

Earlscliffe (Sussex Summer Schools Ltd)

TRIPS AND VISITS POLICY

(which has regard to the Dfe guidance “Health and Safety of Children on Educational Visits”)

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of employees. Employers are also under a duty to ensure, so far, as is reasonable practicable, the health and safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. This includes participants in off-site visits.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, made under the 1974 Act, require employers to:

Assess the risks of activities (see RISK ASSESSMENT).

Introduce measures to control those risks.

Tell their employees about these measures.

Also under the Health and Safety legislation employees must.

Take reasonable care of their own and others’ health and safety.

Co-operate with their employers over safety matters.

Carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions.

Inform the employer of any serious risks.

These duties apply to all Earlscliffe visits. Teachers and activity staff in charge of children also have a common law duty to act, as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

The Earlscliffe management will:

Ensure that the visit has a specific and stated objective, normally raising cultural awareness or tourism

Ensure that the Trip Leader shows how their plans comply with regulations and safety policy document and that the Trip Leader reports back after the visit.

Ensure that they are informed about less routine visits well in advance.

Assess proposals for certain types of visit, which should include visits involving an overnight stay

The Head Teacher and Senior Staff should ensure that visits comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the management of its own health and safety policy. Senior staff should ensure that the Trip Leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

Senior staff should be clear about their role if taking part in the visit as a group member/supervisor. They should follow the instructions of the Trip Leader who will have sole charge of the visit.

Senior staff should ensure that:

Adequate Safeguarding procedures are in place.

All necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins.

The risk assessment has been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place. Training needs have been assessed by a competent person and the needs of the staff and children have been considered.

The Trip Leader has experience in supervising the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively.

The Trip Leader or another leader is suitably competent to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place. See School-led adventure activities.

Non-teacher supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children.

Ratio of supervisors to children is appropriate.

Parents have signed consent forms if applicable.

Arrangements have been made for the mechanical needs and special educational needs of all the pupils.

Adequate first-aid provision will be available.

The mode of travel is appropriate.

Travel times out and back are known including pick-up and drop-off points.

There is adequate and relevant insurance cover.

They have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name.

A school contact has been nominated (this may be the Centre Manager) and the Trip Leader has details.

The Trip Leader, group supervisors and nominated contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures.

The Trip Leader, group supervisors and nominated contact have the names of all the adults and pupils travelling in the group, and the contact details of parents and the teachers' and other supervisors' next of kin if necessary.

There is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home.

The designated Trip Leader

The Trip Leader, should have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have regard to the health and safety of the group. The Trip Leader should have been appointed or approved by Senior Staff. The Trip Leader should:

Obtain Senior staff approval prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place.

Follow school regulations, guidelines and policies.

Appoint a deputy Trip Leader if required

Clearly define each group supervisor's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned.

Be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range.

Be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity and be familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place. See School-led adventure activities.

Be aware of child protection issues.

Ensure that adequate first-aid provision will be available.

Undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents.

Undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment. See Risk Assessment.

Review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise Senior Staff where adjustments may be necessary.

Ensure that staff are fully aware of what the proposed visit involves.
Have enough information on the children proposed for the visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed.
Ensure the ratio of supervisors to children is appropriate for the needs of the group. See Ratios.
Consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the children is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality.
Ensure that group supervisors have details of the school contact.
Ensure that group supervisors and the school contact have a copy of the emergency procedures.
Ensure that the group's staff have the details of any special educational or medical needs which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively.
Observe the guidance set out for staff below.

Earlscliffe staff on school-led visits act as employees of the Earlscliffe management whether the visit takes place within the normal hours or outside those hours, by agreement with management.

Staff must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances. They should:
Follow the instructions of the Trip Leader and help with control and discipline.
Consider stopping the visit or the activity, notifying the Trip Leader, if they think the risk to the health or safety of the children in their charge is unacceptable.

Visiting Leaders

These adults on the visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit. Visiting leaders acting as supervisors must:
Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group.
Not be left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment.
Follow the instructions of the Trip Leader and staff and help with control and discipline.
Speak to the Trip Leader or staff if concerned about the health or safety of pupils at any time during the visit.

