provided by the LEA's public relations unit when dealing with media enquiries;
- check that contractors have adequate emergency support procedures, and that these will link to school and LEA emergency procedures.

### **Delegation**

12. It is good practice for a scheme of delegation to define the role and tasks of the LEA and the delegated tasks of the school governors, head teacher, EVC etc. It should state who will approve particular visits - whether the task remains with the LEA or is assigned to the EVC in the school - and make clear that any person delegated to carry out the task in the school is doing so on behalf of the LEA.

13. There should be a clear rationale, derived from risk assessment, as to which types of visit are approved in-school and which are to be approved by the LEA. Guidance could follow *HASPEV*, which states that LEAs should retain responsibility for approval of visits involving residence, adventure activities or visits abroad. Local approval forms should be available from the outdoor education adviser.

14. Alternatively, LEAs may decide to delegate a wider range of responsibility for approval to schools that have experienced and competent EVCs and retain wider approval for schools that do not.

15. Risk assessors should apply lessons learned from relevant incidents, accidents or near-accidents which have occurred locally or nationally.

16. The LEA should make it clear how the checks on contractor-use are to be carried out and who should undertake them. The EVC may obtain additional advice from the LEA's outdoor education adviser on the selection of tour operators and other contractors.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

17. In order to promote safe practice, the LEA will need to monitor, and where necessary challenge, the educational objectives that schools have stated for a visit. Before a school decides to arrange an educational visit, it is good practice to consider what educational objectives it wishes to achieve, and then, how a visit might help to achieve them.

18. Risk assessment and risk management are legal requirements. For educational visits they involve the careful examination of what could cause harm during the visit and whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more should be done. The aim is to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill. The control measures should be understood by those involved. Risk assessments should explicitly cover how special educational needs and medical needs are to be addressed. The programme of a visit, as set out in the risk assessment and the consent form, should not be deviated from and should include details of contingency measures – plan B. The Health & Safety Executive has produced a leaflet “5 Steps to Risk Assessment” (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>) as a simple guide. It recommends that risk assessments be recorded and reviewed.

19. Risk assessment for educational visits can be usefully considered as having three levels:

- **generic activity risk assessments**, which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place;
- **visit/site specific risk assessments** which will differ from place to place and group to group; and
- **ongoing risk assessments** that take account of, for example, illness of staff or pupils, changes of weather, availability of preferred activity.

### Generic Activity Risk Assessments.

20. These are usually prepared by the LEA, or by LEAs in agreement with one another. School staff will not normally prepare them unless they have accumulated specific experience or other expertise. The LEA should check any generic risk assessment prepared externally (by, for example, an activity or expedition provider, tour operator, or National Governing Body) or by an EVC or other member of school staff. The generic risk assessment will typically inform the health and safety policy of the LEA and associated procedures.

Examples:

- the lack of adequate risk management leading to drowning is a major cause of accidental death. Control measures would include assessing the water confidence and ability of pupils; use of buoyancy aids; competent supervision, with the appropriate ratios for the specific environment, pupil group and level of activity. The generic risk assessment should include advice, or a local ruling, on the circumstances in which swimming or paddling may or may not be permitted as a marginal activity. See *A Handbook for Group Leaders*;
- travel entails a risk of injury in a road traffic accident. Control measures would include qualified driver; number of drivers; maximum periods of driving; appropriate seat belts provided and worn; evidence of vehicle maintenance,

appropriate supervision levels; and, if appropriate, knowledge of foreign law, experience of driving abroad and with left-side controls. Pupils are also at risk as pedestrians from traffic. (Also travel as in using ferries, airports, long haul coaches, trains, underground/metro systems etc);

- adventure activities. Centres licensed under the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 can be considered safe in the leading, instructing and equipping of the activities stipulated on the licence. These will have been inspected. LEAs have no need to risk assess that part of any visit. They will wish to assess other aspects of the school's planning for a visit - for example, accommodation catering, transport, activities not stipulated on the licence. For non-licensable adventure activities, proof of competence from an NGB award or assessment by a technical adviser may be sufficient.

21. The Department recommends that LEAs share policies, guidance and associated risk assessments with one another, and with employers of staff in foundation, voluntary aided and independent schools. This would reduce duplication of effort and spread good practice.

