

# INTRODUCTION

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1. Pupils can derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits with their school. In particular, they have the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom. Visits help to develop a pupil's investigative skills and longer visits in particular encourage greater independence. This booklet is designed to help head teachers, teachers, governors and others to ensure that pupils stay safe and healthy on school visits.
2. The booklet does not seek to replace local or other professional guidance or regulations. Where appropriate, LEAs should be the first source of advice. The booklet offers national guidance where guidance from elsewhere may be unavailable, incomplete or not up to date. It is based on a wide consultation of schools, LEAs, teacher unions and other professional bodies and reflects and collates existing good practice. The Department is grateful to all those colleagues who responded to the consultation.
3. Most school visits take place without incident and it is clear that teachers are already demonstrating a high level of safety awareness. But, following a number of tragic incidents involving schoolchildren in the last few years, there is a growing concern amongst school staff and parents about further ensuring the safety of pupils on school visits. This booklet has been produced in response to that concern. The potential hazards which the booklet refers to should not discourage teachers. No amount of planning can guarantee that a visit will be totally incident free, but good planning and attention to safety measures can reduce the number of accidents and lessen the seriousness of those that do happen nonetheless. The management of health and safety on visits is part of a school's overall policy on health and safety. The booklet sets out principles, rather than trying to cover every eventuality, leaving it to teachers' professional and local judgement how to apply those principles.
4. The account of the relevant law updates the legal framework set out in the Department's previous booklet, *Safety in Outdoor Education* (1989), and Circular 22/94 *Safety in Outdoor Activity Centres: Guidance*, though much of the technical advice in those documents still stands.
5. Although the booklet is primarily for staff in schools and LEAs in England, much of it is equally valid for staff in nurseries, FE colleges, youth and other organisations. The advice to teachers should also be useful to lecturers, youth workers and other group leaders. Similarly, references to pupils can be taken to apply to students or any young person involved in a visit or an exchange. The booklet does not cover work experience, which is treated in separate guidance (see Annex A for details). References to parents cover anyone who has parental responsibility.
6. The booklet uses the terminology for schools current at the time of production (November 1998). From 1 September 1999 the existing categories of LEA and grant maintained schools will be replaced with the following new categories: Community, Foundation, Voluntary Controlled, Voluntary Aided, Community Special and Foundation Special. The LEA will be the employer of staff at Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special schools. The governing body will be the employer of staff at Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Foundation Special schools.
7. This booklet is guidance. It should not be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the law. That is for the courts.
8. Crown copyright 1998. This booklet is produced by the Department for Education and Employment. Extracts, including the model forms in Chapter 11, may be reproduced for non-commercial education or training purposes on condition that the source is acknowledged.

9. Enquiries about the contents of this booklet should be directed to:

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10. Further copies of this guidance are available free on request from DfEE Publications Centre, Tel 0845 6022260. See end of Annex A and back cover for address details.