The Responsibilities of the Children/Students

The Trip Leader should make it clear to children that they must:
Not take unnecessary risks.
Follow the instructions of the leader and other supervisors including those at the venue of the visit.
Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly.
If abroad be sensitive to local codes and customs.
Look out for anything that might hurt or threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the Trip Leader or staff about it.

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

Day parents should be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should go on the visit. The Trip Leader should ensure that day parents are given sufficient information in writing well before the visit takes place.

Parents will need to:

Provide the Trip Leader with emergency contact numbers.

Sign a consent form.

Give the Trip Leader information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit (usually by means of the consent form).

Planning

Whether the visit is to a local park, museum or swimming pool, or includes a residential stay in the UK or abroad, it is essential that formal planning take place before setting off. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them.

For residential visits at home or abroad, or for potentially hazardous activities, school management should satisfy itself that the visit has been planned effectively and that risks are minimised.

Risk Assessment

In practice, risk assessments, should be carried out by the Trip Leader.

An assessment should be completed well before the visit, and should be approved by Senior Staff .

A risk assessment for a visit need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. The person assessing the risks should be competent to do so.

A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Children must not be placed in situations, which expose them to unacceptable level of risk.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

What are the hazards?

Who might be affected by them?

What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?

Can the Trip Leader put the safety measures in place?

The person carrying out the risk assessment should record it and give copies to all staff on the visit, including school management with details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the risks.

Detailed advice on risk assessment can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive, which has issued a revision of its booklet, Five steps to Risk Assessment.

The Trip Leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

The type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.

The location, routes and modes of transport.

The competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff.
The ratios of teachers and supervisory staff to children.
The group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament and the suitability of the activity.

The special educational or medical needs of children.
The quality and suitability of available equipment.
Seasonal conditions, weather and timing.
Emergency procedures.
How to cope when a child becomes unable or unwilling to continue.
The need to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

Ideally an exploratory visit should be made by any trip/visit leader 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.

In other cases the Trip Leader should undertake an exploratory visit, wherever that is possible, to:

Ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit.
Obtain names and addresses of other schools who have used the venue.
Obtain advice from the venue's manager.
Assess potential areas and levels of risk.
Ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and children in the group.
Become familiar with the area before taking a group of young people there.

If in the last resort an exploratory visit is not feasible then the Trip Leader will need to consider how to complete an adequate assessment of the risks. A minimum measure would be to obtain specific information by letter from the venue, from other schools who have recently visited it, and from local organisations such as tourist boards.

Other factors which should form part of the planning stage include:

The facilities/equipment the group will need to take on the visit.
The facilities/equipment to be provided at the venue.
Staff training needs.
The designation of someone to record the details of the visit and to carry accident forms etc.
Transport arrangements.
Insurance arrangements.
Information to the provider.
Communication arrangements.
Supervision ratios.
Contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return.
Information to day-parents when applicable.
Preparing children.
Emergency arrangements.
Arrangements for sending day children home early/late.

First aid should form part of the risk assessment. Before undertaking any off-site activities the Trip Leader should assess what level of first aid might be needed. On any kind of visit the Trip Leader should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that an adequate first-aid box is taken. For adventurous activities, visits abroad or residential visits it is sensible for at least one of the group's teachers to be a fully-trained first-aider. All adults in the group should know how to contact the emergency services.

The minimum first-aid provision for a visit is:

A suitably stocked first-aid box.

A person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

Other considerations when considering first-aid needs should include:

The numbers in the group and the nature of the activity.

The likely injuries and how effective first aid would be.

The distance of the nearest hospital.

First aid should be available and accessible at all times. The Health and Safety Executive recommends the following minimum contents for a travelling first-aid box where no special risk has been identified;

A leaflet giving general advice on first aid.

Six individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings.

One large sterile unmedicated wound dressing approximately 18 cm x 18cm.

Two triangular bandages.

Two safety pins.

Individually wrapped moist cleansing wipes.

One pair of disposable gloves.