22. Risk assessors should apply lessons learned from relevant serious incidents, accidents or near-accidents which have occurred locally or nationally. Those in charge of foundation, voluntary aided or independent schools may have need of recourse to outdoor education advice. This might be from their own outdoor education adviser within the school or from someone outside e.g. an LEA adviser, where local arrangements permit.

### **Visit/Site Specific Risk Assessment**

23. These are usually undertaken by the school for each venue and are amended as necessary for different groups. They should be prepared or agreed by someone trained and competent to assess risks, such as the EVC.

24. Visit and site specific risk assessments should inform school based policies and procedures. These school-based procedures should complement, and not conflict with, those of the LEA.

### **Examples**

- medical needs of pupils. Control measures include ensuring the group leader is aware of the known health problems of the group; sufficient medication is provided; there are sufficient adults competent in dealing with the medical problems in the group; and there are contingency measures in place for the group to be adequately supervised if an adult has to accompany a child to hospital;
- behaviour of pupils. Control measures include a code of rules and behaviour, agreed as far as practicable with pupils; rules for supervision (including model behaviour and example set by adults); and competence of supervisors to ensure disciplinary standards;
- weather etc. Control measures include obtaining local intelligence of tides; potential for flooding or flash floods; likelihood of sudden weather changes in mountains; streams that can change from benign to torrents in a short time etc.; planning the itinerary to take the possibility of change into account; suitable clothing; ensure pupils understand the risks and the reasons for the

control measures, and having a plan B pre-assessed in case plan A has become too hazardous;

- crossing roads, railways, rivers etc. Control measures include local intelligence; information on where the controlled or otherwise less dangerous crossing places are; ensuring appropriate levels of supervision and that pupils are aware of, and comply with, rules;
- group management decisions. Control measures include establishing meeting and collecting points; code of rules and behaviour agreements; cultural considerations such as dress codes, holy days; induction requirements for support staff etc.

### **Ongoing Risk Assessments and Reassessments.**

25. The group leader, or other adults with responsibility, should reassess risks while the visit is taking place. Ongoing risk assessments normally consist of judgements and decisions made as the need arises. They should be informed by the generic and visit or site specific risk assessments and take account of local expertise on e.g. tides, potential for flooding etc. They are not usually recorded until after the visit and should be reviewed to inform future planning. Examples of the need for ongoing risk assessment:

- changing weather, tiredness or illness within the group, behaviour, issues with other groups at same venue etc. Control measures would often include deciding to change to the pre-assessed plan B or swapping activities on the itinerary so that the activity can be carried out on a different day;
- emergencies. Control measures would include establishing the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible; ensuring that all the group are safe and looked after; establishing whether anyone has been hurt and getting immediate medical attention for them; ensuring that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures; ensuring that if a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital, the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together; and informing the emergency contact in the school;
- group leaders are always in charge. They should trust their own knowledge of the young people and use their own professional judgement. This may include challenging an activity leader where the group leader's knowledge of the group is superior, or intervening to prompt a change of plan, including stopping an activity if it has become too hazardous.

### **Exploratory Visits**

26. *HASPEV* states: "An exploratory visit should be made by any teacher who is to lead a group abroad or on a residential visit or who is to instruct or lead the group in an outdoor activity such as trekking in a location that is not familiar to them." It is good practice for the teacher or other member of school staff leading a group to visit the site beforehand to gain first-hand knowledge of the area and route. This knowledge will then inform the risk assessment and pre-planning.

27. An exploratory visit will give the group leader greater confidence in his or her ability to supervise the pupils. It will help the group leader to concentrate on the

needs of the group rather than the unexpected demands of the environment. It should be borne in mind that overseas trekking expeditions cover a much wider range of terrain and circumstances than is found in the UK. The same good practice should be expected where some of the leadership of the group falls to a contractor.

28. If it is not possible to visit the site beforehand, the LEA's outdoor education adviser will want to be satisfied that alternative arrangements are sufficient for an assessment to be made. Such alternatives might include obtaining advice from those with experience gained from previous visits; heeding reports of previous visits; the use of experienced and reliable local guides where appropriate; a reconnaissance visit by the group leader on arrival at the venue whilst the group remain in the hotel or hostel on residential visits (very often the group will need to rest up anyway). Any one or two of these, or of other measures, might not be enough for an adequate risk assessment.

