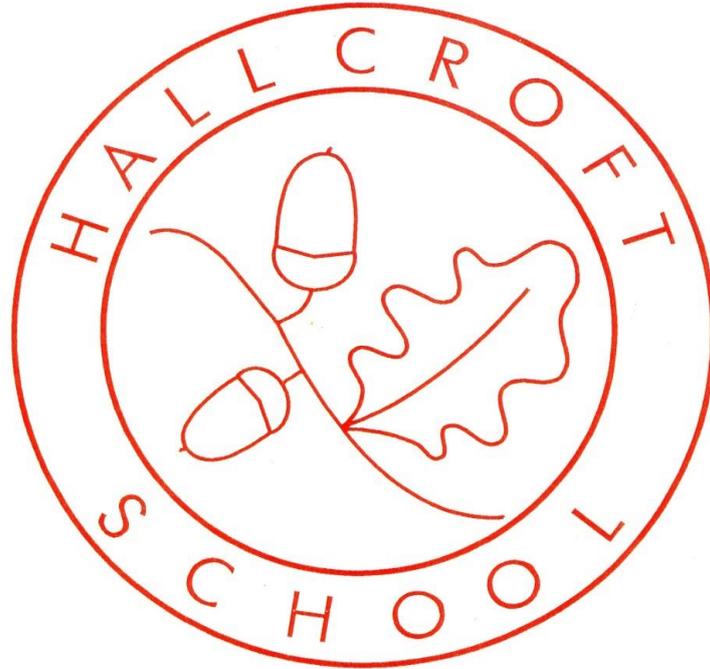


Hallcroft Infant & Nursery School



Visits Policy November 2017

In accordance with Visits Guidance for Children and Young People
Children, Families and Cultural Services Nottinghamshire County Council
April 2011

Visits Guidance for Children, Families and Cultural Services (CFCS) establishments within Nottinghamshire County Council – Publication date: April 2011

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Policy Statement

The CFCS department recognises the educational and developmental benefits for children and young people taking part in organised trips and visits. The department will support staff who organise such trips and visits by:

- Producing visits guidance, which will be reviewed and updated at regular intervals
- Providing information, training and advice via professional Outdoor Education Advisors in order to ensure consistent safe practice.

Roles, responsibilities and operation

The CFCS department requires staff who organise trips and visits to:

- familiarise themselves with the guidance;
- operate within the guidance and national legislation;
- assess thoroughly the risks and necessary safeguarding procedures involved at the outset and throughout the planning and implementation stages;
- identify post holders, at an appropriate level of management, to undertake the responsibilities identified in the guidance.

Departmental guidance identifies that there are different categories of trip or visit. As such, those trips and visits requiring Nottinghamshire County Council notification and/or approval before departure must be recorded on the department's online Evolve system.

Planning, risk assessment and risk management

All trips and visits must be appropriately planned and must have clear educational, developmental or recreational aims. All trips and visits must be effectively and appropriately risk assessed.

Safeguarding young people

Managers should take all necessary and practical measures on all trips and visits to protect children and young people, particularly those with identified needs, from racial, physical or sexual abuse or other harm.

Equal opportunities

Every effort should be made to ensure that trips and visits are accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of specific educational or medical need, ethnic origin, sex or religion. Trips and visits, planned activities and venues should not unnecessarily exclude participation.

Anthony May

Corporate Director, Children, Families and Cultural Services

April 2011

Introduction

This document is a revision of the '*Educational Visits Policy for Nottinghamshire Schools (2008)*'. It has been updated and amended for use by establishments within the Children, Families and Cultural Services Department of the Local Authority (LA).

The purpose of this guidance is to make the planning, preparation and delivery of visits and journeys away from schools and other Children, Families and Cultural Services establishments easier to undertake and to standardise procedures. An electronic version of this guidance and policy statement is available at www.nottinghamshirevisits.org.uk. The Authority's online approval system, hosted by EVOLVE, provides an interactive resource for staff to plan visits and excursions and to formally submit to line management or the LA for appropriate approval. The electronic version of this document on EVOLVE will be continually updated and amended. This will become the definitive reference document for visits and journeys in addition to other guidance documents and hyperlinks to relevant organisations and sources of detailed information.

This document, is also available online from Nottinghamshire County Council's education website, at <http://wired.nottsc.info> and from the Council's main website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

This document builds on existing guidance and compliments a range of documents referenced throughout the text including the DfES publication – '*Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (1998)*' and subsequent supplements (2002-2005). As this document is a summary, the original documents should be referred to as a fuller source of background information and guidance if it is felt necessary. All such documents referenced within the text are available within the guidance and resource sections of EVOLVE at www.nottinghamshirevisits.org.uk. Contact details for all organisations referred to within this document are given in appendix 10.

All services intending to follow the policy guidance must formally identify how this will take place within their respective area of operation. A Service specific (or establishment specific) policy statement document is available from EVOLVE for use in formatting this statement of intent.

Enquiries on all aspects of visits, journeys and activities outside can be obtained from the Outdoor Education Advisers team (for contact details, see back page).

As this is an expanded set of guidance for general use in many settings a number of key terms have been created which are intended to be generic in all settings:

- **Visit/event:** refers to any off-site, educational, recreational or residential opportunity delivered within the grounds, immediate vicinity or further away from your normal place of work. This does not include work related learning which is managed via separate guidance.
- **Establishment:** your normal place of work or where you meet young people as part of a voluntary or statutory expectation.
- **Provider:** a third party organisation or individual who is paid to deliver a specific service on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council.
- **Nominated Manager:** a member of a management team who has a defined responsibility to approve visits. In a school this will be a Headteacher, in other areas this may be a Team Manager, Senior Worker or other officer named within a statement of intent.
- **Visit Coordinator:** a role given to a person who works within an establishment and is competent to advise on matters relating to visits, their organisation and the competency of staff intending to deliver them.
- **Visit Leader:** a person in attendance on the visit with a leadership role in ensuring that an event is adequately planned, supervised and delivered.
- **Leaders:** other staff in attendance. These may be paid or voluntary but should have a defined function.
- **Participants:** people (primarily children and young people) who participate in visits including in either a paid or voluntary capacity

1. The legal situation

All the activities covered by this document take place within a legal framework. The following sections describe some essential elements of that framework.

The Human Rights Act (1998)

Article 2 of the Human Rights Act provides that no person shall be denied the right to education. This has potential implications for visits, for example regarding the inclusion of young people with specific needs.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001

SENDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against young people with disabilities engaged in education, training or services provided for students. Under SENDA, schools **and other organisations** have a duty not to treat young people with disabilities less favourably than **those without a disability** and to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that young people with disabilities have access to the curriculum, information and the physical environment.

Disability and Equality Act 2010 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005

This legislature imposes **on all establishments within Children, Families and Cultural Services (CFCS)** a more proactive duty to promote equality of opportunity for children and adults with disabilities. This also applies to other strands such as gender, race, religion and belief, and pregnancy and maternity.

Health and safety regulations

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the Local Authority (LA), as an employer, is responsible for the implementation of safety on all visits. The LA therefore issues policies and guidance documents on all matters of relevance. These include this document, which forms the LA's policy and guidance for visits and other relevant documents published by Nottinghamshire County Council, for example the Council's Safety Manual, or nationally produced documents published by, for example, the Department for Education or the Health and Safety Executive, which the LA circulates or makes available to establishments.

Whilst the LA has primary responsibility for health and safety, all employees have a statutory duty while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others. Individual managers, leaders and other employees have a delegated responsibility to co-operate with and implement the LA's policies and procedures. Therefore those with responsibility for the care of young people on visits must be thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the LA's policies and procedures that may affect their visits.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, made under the 1974 Act, employers are required to make assessments of the risks to which employees, participants and others are exposed, in order that appropriate measures are taken to protect their health and safety. For further information regarding risk assessment, see section 4.

Any queries about the Council's health and safety policies and procedures can be addressed to Nottinghamshire County Council's Health and Safety Section.

Definition of employer

The LA is the employer for community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools and youth centres.

In foundation, voluntary aided schools, academies and trust schools, the governing body is the employer of staff and therefore holds the employer's responsibility for health and safety. Governors of these schools are strongly advised to adopt this policy and guidance and use the LA's system for approval of visits. (If they do not adopt this, these schools will need to write their own policy and procedures and agree this with the recognised trade unions through their agreed consultation arrangements.)

In all other Local Authority settings such as statutory youth groups and looked after children environments the employer is Nottinghamshire County Council.

Where services are commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council it must be ensured that the level of provision is not less than the expected standards within this guidance. Services should be commissioned on a contractual basis that procedures will be followed as if the Local Authority were the employer.

The duty of care

In addition to the above duties, when teachers and other staff are responsible for the children of others, they may be said to be 'in loco parentis'. This means that they have a common law duty to take the same care that a reasonably prudent parent would take in similar circumstances.

Foreign law

Young people are, of course, generally responsible for their own criminal acts and particular problems may arise where civil or criminal offences are committed in a foreign country. It is impossible to provide specific guidance here on relevant aspects of foreign law, which differs considerably from one country to another. It is suggested, however, that those leading visits abroad should adopt as a minimum standard that which would be expected under English law. They should make participants aware of the very serious implications of any involvement in illegal drugs in many countries. Leaders should obtain information on basic legal 'dos and don'ts' from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Travel Advice website and the appropriate embassy or high commission or the national tourist office of the country to be visited, recognising that information provided will not be exhaustive.

In the unfortunate event of the arrest of a young person or other participant, the Visit Leader is advised to contact the British embassy or consulate for advice. Except where a child is in the care of the LA, it will be the responsibility of the parents or guardians to ensure that they are legally represented. The role of a Visit Leader in such cases will normally be confined to that aspect of their position that relates to pastoral care, coupled of course with their legal duty to assist the police in the course of their enquiries.

Leaders should decide if they need to obtain parental consent for specific activities if they would be contrary to English law, but not to that of the country being visited. For example, the age at which cigarettes may be purchased or alcohol consumed is lower in some other countries than the UK.

Legal liability

Visits authorised by the LA and Nominated Managers, whether in term time, core working hours or holiday periods, will generally be regarded as an extension of the work environment and the same legal liability on the part of nominated managers, leaders and the local authority to act 'in loco parentis' applies.

As in any work situation, a manager or leader will be liable for damage resulting from their own negligence, but the LA has a vicarious liability in those cases where the employee is acting in the proper course of their employment. In such cases it will normally be the LA that is sued because it has resources to pay any damages that may be awarded. Most professionally qualified staff will be

aware of the type of incident which can give rise to a claim, the most common being lack of proper or adequate supervision.

The County Council's Legal Services can give detailed advice on the legal implications before and after any visit, should further guidance be required. The Risk and Insurance Section should be consulted over any insurance claims.

Participants aged over 18

With these participants, the principle of 'in loco parentis' does not apply as such. Nevertheless, leaders responsible for them should assume that the duty of care is the same as for younger participants and that the recommendations within this document are applied.

Other agencies

Where an activity involves the use of the resources or expertise of another organisation, the LA establishment should take reasonable steps to be sure that the agency involved is reputable, competent and the provision safe. Section 4 provides further advice regarding the assessment of safety standards.

Where significant services are procured (commissioned) on behalf of the LA a legal agreement should be in place that ensures compliance with expected procedures and operating standards illustrated within this policy and guidance material.

For air travel, establishments should book with an operator that holds an Air Travel Organisers Licence (ATOL). This licence provides security against a licence holder going out of business.

When travelling abroad and using a travel agent, establishments must check whether or not the whole package is covered under ATOL. If not, the establishment must check that the operator or agent has evidence of other forms of security to provide for the refund of payments and the costs of repatriation in the event of insolvency, usually in the form of a bond. There are currently six 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 - AITOT
- Passenger Shipping Association - PSA
- The Confederation of Passenger Transport - CPT
- The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust - ABTOT

The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992

Under The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992, schools and other LA establishments may themselves become an 'organiser' where they contract directly with hotels and apartments for accommodation and with an airline, coach or ferry company for transport and/or with others for excursions. As an 'organiser', establishments have to provide sufficient guarantee for the refund of money paid over and for the repatriation of the consumer in the event of insolvency. The regulations should not apply for visits that have a clear educational aim and are part of a structured learning opportunity. Schools and establishments should therefore clearly state the educational and developmental aim(s) for the visit.

The package travel regulations are quite complex and establishments unsure of their situation should contact the Outdoor Education Adviser in the first instance with any queries. The Department of Trade and Industry advises that establishment ski trips (which are voluntary activities undertaken by some participants) fall within the regulations, unless they are organised only occasionally. Establishments should therefore organise ski trips through bonded tour operators.

2. Roles and responsibilities for visits

Role of the Local Authority (LA)

In managing the health and safety of visits, the LA has the following role:

- to provide relevant guidance, information and a written policy for Children, Families and Cultural Services' establishments such as schools, youth provision, early years and children looked after
- through guidance documents and supporting procedures, to provide a framework for adoption by establishments within Children, Families and Cultural Services
- to provide access to specialist staff for advice and information regarding the management of visits where unresolved through guidance and policy documents
- to provide generic risk assessments and to monitor risk management procedures of establishments and other providers
- to provide appropriate training and ongoing advice and guidance to Visit Coordinators (VCs) and others involved in the organisation of visits where deemed necessary.
- to assess proposals for residential visits, those involving adventure activities, visits abroad and visits to potentially hazardous locations (e.g. coast and inland water) and give to give LA approval
- to monitor practice in relation to visits
- to provide a 24-hour emergency telephone contact.

