

**Educational Visits Policy**

**September 2025**

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## Introduction

Students of all ages and learning abilities benefit from educational visits that link to subjects being taught under the National Curriculum. They may include farm visits, geography field trips, museum visits, visits to sites of historical importance and community-based activities. Some visits may be to places outside of the United Kingdom.

There have been some high profile cases where education authorities and teachers have been prosecuted when things have gone seriously wrong on a provision trip. However, it is important to remember that the overwhelming majority of educational visits are carried out safely and responsibly by teachers who take the time and effort to get things right. The benefits of such trips to students can be immense and this is reflected in official advice from the government, the education department and the Health and Safety Executive

This guidance note is intended to provide information and advice to teachers, classroom assistants, group leaders and other adults involved in provision trips. It is important that the reasons why some trips have gone wrong are understood and that provisions planning trips do not make the same mistakes.

A number of significant hazards are linked to provision trips and educational visits. These include;

* Travelling to and from the destination.
* Weather conditions (excessively hot or excessively cold).
* Water based activities.
* Adult – student ratios.
* Contact with animals (where applicable).
* Infectious diseases.
* Other hazardous substances e.g. pesticides.
* Contact with equipment and machinery.
* Electrical installations and equipment e.g. electric fences, power distribution points.
* Ground conditions (wet, muddy, contaminated).
* Personal hygiene.

## Legal Duties

Health and safety legislation requires that employers protect, so far as is reasonably practicable, their workers from the risks to their health and safety whilst at work. They also have a responsibility to protect others (including children) from risks to their health and safety that arise from the way they run their business.

If a member of staff leading a trip deviates from an agreed visit plan or in some way contributes to an incident they too may be in breach of health and safety legislation or common law.

## Information

These duties place a clear legal responsibility for the safety of visiting provision students on both the provision authorities and the operator of any site they visit. They must take into account the fact that children are naturally inquisitive and may not have a true understanding of the risks associated with the place they are visiting.

## Controlling and managing visits

Every education authority will have a detailed policy in relation to the planning and delivery of provision visits. Independent operators will need to develop their own systems to monitor and oversee visits.

It is recognised that each provision should have an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). This may be the Head Teacher or other nominated person within the provision. The EVC should be able to demonstrate competency relative to the size of the provision and the activities to be undertaken. They must be able to produce evidence of suitable training, or qualifications and have proven experience of practical leadership of outdoor educational activities. The EVC will normally have the responsibility for approving educational visits organised by other staff.

In developing arrangements it may be appropriate to impose different requirements for different activities. For example the policy could require that routine day long educational visits be approved by the EVC while those involving activities near water or other significant hazards and residential visits would need specific approval by the Governing Body or Local Education Authority (LEA). This guidance note assumes that the activity is being organised by the provision’s own EVC, or that the EVC for the Local Education Authority is involved in the planning of the visit.

### **Risk Assessment**

A competent person will undertake a thorough risk assessment for every educational visit or provision trip. A written statement on the five key areas of risk assessment will be prepared, covering the following.

* What potential hazards are involved in the visit or activity?
* Who might be affected by the hazards?
* What safety measures need to be put in place to reduce any risks to an acceptable level?
* Is the group leader able to put the safety measures in place without specialist assistance?
* What arrangements are there for dealing with an emergency?

The risk assessment will take into account:

* The type of activity and the level at which it is undertaken.
* The age, competence, fitness and temperament of the group members.
* Any special educational or medical needs of individuals within the group.
* Supervision ratios.
* The competence, experience and qualifications of the supervisory team.
* The location, routes and modes of transport to it.

### **Informing and Involving Parents**

The educational setting will obtain parental consent for all educational trips (if required), and will give parents the chance to opt out of specific trips if they have signed a generic consent form.

Parents / students will be asked to provide information about any medical conditions, allergies and special dietary needs that their child / student has. Consent to emergency medical treatment will also be obtained, where possible, prior to the activity.

Parents / students will be given full information concerning the proposed out-of-provision activity or visit.

#### Overseas Travel and Residential Visits in the UK

For journeys involving overseas travel or extended residential journeys in this country, the educational setting will hold a meeting with the parents of those students wishing to participate so that parents have access to full information before making a final decision on their children's participation or alternatively with the older students themselves.

Such meetings will cover:

* The dates and time of departure and return.
* The destination with full address and telephone numbers.
* The name of travel company/coach company, method of travel.
* The activities planned for the participants.
* The cost and what it covers.
* Insurance arrangements.
* The date after which the deposit cannot be returned if cancelling.
* Advice on pocket / spending money.
* The identity of staff who will be responsible for money if required.
* A checklist of clothing and/or equipment required.
* Details of any inoculations required.
* Planned care for any children / students with special education or health needs.
* A copy of the child / students medical care plan.
* The names of the group leader, deputy leader and other staff and or parents accompanying the party.
* The ratio of students to supervisors.
* The rules.
* Contact details in case of an emergency.

#### Accompanying Parents or Other Volunteers

All parents or others who volunteer to accompany the party as one of the supervisors will be subjected to a Disclosure and Barring Service criminal records check if an overnight stay is involved or if there is a possibility of them being alone with students. Their participation will need to be approved by the party leader, the Headteacher / Principal and the governing body.

The organization of a visit can be broken down into three stages: pre-visit, the visit itself and after the visit.

