

1

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VISITS

Legal framework

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

12. Employers are the LEA in county, controlled and special agreement schools. The governing body is the employer in city technology colleges, voluntary-aided, non-maintained and grant-maintained schools. The owner, governors or trustees are the employers in independent schools.

13. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, made under the 1974 Act, require employers to:

- ▼ assess the risks of activities (see Risk assessment in Chapter 2 paragraphs 37 – 46);
- ▼ 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.

14. These duties apply to all school visits. Teachers and other staff in charge of pupils also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

Approval for visits

15. Employers should have a written procedure for arranging visits which teachers should follow. This will normally include procedures for the approval of certain types of visit.

16. Although the employer is responsible for health and safety, decisions about visits are usually delegated to the head teacher. The head teacher's agreement must be obtained before a visit takes place.

17. See Chapter 11 Model Form 1 for an approval application.

LEAs

18. LEAs have the following main roles:

- ▼ provide written guidelines for governors, head teachers and teachers including advice on risk assessment;
- ▼ assess proposals for certain types of visit;
- ▼ provide emergency telephone contact for the duration of the visit where necessary;
- ▼ ensure training needs have been addressed;
- ▼ provide access to named staff for advice;

- ▼ maintain appropriate insurance cover;
- ▼ have in place procedures to monitor and review safety during off-site visits and activities.

Governing body

19. Where the governing body is the employer the governors' role will be the same as that suggested for an LEA above. They should satisfy themselves that the risk assessment has been carried out, that appropriate safety measures are in place and that training needs have been addressed.

20. Governing bodies of all types of school should:

- ▼ ensure that the visit has a specific and stated objective;
- ▼ ensure that the head teacher/group leader shows how their plans comply with regulations and guidelines, including the school's health and safety policy document and, where applicable, the LEA's; and that the head teacher/group 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 or travel outside the UK, and submit these proposals to the LEA if appropriate.

Head teacher

21. Head teachers should ensure that visits comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the LEA or governing body and the school's own health and safety policy. Head teachers should ensure that the group leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

22. Head teachers should be clear about their role if

taking part in the visit as a group member/supervisor. They should follow the instructions of the group leader who will have sole charge of the visit.

23. Head teachers should ensure that:

- ▼ adequate child protection 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 pupils have been considered;
- ▼ the group leader has experience in supervising the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
- ▼ the group leader or another teacher 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 in Chapter 8 paragraphs 172 - 174;
- ▼ group leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly;
- ▼ non-teacher supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children. See Vetting suitability in Chapter 3 paragraphs 75 - 78;
- ▼ ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate. See Ratios in Chapter 3 paragraphs 69 - 72;
- ▼ the LEA or governing body has approved the visit, if appropriate;
- ▼ parents have signed consent forms;
- ▼ arrangements have been made for the medical 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. See Chapter 7 Insurance;
- ▼ 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 head teacher) and the group leader has details;
- ▼ the group leader, group supervisors and nominated school contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures;
- ▼ the group leader, group supervisors and nominated school 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;
- ▼ there is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home.

Group leader

24. One teacher, the group 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 group leader should have been appointed or approved by the head teacher or the governing body. The group leader should:

- ▼ obtain the head teacher's prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place;
- ▼ follow LEA and/or governing body regulations, guidelines and policies;

- ▼ appoint a deputy;
- ▼ 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 in Chapter 8 paragraphs 172 - 174;
- ▼ 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 in Chapter 2 paragraphs 37 - 46;
- ▼ review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise head teacher where adjustments may be necessary;
- ▼ ensure that teachers and other supervisors are fully aware of what the proposed visit involves;
- ▼ have enough information on the pupils 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 pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group. See Ratios in Chapter 3 paragraphs 69 - 72.
- ▼ consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the pupils 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 teachers and other supervisors have the details of pupils' special educational or medical needs which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively;
- ▼ observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below.
- ▼ 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 group leader and teacher supervisors and help with control and discipline;
- ▼ speak to the group leader or teacher supervisors if concerned about the health or safety of pupils at any time during the visit.

Teachers

25. Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the LEA or of the governing body, whether the visit takes place within normal hours or outside those hours, by agreement with the head teacher and governors.

26. Teachers 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 group leader and help with control and discipline;
- ▼ consider stopping the visit or the activity, notifying the group leader, if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

Adult volunteers

27. Non-teacher adults on the visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit. Non-teacher adults acting as supervisors must:

- ▼ do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;

Responsibilities of pupils

28. The group leader should make it clear to pupils 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 group leader or supervisor about it.

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

Parents

30. Parents should be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should go on the visit. The group leader should ensure that parents are given sufficient information in writing and are invited

to any briefing sessions.

31. The group leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

Parents should also be asked to agree the arrangements for sending a pupil home early and who will meet the cost.

32. Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language.

33. Parents will need to:

- ▼ provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s);
- ▼ sign the consent form (see Model Form 7 in Chapter 11);
- ▼ give the group leader information about their child's emotional, psychological and physical health which might be relevant to the visit (usually by means of the consent form).

34. See Chapter 5 Communicating with Parents. For Tour operators see Chapter 9 paragraphs 201 - 203.