The LA has an outdoor education adviser who fulfils or coordinates the above roles on behalf of the LA.

Role of the governing body within schools

In all schools where the LA has the function of employer of staff for the purposes of health and safety, governing bodies must use this LA guidance as the school's policy for visits.

Where the governing body, or governing trust, is the actual employer of staff (in foundation, voluntary-aided, academies, trusts and foundation special schools), the governors' role will be the same as that shown for LA above. To fulfil this role, governors of these schools are strongly advised to adopt this guidance.

Governors need to be satisfied about the school's procedures and practice in relation to the guidance. They should ensure that the guidance is in place in school and is actively followed. They should ensure that the head and staff have the time and expertise to fulfil their responsibilities for visits. It is not necessary for governing bodies to approve each visit. However, headteachers should inform governing bodies, in advance where possible, of all non-routine visits, particularly those involving adventure activities, residential visits and visits abroad. This information can be included in the headteacher's termly report to governors. It is good practice that governors consider the educational objectives and the appropriateness of proposed visits for the pupils involved and seek feedback from completed visits. Post-visit evaluations may be provided in a termly report. In their monitoring role, governors can help ensure that all necessary checks and

assurances are satisfactory. Training for governors on running visits is available through the LA's governor training programme.

Role of the Nominated Manager (head teacher)

Nominated Managers must ensure that staff involved in visits have access to, and understand their responsibility to follow, LA policy and guidance documents.

Nominated Managers must authorise all visits that occur within their establishment or locality, ensuring that staff are aware of the correct procedures and that every visit is adequately planned and prepared for by the leaders concerned. Managers are advised to appoint a competent Visit Coordinator and should agree with the Visit Coordinator their specific duties. Where no Visit Coordinator is in place, the functions of this role will default to the relevant Nominated Manager.

For each visit, Nominated Managers must ensure that:

- the visit has a sound objective based on a developmental, educational or recreational outcome.
- all visits are planned in accordance with LA policy and guidance pertinent to the excursion planned.
- that checks have been completed of locations and providers to be used
- establishment or visit specific risk assessments, which take account of the LA generic risk assessments, have been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place
- due regard for equalities has been demonstrated in preparing for the visit
- suitable supervision has been arranged and the group leader and other leaders have the necessary skills and experience to lead the visit
- sufficient time is made available for the induction and training of leaders before the visit
- all leaders are aware of their roles and who is in overall charge
- charging regulations, financial procedures issues of inclusion and wider guidance re health and safety policy will be correctly followed
- where applicable, the governing body has been appropriately informed or approval has been given
- approval appropriate to the visit and activity planned has been provided
- for residential visits, visits involving adventure activities or hazardous outdoor environments and visits abroad, the LA has been informed of the visit in advance and LA approval obtained
- 24-hour emergency contact procedures are in place for extended visits.

Role of the Visits Coordinator (VC)

Each school, establishment or group of smaller establishments should have a Visits Coordinator. In our case this is Mrs Cook, Headteacher for the establishment, but may also be another nominated member of staff acting on behalf of the establishment head, who has sound experience of visits. If there is no VC, the duties pass by default to the relevant manager within CFCS structures.

The VC role is predominantly as a focal point for procedure and organisation; it does however carry a level of responsibility greater than that of simple administration.

The VC must be competent to fulfil this role in relation to the size of the establishment/s and the extent and nature of the visits planned. The LA advises schools and all establishments in the selection and induction of their Visits Coordinator, and provides training and ongoing information and support. Nominated managers and VCs should agree the delegation of tasks to the VC and how the VC role will work in the establishment.

The Visits Coordinator has responsibility for:

- ensuring that all visits are considered within the appropriate approval channel, in accordance with guidance provided and are suitably recorded
- ensuring that there is sufficient liaison with the LA Outdoor Education Adviser where necessary to ensure that visits meet the LA's requirements
- supporting the Nominated Manager with approval and other decisions
- assigning competent people to lead or supervise a visit
- assessing the competence of leaders and other adults proposed for a visit. This may include reference to training and awards, practical observation or verification of experience
- assisting Visit Leaders with risk assessment
- organising the training of leaders of visits. This might involve training such as first aid, hazard awareness etc
- organising, with the group leader, the induction of leaders and other adults taking participants on a visit
- ensuring that Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are in place as necessary
- working with the Visit Leader to provide parents and guardians with full details of the visit beforehand and to obtain the parental consent or refusal
- organising the emergency arrangements and ensuring there is an emergency contact for each visit
- keeping records of individual visits including reports of accidents and 'near-accidents' (sometimes known as 'near misses')
- reviewing systems and, on occasion, monitoring practice.

Role of the Visit Leader

One member of staff should have been approved as Visit Leader by the Nominated Manager and will normally have overall responsibility for the planning and supervision of the visit. In some

circumstances, provided the establishment and VC are satisfied as to the competency of the leader, this person may not be a teacher or substantive member of staff.

Below are some of the criteria that should be considered when determining the suitability of a group or activity leader:

- Relevant specific experience
- Qualifications held
- Familiarity with the venue
- Relationship with the participants
- Relationship with other staff members
- Staff numbers and ratio to participants
- Time available for preparatory work
- Contractual or job description implications
- Their willingness to undertake the work
- Any requirements of the organisation to be visited
- Their understanding of the objectives of the visits

The Visit Leader takes responsibility for:

- obtaining approval before a visit occurs
- following the LA policy and procedures contained in this document and relevant service-specific policies and procedures
- ensuring that the trip, venue and activities match the abilities of the group, staff competencies and the overall aim
- all necessary planning and preparation before the visit, as detailed in this guidance, including curriculum planning, risk assessment and briefing of other leaders, parents and participants.
- overall organisation during the visit, including leadership of staff, achieving desired aims, supervision of participants (including 'free time') and the overall health and safety of the whole group
- being aware of child protection issues
- ensuring that adequate first aid provision will be available
- evaluating the experience after the visit, and reporting any important issues to the establishment's Visits Coordinator.

Role of other leaders and volunteer staff

Other leaders on a visit are responsible for assisting the Visit Leader in his/her responsibilities and contribute to the duty of care afforded to participants. One person should be appointed as deputy leader, prepared to take full responsibility for the leader's role if the leader is unable to do so.

Teaching staff, professionally qualified staff and those in receipt of a salary from the LA normally have prime responsibility for supervision on a visit.

Teaching assistants, parents, governors and voluntary assistants can play an important role in providing extra supervision and/or undertaking other tasks. The Visit Leader must ensure they are competent to undertake their duties and understand their role.

Volunteers and parents cannot normally be expected to take on the same level of responsibility as employed members of staff; hence employed members of staff have a higher duty of care than volunteers. They do however owe a duty of care towards participants to act as a reasonably prudent parent.

Volunteers can provide excellent assistance in the delivery of a range of activities however they may not be experienced in the management of groups of young people. This should be considered as part of the planning process and when parties are separated, each group should be under the charge of a suitably competent adult.

All leaders on excursions should:

- fully understand their role and responsibilities on the trip
- have necessary information regarding the trip and participants
- be aware of what action to take in the event of emergency.

External agencies and providers

If an activity involves the use of an external agency (such as a specialist activity provider) they must be thoroughly scrutinised as appropriate by the Nominated Manager and the VC.

It is the responsibility of the agency to risk assess and manage safety for the services they are specifically contracted for, and to also show due regard for equality. However, establishment staff also have a responsibility to ensure the appropriate supervision and pastoral care of participants throughout any excursion.

Many industry-specific approval and endorsement schemes exist that offer assurances to booking groups such as the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge and currently, where specific adventurous activities are delivered it is a legal requirement for agencies to hold an Adventure Activities Licence. Details of these activities are provided in section 10.

A list of suitable areas for consideration by establishments prior to committing to a provider of services is available for use by Nottinghamshire Children, Families and Cultural Services' establishments within Appendix 4.

Responsibilities of participants

It is good practice to involve participants in the planning of trips; this allows participants to develop an understanding of the purpose of the event and for issues of personal responsibility to be considered.

Participants must:

- follow the instructions of leaders and other supervisors

- not take unnecessary risks or activities that have not been risk assessed or considered as part of the programme
- inform the leader or other supervisors of any concerns they may have or any issue they feel may cause harm to themselves or others
- when abroad, be informed of and remain sensitive to, local customs or social behaviour.

Anyone whose behaviour may put themselves or others at risk may be stopped from going on a visit or, if on a visit, their activities may be curtailed and arrangements may be made to return them home. However, some participants with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are disabled if their behaviour has an underlying impairment or condition. Leaders are obliged by law not to treat anybody less favourably because of their disability and to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that participants with disabilities are included. Therefore any decision to exclude should be made only in consultation with parents or carers and the establishment's manager and only after making and recording due efforts to include them. Where inclusion has not been possible, the curricular or developmental aims for the visit should be fulfilled in other ways where possible.

Responsibilities of parents and guardians

Parents (or other legal carers) must be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should go on visits and what the expectations will be of them and their child.

In order to do this, they should be provided with sufficient information in writing and are invited to relevant briefing sessions. Parents and guardians must provide written consent, including an acknowledgment of their and their child's responsibilities for the visit and provide the establishment with necessary medical information to ensure safe inclusion and emergency contact arrangements. (See section 7 for guidance on information to parents and guardians.) Consideration may need to be given as to how this consent is gained where parents/carers have limited fluency in English or low literacy skills.

3. Gaining approval for visits

Children, Families and Cultural Services establishments and initiatives must use the Local Authority's (LA) generic risk assessment and approval system for all visits. The LA provides generic risk assessments, specific risk assessment proformas an electronic visit approval system and a range of supporting resources and documents to assist with visit planning.

All documents are available online via the EVOLVE system. Passwords for online approval and planning are available from your establishment's Visit Coordinator or by contacting an Outdoor Education Adviser.

Early notification

An important principle in planning and conducting successful visits is to notify others of your plans as early as possible. This may involve notifying colleagues, senior managers, the Visit Coordinator and the LA at the earliest possible stage. The LA expect requests for approval to be submitted at least 4 weeks in advance for most visits and at least 8 weeks in advance for trips abroad. If you intend to undertake an expedition based journey, either self directed or utilising an adventure travel company, consultation at the planning stage prior to making any financial commitment is necessary.

Early notification means that support, advice and guidance may be provided and acted upon well before the visit takes place, should it be necessary.

Level of approval required

Visits vary in terms of location, duration, regularity and purpose. Consequently, different approval arrangements are appropriate for different types of visit. For approval purposes, visits are classified in three different categories:

Category A visits (recorded in house and approved by Nominated Managers)

These are visits and activities that are generally perceived as being routine events presenting low levels of risk. These events can be adequately managed through the use of LA generic risk assessment and establishment operating procedures (such as a school's visits policy and existing risk management procedures).

Examples of these visits:

- Local events that occur as part of your work programme and within your normal operating hours (such as core operating hours or the school day).
- Sporting activities within your locality or those that take place immediately after hours, including trips to swimming pools, leisure centres or local sports fixtures
- Local enrichment opportunities on site, or a short journey from it, such as to a café, village hall, library, local shops etc.
- Work placements.

The Nominated Manager must approve all such activities. Establishments can record this in a format to suit their own purposes, which may include the provision of approval on an annual basis evidenced by the Nominated Manager's signature on the risk assessment for the planned visits.

Parental consent for these activities can be obtained annually or on a termly basis if information is provided to parents and guardians outlining the visits and activities planned for that period (see page 14).

It should be possible for establishments to hold the majority of risk assessment information for these visits within their standard operating procedures, negating the need for reproduction of risk assessments for similar trips within a period of time. Individual management plans or support for specific needs will require consideration in addition to generic management procedures dependant on the needs of the group or visit planned.

Establishments must:

- refer to, and work within, the LA generic risk assessments adding additional control measures as appropriate for participant needs or the visit in general. These should be reviewed annually, where a significant change occurs or following an incident on a trip
- follow the most recent LA advice and develop and follow any establishment policies and codes of practice they consider necessary in respect of these types of visit.
- decide as part of the risk assessment process, what type of consent is appropriate, i.e. for a period of time or specifically for a series of events where the nature of activity may deem it appropriate
- if an activity happens after hours such as school sports matches, inform parents of the specific dates and times of each activity throughout a programme or fixture and detail transport arrangements if applicable
- follow other relevant LA guidance such as that for physical education activities, lone worker guidance or work placement procedures.
- ensure that competent staff are allocated to lead and supervise such trips

- ensure that effective arrangements and/or contingency plans are in place to manage an unforeseen incident if it were to occur, this may form part of the sites routine operating procedures.
- ensure that formal approval has been provided, this could be carried out by approval of the risk assessments for the events planned via a dated signature on the form by the Nominated Manager or as stipulated in a local establishment visits policy

Category B visits (approved by Nominated Managers but also recorded on EVOLVE)

These are events and activities that do not normally form part of a local or regular input. They may extend beyond normal operating hours, necessitating a late return, but do not involve an overnight stay.