A resuscitator [for hygienic mouth to mouth resuscitation] would also be useful.

All minibuses are required by law to carry a first-aid kit

Supervisory ratios

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

Sex, age and ability of group.

Children with special educational or medical needs.

Nature of activities.

Experience of adults in off-site supervision.

Duration and nature of the journey.

Type of any accommodation.

Competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.

Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited.

Competence and behaviour of children.

First aid cover.

1 adult for every 15 students aged 11 years +

In addition to the trip's Trip Leader in charge there should be enough staff to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks

may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly. The same consideration should be given to visits abroad or residential visits.

Visiting Leaders/other adults and parents on the trip

Where there is more than one staff member a Trip Leader should be appointed who has authority over the whole group.

Where a high adult:pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Trip Leaders and parents may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the group. Anyone who has not had a criminal conviction check should never be left in sole charge of children.

For the protection of both adults and children, all adults should ensure that they are not alone with a child wherever possible.

Staff responsibilities

All adult supervisors, including Earlscliffe staff and visiting leaders and parents, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. It may be helpful to put this in writing. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any children who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those likely to cause trouble. Earlscliffe Staff retain responsibility for the groups at all times.

Competencies if on an Adventure Trip

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as watersports, karting, riding etc the management must ensure that the Trip Leader and other supervisors are suitably competent to lead or instruct children in the activity, bearing in mind that some children may be novices. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) award where it exists. In all probability, Earlscliffe will have sub-contracted its instruction in such activities to other suitably recognised, experienced and qualified providers.

Head counts

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of children should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. All supervisors should carry a list at all times. Children should not wear name badges. All children must carry school contact details. The Trip Leader should establish rendezvous points and tell children what to do if they become separated from the group.

Remote supervision

The aim of visits for older children may be to encourage independence and investigative skills, and some of the time on visits such as trips abroad and fieldwork may be unsupervised. The Trip Leader should establish during the planning stage of the visit whether the children are competent in remote supervision and should ensure parents have agreed this part of the visit. The Trip Leader remains responsible for children even when not in direct contact with them.

Preparing the children

Children who are involved in a visit's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Providing information and guidance to children is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Children should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail.

Participation

The Trip Leader should ensure that the children are capable of undertaking the proposed activity. Children should be encouraged to take on challenges during adventurous activities but should not be coerced into activities of which they have a genuine fear.

Children whose behaviour is such that the Trip Leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity.

Equal Opportunities

Every effort should be made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, sex, religion etc. All should be encouraged to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible.

Information for the Children

The Trip Leader should issue a student information sheet.

The aims and objectives of the visit/activity.

The background information about the place to be visited.

Basic foreign works where appropriate.

Relevant foreign culture and customs.

How to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules.

Why safety precautions are in place.

Why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities.

What standard of behaviour is expected

Appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct.

Who is responsible for the group.

What not to bring back either within the UK or from abroad.

What to do if approached by anyone from outside the group.

Rendezvous procedures including timings.

What to do if separated from the group.

Emergency procedures.

For residential visits all group members should carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation in case an individual becomes separated.

If at anytime there is a change in the planned schedule new activities should be assessed and children provided with the appropriate information.

It is important that children are told not to go off on their own, are given clear instructions about permitted remote supervised activities and understand and accept the ground rules.

Transport

Children should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- Arrive on time and wait for the transport in a safe place.
- Do not rush towards the transport when it arrives.
- Wear your seatbelt and stay seated whilst travelling on transport.
- Never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or driving controls.
- Bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions.
- Never attempt to get on or off the moving transport.
- Never lean out of or throw things from the window of the transport.
- Never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic.
- Never run about or pass someone on steps or stairs while transport is moving.
- Never kneel or stand on seats.
- Never distract or disturb the driver or impede the driver's vision.
- Stay clear of doors after boarding or leaving the transport.
- After leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road.
- If you have to cross roads to get to the transport in the UK always use the Green Cross Code.
- If you feel unwell tell a supervisor.
- The Trip Leader should ensure that children know what to do if they miss the scheduled departure time, and moreover staff know what to do when a child is lost/very late.