## Stage 1 – Pre-Visit Planning and Preparation

* Obtain outline approval for the visit from the provision’s EVC or LEA, using the provision’s own or LEA approved documents.
* Establish the educational criteria for the visit.
* Ensure that the purpose of the visit is made known to all relevant parties;.
* Ensure that suitable risk assessments for the activities are carried out. Ideally this will be based on a familiarization or liaison visit carried out by the organizer so that they can identify hazards and risks. The risk assessments should address only risks that are reasonably foreseeable – you do not have to consider risks that are trivial or fanciful.
* Consider whether the needs of disabled or people with special needs can be met thorough the duration of the visit
* Prepare a visit plan, supported by a risk assessment, and submit it to the EVC, LEA or Governing Body for approval.
* When approval is given check that you have, or arrange for parental consent for the children who will be involved. Send parents details of the trip and the proposed itinerary and include planned contingency arrangements in the event of e.g. Traffic delays or bad weather.
* Establish a procedure to follow in the event of an incident taking place during the visit;
* Ensure that there is an appropriate ratio of supervising adults to children.
* Ensure that a contingency plan is in place to deal with potential alterations to the visit (including changes of route and to take account of adverse weather).
* If the party is to split up on arrival at the visit site ensure communication between the group leaders.
* Ensure that a person at the provision, with authority to make significant decisions, is available throughout the duration of the visit. There should also be a nominated back-up for this person.
* Ensure that the provision of transport, either using the provision’s own bus(es) or those of an approved coach operator is adequate and that the drivers are licensed and authorised. Make sure seat belts are fitted and used.
* Liaison with the operator of the site being visited will include:
* Public Liability Insurance cover.
* Site specific safety information.
* Any limits on numbers that may be appropriate.
* Risk assessments;
* COSHH assessments.
* Supervision.
* Safety equipment.
* Provision for first aid.
* Washing facilities.
* Provision for catering or eating and drinking. Provision for those with disability or special needs
* Alternative activities should they be needed;
* Emergency procedures including the location of the nearest Accident and Emergency unit.

## Stage 2 – The Visit

* On the day of the visit, if not before, explain and check that the supervising adults, including parent volunteers, understand their role and what is expected of them. Ensure that each group leader has the means to communicate with the visit leader through the day.
* Consider if the weather or conditions will affect the planned activity. Might the contingency arrangements be required? Do helpers need further information or instruction?
* Establish emergency arrangements.
* Ensure that children are wearing appropriate clothing and that any cuts or grazes are covered with waterproof dressings.
* Remind children of the safety rules, e.g.;
* Stay in allocated groups at all times.
* Listen carefully to all instructions given to them by staff or parent supervisors.
* Approach and handle any animals carefully (if applicable).
* Wash hands thoroughly before eating and after using the toilet.
* Eat only food brought with them, or food bought at the venue.
* Eat only in designated areas.
* Clean, or if possible, change their footwear before leaving and wash their hands after touching footwear.
* Do not pick up or handle any tools or equipment unless permitted to do so by staff.
* Do not climb on walls or fences.
* Do not chase or frighten the animals.
* Do not kiss animals.
* Do not suck fingers or put pencils, pens, crayons etc. into their mouths.
* Do not eat food which has fallen to the ground.
* Do not force children to rush to keep up, allow plenty of time for each activity including rest and lunch breaks.
* Undertake regular headcounts to ensure that all children are present - especially at departure.
* Make sure that no personal possessions or rubbish are left behind. Ensure that all possessions are accounted for and rubbish disposed of before departure.

## Stage 3 – After the Visit

* Review the visit with other staff and parents involved to identify any causes for concern that may need to be taken into account by the provision or LEA for future visits.
* Review the visit with the site operator to see if there are things that need to be improved, or amended for future visit programmes.
* Where there are lessons to be learned, keep a written record for future reference.
* Monitor the children over the next few days (especially if there has been contact with animals) in case any of them appear to be developing any illness that may be attributable to the visit.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Group Leader

* The group leader will have overall responsibility for the group at all times. In delegating supervisory roles to other adults in the group the group leader will ensure that:
* Supervisory responsibility is allocated to each adult for named students.
* Each adult knows which children / student they are responsible for.
* Each child / student knows which adult is responsible for them.
* All adults understand that they are responsible to the group leader for the supervision of children / students assigned to them.
* All adults and children / students are aware of the expected standards of behaviour.
* The group leader will be expected to have made an exploratory visit to the location.

Supervisors

* Individual supervisors will be expected to:
* Have a reasonable prior knowledge of the children / students including any special educational needs, medical needs or disabilities including copies of any medical care plans.
* Carry a list/register of all group members.
* Directly supervise the children / students, particularly when they are mingling with the public and may not be easily identified.
* Regularly check that the entire group is present.
* Have a clear plan of the activity to be undertaken and its educational objectives.
* Have the means to contact the group leader or other supervisors if needing help.
* Have prior knowledge of the venue (the group leader should normally have made an exploratory visit).
* Anticipate any potential risk by recognising hazards and act promptly where necessary.
* Continuously monitor the appropriateness of all activities and the physical and mental condition and abilities of the group and suitability of prevailing conditions.
* Exercise appropriate control of the group and ensure that children / students abide by the agreed standards of behaviour.
* Have a clear understanding of emergency procedures and be able to carry them out.
* Ensure that all children / students are aware of an appropriate rendezvous point.
* Ensure that all children / students know what to do if they become separated from the group.
* Have appropriate access to first aid.

## Other sources of information

There is a huge amount of more detailed information on educational visits available on educational websites and from trade unions representing teachers. Visit organisers would benefit by looking at and learning from these sites. Some include, as case studies, details of trips that went wrong so that lessons can be learned and similar mistakes avoided.

## Maintaining Records

A file should be maintained that contains all information such as provision or LEA approval, risk and COSHH assessments, site operators’ assessments and insurances, parental consent forms and any other relevant documents. This may then be referred to at a later date if any subsequent visits are planned to the same site.