### **Involving Pupils in Risk Assessment**

29. *HASPEV* chapter 4 Preparing Pupils states: 'Pupils who are involved in a visit's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and be less at risk.' The Department issued *Safety Education* in 2002. This provides advice on making children risk aware rather than risk averse. *Safety Education* explicitly recognises adventurous visits as a useful way of doing this. Any type of educational visit can provide an important medium for education about risk. See table at Annex A, which takes the five National Curriculum statements and suggests ways in which pupils on educational visits can learn about risk assessment.

30. Adventure activities enable pupils to build upon their theoretical knowledge of risk management by providing active opportunities to test their knowledge in practice and develop transferable skills. But bare in mind that pupils may have an exaggerated opinion of their own ability. The risk assessment should ensure that activities are appropriate to levels of ability and progression.

31. Bear in mind too that pupils engaged in assessing risks may alarm parents about the nature of the hazards to be encountered on more adventurous visits. The consent forms should adequately convey the real risks and the control measures. The statutory duty of care laid on LEAs and schools by health and safety legislation remains where pupils are assigned specific tasks relating to risk assessment.

### **LEA & Risk Assessment**

32. See *Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers*: "The LEA must provide health and safety guidance to those schools and services where it is the employer. It must ensure that staff are trained in their health and safety responsibilities as employees and that those who are delegated health and safety tasks (such as risk assessment) are competent to carry them out." The LEA should draw up the generic risk assessments. The task may be assigned to an appropriately competent person who has training and experience or knowledge and other qualities appropriate to the task.

33. The LEA should record the results of the assessment and include them in its policy statement and procedures. The assessment should include an overview of the range of visits carried out by schools and be informed by monitoring procedures. It should include an assessment of new areas of work.

34. The LEA may delegate the preparation of visit/site specific risk assessments to the EVC at the school. Delegation should be informed by the LEA's generic risk assessment contained in its policies and procedures. The competence of the EVC to assess the risks and any risk assessment provided by a contractor should be taken into account. The LEA, when considering approval of a visit, should refer to the EVC's risk assessment.

35. The LEA must ensure that risk assessment training is available to employees. Training and information should emphasise that risk assessment is essential to the planning of a visit and should cover the three levels of risk assessment. All supervisors of a visit should be briefed on the risk assessment and each should take a copy.

36. For further information on risk assessment see **Further Guidance**. Also see the section on risk assessment in *Standards for Adventure*.



## COMPETENCE

37. The LEA should set the standards of competence required for each type of visit. The LEA should approve the assignment of competent staff. The EVC may act on the LEA's behalf if competent to do so and arrange for the assessment of staff's competence to lead, manage, and control pupils on an educational visit. The outdoor education adviser in the LEA will check competence in specific activities. Knowledge of the group, the nature of the visit and the environment to be used should be taken into the assessment. The EVC should seek advice from the LEA outdoor education adviser where necessary.

38. LEAs should use accepted standards of competence - e.g. national governing body (NGB) awards or NVQs - as benchmarks for acceptable competence in adventure activities. Depending upon the circumstances, a number of alternative ways of proving staff competence may be acceptable. These could include in-house training and assessment approved by a relevant technical adviser. See *Standards for Adventure*

39. The LEA's scheme of delegation, made available to all schools, should determine whether it is the LEA or the school that maintains a record of staff competent to lead specific adventure activities. Visits should be approved, or not, with reference to the record of competence amongst other matters. The record should be periodically reviewed and staff should keep logbooks of their experience.

40. The LEA should give clear guidance on supervision, stating what ratios might be appropriate. The guidance should advise how staff should be deployed in general and in specific circumstances and set out the standards expected of adults assigned to be supervisors. Competence and robust supervision should be stressed as essential to any visit. Support should be made available for increasing the competence of teachers who will take children with behavioural problems on educational visits.

41. Specific scenarios should be set out where staff will need to be particularly careful when making a decision. For instance, whether pupils may be allowed to swim or paddle in rivers, lakes, the sea etc.

42. Different circumstances will require different techniques of supervision, such as the difference between close and remote supervision, and the criteria for establishing self-reliant groups. (Note: remote supervision does not mean an absence of supervision.) Details of supervision should be included in the information given to parents on the consent form.