Examples of these visits:

- All day visits to neighbouring cities or locations of interest.
- Theme park trips.
- All day low level walks or activities.
- Sporting fixtures that involve considerable travel.

Approval for these trips must be obtained from Nominated Manager. A record of these visits must be entered onto the EVOLVE system. This will provide a suitable record of trip details and approval provided.

Parents/guardians must be informed of such activities and specific consent will be required in writing (see page 14).

Because these trips are likely to be more complex, existing risk assessments will need reviewing and a specific risk assessment produced identifying safety management procedures for the event.

Establishments must:

- refer to, and work within, the LA generic risk assessments pertinent to the planned excursion.
- complete a specific risk assessment for the planned event/activity.
- inform parents and guardians of organisational details in writing, e.g. via briefing sheet or information contained on consent forms (see page 14).
- ensure that competent staff are allocated to lead and supervise such trips; suitable competence must be clearly identified by the head of the establishment or Nominated Manager with support of the Visits Coordinator.
- outside providers may be employed to deliver part of the visit or some activities; these will require any necessary checks being made to ensure that they are suitable and sufficient to do so. A checklist of considerations is provided for leaders and others to support this process.
- ensure that the Nominated Manager has considered the application for approval together with details of the proposed programme; specific risk assessments produced by the leader and any other relevant information and, if satisfied with the arrangements, provide their approval. Nominated Managers may contact an OEA for specific advice and guidance prior to approval.

- ensure that effective arrangements and/or contingency plans are in place to manage an unforeseen incident if it were to occur while on the visit. This may include nominating a base emergency contact person with access to staff and participant contact details in the event of an emergency.

Where an activity is deemed non routine but occurs on an annual basis, the specific risk assessment may be sufficient for use again with minor amendments.

Category C visits (require LA approval via EVOLVE)

This is the most complex and demanding activity level, where participants and staff may be involved in residential visits, adventurous activities, activities with higher than normal risks and trips to higher risk environments.

Examples of these visits:

- Residential visits or activities that require an overnight stay.
- Travel outside the United Kingdom, exchange visits, expeditions and study tours.
- Outdoor and adventurous activities including – canoeing, caving, high ropes courses, moor land and mountain walking, rock climbing, stream scrambling, sailing activities, mountain biking, wild country camping, pony trekking and open water swimming.
- Hazardous activities and or locations e.g., motorised sports, cliff edge walks, coastal walking, planned entry into water in the environment such as river study.

Where a visit involves a new venture to the establishment, visiting a developing country or remote area, an expedition, skiing or adventure activities using a new provider/company, establishments should take initial advice from the LA Outdoor Education Adviser **before** making any financial commitment.

The Nominated Manager must give approval for category C events AND obtain specific approval from the LA.

Specific consent must be obtained for all such events and specific information provided to parents and guardians. This is usually facilitated by attendance at planning meetings or information sharing events with participants and parents (see page 14).

Specific competency may be required to lead such events and a higher level of familiarisation will be required of staff who work on these trips. This may be through a familiarisation process, induction specific to the activity/location or evidencable competency.

Outside providers may be employed to deliver part or all of the visit or activities. These will require any necessary checks being made to ensure that they are suitable and sufficient to do so. A checklist of considerations is provided within Appendix 4

Additional insurance cover may be required; establishments should investigate the appropriate level of insurance required for their planned excursion.

Approval must be recorded on the EVOLVE system. These trips will automatically be submitted to the LA for further approval.

Establishments must:

- refer to, and work within, the LA generic risk assessments pertinent to the planned excursion

- plan according to guidance contained within generic risk assessments and the nature of the trip
- complete a specific risk assessment for the planned event/activity
- obtain outline approval for the trip from the Nominated Manager prior to commitment of non-returnable funds
- obtain specific consent from parents and guardians
- ensure that competent staff are allocated to lead and supervise trips; suitable competence must be clearly identified by the Nominated Manager with support of the Visits Coordinator and with reference to LA generic risk assessment requirements. Advice may need to be sought from the OEA
- ensure that the Nominated Manager has considered the application for approval together with details of the proposed programme; specific risk assessments produced by the leader and any other relevant information and, if satisfied with the arrangements provide their approval. Managers may contact an OEA for specific advice and guidance prior to approval
- comply with any suggested amendments/advice provided by the OEA and ensure that LA approval has been provided
- submit information for approval purposes to the LA at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed excursion if in the UK and a minimum of 8 weeks in advance for foreign travel excursions.

NB where any proposed event contains activities with higher than normal risk (see section 11) LA approval will be required in addition to that of the Nominated Manager as a Category C event.

Use of Nottinghamshire County Council centres or programmes involving adventurous activities

Establishments using Nottinghamshire County Council facilities to provide activities which fall within the Category C range (e.g. Hagg Farm, Duke of Edinburgh Award activities, Holme Pierrepont etc) should plan as above, ensuring that risk assessments are in place for all aspects of a programme not provided by Nottinghamshire County Council centres and that approval of all plans has been given by their nominated manager.

Additional assurances required of other providers should not need to be sought from in house provision as all operating procedures will be in accordance with expected standards.

These trips must be recorded on the EVOLVE system and can proceed under delegated approval from the Nominated Manager.

Events involving higher risk activities or environments

Some activities are higher risk than others, likewise locations used and the time of year can increase hazards on excursions and subsequently the level of approval required. Section 10 provides guidance on the sort of locations and activities that may increase approval criteria into a higher category.

Self-led adventurous activities

Schools under current adventure licensing authority regulations may deliver adventure activities provided for their own pupils. Other establishments may provide non-licensable activities where

staff have specific experience and competency. This may be provided on and off site; however it is increasingly common for establishments to use a commercial provider.

The main points for consideration when planning such events are:

- the VC and Nominated Manager must affirm the competence of leaders in accordance with information provided within the LA's generic risk assessments
- leaders should be registered on the LA's EVOLVE system as a recognised leader of an adventure activity and evidence provided to the LA of this
- certain activities fall outside of the adventure licensing scheme but still require competent leadership or qualified staff to lead
- all such activities require approval from the LA. Additional information regarding the organisation and approval of adventure based activities is contained within section 10 .

Visit monitoring

In order to comply with its obligations under health and safety law, as an employer the LA must undertake monitoring of visits. This takes three main forms:

1. Monitoring of visit details and approvals on the EVOLVE system

The LA monitor visit details recorded on the EVOLVE system and may request further information from establishments or issue guidance and advice. This must be acted on if received.

For category C visits and activities, the LA will indicate approval of the information received on approval submissions, allowing events to proceed. For all such activities, establishments must ensure that they receive such approval prior to the visit taking place.

2. Monitoring of establishments' visit planning procedures

An Outdoor Education Adviser or LA representative may visit establishments to review planning arrangements for visits and approval systems developed on site, as well as risk assessments and other relevant systems and procedures in place. Establishments will be contacted in advance of such visits and informed of the format this will take.

3. Monitoring of visits as they take place

From time to time an LA representative or OEA may attend a visit as it is occurring. This will be an opportunity to assess that visits are operating in accordance with LA procedures and details outlined within approval submissions. Establishments will be contacted in advance of such a visit and will be informed of the format this will take and any review which will result as an outcome.

4. Planning, risk assessment and risk management

Planning aspects

All trips must be appropriately planned. Effective planning need not be complicated. Many regular trips carried out on a periodic basis can be managed, approved and reviewed locally. Where applicable, this can be through reference to existing risk assessment documents and routine operating procedures for the establishment.

For larger, more complex excursions, specific planning must take place and LA approval sought. All applications for LA approval should be submitted, with a detailed programme for the duration of the visit, at least 4 weeks prior to the proposed event.

Planning checklists are available to support staff in identifying key areas to consider and are available within the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE. These are produced as a means of support rather than a rigid framework and additional considerations may be required.

Establishments should allocate sufficient time to plan excursions and meet submission timescales. Planning ahead allows robust procedures to be put in place, sufficient time to brief participants, all staff and, where applicable, source alternative means of funding.

Where a visit involves a new venture for the establishment, particularly when visiting a developing country or remote area, or expedition, skiing or adventure activities using a provider/company, establishments should take initial advice from the LA Outdoor Education Adviser **before** making any financial commitments.

Establishing the aims and purpose

All visits must have clear educational, developmental or recreational aims dependant on the purpose of the intervention. Visits may have a specific curriculum focus, e.g. fieldwork or a language exchange visit, and/or may more generally contribute to a young person's personal, social, health and/or cultural awareness.

All involved, including leaders, parents/guardians and participants, should be aware of the aims of the visit as part of the planning process.

Visits plans should be discussed with the VC and Nominated Manager prior to committing to any course of action.

Consider the costs

In assessing the costs of visits, leaders will need to consider a number of components. These may include:

- preparation and pre-visit expenses
- transport
- meals/refreshments en route
- accommodation and food
- instruction
- entry charges/site fees
- equipment hire
- insurance
- passports and visas if abroad
- pocket money
- contingency money.

Cost can be a significant barrier for families, children and young people and this should be considered when determining plans. It may be possible to locate sources of external funds from trusts, charities or governmental initiatives which can greatly increase the likelihood of a trip taking place for the benefit of all.

Standard financial procedures

When plans progress, leaders must operate within Nottinghamshire County Council's standard financial procedures. These are based upon sound principles of accountability to provide adequate personal safeguard, yet at the same time to be fully adaptable to a variety of circumstances. At no time must the underlying principles be ignored.

Advice on financial management procedures is available from departmental finance officers and reference should be made to the Manual of Finance Guidance or the Managing Schools Funds handbook, contact Nottinghamshire County Council's finance department.

Charging regulations – schools

The Education Act 1996 allows charges to be made only for strictly defined school activities. A summary of the main principles is given below, but teachers must ensure that they refer to the latest LA guidance.

The Act largely forbids charges for activities that take place in school hours. Charges are permitted for activities taking place outside school hours provided that they are not required as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum - these are known as 'optional extras'. Charges are permitted for the board and lodging element of any residential activity.

Even where charges are forbidden, schools may invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or to support a particular visit. Such contributions must be genuinely voluntary and it must be made clear that pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made a contribution. However, if a visit cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this can be made clear to parents at the planning stage.

All governing bodies should have agreed policies on charging and remissions and teachers must ensure that they are aware of their particular school's policy when planning any visit. A copy of regulations regarding school charging policy is available within the guidance and resource section of EVOLVE.

Researching locations and use of other organisations

In choosing the location of a visit, leaders should consider the age of the participants and their ability to cope with the length and type of travel. Consideration should be given to staff competency, the accessibility of the activities and locality for participants and knowledge of the environment to be visited. Establishments should also bear in mind environmental sustainability in their venue choices.

It is good practice for exploratory visits to take place when activities are planned. If an establishment is leading part or all of a programme and/or is organising its own accommodation, an exploratory visit is normally essential. This provides a level of detail that written or verbal information may not provide and supports the production of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

If the entire venture, including any recreational time or evening activities, is arranged through a known and reputable tour company, who is leading all activities, has undertaken risk assessments and can provide appropriate assurances, a pre-visit by the leader may not be necessary, but this should be checked with the VC. Even in this situation, there is a shared responsibility for the care

of young people and a pre-visit may pick up a number of issues which can usually be addressed in discussion with the provider. Leaders should be mindful that the provider's interest may be to promote their business and not necessarily to inform potential leaders of drawbacks. Equality issues relating to cultural, religious or linguistic differences, and special needs should be assessed.

If for any reason an pre-visit does not take place, the Visit Leader must obtain sufficient information to complete a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and management plan for the event. This could include information provided from colleagues who have used a provider/venue previously, information provided via tour operators and providers or advice received from the OEA.

Many establishments use the same venue on a regular or an annual basis. Leaders should avoid making assumptions from previous visits as some factors, e.g. the management of facilities and staffing change over time. It is essential to review the risk assessment, location and programme before each visit but a visit in person may not be necessary.

It is reasonable to include the cost of a pre-visit within the overall costs of the trip. If the venture does not finally take place, it would be reasonable for establishment funds to finance any pre-visits that have taken place.

In researching information about other countries, leaders should refer to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website and select information for the particular country. This website lists specific security and health risks of global areas and individual countries and provides other useful information.

Self organised or using a tour operator?

Establishment-organised and led visits are appropriate in many circumstances, as this ensures that the programme can be specifically planned to meet the needs of the participants involved. However, in specific cases, it is wise to arrange visits through specialist providers or tour operators. Establishments should always ensure a reputable operator is used, that is experienced in providing services for groups such as schools, youth groups, early years or children's social care. The Outdoor Education Adviser can provide contact details of organisations and tour operators used by other Nottinghamshire County Council establishments.

Travel organisers and operators selling seats on aircraft, or packages with an air transport element, must have an Air Travel Operators Licence (ATOL) which provides security against a licence holder going out of business. Travel agents do not need to be an ATOL holder if acting only as an agent of an ATOL holder.