Medical Needs

Additional safety measures to those already in place in the school may be necessary to support those with medical needs during visits. Arrangements for taking medication and ensuring sufficient supplies for residential visits may be required.

All staff supervising visits should be aware of a child's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures. Summary sheets held by all staff, containing details of each child's needs and any other relevant information provided by parents, is one way of achieving this. If appropriate, a volunteer should be trained in administering medication, if they have not already been so trained, and should take responsibility in a medical emergency.

Parent communication if necessary

Day parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or visit unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum which parents have already been informed about through the school prospectus or booking form. Seeking a blanket consent for such routine visits may be appropriate.

Before residential visits, or when the students are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities, parents should be given written details of the proposed visit.

Trip Leaders should seek consent for:

- Non-routine visits involving day students.
- Adventure activities.
- Visits abroad.
- Other residential visits.
- Remote supervision.

If parents withhold consent absolutely the child should not be taken on the visit but the curricular aims of the visit could be delivered to the child in some other way wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent the Head Teacher/Deputy Head will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not.

A parental consent form should be completed for each child in the group. Besides conveying the parents' consent it could also form the basis for obtaining details required. If a tour operator is used it may be sensible to ask them what information to obtain. General issues to consider include:

Any allergies/phobias the child may have.

Any medication the child is taking (if so what the dosage is and who is to administer it).

Whether the child administers their own medication.

The child's ability to swim in the pool or sea and their level of safety awareness.

Any other information which the parent thinks should be known.

The parental home and daytime phone numbers and addresses and alternative contact details.

Medical consent

This should form part of the parental consent form. Parents should be asked to agree to the child's receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If parents do not agree to this, Earlscliffe staff may decide to withdraw the child from the visit – given the additional responsibility this would entail for the Trip Leader.

Planning Transport

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk assessment for the journey. The Trip Leader is responsible for the party at all times including maintaining good discipline.

The driver should not normally be responsible for supervision. Driver supervision may be sufficient if a small number of older children are being taken on a short journey. All group members should be made aware of the position of the emergency door and first-aid and anti-fire equipment on transport. The Trip Leader should also be aware of alternative routes or means of travel in the event of delay or cancellation.

Factors that the Trip Leader should consider when planning supervision on transport include:

Safety when crossing roads as part of the journey – the Trip Leader should ensure that children know how to observe the safety rules set out in the Highway Code and the Green Cross Code. Pedestrian crossings and traffic lights or footbridges should be used to cross roads, whenever possible.

Safety on buses, trains, ferries and boats – the Trip Leader should make clear to children how much or little freedom they have to 'roam'. Misbehaviour is a main cause of accidents to children on such means of transport. Appropriate supervision and discipline should be maintained at all times.

Safety of the group in the event of an accident or breakdown – the group should remain under the direct supervision of the Trip Leader or other staff wherever possible.
Head counts, by the Trip Leader or another delegated supervisor, should always be carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport.
Responsibility for checking that seat belts are fastened.
Children should be made aware that they are not allowed access to the driving area at any time.

Hiring coaches

The school is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed.

Private cars

Staff must not drive children in their own car and must ensure their passengers' safety, that the company vehicle is roadworthy, and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying the children IF agreed by the Head Teacher.

The driver is responsible for making sure that children have a seat belt and use it all times. Vehicles without seat belts should not be used.

Children must not drive other children.

School Minibus/other vehicle Drivers

Although the school management is mainly responsible for the rental vehicles, the driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit. The minibus driver must be qualified, check with Admin that all is clear for you to drive a minibus and that you have a valid driving licence. The Senior Staff should ensure that staff driving vehicles have appropriate rest periods. Earlscliffe vehicle drivers must always adhere to transport Regulations. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents have issued Minibus Safety: a Code of Practice 1996.

The vehicle driver must:

Observe LEA and/or school management governing body guidance. Where appropriate;
Not drive when taking medication or undergoing treatment that might affect their ability or judgement.

Know what to do in an emergency.

Know how to use fire fighting and first-aid equipment.

Avoid driving for long periods and ensure that rests are taken when needed.