### Training of staff

43. The LEA must ensure that all school staff who will lead or supervise a visit are trained. It should ensure that the local funding scheme allows it to insist on the release of school staff for training. (See *Health and Safety: Responsibility and Powers*.)

44. The LEA should ensure that specific training for head teachers, EVCs, other staff and school governors is provided. This may be via an LEA programme of training opportunities made available to schools by external providers, including for NGB, NVQ or other awards.

45. Training should include First Aid, mini-bus driving, and life saving as

appropriate. Training for group leaders should include all aspects of supervision, ongoing risk assessment (including being prepared to stop an activity that has become too hazardous) and how to deal with an emergency. Where necessary, training on support for pupils' medical and special educational needs will help visits to be inclusive.

46. The LEA should maintain a record of those schools whose staff have received visits training. Also of those schools whose staff still need training. The LEA should periodically check that training is up to date.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

47. *HASPEV* (Chapters One and Two) sets out what LEAs and others should bear in mind when visits and their supervision are being planned. In order for the LEA, as employer, to manage its responsibilities, it will need to delegate or assign some of the related tasks.

48. The LEA should have a policy statement and guidance (as necessary) based on risk assessment. This will set out how to manage educational visits within the statutory framework. It is good practice for the LEA to canvass the views of heads, governors, teachers, parents, technical experts and pupils where appropriate when preparing the statement and guidance.

49. The policy should name the outdoor education adviser and give contact details. It should include details of where advice can be obtained on specific activities and on related matters such as law, transport and child protection if not from the outdoor education adviser.

50. The policy should describe how tasks of planning, supervising, organising and leading activities are carried out. There should be specific references to higher risk environments and activities.

51. The policy should also refer to insurance, transport, any use of contractors, and information for young people and parents (consent forms), emergency procedures and the criteria and procedures for Criminal Record Bureau disclosures.

52. Local arrangements and sources of further information should be made clear. The LEA may endorse *HASPEV*, or other good practice guidance (e.g. from a teacher union), when local guidance is not available.

53. Procedures should be backed-up by the provision of forms for risk assessment, the approval of visits, the check-listing of group-leader tasks, parental consent, use of external activity or service providers, emergency procedures, accident reporting etc. *HASPEV* has a range of model forms that can be adapted as need be. Other organisations' guidance also carries such forms.

54. The LEA policies and procedures should be updated and accessible. Schools should be notified of amendments. Statements and procedures should be regularly reviewed and informed by good practice. Schools should be notified by newsletters etc. and key parts should be web-based.

55. The outdoor education adviser should share good practice by, for example, making the LEA guidance available to foundation, voluntary-aided and independent schools.

### **Contractors (Providers)**

56. Contractors for educational visits might be tour operators, expedition providers, outdoor education centres, local farms, civic museums, and national bodies such as the RSPCA, YHA etc. Guidance should be provided by the LEA on the standards expected of contractors and should include selection criteria. The LEA should list the questions that schools should ask contractors relating to safety management, and what to look for in the replies. LEAs may demand different standards of the same contractor in accordance with the needs of their pupil groups. However, the Department would encourage LEAs and schools to work together and

with the contractor, and contractors' representative bodies e.g. the British Activities Holiday Association (BAHA), to establish some commonality. BAHA's contact details are under **Further Guidance**.

57. Contractors are responsible for assessing the risks of those parts of the visit appearing in the contract. *HASPEV* Chapter 8 states that assurances should be obtained from providers that risks have been assessed and that the provider's staff are competent to instruct and lead pupils of the group's age range on the activity. It is good practice to seek details of their safety management systems. Contractors should also provide details of any independent, inspection-based external verification. However, checks by the LEA or school do not relieve the contractor of any responsibility or liability. Where the EVC does not feel competent to assess the validity of contractors' safety systems or assurances, advice should be sought from the LEA's outdoor education adviser, who may also seek advice from a technical adviser.

### **Use of Tour Operators**

58. *HASPEV* paragraphs 201-205 states. "Before using a tour operator group leaders should ensure it is reputable." The Department recognises that recently established companies might not have had the time to acquire a good reputation. The process of risk assessment detailed above will help such companies to present their credentials. The outdoor education adviser and the EVC should between them check that the company shows due diligence in checking, for example, the safety and suitability of the accommodation and transport (pupils should not be expected to share beds, the road transport must have seat belts). The Department is advised that some companies act as agents and use service providers overseas. If this is so then the agent should be asked to explain how the health and safety of the group would be ensured. Details of insurance should be obtained and checked.