Reputable operators should be able to demonstrate their awareness of the health and safety concerns of Local Authorities and should provide activities that meet UK safety standards. If they offer adventure activities such as water sports (other than in very restricted and controlled environments) or rock climbing (on natural rock) in the UK, they must have an AALS licence. Other accreditation schemes exist that evidence management procedures and are independently audited such as the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Mark (LOtC Quality Badge) Adventure Mark or other industry specific award which offer similar assurances.

Providers should offer accommodation which is suitable for young people, which meets health and safety and fire regulations and is adequately insured. They should be able to provide copies of their safety audits and risk management procedures and many offer leaders a subsidised inspection visit.

Adventure activity providers, accommodation providers and other service providers to Nottinghamshire County Council establishments must be assessed as appropriate. The provider checking form provides examples of suitable assurances which establishments should seek from providers, either verbally at the point of booking or by requesting the provider to complete this form.

Tour operators and others who may sub-contract service delivery to other providers, (e.g. a ski tour operator who organises ski school, accommodation and transport in one package) must give the establishment assurances that contractors will provide a suitable level of service to the establishment.

No contract should be entered into with any provider or tour operator until the establishment is satisfied that there is good safety provision.

Checking accommodation

Establishments should take all reasonable steps to ensure that accommodation and other facilities used on the visit are suitable and safe. The LA generic risk assessment '*Residential Visit Accommodation*' provides details of suitable provision and should be used in the decision making process when choosing accommodation.

If travelling abroad, bear in mind that standards of health and safety, including fire precautions in other countries vary and may be less stringent than from those in the UK. Parents/guardians should be made aware of this when they are asked to give consent. Information provided by a tour operator should be considered carefully during the risk assessment process.

If an establishment is independently arranging accommodation, a pre-visit should normally be made with reference to the LA generic risk assessment '*Residential Visit Accommodation*'.

On arrival at the accommodation, leaders should check the nearest fire escapes and fire alarm point and the availability of any fire equipment and note any other obvious health and safety hazards. Any problems, such as obstructed escape routes or locked doors, should be reported to the management and satisfactorily resolved. Leaders must ensure that every member of the group knows what to do in the event of fire or other emergency, including the location of an agreed assembly point.

Risk assessment and risk management

All visits must be risk assessed. This process, while being a legal requirement, should be viewed as an aid to the overall planning process, rather than a necessary obligation. Accidents can happen on any activity and effective supervision and management should occur regardless of their frequency, duration or perceived risk.

As with any other aspect of provision, establishments must give careful consideration to the hazards involved in the visit and ensure that any areas of risk are contained within acceptable levels. Risk assessments must be suitable and sufficient; they need not be complex but should be comprehensive.

In practice this means that:

- the level of detail should be proportionate to the risk
- all reasonable steps are taken to identify significant risks
- the assessment should be appropriate to the nature of the activity and take account of changing circumstances.

No specific qualification is needed to carry out a risk assessment; however the person conducting the risk assessment needs to be competent to do so. Training in applying risk assessment to visits is provided within the LA's training courses. (See Nottinghamshire County Council's annually published '*Outdoor and Environmental Training Opportunities*' booklet, available online from 'Wired' or www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/outdoorenvironmental and in the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE.

All activities in life involve a level of risk, likewise a wide range of activities that have inherent risks, have direct benefit for participants. Risk assessment includes the assessment of hazards and their management, so as to reduce the risk to an acceptable level to enable learning and development to occur.

Responsibility for risk assessment

For visits there are three recognised levels of risk assessment, which taken together constitute a sound risk management process. These three levels must be in place for every visit:

- **A generic risk assessment of the common risks of the activity.** It is the employers' (the LA's) responsibility to prepare these risk assessments which establishments must refer to in planning and conducting visits.
- **A specific risk assessment.** This includes the specific risks of the venue and programme, the medical and potential behavioural needs of the group and other considerations. A specific risk assessment can be completed for a group of similar visits or a regularly delivered activity where appropriate. **The specific risk assessment is the responsibility of the establishment and is usually completed by the Visit Leader and VC.**
- **An ongoing risk assessment.** This is a continuous process of sound judgements being made by competent people before and throughout the activity. **This is the responsibility of the Visit Leader and other staff on the visit**

Generic risk assessments

A set of LA generic risk assessments for visits is available to establishments on the Wired website and in the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE. These cover most general risks associated with the majority of visits undertaken by Nottinghamshire CFCS establishments. If a visit or activities are planned which are not covered by these generic risk assessments, the VC should contact the Outdoor Education Adviser.

For each visit, the leader and VC must refer to and read the relevant LA generic risk assessments. Numbers 1 and 2 apply to all visits and leaders need to identify which others apply to their visit. They form a general framework for safety and all visits should conform to them. However they are not exhaustive and do not consider individual circumstances specific to an establishment, service area or the particular needs of participants.

If they are to be used by establishments to manage Category A events, they must be made specific to the establishment through reference to local operating procedures (such as action in the event of an emergency or the needs of the group) and signed as appropriate by the Nominated Manager for the site.

Establishments should ensure they use the latest up-to-date set of risk assessments available from September each year.

Specific risk assessments

With reference to the relevant generic risk assessments, two or more staff, usually the Visit Leader, who will have normally pre-visited the location with support from other leaders or the VC, should carry out the specific risk assessment for a visit or group of visits. Specific risk assessments are required for all Category B and C events.

Where LA generic risk assessments are modified for use on Category A events risk assessments should refer to relevant establishment policies and procedures e.g. a school's behaviour policy or

street youth work policy or the needs of the group worked with. **The specific risk assessment should not repeat generic risk assessment procedures, but should follow on from the points raised in them.** Many establishments do this by thinking through the visit from beginning to end and identifying specific significant hazards. This assessment should form the basis of the planning for the supervision and arrangements for the visit(s) and may form a useful framework for informing participants and others about arrangements for the trip.

The detail of the specific risk assessment should reflect the complexity of the visit. Short local visits need less planning than longer residential visits to a distant location. In the past, the most serious incidents on visits have involved water and traffic. Therefore these potential hazards should be addressed with particular care. Some participants with specific needs may require an individual risk assessment completing to ensure their safe inclusion in an activity.

Examples of specific risk assessments and a blank specific risk assessment form are available on the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE.

Ongoing risk assessment

While written risk assessments must be completed before the visit, risk assessment does not end as the visit begins. **Risk assessment is a vital and ongoing process and a responsibility of the Visit Leaders throughout each visit.** It is not normally a written procedure; rather it is the process of sound judgements being made by competent people managing risk during events and activities. As part of this, leaders must:

- apply the control measures
- monitor how effective they are
- change, adapt and revise as required.

Plans and activities must be continually reviewed and adapted or not undertaken if circumstances indicate that risks have become too high. Leaders should ensure any subgroups are informed of changing circumstances they may not be aware of. For example, leaders may need to:

- check the forecast and monitor the weather, water levels, conditions underfoot, traffic levels
- monitor participants' and leaders' response and motivation
- adapt outdoor programmes because of, for example, high winds, high water levels, low temperatures or participants responses
- change from planned remote supervision to close supervision (e.g. because a city centre is busier or weather is more extreme than expected)
- change a programme because of non availability of a provider (e.g. if a lifeguard for a swimming pool does not arrive as requested)
- change a programme because of reduced staffing (e.g. the behaviour, illness or injury of a pupil is requiring the attention of one or more adults).

It is good practice to have a risk-assessed alternative plan in case the programme needs to be changed.

The Health and Safety (HSE) recommend a 5 step process for the production of risk assessments. An example of this process is provided in Appendix 12.

Significant incidents or 'near misses'

At the end of a visit, the leader should review the venture and report any issues of significance to the Visits Coordinator in order to improve practice next time. It is important to share learning outcomes with other leaders in the establishment and is good practice for the VC to let the Outdoor Education Adviser know of any issues that might be of use to others or the LA. A significant

incident form is available within the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE. Accidents on visits should be reported and recorded using normal establishment systems.

Risk assessment when using other organisations

Establishments need not complete risk assessments for aspects of visits that are the responsibility of a provider or other organisation. For example, it is not necessary for an LA establishment to complete risk assessments for adventure activities provided by a tour operator as part of a packaged adventure trip.

The establishment must however check that the provider has suitable and sufficient risk assessments and the necessary control measures in place. To obtain this information, a provider assurance form has been created. This should be used by the leader to ensure that minimum standards of deliver and provision are in place. Establishments needing help with considering information provided should contact the Outdoor Education Adviser. (It is not necessary for establishments to obtain such assurances from the County Council's own outdoor and environmental centres).

While a provider is responsible for their aspects of the programme, the LA establishment must undertake an overall risk assessment of the visit including assessments of aspects of the visit which are the establishments rather than the provider's responsibility. These may include any self-organised travel, supervision of behaviour and of participants during breaks and in the evenings and any excursions organised by the establishment. An example of a specific risk assessment for these circumstances is available from the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE. NB it is not necessary to submit provider risk assessments, generic risk assessments or specific risk assessments unless specifically requested. It is necessary that they are in place and available for inspection if required.

If a provision does not meet the standards required

It is important to ensure that in contracting with a tour operator or provider, details and any amendments are confirmed in writing. If the provision is not up to the standard required, group leaders and VCs must confer with the Nominated Manager and, if necessary the Outdoor Education Adviser, before allowing the visit to proceed.

Whilst actually on a visit, any problems should be immediately reported to those responsible, for example the centre manager or the tour operator's representative. Aim to obtain improvements to the situation at the time. This is essential if there are concerns over the health or safety. The visit or activities must not proceed if safety concerns cannot be satisfied. If necessary, contact your manager and/or Outdoor Education Adviser for advice.

If provision during a visit is not satisfactory, collect evidence to support a complaint. Photographs may be useful. Other parties may be prepared to support by a brief written statement or by leaving you their name and address.

The establishment should write to the company detailing the complaint, stating clearly what action is required and enclosing copies of any evidence. A copy of this letter should also be sent to the Outdoor Education Adviser.

If the company's response is unsatisfactory and the company is a member of a tourist or bonding association, or holds other accreditation, it is possible to approach the relevant association. For a health and safety matter in the UK, the Health and Safety Executive and the Adventure Activities Licensing Service can be informed. A claim for compensation can be made in the Small Claims Court, Legal Services will be able to advise.

For further guidance on ongoing risk assessment, refer to the DCSF *'Handbook for Group Leaders'* a copy of this guidance is available within the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE.

First aid

Qualified first aiders may not be necessary for all visits and activities, for example where activities occur in close proximity to the establishment and staff have ready access to first aid support. First aid issues should be considered as part of the risk management process and be determined by the availability of an appropriate level of first aid support.

At least one person, with a current first aid certificate, trained to an appropriate level based on the risk assessment, should accompany each visit where a time delay could occur in obtaining suitable assistance or as appropriate to the activity planned or needs within the group. Many National Governing Body awards are not current without an up to date appropriate first aid certificate and this must be considered when assessing the competency of leaders.

Participants should have access to first aid, and where small groups are working at a distance from each other, more first aiders will be required. First aid provides 'immediate temporary care' and if in any doubt, medical advice should be sought as soon as possible. Leaders must find out how to contact medical help in the location visited, before this is required and ensure that emergency medical assistance is provided expediently where required.

A course delivered by an HSE approved organisation is recommended as a minimum training for leaders of visits. First aid qualifications are valid for three years. Training courses are available through Nottinghamshire County Council (see '*Outdoor and Environmental Education Training Opportunities*' on Wired and [EVOLVE](#)) or first aid organisations such as Red Cross, St John's Ambulance, REC (Rescue Emergency Care) and ITC (Immediate Temporary Care).

Where activities take place in remote areas, a higher standard of training in first aid may be appropriate. Leaders of such activities should take advice from the Outdoor Education Adviser.

First aid kit(s) must be accessible for every group and where remote supervision is planned, such as a Duke of Edinburgh Award expedition, participants should have a working knowledge of first aid and how to access qualified first aid support.

Leaders should consider the remoteness and duration of the venture, and take with them extra supplies of any supplementary first aid items that may be necessary, including such items as sanitary towels, clean water and sick bags. First aiders trained in resuscitation may choose to carry an anti-infection resuscitation device. If people are allergic to fabric plaster, a waterproof or 'micro pore' plaster may be used. Participants may carry their own first aid kits to deal with minor injuries. If travelling to countries where the availability of sterilised equipment may not be assured, leaders may decide to take emergency medical travel kits including syringes, needles and sutures where advised to do so.

Medication and drugs

Leaders should be aware that no drugs, other than those prescribed by a physician, may be administered to a child or young person. Leaders cannot be required to administer drugs but can volunteer to undertake the role. It may be sensible that participants self-administer under supervision. During visits, safe arrangements should be made for the control and administration of prescribed drugs to participants on the basis of signed written information and consent from parents/legal guardians and agreement on appropriate action by the staff responsible for participants. Similar arrangements may be made for non-prescription drugs, e.g. painkillers such as paracetamol, which parents wish their child to self-administer for such conditions as headaches or period pains.