Clarify and comply with transport regulations and the requirements of the vehicle's insurance cover.

Take into consideration the effects of the working day.

Have regular medical checks e.g. eyesight.

Vehicle checks

The school management is responsible for the vehicles. All bureaucracy re vehicles and their operation is overseen by Earlscliffe Admin.

Insurance

The Trip Leader must ensure well before the group departs, the adequate insurance arrangements are in place. Check with the College Office (Earlscliffe).

The Trip Leader should write to the parents to tell them which responsibilities the school accepts and the scope of any insurance cover the school is to arrange.

Additional arrangements may be necessary to obtain insurance cover for activities abroad and activities of a potentially hazardous nature. The Trip Leader should scrutinise carefully the list of exclusions in the policy. If there is any doubt about the cover the insurer should be asked for clarification.

The Trip Leader should ascertain the details of the insurance held by a tour operator.

Additional cover may be necessary for participants with medical conditions. The Trip Leader should check this with the insurance company before departure.

Using Licensed Providers

When planning to use adventure activity facilities offered by a commercial company or by a local authority the Trip Leader should follow the policy of the school and check.

Whether the provider is legally required to hold a licence for the activities it offers and, if so, That the provider actually holds a licence.

The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority can check on the licence status of a provider.

Their address is: Adventure Activities Licensing Authority, 17 Lambourne Crescent, Llanishen, Cardiff CF4 5GG. Tel 01222 755715. Fax 01222 755757. Their Internet site is at:

<http://www.aala.org>

Many of the activities that children take part in will be covered by health and safety legislation alone. However the following activities – where undertaken by young people under 18 years unaccompanied by a parent – need a licence:

Holding a licence means that a provider has been inspected and the Licensing Authority are satisfied that appropriate safety measures are in place.

Using un-licensed Providers

Not all providers are required to hold a licence. Voluntary bodies and schools providing for their own members and children respectively are exempt.

Commercial bodies and local authorities are also exempt if their activities fall outside the scope of the regulations. Not holding a licence does not imply a lack of safety. It might simply mean the provider or the activity is not licensable.

If proposing to use a non-licensable provider, the Trip Leader should obtain assurances in writing from the provider that.

Risks have been assessed and that the provider's staff are competent to instruct and lead children of the group's age range on the activity. Competence could be demonstrated by holding the relevant NGB award where it exists or through successful participation in an NGB approved in-house scheme.

The equipment is appropriate and that its safe condition is checked before each use.

Operating procedures conform to the guidelines of the National Governing Body for the activity where this is appropriate, including use of equipment, safety and emergency procedures.

The Trip Leader and teachers retain ultimate responsibility for children at all times during adventure activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the

provider's staff. The providers are responsible for the safe running of an activity. Clear handover and handbook procedures should be in place.

The Trip Leader and staff should have sufficient information on what the activity involves before it takes place. They should approach the instructor at an appropriate safe interval if they are concerned that the children may be at unnecessary risk.

School-led Adventure Activities

If a member of the staff is to organise, lead and instruct children on adventure activities they should complete the checks set out under Risk Assessment.

SMT should satisfy themselves that:

The Trip Leader and other supervisors are competent to act as leaders and/or instructors of children in the activity.

The Trip Leader is competent in safety procedures and the planning of adventurous visits.

An appropriate risk assessment has been completed.

The supervision will be appropriate.

There is adequate first aid provision, expertise and equipment within the group.

The emergency procedures include activity – specific measures and that supervisors are competent to carry them out.

The equipment is appropriate, safe and in good condition.

Remote supervision

The scope of field studies means that the Trip Leaders, who will usually be subject specialists, should also be competent to lead and instruct their children within urban and non-urban environments at minimal risk. Some activities – such as those under the Duke of Edinburgh Awards – or field trips require children to work in small groups without direct supervision. Particular attention needs to be given to the information provided to children before supervision can be withdrawn.

The training given to children must be sound and thorough and should be assessed separately. The instructor should have the appropriate qualifications or experience to provide training in the activity. The Trip Leader should be satisfied that the children have acquired the necessary skills and have the necessary experience, confidence, physical ability and judgement to be left without direct supervision.