59. An unexpected change of plan increases risk. Do you have a plan B for when - for example - your English vehicle breaks down in France? Is your driver competent to drive your group in a French coach? Does the offered coach have seatbelts? Should you carry on by train? Do you have the language ability to cope with this? For further guidance see RoSPA's *Minibus Safety: A Code of Practice* (details under **Further Guidance**).

60. Some contractors may offer a pre-visit to overseas or other sites for group leaders free of charge. These may be arranged in conjunction with the local tourism authority. This can enable the group leader to gain a direct experience of the venue and environment and assist their appraisal of the contractor's risk assessment.

61. However, the outdoor education adviser and the EVC will need to be mindful that 'free' family holidays might be offered to teachers as an inducement to use a particular company. However, the costs would usually be loaded onto the package costs borne by the parents. This would not represent best value for them or good practice by the school, and might infringe staff rules and conditions of service.

### **Emergency procedures**

62. The LEA should develop emergency procedures, including those in the immediacy of an incident, in consultation with teachers, school governors and relevant agencies. The procedures, with telephone numbers for use in emergency, throughout the visit, by those on visit and those in school, should be clearly outlined in written guidelines for educational visits.

63. The written guidelines should contain an immediate action checklist for use by the group leader in emergency, and for LEA officers, head teachers, school governors.

64. Procedures should be reviewed regularly with the help of people from all agencies involved in any incident

65. Named senior officers of the LEA should be accessible at all times in the event of an incident and an emergency contact point should be set up which relays information to them. Where necessary, a rota of staff on call in case of an emergency should be drawn up and disseminated. Procedures should be tested.

66. The written guidelines should emphasise the importance of good communication with parents before, during and after a visit. The LEA should provide guidance and support for schools needing to communicate with parents.

67. It is good practice to maintain appropriate public liability insurance cover. The LEA should make a statement of what insurance cover it provides (including personal accident), what needs to be provided by the school, and what is optional for the school or parents. The means by which insurance cover is obtained, and claims made, should be made known. Guidance could stress that compensation after the event is no substitute for prevention by careful risk management. Details of insurance should be provided in the consent form sent to parents.

68. Advice to head teachers faced by a sudden death should be available. It should carry practical guidance on meeting CID officers, on coping with media attention, and on the sympathetic treatment of distraught families, pupils and staff.

69. Counselling services, media liaison (press office) and communications systems personnel should be made available to draw the onus of response away from the school.

### **Investigation of Serious Incidents**

70. Chapter 10 of *HASPEV* gives advice on emergency procedures. When a serious incident has taken place on an educational visit in the UK or abroad, the LEA will usually undertake its own investigation. This is good practice. A serious incident would include the fatality of a pupil or adult but might also include serious injuries (e.g. those that in the UK are reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases or Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) and comparable incidents abroad) and incidents where no serious injury occurred but where the risk of injury was high.

71. The purpose of the investigation will be to:

- determine the causes of the incident;
- determine whether there are lessons to be learned;
- provide information to bereaved parents;
- exchange information with statutory investigation bodies as required e.g. police, coroner, Health & Safety Executive;
- manage media enquiries;

- provide early information to the Department (contact the Pupil Health & Safety Team on 020 7925 5536) who will consider the need for national dissemination of lessons learned.

72. The investigation should begin as soon as possible, while key witnesses have good recall of the facts. If a contractor or other organisation is involved in the visit, the LEA should agree roles with them to avoid duplication of effort. Care should be taken not to disrupt any parallel investigations by the police, HSE, coroner, etc.

73. There is usually no reason to wait for those parallel investigations to be complete before starting the investigation. However, before publishing any report, the LEA should check with the police, HSE, coroner etc. to ensure that publication will not jeopardise their investigations or any action that they may decide to take. When the investigation is complete, it is good practice to share lessons learned with all schools in the LEA area, with other LEAs and with the Department.