Reference should be made to the DCSF publication, '*Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs*' and the recommended parental consent form, both are available from the guidance and resources section of [EVOLVE](#).

5. Insurance for visits and activities

During approved visits, the County Council's insurance arrangements (public liability insurance and personal accident insurance for staff) are identical to those that operate during a normal working day.

It is not always necessary to take out additional insurance for visits in the UK. **However**, the LA's standard (as opposed to travel) insurance does not provide for example; cover for cancellation or curtailment due to illness; personal accident cover for pupils or participants or cover for the theft of property. Therefore schools and other establishments may wish to consider arranging specific insurance cover for visits, particularly residential visits and those involving adventure activities.

Appropriate travel insurance cover must be taken out on behalf of all participants for every visit abroad.

Annual cover for school visits (UK and abroad) can be arranged under Nottinghamshire County Council's School Travel Insurance Scheme. Those schools who have taken out the Annual Travel (Off-site) Insurance option through the LA's 'Management Choices', will have cover automatically in place for pupils, teaching and support staff, adult volunteers, helpers and assistants, and other authorised children travelling with the group. Nottinghamshire County Council's School Travel Insurance summary is available on 'wired' or from the insurer's website: www.eduvia.com

Individual activity insurance arrangements for other establishments within Children, Families and Cultural Services, as well as schools who have chosen not to purchase the annual insurance, can be arranged through the 'ad-hoc' travel policy. This provides insurance cover for activities ranging from standard trips to winter sports and includes personal accident; cancellation and theft/loss of belongings as well as many other benefits. The cover applies to pupils/participants, staff, volunteers, helpers and assistants travelling with the group.

As with all policies, there are a number of exclusions; such as: engaging in aviation as a pilot or crew member of a fixed wing or rotary propelled aircraft; or for the costs of rescue not involving a medical emergency which might occur during certain activities or dental treatment caused by foodstuff not apparent within 1 week of the incident. The Local Authority's policy also excludes camping or water activity equipment. However, for an additional premium, it is probable that insurance can be extended to include this equipment through the Authority's Risk & Insurance team. When undertaking camping or water activities, or where adventure activities will take place in a country which could present potentially adverse conditions, the insurance needs may be specialised and advice from the Risk and Insurance Section should be taken.

Where insurance is provided from another agency, for example via an inclusive charge for a package holiday from a tour operator or to cover a specialised activity, schools and establishments must forward full details of the policy to the Risk and Insurance Section for their approval. **This approval must be gained for each separate visit abroad.**

Important insurance advice

- On visits abroad, leaders must take a copy of their insurance policy with them.
- Contact the Risk and Insurance Office at County Hall or the insurers before incurring substantial medical or other expenses.
- Obtain and retain receipts and other documentation relating to any claim.
- Report any loss or theft of property to the local police within 24 hours of the incident and obtain written confirmation of this.
- In the event of a claim, contact the Risk and Insurance Section at County Hall to obtain a claim form within 30 days.
- Some providers may require establishments to sign liability disclaimers for certain services provided. Any such request from a provider, or as part of the terms and

- conditions of a contract, must be discussed and approved as appropriate with Legal Services and the Risk and Insurance Section.
- Employees, paid or otherwise, are not insured by the County Council when transporting participants in private cars as part of a visit. Drivers and establishments must ensure that the vehicle used has appropriate separate insurance in place.

The Council's Risk and Insurance Section is happy to give specific advice on any insurance matters relating to visits and travel arrangements.

6. Supervision

Careful planning is an essential element of ensuring the smooth running of any excursion. However this cannot replace the need for adequate supervision throughout the trip. Staff should take all reasonable measures to ensure that participants under their control are safe and protected from any unacceptable risk.

To exercise supervision means to be in a position of awareness of all that is taking place in any given situation and being able to intervene effectively should the need arise. It does not always mean direct visual contact but it does include the ability to anticipate potential problems and to take appropriate preventative action. Clearly, adequate supervision depends on the appropriate experience and the sound judgement of leaders.

Aspects of supervision

Supervision can be close or remote but must always be in place and active:

- Close supervision occurs when the group remain within general sight and/or contact of the supervisor.
- Remote supervision occurs when, as part of planned activities, a group works away from the supervisors but is subject to stated controls (e.g. during souvenir shopping in a town centre or on a Duke of Edinburgh's Award activity). The supervisor is present, though not necessarily near or in sight and they are able to monitor the group. The supervisor's location is known and the group have a planned means of contacting the supervisor.
- Recreational time - for example during the evenings - may involve close or remote supervision, but should not be unsupervised. The supervisors continue to be in charge and owe a duty of care for participants and should retain the ability to manage the conduct and welfare of the group.

Factors affecting the nature of supervision

The supervision employed will be dictated by the size and nature of group. The leader/adult to participant ratios should be governed by the age and experience of participants, the competence of staff, the nature of the venture and the location. It is important to ensure that there are sufficient experienced and competent staff to deal with an incident whilst, at the same time, maintaining adequate supervision of the rest of the group.

Establishments should be aware of the existence of the EU Working Time Regulations. Whilst individuals can voluntarily opt out of these regulations, it is obviously good practice to ensure that leaders on residential visits do not get overtired. If a leader's night sleep has been seriously interrupted s/he should avoid taking on significant responsibilities, or driving, before catching up on rest.

Competence of leaders

VCs and Nominated Managers need to be satisfied that the Visit Leader and other adults leading participants on a visit are suitable and sufficiently competent to carry out their responsibilities. Where volunteers are used in support roles, it is likewise essential that competence is ensured and that roles allocated are suitable.

Specific competencies are required for leaders to operate in certain locations or involved in the delivery of adventurous activities. Issues of competencies are explored further in section 10 and details of specific competency are contained in the LA generic risk assessment for activities on visits.

It is good practice that Visit Leaders maintain a portfolio of their experience, training and qualifications in relation to visits. The VC should maintain an establishment record of leaders' training and experience. This can be carried out by record keeping on the EVOLVE system. Competence as a leader derives from:

- experience of the environment to be visited
- experience of the activities involved
- leadership experience of similar visits
- knowledge of the participants involved
- appropriate training in activities and environments
- leadership skills and other personal qualities.

The LA provides a range of relevant training courses. These include health and safety awareness courses, VC training, risk assessment and Visit Leader training, introductions to the LA's own centres, first aid, leadership training and qualifications in specialist adventure activities. Details of training are available from 'Wired', or the support and section on the EVOLVE system.

Establishments must ensure all staff involved in any visit (including volunteers) receive a specific induction to the visit, including its aims, their role, hazards and control measures and emergency procedures.

Leadership by non teaching staff on school visits

Under current legislation, there is no requirement for the visit leader or other accompanying staff to be qualified teachers. There is however a generally held expectation that there will be a teacher in charge of visits, in most circumstances this means leading and accompanying participants out of school.

The use of non-teaching staff to supervise participants on visits must be based on their competence to do so, the appropriateness of their inclusion and the level of responsibility that this may incur with regard to their contract of employment.

Supervision ratios

With the exception of early years and foundation stage staff, a participant ratio is not stipulated in law.

Staff working with children under the age of 5 must operate within the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, published by the DCSF 2008. This stipulates minimum allowable staffing ratios pertinent to the supervision of children and additional controls regarding the qualification of staff suitable to provide supervision. Copies of the full document are available on the guidance and resources section of the EVOLVE system and it is expected that staff to child ratios will be used as a minimum on visits as a result of the risk management process.

Excepting early years and foundation stages, suitable staff and participant ratios are a matter of judgement for the Nominated Manager and VC after consultation with the group leader and should be established as part of the risk assessment process. It is important to ensure that a high enough

number of adult supervisors exist to cope with any foreseeable circumstances during the visit. Factors to consider include:

- age, ability and maturity of participants
- special educational and/or medical needs
- linguistic needs
- nature of journey, venues and activities
- experience and competence of staff
- experience, competence and behaviour of participants
- requirements of organisations and venues used
- the need to provide first aid cover.

Benchmark guidance for adult: participant ratios for normal day visits are:

- school years 1 to 3 (ages 4 - 8 yrs):
1 member of staff or adult for every 6 participants
(under fives need higher ratios established via a risk assessment process)
- school years 4 to 6 (ages 8 - 11yrs):
1 member of staff or adult for every 10-15 participants
- school year 7 onwards (ages 12 yrs and above)
1 member of staff or adult for every 15 - 20 participants

Residential visits – as for day visits plus:

- a minimum of two members of staff are required on residential visits
- 1 professionally qualified member of staff or adult for every 10 participants
- mixed gender groups should have at least 1 male and 1 female member of staff.

On residential visits it is usually necessary that both male and female adults accompany a mixed group though parties of younger participants can often be adequately supervised by female adults. There should always be a male and female adult with any mixed group abroad.

Visits abroad – as for day visits plus:

- a minimum of two professionally qualified members of staff
- 1 professionally qualified member of staff or adult for every 10 participants
- mixed gender groups should have at least 1 male and 1 female member of staff.

These ratios are guidelines that should not normally be exceeded. The actual level of supervision should be established via a risk assessment process which considers the needs of the group and the nature of the visit. A minimum number of two members of staff/adults with each group is usually necessary. However, for small groups, in certain circumstances, the head of establishment, VC and Visit Leader may agree that only one supervisor is required.

Where a participant requires specific support, such as a 1:1 carer this person should not be considered within the overall staffing ratio as there prime responsibility of the young person they are there to support.

Careful consideration should be given to the inclusion of other people on a visit such as the leaders' own children or friends. Care should be exercised to ensure that the safety of the group is not put at risk because of their inclusion and that suitable supervision of all participants will be maintained at all times. If additional children are not of the same age and ability of the main group, separate supervision must be arranged for them and their supervisors may not be included in the

main group's staff/participant ratio. An establishment's policy must identify if this practice is locally endorsed or not supported as appropriate within a given service area.

Managing supervision; briefing and induction of leaders

Supervision for the visit and specific responsibilities should be planned in advance. Whilst rotas for those on duty may be established, all supervisors must accept that they share responsibility for the health and safety of the whole group throughout the visit and their prime duty is to all participants in the group.

The Visit Leader should ensure that all leaders and supervisors:

- understand the overall aims and programme for the visit, the supervision arrangements and their role
- understand the risk assessment and control measures for the visit
- have prior knowledge of the group including any special needs
- carry a list of all group members and a list of those for whom they are taking specific responsibility where appropriate
- understand the emergency procedures.

Leaders must check regularly that the entire group (or their section of the group) is present, especially when leaving a site or rest stop on a journey, particularly in crowded venues, where appropriate participants can be made easily identifiable by wearing similar tee shirts or other identifying clothing. In public areas, participants should not wear name badges but can carry their name and a contact details in a pocket. Rendezvous points should be established and participants told what to do if they become separated from the group.

In many situations, both safety and visit aims will be best served if large groups are broken into smaller groups each independently supervised. Potential danger points can occur when rearranging groups, in particular:

- when a large group is split into smaller groups for specific activities
- when groups transfer from one activity to another and change supervisor
- during periods between activities
- when small groups re-form into a large group.

Each supervisor must clearly take responsibility for a group when their part of the programme begins, making certain that all group members are aware of the changeover. They should clearly pass on responsibility for the group when their part of the programme is concluded, together with any relevant information ensuring that the group members know who their next supervisor is. This may be particularly important where using activity provider's staff for part(s) of a visit.

Remote supervision

This refers to the practice of supervising participants from a distance rather than being right alongside them for the majority of the time. Remote supervision for older participants may be integral to the activity; such as on Duke of Edinburgh Award activities, on other visits there will be occasions when it is appropriate for participants to experience some independence, for example souvenir shopping or down time in a programme.

In organising such activities, leaders still remain responsible for participants and must follow all relevant advice in this document in relation to risk assessment, planning and preparation. Leaders must follow LA generic risk assessment 1, assess the risks of the particular location, situation or activities proposed and the competence of the participants to act sensibly and take responsibility for themselves. Some locations and activities, including beaches and swimming, are not appropriate for remote supervision. Parents/guardians must be informed of the supervision arrangements and their written consent obtained.

Depending on the circumstances and the risk assessment, there are a number of fundamental points that should be adhered to when considering remote supervision:

- it should be undertaken by an appropriately competent member of staff
- participants should be sufficiently competent to act safely and independently in the particular situation
- maps, plans and/or other information or training for participants to act effectively in the environment are available
- suitable clothing and equipment is provided
- risk assessment control measures, agreed rules and boundaries are known by all involved
- written details of the rendezvous points and times and how to contact leaders in an emergency and/or return to base are known by all involved
- ensure all have coins, phone cards and/or mobile phones and telephone numbers
- monitoring of the group should occur at appropriate intervals
- the supervisor should remain in a position to reach the group reasonably promptly if support is required.

For remote supervision of adventure activities, including Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions, refer to section 10. This section provides advice on the gradual withdrawal of supervision, which may have application for indirect supervision in other contexts.

Teachers and others taking responsibility for work experience that comprises of substantive remote supervision arrangements should follow and refer to the Nottinghamshire Futures (formerly NEBA) guidelines regarding work based learning (see Appendix 10).