The withdrawal of direct supervision should be a gradual four stage process.

Accompanying the group.

Shadowing the group.

Checking regularly at agreed locations.

Checking occasionally at agreed locations.

Coastal visits

Trip Leaders and other staff should be aware that many of the incidents affecting children have occurred by or in the sea. The Trip Leader should bear the following points in mind when assessing the risks of a coastal activity.

Tides, rip tides and sandbanks are potential hazards; timings and exit routes should be checked.

Ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags.

Establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated.

Look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc.

Trip Leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds.

Cliff tops can be highly dangerous for child groups even during daylight. The group should keep to the path at all times.

Swimming in the sea or other open water

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group. Children should always be in sight of their supervisors. One supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.

The Trip Leader, or another designated teacher in the group, should hold a relevant life saving award or be a strong swimmer with a 1st Aid qualification.

The Trip Leader should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group before any coastal /water activity takes place. The Trip Leader should:

Be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers.

Designate a safe area of water for use by the group.

Be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water.

Ensure the activity is suitable for the children especially any with disabilities.

Use of pools on trips

Trip Leaders should follow the recommended safe supervision levels at the pool for their children. A minimum 1 adult to 15 for 11yrs and upwards, and 1:10 for 8 -11 yrs. If considering the use of a swimming pool it is advisable to observe and check the following: Is there constant pool supervision by a sufficient number of qualified lifeguards?

The Trip Leader should stay at the poolside at a raised location. In such circumstances, the Trip Leader, or a designated teacher, should have a relevant life saving award.

Is the water temperature appropriate?

Is the water clear?

Are there signs clearly indicating the depth.

Does the deep end allow for safe diving?

Have the children been instructed how to behave in and around the water?

Farm Visits

Farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm should be carefully planned. The risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections.

There are some basic safety rules. Never let children:

Place their faces against the animals or put their hands in their own mouths after feeding the animals.

Eat until they have washed their hands.
Drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities).
Ride on tractors or other machines.

Residential Trips

A good rule of thumb ratio is 1 Earlscliffe staff for every 10 pupils. Issues for the Trip Leader to consider include the following:

The group should ideally have adjoining rooms with staff quarters next to the children.

There must be at least one teacher from each sex for mixed groups.

There must be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for children and adults.

Ensure there is appropriate and safe heating and ventilation.

Ensure that the whole group are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits (are instructions in English or otherwise clear).

Locks on doors should work in the group's rooms but appropriate access should be available to staff at all times.

There should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage, equipment etc, and for the safe keeping of valuables.

Adequate lighting – it is advisable to bring a torch.

The Trip Leader should be aware of local fire procedure, including all exits.

Visits Abroad

Organising your own visit

A Trip Leader may decide to organise a package abroad without the help of an outside body. Package organisers have responsibilities under Directive 90/314/EEC. This is implemented in the UK by the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 (The Package Travel Regulations). These regulations apply to packages sold or offered for sale in the UK. They define a package as a combination of any two of: accommodation, transport, or other tourist services not ancillary to transport. Most package arrangements come within scope of the regulations unless they are 'occasional' or part of an educational course programme as compared with a leisure activity such as skiing.

Transport

Trip Leaders should ensure that drivers taking groups abroad are familiar with driving the coach or minibus in the countries being visited and those en route. EC regulations require the fitment and use of a tachograph and prescribe maximum limits on driving time and minimum requirements for breaks and rest periods. These regulations apply for most drivers of school passenger vehicles when undertaking an international journey. Different licence requirements would normally apply for driving abroad. DTLR can provide advice on the relevant transport legislation.

Factors to consider when travelling abroad include:

The need to be aware that different legislation and regulations may apply for drivers' hours and record-keeping purposes, particularly in non-EU countries.

EU drivers' hours and tachograph regulations normally apply to any vehicle with 9 or more passenger seats on journeys through EU countries and some countries outside the EU. In other countries, drivers must observe the domestic rules of the countries being visited. Special documentation is required for minibuses taken abroad.