74. Local legal advice (and sometimes insurer's advice) will often suggest the merits of restricting information where it may be used for legal action. This should not mean keeping bereaved parents uninformed even where the LEA or school may fear legal action.

75. It is good practice to identify an official who will act as the key point of contact for bereaved parents. This official should be sensitive to the family's needs and should preferably have some counselling competence. He or she should inform the family of the progress of the investigation, answering their questions as helpfully as possible, and providing them with the facts.

76. Bereaved parents will need to know all the facts. In the long term, they will not be able to complete the grieving process if their questions remain unanswered. They will also need to know that any lessons learned will be applied. Denial of information is likely to compound and perpetuate their grief, and to increase the likelihood that they will resort to legal action.

### **Reporting accidents and incidents**

77. The LEA should lay down procedures for schools to use when reporting accidents and near-accidents to the LEA for monitoring purposes.

78. The LEA should establish procedures to ensure and help the statutory reporting of serious accidents and incidents involving violence. These are likely to be in scope of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases or Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR). Reports are made to HSE directly by the school or via the LEA as employer.

79. It is good practice to study reports of incidents in order to identify what consequent action may be necessary to limit recurrence, including the amendment of procedures. A named officer or adviser who can effect an urgent response, if necessary, will limit the risk of similar incidents happening elsewhere.

80. It would be helpful if serious accidents could be reported to the Department's Pupil Health and Safety Team on 020 7925 5536 so that Ministers may be briefed.

81. It is good practice to report near-accidents to the EVC and the outdoor education adviser so that lessons can be learned and appropriate training or re-training be arranged.

## **Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures**

82. Outdoor education advisers, EVCs and group leaders should understand and follow the procedures for vetting contractors, volunteers and other people not on the school staff who wish to be supervisors or drivers for educational visits. The DfES has issued guidance: Circular 0278/2002, *Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service*. (This supersedes paragraph 77 of HASPEV. The dedicated phone number on page 64 of HASPEV for list 99 checks no longer exists.)

83. The Education (Teachers) (Amendment) Regulations 1998, which came into force on 1 August 1998, made changes to the law with the aim of preventing people who are barred by the Secretary of State from being directly employed by an LEA, school or further education college from getting round the ban by either:

- working as a volunteer; or
- working in a business that is contracted to provide services to schools, further education institutions, or pupils attending them.

84. Checks should therefore be carried out on volunteers and staff employed by contractors who will have regular contact with pupils on the school premises or on school activities outside. The employer should ask them to apply to the Criminal Records Bureau for an Enhanced Disclosure to check for convictions or inclusion on List 99. Volunteers do not have to pay a fee for these Disclosures. Contact details for the CRB are <http://www.disclosure.gov.uk> and telephone 0870 90 90 811.

85. This does not mean that every volunteer who helps to supervise an educational visit will have to obtain a disclosure. Parents and others who from time to time help teachers to supervise local visits need not necessarily be CRB-checked (though they should be verified as competent in their allotted tasks and trained and briefed as necessary). Volunteers helping teachers to supervise a residential visit should be checked. Anyone should be checked if they are likely to be in sole charge of a pupil under 18 on a one-to-one basis.

86. All contractor staff likely to have access to young people as part of their normal duties should be CRB-checked. See *HASPEV* paragraph 76. The EVC should obtain assurances that this has happened. The LEA should monitor.

## **Special Educational Needs & Disability**

87. *HASPEV* (paragraphs 107-108) relates to pupils with special educational needs being taken on visits. Changes to the law bring educational visits into scope of disability legislation. From September 2002, changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) place new duties on LEAs and schools not to discriminate against disabled pupils for reasons relating to their disabilities.

88. The school's EVC and the LEA's outdoor education adviser should check that all reasonably practicable efforts have been made during the course of risk assessment to include disabled pupils in educational visits; and to include those disabled pupils who wish to take part in educational visits out of school hours. This will usually entail discussion with the pupil, parents, group leader and other supervisors, the manager of the venue to be visited, the tour operator etc.

89. The Department's guidance, *Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access*

*to schools for disabled pupils'* was sent to LEAs. The Department has also published a 6-page summary of the guidance, entitled *Accessible Schools: Summary Guidance*. This was sent to schools. Both documents are available from the Department's publication centre.