Providing for participants with additional needs

Under Disability and Equality legislation, it is unlawful to:

- treat a disabled young person less favourably
- fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

Every effort should be made to ensure that activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion, sexual orientation. If a visit requires catering for young people with additional needs, every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

The Human Rights Act provides that no person should be denied the right to education. Establishments should take all reasonable steps to include participants with special educational or medical needs in any visit, whilst maintaining the safety and educational benefit for everyone in the group. If establishments are concerned about a particular group member's medical condition, advice should be taken from a doctor or community paediatrician.

It is often the participants with additional needs who stand to gain the most from visits. The 2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act requires that schools make 'reasonable adjustments' to make visits accessible to all participants and that disabled participants are not treated less favourably. A reasonable adjustment may include, for example, choosing a more accessible venue for the annual residential visit or taking an additional member of staff or volunteer. Where inclusion difficulties arise, establishments need to be able to demonstrate that they have made reasonable adjustments and should keep a record of their efforts to include in case of a challenge. Useful documents are the Nottinghamshire County Council publications 'Planning Inclusive Visits' and

'Making Reasonable Adjustments'. Both are available from 'Wired' and the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE. Further advice is available from Nottinghamshire County Council's Special Educational Needs Strategic Services.

When selecting participants for a visit, there are several criteria to consider, such as the specific class or group for whom a visit is planned, the number of places available and the individual needs of participants. The ultimate decision on the selection of the members of the group lies with the head of the establishment after consultation with the group leader and staff. Having taken account of the above and made reasonable adjustments, any participant whose behaviour puts him/her or others at risk may be stopped from going on the visit. This decision can only occur after a significant period of planning for inclusion and the remaining concerns for the decision must be evidencable. The curricular aims of the visit for participants who are unable to attend for medical or behavioural reasons, should be fulfilled in other ways wherever possible.

If a pupil needs additional support to take part in a visit and receives additional funding from HLN (Higher Level Needs), AFN (Additional Family Needs,) ASN (Additional School Needs) or from the school or family of schools' budget, then this can be used to contribute to the cost. The LA does not have additional funds to contribute to any increased costs arising from a planned visit. The additional costs must be taken account of by the school as part of its planning.

Behavioural issues

Where concerns are held regarding participants behaviour, it should not be assumed that behavioural issues will be replicated in different situations.

Time should be spent discussing expected behaviour and conduct while on visits. Participants whose behaviour is such that the leader is concerned for their safety or that of the group may be withdrawn from the activity.

On residential visits, the group leader should consider sending participants home early if there behaviour is a serious risk to themselves or others. Young people should not be sent home unaccompanied; any decision to do so would need managing either by parents and guardians being requested to collect them or within the confines of the staff available.

Consideration should be given to the additional pressure the decision to return a participant home may create for the remainder of the visit. Incidents aboard in particular may need careful consideration (and higher staffing) and a strategy agreed prior to departure.

Parents and guardians should be informed of procedures for dealing with behavioural issues, how a participant will be returned home and who will meet the cost of this as part of the planning/ information provided for the visit.

Safeguarding young people

Establishments should take measures on all visits to protect all young people, particularly those with special educational needs, from racial, homophobic, disabilist, ('hate incidents' is the umbrella term), physical or sexual abuse. Establishments and leaders need to consider the possibility of abuse from someone within the group, or with access to the group, from an intruder entering the accommodation or a participant leaving the accommodation and should ensure adequate control measures are in place.

Teachers and establishment staff should undergo a criminal record check before appointment. This is the Criminal Record Bureau's (CRB) 'enhanced' check.

A CRB check/ISA registration is required for all staff (paid or voluntary) who works in a regulated or controlled activity.

What is a 'regulated activity'?

Any activity of a specified nature that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults frequently, intensively and/or overnight. (Such activities include teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment and transportation.)

- Any activity allowing contact with children or vulnerable adults that is in a specified place frequently or intensively. (Such places include schools, care homes and youth centres.)
- Fostering and childcare.
- Any activity that involves people in certain defined positions of responsibility. (Such positions include school governor, director of social services and trustee of certain charities.)

'Regulated activity' is when the activity is frequent (once a month or more) or 'intensive' (takes place on three or more days in a 30-day period).

What is a 'controlled activity'?

Frequent or intensive support work in general health settings, the NHS and further education. (Such work includes cleaners, caretakers, shop workers, catering staff, car park attendants and receptionists.)

- Individuals working for specified organisations (e.g. a local authority) who have frequent access to sensitive records about children and vulnerable adults.
- Support work in adult social care settings. (Such jobs include day centre cleaners and those with access to social care records.)

'Controlled activity' is when this type of activity is 'frequent' (once a month or more) or 'intensive' (takes place on three or more days in a 30-day period).

General considerations

A CRB check may not be required for volunteer leaders accompanying establishment staff in non-residential situations unless they are to be in sole charge of children or it is part of a regular input.

For the protection of both adults and participants, all adult supervisors should avoid being alone with young people wherever possible. On residential visits, separate male and female sleeping areas should be arranged and, except with young or those with specific needs, staff should avoid sleeping in the same room or tent as participants and never directly next to participants. Staff accommodation should however be in close proximity.

CRB regulations are not pertinent to private arrangements (such as two parents arranging the transportation of their children to a sports event or similar un-solicited by an NCC establishment).

Private fostering arrangements – exchange programmes

Where volunteers agree to host a young person in their home for a defined period as part of an exchange programme with the agreement of the parents or guardians there is no requirement for a CRB check or ISA registration.

It is vitally important that establishments recruit volunteers who are known to the establishment and monitor these arrangements on an ongoing basis with the host family and young person.

This is termed a private fostering arrangement and can only occur where:

- hosts provide care for a period under 28 days
- adults providing private fostering (accommodation and care) are unpaid volunteers

- the parents or guardians of the child being privately fostered agree the choice of the adults who privately foster their child.

Leaders should be aware of and comply with the most current Nottinghamshire County Council safeguarding procedures and seek advice where appropriate from the Safeguarding Team.

7. Communicating with parents and gaining consent

Parents and guardians should be informed in writing, of any visit or activity unless it is a regular part of an establishment's curriculum or regular programme of activity which they have previously been informed of. Seeking consent for such activities for the period of a programme, or annually in the case of structured input, may be appropriate.

For all category B and C visits written information describing the visit should be provided and parental consent should be obtained. For residential visits and visits abroad it is expected practice that parents and guardians are invited to a briefing meeting where the visit is described and they can meet the leaders involved and ask questions. This may be a stipulation within your establishment's local visits policy.

Suitable information

Before a complex undertaking parents and guardians should be encouraged to attend a briefing session where a discussion can be held and written details of the proposed visit can be shared. There should be alternative arrangements put in place for parents/guardians who cannot attend, or who may have difficulty with communication in English.

So that an informed decision about their child's participation can be made, parents should be advised of the aims, objectives and value of the visit and the risks involved. Parents and guardians need to be informed of any significant hazards, especially those that they might not reasonably be expected to be aware of. Parents and guardians must be informed if health and safety standards are expected to be below those of the UK, e.g. in developing countries there may be a lack of vehicles with seat belts. It is useful to point out that there is always some level of risk in any activity, but that the visit will be managed to minimise risk as much as possible.

The following information should be provided initially to inform parents/guardians:

- dates and times of the visit
- purpose and educational value of the visit
- location, proposed itinerary and activities
- risks involved
- transport arrangements and name of any travel company involved
- accommodation/catering details
- cost/voluntary contribution requested
- year groups, number of participants, number of staff and name of group leader
- supervision arrangements, including arrangements for free time and any remote supervision
- code of conduct/standard of behaviour expected (parents may be expected to fund the early return of a participant whose conduct or behaviour puts him/herself or others at risk)
- medical and other information required on parental consent form
- insurance arrangements.

Where a visit includes travel abroad, additional information may be required such as:

- copy of the insurance policy

- passport and visa arrangements
- any vaccinations or medical preparation required
- if a school/other exchange visit, details as in section 9.

As organisation progresses, more detailed information should be passed onto parents and guardians such as:

- dates, times and place of departure and return (including arrangements for collection of participants at the end of a visit)
- any revisions to previous information
- pocket money arrangements if appropriate
- medical arrangements and reminder to bring prescribed drugs such as asthma inhalers
- advice on necessary clothing, equipment and footwear including advice on the climatic conditions of the destination and advised protection against sun, insects etc.
- checklist of clothing, equipment, passport/identity card, EHIC (European Health Insurance Card), medication and other essentials
- weight and size limits on luggage, particularly when travelling by air
- name and telephone number of emergency contact and/or address and telephone number of place(s) to be visited.

Disciplinary requirements should be made clear to both parents/guardians and participants. Leaders should be very explicit about rules on alcohol, smoking and illegal drugs, general behaviour and the policy on sleeping arrangements.

Obtaining consent

Consent should be obtained from parents and guardians based on information outlined above. Specific consent may not be required for a range of local and regularly delivered activities. Specific consent is required for any residential experience, activities happening some distance from an establishment or any activity that has additional hazards from routine work with young people (such as adventure activities).

Category A visits

For routine local activities delivered by an establishment (category A visits) information can be provided via an establishment prospectus, newsletters, programmes for a set period of time or letters home to parents and guardians.

Establishments must exercise judgement regarding the necessity to reinforce existing information provided and seek specific consent for activities. Local guidance should clarify this process within the establishment policy.

For nursery age children, on all occasions where children are to be off site from an establishment, parents/guardians must be informed and consent gained. For the majority of routine Category A visits, information and consent covering the period of a programme or term may be suitable and sufficient.

Category B and C visits

Parents and guardians must be informed of all non-routine visits including day visits, residential visits, adventure activities and visits abroad, by specific written information describing the visit and their specific consent obtained. For residential visits and visits abroad it is expected practice that parents/guardians are invited to meeting where the visit is described and they can meet the leaders involved and ask questions.

Where parental consent is required, forms should ask for information from parents about any illness, conditions, night-time tendencies, medication and any other information which the establishment needs to know in order to care for the participant such as dietary/ religious observance.

Medical consent

Medical evidence as to the fitness of a child or young person to participate may be required if they have had a recent serious illness or are suffering from a serious condition.

A declaration of agreement to emergency medical treatment, including anaesthetic and blood transfusion, should also be included. Whilst doctors might be expected to carry out necessary emergency treatment without parental consent, if parents do not agree to emergency treatment it may be reasonable for nominated managers to withdraw a participant from the visit, given the additional responsibility this could entail for the group leader.

The LA's parental consent form should be used for all residential visits and visits abroad. However, not all aspects of this form may be relevant for every visit and establishments may adapt the form for Category A or B visits as required, provided the necessary information to care for the participant is obtained.

Except for local visits during normal hours, copies of individual consent forms must be taken by the leader on the visit and be available to an emergency contact person.

Consent for transport in private vehicles

Consent should be obtained specifically for the transport of children and young people in the private vehicle of a member of staff or other participant as part of the organisation of a visit.

Early return

Arrangements for the early return of a young person from a visit whose conduct gives reason for concern may be required. A written agreement may be necessary identifying who will meet any costs incurred.

Communication between participants, parents and guardians and an establishment

Establishments should consider the issue of communication between participants on excursions and parents and guardians back at home.

A central point of contact is useful (usually the establishment) to make contact with those on visits should the need arise. This can be provided on the consent form together with contact details for the accommodation and Visit Leader in the event of a home emergency.

Consideration should be given to the use of mobile phones throughout a visit, for some participants this may be appropriate, for others it may be a hindrance to the purpose of the trip and its smooth running. While being extremely valuable in emergency situations, they can also cause serious miscommunication if used randomly and without thought.

Mobile phones are also open to misuse and can have implications for safeguarding. Subsequently establishments and leaders should consider if and how they are accommodated on residential experiences. This should be agreed by all participants, parents and guardians prior to an event.

Preparing participants for visits

Participants have an important role in the preparation of visits. Participants who are involved in the planning and risk assessment process are likely to be well prepared, make more informed decisions during visits, gain more developmentally from a visit and be at less risk. Providing information and guidance for participants is an important part of preparing for most trips.

Ensure that activities are suitable

The Visit Leader should ensure that participants are aware of the planned activities and that they are capable of undertaking what is proposed. Where young people should be encouraged to take on new challenges they should never be pressurised into unsuitable activities or those that they have genuine fear of.

The Visit Leader should decide how and what information is provided and must ensure participants understand key safety information. More preparation and subsequently more information will be required for category C visits as these include residential elements, travelling greater distances, may include more adventurous activities and by nature be more complex. Before a journey or visit takes place, participants should understand the list of points below:

- the aims and objectives of the visit
- background information about the place visited and/or activities
- how to avoid specific dangers and why safety measures are in place
- expected behaviour and the need to follow instructions
- what clothing or other equipment should be brought along
- emergency procedures in place for the visit
- when in another country cultural differences and basic phrases.