All group members should be aware of unfamiliar right-hand drive traffic. The passenger doors on UK minibuses and coaches may not open on the kerb side in countries where travel is on the right hand side of the road. Extra care will be necessary when the group is climbing in and out of the vehicle. Detours may be necessary to ensure safety.

Carrying capacity and loading requirements.

DTLR can provide information on legal requirements for travel abroad.

Using a Tour Operator

Before using a tour operator the Trip Leader should ensure it is reputable. Ascertaining this should form part of the risk assessment. The Civil Aviation Authority licenses travel organisers and tour operators selling air seats or packages with an air transport element (Air Travel Organisers Licence or ATOL).

A travel agent does not need to be an ATOL holder if acting only as an agent of an ATOL holder. But if so the Trip Leader must check whether or not the whole package being supplied is covered by the ATOL. If it is not, the organiser must show evidence of other forms of security to provide for the refund of advance payments and the costs of repatriation in the event of insolvency.

There are seven bonding bodies approved by the Department of Trade and Industry:

Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA).

Federation of Tour Operators Trust (FTOT).

Association of Independent Tour Operators Trust (ATOT).

Passenger Shipping Association (PSA).

The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT).

Yacht Charter Association (YCA).

The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust (ABTOT).

Other advice

The Schools and Group Travel Association (SAGTA) is an independent association with a members' code of good conduct and safety rules. All its members are in ABTA.

Alternatively, there are voluntary bodies established to promote school journeys, such as the School Journey Association.

Planning

It is good practice that an exploratory visit to the location should always be made. If this is not possible, the Trip Leader should gather as much information as possible on the area to be visited/facilities from:

The provider.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Travel Advice Unit.

Other education providers who have used the facilities/been to the area.

National travel offices in the UK.

Embassies/consulates.

Travel agents/tour operators.

Staffing

A minimum ratio of 1 adult to 10 children should be followed and at least two of the adults should be Earlscliffe staff. There should be enough adults in the group to cover an emergency. Mixed gender groups should have at least one male and one female staff member.

Preparing students

Factors to consider for visits abroad include:

Language – particularly common phrases.

Culture eg body language, rules and regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender etc.

Drugs, alcohol-usage.

Food and drink – group members should be warned of the dangers of drinking tap water in certain countries.

Money – how to carry money and valuables discreetly e.g.: money belts.

How to use phones abroad.

What to do in an emergency

It is particularly important that parents are given the opportunity to discuss the trip with the Trip Leader who will be taking the pupils overseas.

Vaccinations

The Trip Leader should find out whether vaccination is necessary and ensure that all members of the group have received it in good time. Check whether the country to be visited requires proof of vaccination. The Department of Health gives advice on vaccination requirements in their publication, Health Advice to Travellers Anywhere in the World.

Insurance

The Trip Leader must ensure that the group has comprehensive travel insurance. See College Office (Earlscliffe).

Language

One of the adults with the group should be able to speak and read the language of the visited country. If not, it is strongly recommended that the leader or another adult learns enough of the language to hold a basic conversation and knows what to say in an emergency. It is also advisable that students have a basic knowledge of the local language before the visit.

Passports and visas

The Trip Leader should ensure that all members of the group have valid passports and visas (if appropriate) in the early stages of planning the trip.

Photocopies of the group's passports should be taken for emergency use. Otherwise there can be problems if someone other than the designated leader has to accompany an injured pupil back to the UK. Visa waiver forms are available for Schengen state visits. Contact the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges.

Emergency Medical Requirements

Some of these are available through reciprocal health care arrangements in European Community (EC) countries to EU Nationals. Form E111 from DSS is the certificate of entitlement to free or reduced cost treatment and must be completed by the child's parent. It is available from Post Offices or Free Phone 0800 555777.

It is advisable to take a contingency fund as sometimes treatment must be paid for in advance and money has to be claimed back later. Make sure all insurance documents are carried by the Trip Leader.

NB: where 'Senior Staff' is mentioned this includes: Deputy Head; Centre Managers (summer schools only), School Manager, and Head of Pastoral Care.