90. The Disability Rights Commission is producing two Codes of Practice on the new disability duties: one for schools and one for post-16 providers of education, which will illustrate the new legislation with examples, and help those affected by it to understand their rights and responsibilities.

### **Passports**

91. Some states may not allow in a traveller whose passport will expire within a few months of entry. The group leader or EVC should personally check the passports of all supervisors and pupils to obviate the risks of anyone being turned back from the borders of the venue country or any countries being traversed en route. The EVC or the group leader should contact the UK embassy or consulate of the relevant country or countries for details.

### **Collective Passports**

92. These can be held for an approved group of usually five to fifty British nationals under 18 years of age travelling abroad in the charge of a responsible leader. The leader and deputy leader must be over 21 years old and hold a valid standard United Kingdom passport. An application costs £42 and should be submitted at least four weeks before the collective passport is needed. Pupils who are not British nationals cannot be named on the collective passport.

### **Visa Exemption**

93. Pupils who are not British nationals will normally need a visa to travel to another EU member state unless visa exemption has been secured for them. Details of visa exemption, which is available only for members of a school group taking part in an educational visit, and not for other youth groups, are available from the Home Office on 020 8760 8773 or the British Council on 020 7389 4004.



## **FURTHER GUIDANCE**

### **Department for Education and Skills**

*Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV)*, and supplement  
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits>

*Health & Safety: Responsibilities & Powers*  
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/responsibilities>

*Guidance on First Aid for Schools* <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/firstaid>

*Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs: A Good Practice Guide*  
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/medical>

*Work experience: A guide for secondary schools 2002*

*Work Experience: A guide for employers 2002*

*Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service.* DfES May 2002.

*Safety Education Guidance Leaflet*  
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/safetyeducationguidance>

Chief Medical Officer Advice on Farm Visits: A Department of Health Press Notice 12 April 2000.

### **HSE**

*Guidance to the Licensing Authority on the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996* (HSC £9)

*A Guide to Risk Assessment Requirements -*  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg218.pdf>

*Avoiding ill health at open farms: Advice to teachers AIS23* new edition 28 June 2000 of advice mentioned in *HASPEV*).

*Five Steps to Risk Assessment* . (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>)

*Adventure activities centres; five steps to risk assessment* (£4.50)

The New General Teaching Requirement for Health and Safety, QCA/HSE, 1999

*Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools* revised edition 1999. HSG 179 £10.50

*Reducing Risk Protecting People* 2001

*Preparing Young People for a Safer Life* (issued with Cheshire County Council and The Institute of Occupational Safety and Health – tel: 0116 257 3100). This has a model risk assessment for a sponsored walk.

*Adventure activities centres: five steps to risk assessment* (£4.50)

Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC): *Statement of Risk Perception in Adventure and Outdoor Activities*

## **Others**

Information about adventure activity providers covered by the Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme <http://www.aala.org.uk>

The Wales Tourist Board, the Scottish Tourist Board and the British Activity Holiday Association (see next) provide voluntary inspection schemes to complement licensing for providers of activities that are out of scope of licensing

The British Activity Holiday Association, 22 Green Lane, Hersham, Surrey, KT12 5HD. Tel/Fax: 01932 252994. [www.baha.org.uk](http://www.baha.org.uk)

*Get Safe for Summer* - Amateur Swimming Association. [www.asa.-awards.co.uk](http://www.asa.-awards.co.uk)

*Safe Supervision for Teaching and Coaching Swimming*. Amateur Swimming Association and others. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2001 Tel: 01509 618700. Advice on ratios in HASPEV paragraph 187, which are pupil year-based, should be read in conjunction with the competence-based ratios in *Safe Supervision*

The Royal Lifesaving Society UK, River House, High St, Broom, Warwickshire B50 4HN (Tel: 01789 773994) <http://www.lifesavers.org.uk/>

*Minibus Safety: A Code of Practice* - RoSPA and others 2002  
[www.rospa.com/pdfs/road/minibus.pdf](http://www.rospa.com/pdfs/road/minibus.pdf)

*Safety on School Trips A Teachers and the Law Booklet* - The Professional Association of Teachers. Revised edition 2002

*Educational Visits* - NASUWT 2001

Guidance published by the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for various adventure activities as in HASPEV. NGBs also maintain leader training and assessment programmes.