Where activities change within a planned programme, new activities should be assessed as appropriate and further information provided. With larger groups, where the Visit Leader may delegate responsibilities to others for leading smaller groups, it is important that participants know who is the responsible adult at all times throughout the programme.

During residential visits it may be sensible for each participant to carry the address and telephone number of where they are staying.

Where remote supervision is planned, reference should be made to section 6.

Leaders should conduct a final check before departure, to ensure that all participants have the necessary documents, clothing, equipment, medication, and other essentials.

Where transport is used, the group should be made aware of basic safety rules and advice as identified within section 8.

Equal opportunities

Every effort should be made to ensure that visits are accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of specific educational or medical need, ethnic origin, sex or religion.

Visits, activities planned and venues used should not unnecessarily exclude participation, more information on statutory expectation regarding inclusion is available within section 1.

To exclude a participant from participation in an event is a particularly contentious issue and should not be taken without a sound basis. This should be supported by evidence of measures taken to ensure participation, and a risk assessment that proves that risks cannot be sufficiently reduced by implementing reasonable control measures.

8. Transport

Visit Leaders must give careful thought to planning transport, especially when this is by road, since this is potentially the highest risk involved in most visits.

Transport arrangements and specific management plans should be outlined within risk assessments produced by establishments. Issues include the level of group supervision required while travelling, supervision/group management issues when boarding or alighting vehicles, managing stops in the journey and, if self driving, the competence of drivers and availability of support drivers to avoid fatigue.

The organisational skills used for local visits are transferable for longer journeys, however these normally require additional consideration due to the length of the journey or the use of multiple forms of transport.

Visit Leaders and Visit Coordinators should seek as much advice as necessary from the travel provider or company or the OEA. General considerations include:

- type of journey planned, will this take place locally or does it include long distances?
- most appropriate method of travel; self-driven forms of transport, public transport by road or rail, plane, boat or hired coach/minibus?
- arrangements in case of unforeseen circumstances including breakdown
- supervision while travelling
- insurance cover
- managing stops while travelling
- considering the effects of weather for transport plans
- choice of reputable travel or transport companies
- legal and regulatory constraints where staff use LA or hired minibuses
- driver competence and training and whether the driver holds an appropriate licence
- number of hours required for the journey and the length of the driver's day.

Legislation

Various forms of legislation exist for differing forms of transport. These can be extensive and complex and it is only feasible to address the most commonly encountered issues in this document. For further details about vehicle legislation pertinent to your visit, consult the Department for Transport (DfT) or the DVLA websites.

Specific information regarding the management of minibuses can be obtained by reference to Children and Young People's Departmental Circular – School Minibuses (CYPD/A2/09) and section B29 Minibus Safety Guidance within the LA's Health and Safety Manual. All such guidance must be adhered to when using minibuses.

Advice and further information can be obtained by contacting Nottinghamshire County Council's Transport Services or Health and Safety Advisers.

Using public transport

The use of public transport may be appropriate for a range of reasons including issues of environmental sustainability, as an educational opportunity or as a local, convenient transport option. Public transport is regulated to maximise the safety of passengers and has a good record in this area, however when working with large groups of young people, public transport requires additional considerations to be managed which may not present themselves when using other forms of dedicated transport.

It is unlikely that any public service bus will have seat belts for instance and it may be impossible to ensure that you have sufficient seating for your entire group. This may have implications regarding the distance you choose to travel, the size of group you work with and the number of supervisors required to ensure effective supervision, potentially in different carriages of a train or deck of a bus.

On longer journeys it is likely that a number of different forms of transport will be required to reach your destination, during which the group and any luggage will need to be managed during transfers. For these reasons, many groups choose to use private hire coaches, minibuses or, for longer complex journeys, the services of a tour operator. This however may come at an additional cost and the ultimate decision regarding which form of transport is most suitable for your group has to be with the leader who is aware of the groups needs, the experience of staff and the overall aim of the visit.

Hiring coaches and buses

Establishments and Visit Leaders are responsible for ensuring that any coaches and buses used are hired from reputable companies. Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed. Establishments using operators to provide transport should ensure that the operator holds an appropriate Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator's licence. When making bookings, the Visit Leader should ensure that seat belts are available for participants. While seat belts are required on coaches, they are not legally required on buses. Buses without seat belts are not normally appropriate for visits involving a long journey.

Use of minibuses

Any person undertaking minibus driving for, or in association with, Nottinghamshire County Council, must be in possession of an appropriate, valid, Nottinghamshire County Council 'Permit to Drive a Minibus'. Information regarding these permits is available from Nottinghamshire Transport Services. Drivers of minibuses must follow the driver's checklist supplied to them with their permit and be familiar with the contents of Nottinghamshire County Councils minibus guidance B29 within the Nottinghamshire County Council Health and Safety Manual.

Drivers should be aware that while the authority as the employer is ultimately responsible for minibuses operated by them, the driver will be responsible for the vehicle while on the visit and must comply with all relevant legislation, in addition to guidance provided by the authority.

Minibuses used may be owned by the authority, establishment or hired for a specific purpose. No vehicles such as crew buses or those with side or rear facing seats should be used, all vehicles must have full lap and diagonal seat belts fitted to all seats and these should be worn by drivers and passengers.

Drivers must ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities as identified with Children and Young People's Department Circular (CYPD A2/09), which includes:

- vehicle checking prior to use
- obeying the Highway Code and driving legislation
- dealing appropriately with accidents and incidents
- ensuring that luggage is appropriately stowed and that the vehicle is not over loaded
- ensure that seat belts are worn by passengers. Where passengers are under 14 years old, this is wholly the drivers responsibility
- operating within the designated driving hours, ensuring a break of 30 minutes away from responsibility every 2 hours and not exceeding 9 hours driving per day.

Establishments must ensure that:

- vehicles are maintained fit for use and operated in accordance with the Children and Young People's Department Circular 'CYPD A2/09'
- a small bus permit where required is displayed in each minibus
- drivers have appropriate training and endorsements to drive
- adequate supervision is provided for journeys by another member of staff in addition to the driver for every trip except short journeys.

For detailed advice on these or related issues such as the use of trailers, tail lifts or appropriate restraints for wheelchairs, establishments should contact Nottinghamshire Transport Services.

Minibus use abroad

Establishments intending to use self drive minibuses in different countries must seek further detailed advice from Nottinghamshire Transport Services.

Visit leaders should ensure that drivers taking groups abroad are familiar with driving the vehicle and have experience of driving in the country of destination and others visited en route. Different licence requirements apply for driving abroad and these must be established as part of the planning process. EU regulations require the use of a tachograph and certain documentation must be completed and carried on the journey including passenger waybills, driver documentation, vehicle registration details etc.

Factors that must be considered include:

- the need for awareness of different legislation and regulations within countries visited
- EU driving hours and tachograph regulations normally apply to any vehicle with 9 or more passenger seats
- domestic rules must be observed in countries being visited. Advice on this may be obtained from the relevant embassies concerned
- the vehicle is fit for the journey, properly adjusted and contains all required additional safety equipment as necessary for the country visited
- carrying capacity and loading requirements need to be considered and adhered to
- UK vehicles are designed for UK use. Passenger doors may not open on the kerbside and this, in addition to stops and transfers from other means of transport, need to be managed appropriately
- if your vehicle will be used by others, such as shared transport while on an exchange visit, additional passengers will need to be authorised on the passenger way bill.

Due to the complexities of organising independent self-driven transport to and across the continent, most establishments make use of the services of an external tour operator or local public transport arrangements.

Use of private cars

Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration and records should be maintained regarding how this is facilitated.

Leaders and others transporting participants on visits in their own vehicles will not be covered by the local authority's insurance policy and should ensure that they have appropriate insurance in place. The vehicle owner should check this with their insurance provider.

Likewise it is important to ensure that the vehicle is maintained fit for use and driven by a licensed individual recognised on the insurance schedule.

If it is intended that a visit will involve the use of private cars, establishments must ensure that:

- prior written consent is obtained from parents and guardians for their child to be transported in a private vehicle (this may not be possible in the event of a real emergency but this would be reasonable to safeguard young people if required)
- leaders, volunteers and others using their own cars for transporting young people on visits give an assurance to the establishment that the car is roadworthy and that they have checked with their insurers that they are insured for such use (usually business purposes). A form for establishments to use to obtain assurances from drivers is contained in the guidance and resource section of EVOLVE and Appendix 5
- drivers are aware that they are responsible for the use of seat belts/appropriate restraints and booster seats. Seat belts and restraints should be used by driver and passengers
- volunteer drivers who are in sole charge of participants other than their own children are required to be CRB checked when acting on behalf of the establishment
- the maximum seating capacity of the vehicle must not be exceeded
- children and young people should not be left unattended in vehicles.

Where parents are regularly involved in providing transport for participants, for example for sporting fixtures, it is good practice to make parents aware of who will provide the transport and to maintain a record of endorsed volunteer drivers.

If private vehicles are used abroad reference should be made to the issues identified with minibus travel abroad and specific advice should be sought from Nottinghamshire Transport Services.

Dropping off participants 'en route' back to the establishment

On occasions it may be more convenient for participants to be dropped off at a venue other than the one they embarked from. If this is allowed, some form of judgement and planning must take place. Issues to consider include:

- parents are aware of the arrangement and have consented to this
- it is appropriate to the age and capability of the participant
- the distance of the drop off point from their final destination and any obvious hazards present
- the mode of transport used from this point taken by the participant
- ongoing supervision issues; is the person being dropped off as part of a group?
- seasonal considerations.

Using volunteer drivers of minibuses and cars – who is responsible?

There are two important definitions for establishments to consider when planning visits:

1. Where parents transport their own children, or agree with others to co-operate in transporting children to and from venues as a private arrangement, the health and safety of young people is the responsibility of the parents concerned.
2. Where parents (or others) offer transport assistance which has been requested or facilitated by an establishment, they are in effect operating as volunteer employees and the responsibility for safety lies with the establishment.

Incidents and accidents

In any situation the safety of the group must be the first consideration; this will require ongoing group management and potentially arranging alternative transport. Advice on action in the event of an emergency is given in section 11. In addition, drivers must be aware of the following:

- **Accidents**
Following a road traffic collision, the driver of a motor vehicle **must stop** and give his/her name and address, the name and address of the owner of the vehicle and the registration number of the vehicle. If there is a personal injury to another person, the driver must report the accident to the police. All accidents must be reported to Nottinghamshire Transport Services.
- **Breakdowns**
In the event of a breakdown the first priority is the safety of the passengers, this may require evacuating the vehicle. It is the duty of the driver to ensure that the vehicle is not left for any period of time in a situation which could cause an obstruction or danger to other road users or to any of the passengers on the vehicle. If the vehicle cannot be moved from such a situation, it will be necessary to inform the police.

Use of watercraft

Whilst it can be assumed that large vessels such as cross-channel ferries are operating within licence requirements, establishments using watercraft such as pleasure boats, barges, narrowboats and fishing boats should check that such craft and skippers are properly licensed by an appropriate authority. The provider of the vessel must have public liability insurance of at least £5 million. Craft need to be used within the remit of their licence. As with other visits, leaders should undertake a risk assessment of the water journey. They should consider when and where personal buoyancy should be worn. Particularly with large parties of small children, the leader should check that the craft has sufficient lifejackets/buoyancy aids of an appropriate size.

Sea and tidal waters

All vessels which carry more than 12 passengers must hold a Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), Passenger Ship Certificate. The certificate will indicate the number of persons which may be carried and the nature of the voyage for which the certificate is issued. A certificate will not be issued for more persons than there are lifesaving appliances for. The certificate should be displayed on the vessel and should show the names of those responsible for piloting the craft who must, as a minimum, hold a 'Boatmaster Certificate' issued by the MCA.

All vessels under 24 metres in length, used commercially for sport or pleasure and operating from a nominated departure point (NDP), must comply with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency NDP code. These vessels will hold a yellow code certificate and be noted for a particular area of operation.

Vessels that carry less than 12 passengers and do not 'proceed to sea' i.e. operate closer to land than three miles may, alternatively to the MCA NDP code, have a local authority licence. (Not all local authorities issue such licences.) As a minimum such vessels should carry life saving and fire appliances. It should be possible to check these licences through the relevant local council offices.

For further information contact the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's 24 hour helpline.

Inland waters

Inland waterways fall mainly under the remit of the British Waterways Board, the Environment Agency or the Local Authority. All craft operating on these waters need to be licensed by the relevant authority and licences need to be clearly displayed on the craft. See the relevant generic risk assessment regarding use of such craft.

Further advice

Further advice on use of coaches and minibuses is available from the Fleet and Compliance Manager, Nottinghamshire Transport Services, the Children and Young People's Department Circular 'CYPD A2/09' school minibus guidance and further sources of information are identified in Appendix 10 and the guidance and resource pages of EVOLVE.

9. Visits abroad – Will not be made from Hallcroft Infant School.

10. Visits involving outdoor, adventure and activities in hazardous environments

For the purpose of notification and approval, visits have been classified into three main categories:

- Category A - local visits and activities, approved directly by a Nominated Manager
- Category B - longer visits or excursions, that can be approved directly by a nominated manager, but require greater planning and notifying to the LA
- Category C - visits that are more complex in nature, or include potentially hazardous activities. LA approval is required in addition to the approval of the Nominated Manager.