*Safe and Responsible Expeditions and Guidelines for Youth Expeditions* - Young Explorers' Trust, c/o RGS-IBG Expedition Advisory Centre. £5 inc. p & p or free from website: <http://www.rgs.org/eacpubs>

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)'s Expedition Advisory Centre, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR provides advice, information and training to anyone planning an overseas expedition. Tel 020 7591 3030 <http://www.rgs.org/eac>

The Independent Schools' Adventure Activities Association (ISAAA) offers help, support and technical advice to any Independent School [www.malcol.org/isaaa/](http://www.malcol.org/isaaa/)

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has its own clear structure, procedures and guidelines <http://www.theaward.org/>.

Guidance is produced by many of the voluntary youth organisations

*Guidelines for Off-Site Educational Visits and Activities in the United Kingdom*  
Nottinghamshire CC September 2001 has a section on camping pages 75-79.

*Safe Kids Campaign* Report 2000, Child Accident Prevention Trust

Transport for London provides free transport for school groups on the underground, buses, Thameslink and the Docklands Light Railway. The advice line for the scheme is 0207 918 3954 and the website is at [www.tfl.gov.uk/schoolparty](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/schoolparty). The general travel advice line can offer information on route planning and station layouts. Apart from its commitment to the safety of its passengers Transport for London does not offer specific advice on health and safety for school groups but refers them to HASPEV and HSE risk assessment guidance.

*The Waterways Code* (leaflet) and *The Waterways Code for Boaters* (video) are available from British Waterways - [hq@britishwaterways.co.uk](mailto:hq@britishwaterways.co.uk) - tel: 01923 201120

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust has produced a range of guidance on personal safety, including booklets, videos and training courses <http://www.suzylamplugh.org>

The OCR (Oxford Cambridge RSA) 'Off-Site Safety Management Scheme' provides a training course aimed at those who organise off-site visits. It is exam-based and teachers can combine it with practical experience:  
<http://www.ocr.org.uk/schemes/ownbrand/examined/offsite/Offindex.htm>

## INVOLVING PUPILS IN RISK ASSESSMENT

## ANNEX A.

NC Statement	Examples of Good Practice
Teaching about hazards, risks and risk control	<p>Pupils understand the hazards of getting lost in an unfamiliar town. They recognize why they have to stay in groups, look out for each other and meet teachers on time.</p> <p>Pupils on a ski trip understand the risks and possible consequences to themselves and others in skiing out of control. As a result they comply with rules about staying together and with instructions given to them by instructors and teachers.</p>
To recognize hazards, assess consequent risks and take steps to control the risks to themselves and others	<p>Pupils are asked to draw up a set of rules that they can use on a school camp that will keep them safe when moving around tents, using cooking stoves and being hygienic.</p> <p>Pupils plan a Duke of Edinburgh's Award Silver Expedition that shows route planning that takes into account the ability of every member of the group, sensible escape routes and circumstances in which they would decide to use those escape routes.</p>
To use information to assess the immediate and cumulative risk	<p>On a field studies visit involving a beach survey pupils are asked to make a risk assessment of the area they will study taking into account the tidal range. They are then asked to say what differences they would have to allow if the tides are spring tides rather than neaps and how a strong onshore wind might affect the wave height and their subsequent area of safe operation.</p>
To manage their environment to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others	<p>A teacher is taking her class of 9 year olds on a walk along a canal bank, which is 100m from the nearest road. She asks them what they would do if they were here as one of a group of three friends and one of them fell into the water? She might ask them to apply what they had learnt in water safety during their swimming lessons.</p> <p>A group of 16 year olds is on a residential 'team building' course. They are asked to devise a self-imposed 'contract' or 'code of conduct' they will all agree to abide by. It has to cover how they can be honest with each other's performance without being damaging in the way they tell each other, how to support each other in emotional crises (e.g. when a personal 'fear' threshold is reached), how they will use the environment they are in and leave no trace of their passing.</p>
To explain the steps they take to control risks	<p>Pupils plan a residential visit. They make bookings for accommodation and transport themselves taking account of the responsibility they have and the criteria they will use for making safe decisions for themselves and their friends.</p> <p>Pupils are able to review an activity, identify what was done well, where improvements could be made or when near accidents may have occurred. They are aware that they know how to ensure that everyone learns and improves from this experience.</p>