This section considers the management of activities within outdoor, adventurous and hazardous environments. If a proposed visit, irrespective of which category it can be allocated to as above, includes activities or locations with inherent additional risk, approval must be sought from the LA prior to delivery.

Nottinghamshire's online notification and approval system (EVOLVE) filters visits and directs all applicable proposals for secondary approval to the LA. Where establishments plan activities and visits outside of the EVOLVE system, particular care must be given to the nature of the intended event and advice sought where necessary.

Adventurous activities

Adventurous activities require a defined level of competency to lead and may include the use of specialist equipment which must be suitably maintained as fit for purpose.

Activities may be in scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations or outside of this legislation. All such activities require competent supervision usually, supported by an appropriate qualification or endorsement of competence from a suitably qualified technical advisor.

All leaders of adventurous activities or those requiring specific competence, must be registered on the LA's visit management system as a being appropriately accredited for the activity, hold a current first aid certificate and have recent and relevant experience.

Hazardous environments

When completing a risk assessment and in assessing which approval route is appropriate for an event, the nature of the environment operated in must be considered.

Particular care should be taken in higher risk environments, such as those by or in inland water or the sea. Likewise other outdoor environments may have specific risks due to other environmental factors such as the terrain covered, proximity to crags and cliffs or the time of year, where winter weather may require leaders to have a higher than normally expected level of competency to safely lead.

A list of activities and environments is indicated in this section, this is not exhaustive and the Outdoor Education Adviser can advise on the categorisation of activities not listed or to support VCs and Nominated Managers in judging competence and approval requirements

The Adventure Activity Licensing Scheme (AALS)

AALS was set up to regulate and monitor the provision of adventure activities for under 18 year olds by commercial organisations and individuals. It is a legal requirement to hold a licence for all such providers. Holding a licence means that a provider has been inspected and the Licensing Authority are satisfied that appropriate safety measures are in place for the activities specified on their licence. Other aspects of the provision such as accommodation standards, catering or overall quality are not considered by the scheme and these should be checked by the group leader as part of visit planning.

AALS is pertinent to these activities:

- caving that requires use of specialist equipment or expertise
- climbing, scrambling, sea level traversing and abseiling on natural and some outdoor artificial structures, which requires use of specialist equipment or expertise
- trekking on foot, ski, horse (pony) or cycle in remote terrain where it could take more than 30 minutes to reach a road or refuge
- watersports including sailing, canoeing, kayaking, rafting and windsurfing on the sea, tidal waters, inland water where it is possible to be 50 metres from land and inland turbulent waters.

A range of activities that can be termed adventurous or hazardous may not be considered as part of an AALS licence. When a visit involves adventure activities not listed on an AALS licence, leaders and VC's should consult the LA's generic risk assessments for guidance on expected levels of competency and standards of delivery and ensure that provision is in accordance with these. If in doubt, advice can be sought from the Outdoor Education Adviser early in the planning process and before arrangements are confirmed.

Activity providers that do not require an AALS Licence

Not all providers of activities are required to hold an AALS licence. For example voluntary organisations providing for their own members, establishments providing activities solely for their own participants and the Ministry of Defence.

Commercial bodies and LAs delivering activities out of scope of the AALS remit are likewise not required to be licensed. Examples of activities not covered by AALS licence are rope course activities and watersports on flat water areas less than 100 metres wide.

Not holding an AALS licence does not mean that a provider is unsuitable to use, or that the activity does not require robust safety management procedures. Providers should be able to evidence that they have suitable management procedures in place and a range of industry specific awards exist that can evidence this, including the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge or British Activity Holiday Association accreditation and other similar schemes.

Sources of information regarding specific accreditation schemes is available within the guidance and resource sections of EVOLVE and establishments using activity providers who do not hold an AALS licence are advised to seek alternative assurances that quality and safety management systems exist.

The provider assurance form (Appendix 4) provides examples of suitable alternative arrangements that should be in place prior to committing to the use of an organisation or individual and is pertinent to activities not considered by AALS.

Issues common to the use of any activity provider

When employing or contracting someone to provide a specific activity or service leaders should ensure that the division of responsibilities between Nottinghamshire County Council staff and others is clearly known and understood. Where leaders may pass responsibility for the safety of participants over to an instructor during an activity, leaders retain an overall responsibility for participants and, in order to discharge their duty of care, need to ensure that proper supervision and control is maintained and that the health and safety of participants is not put at risk.

Establishment and school-led activities

Schools are not required to operate under an AALS licence when providing activities for their own pupils, if provision includes pupils from other schools or establishments then a license will be required.

Activities must however be delivered by competent staff in accordance with the LA's generic risk assessments and guidance or direction provided by an OEA or technical adviser for the LA.

Other LA staff and Visit Leaders must not deliver adventure activities within the scope of the 1995 regulations, unless doing so under an appropriate Adventure Activity Licence held by the Authority.

Staff may deliver non-licensable activities only where accredited and competent to do so and where approval has been provided by the LA.

Employing individuals to provide adventure activities

Schools and establishments should not employ, as a temporary teacher or instructor on Nottinghamshire County Council payroll, an unlicensed provider of adventure activities solely for the purpose of providing licensable activities on behalf of school or the establishment rather than contracting a licensed provider to provide the same activities.

Leader competence while on visits

Leaders must be sufficiently competent to supervise participants in the activity/environment used. Competence derives from knowledge, experience, training and personal qualities. It is usually supported by an individual holding accreditation issued by a National Governing Body for the relevant activity. Advice on leader competence can be obtained from the OEA and the expected qualification/experience level is indicated within the LA's generic risk assessments for a range of activities.

Details of appropriate training courses for leaders are available from the Outdoor Education Adviser or from the '*Outdoor and Environmental Training Opportunities*' booklet, which is available from the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE.

Different activities and environments present different levels of risk and levels of required competence.

Lower risk activities (Activities or environments that may present no significant risks, other than routinely encountered and may not require specific training to deliver.)

The VC should assess the competence of staff to lead these activities by considering relevant and recent experience and any relevant training completed by the individual. Advice can be taken from the Outdoor Education Adviser as necessary.

Examples of these activities are:

- walking in country parks or non-remote* country paths
- cycling in controlled environments (eg school playground)
- field studies in environments presenting no significant hazards
- orienteering in an enclosed area
- problem solving activities
- farm visits to formally organised venues
- School swimming or sports activities

*'Non-remote' areas are defined as areas where it is not possible to be more than 30 minutes from a road usable by a normal vehicle. Non-remote areas include the rural countryside of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire except the Dark Peak moorland.

It is not necessary for establishments to submit applications for approval for such activities to the LA if they occur as part of Category A or B visit. Approval by a Nominated Manager via the recognised approval procedure is sufficient.

More hazardous activities and environments (Activities or environments that may involve access to more than everyday risk and should be submitted to the LA as a Category C event.)

These may require that the leader, as well as having recent relevant experience should have, as a minimum, undergone location and/or activity familiarisation, have in place a suitable specific risk assessment and be judged as appropriately competent by the Nominated Manager and VC.

Examples of such activities include:

- walking on non-remote moorland
- coastal visits, cliff top or waters edge coastal walking
- field studies in coastal locations or in proximity of inland waters
- orienteering in a public or non-enclosed area
- cycling on roads or non-remote off-road terrain
- swimming in the sea, inland waters or any planned entry into a body of open water
- walking on country paths where groups are remotely supervised (e.g. D of E activities)
- motor sports
- air sports
- war games, assault courses and military manoeuvres
- high ropes courses
- team building events in remote locations or using specialist equipment.

Guidance on suitable levels of competence are indicated within the LA generic risk assessments and specific advice can be sought from the OEA by establishments where required.

Adventurous activities

For activities that fall within the range of licensable adventure activities, the leader should have been assessed as competent, usually by possession of a National Governing Body (NGB) qualification. Leaders must provide evidence of their training and qualifications and recent and relevant experience to their VC. The VC should input this information into the staff profile contained in the online approval system for future reference by the LA.

Nottinghamshire County Council staff can only deliver such activities where it is solely for the benefit of their participants or they are operating under the auspice of an adventure activity licence held by Nottinghamshire County Council.

Only LA approved staff can deliver such activities. Where a new member of staff intends to provide activities establishments are advised to check the competence of leaders with the Outdoor Education Adviser early in the planning process and before submitting plans for approval.

Examples include:

- adventure activities as defined by AALS
- water sports such as canoeing, sailing and white water rafting
- adventure activities in water including river, stream and gorge walks
- rock climbing (including indoor climbing),
- moorland and hill walking, mountaineering including any area where it is possible to be more than 30 minutes from a road
- skiing, snow boarding and snow sports
- caving and potholing
- horse riding.

All such activities must be submitted for LA approval in addition to that of the Nominated Manager via the online **system at least 4 weeks in advance of the planned visit.**

Evidence of staff competency, records of training and appropriate qualifications should be maintained by the establishment via EVOLVE. The online approval system has a mechanism for this, automatically records staff experience and filters all such visits to the LA.

Risk assessment

All activities led by staff must be specifically risk assessed. Reference must be made to the relevant LA generic risk assessment for each activity proposed on a visit and complied with as part of the specific risk assessment control measures.

Specific risk assessment should include control measures appropriate for the location used and activity management procedures, with particular care if activities are in or by water or have other significant risks such as cliff edge walks.

Where a contracted provider is responsible for the delivery of an activity or defined element of a programme it is their responsibility to ensure that appropriate risk management procedures are in place, this includes risk assessing the components they are responsible for.

Establishments are responsible for contracting suitable providers and should ensure that risk management procedures are in place by seeking appropriate assurances or making checks prior to booking. All other elements of the programme remain the sole responsibility of the staff leading the event.

Additional guidance on the process of risk assessment is contained within section 4.

Equipment

Leaders must ensure that the group are adequately prepared, dressed and equipped for any outdoor experience, bearing in mind the location, the time of year and the activities proposed. Leaders must assure themselves of the suitability and safety of all equipment used whether this is provided by the establishment, another organisation or by participants themselves. Establishments that have their own store of equipment should ensure this is appropriately maintained and keep a logbook of checks made.

First aid

Reference should be made to section 4 for general advice on first aid. There should be a first aider with all groups involved in adventure activities. Most National Governing Body outdoor leader qualifications are not valid without an appropriate current first aid certificate.

Ratios

In order to arrive at a suitable supervision ratio for outdoor, adventurous or more hazardous activities, reference should be made to specific guidance on supervision in section 6 in addition to the LA generic risk assessment for that activity and the findings of the establishment's specific risk assessment, which will take into account the needs of the participants and environmental risks.

Group sizes for activities that have moderate to higher risks (identified by the leader having to have specific competencies or qualifications) will need to be kept as small as is reasonably possible, to enable effective supervision as identified as part of the risk assessment.

Remote/indirect supervision

Some visits and activities such as Duke of Edinburgh Award activities require participants to work in small groups without direct supervision. Particular care must be taken regarding the training, preparation and information provided for participants prior to allowing remote supervision.

Leaders should be satisfied that participants have acquired the necessary skills, confidence, experience and judgement and are physically able to operate remotely from staff.

This can be seen as a gradual process containing the stages of:

- training and accompanying the group
- shadowing the group
- checking regularly at agreed locations
- checking occasionally at agreed locations.

This can only be facilitated by an appropriately competent person who can assess when the group are adequately prepared for the environment and activity planned where remote supervision will occur. Participants must be familiar with any equipment used when operating remotely and an ongoing element of supervision may be required for certain activities i.e. the use of camp stoves or specialist equipment.

Specific guidance on operating procedures for the Duke of Edinburgh Award is available from the Nottinghamshire County Council Award team and the guidance and resource sections of EVOLVE.

Coastal visits and water environments

A high proportion of the more serious incidents on organised visits with children and young people have occurred involving water hazards. These require greater planning, supervision and care to be exercised by group leaders.

Visit leaders should refer to and follow advice provided in the DfES document '*Group Safety at Water Margins*' which is available on the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE.

Swimming or paddling in the sea or other natural waters is potentially dangerous and should only be allowed as formal and supervised activities. Robust group management procedures must be in place for the duration of the activity including knowledge of local conditions, tide times and planned action in the event of an incident.

Environmental considerations may be appropriate including risks from Weil's disease, contact with blue green algae or other infectious pathogens which can be prevalent in bodies of water. Though infections are rare, it is advisable to consider how infection can occur and take steps to minimise this through the use of waterproof dressings where required, minimising hand to mouth transmission or consumption of water and ensuring hand washing after contact and prior to eating.

Open water swimming

Leaders contemplating these activities must give careful consideration to the risk assessment, which must be checked again on the day. Water, weather and other environmental conditions must be assessed on an ongoing basis and are impossible to accurately anticipate before the event.

Supervision arrangements must be robust and, wherever possible, locations used where official supervision is provided i.e. qualified lifeguard cover. Where this is not possible, a group leader or other designated adult should hold a relevant lifesaving qualification.

Participants' swimming ability must be established prior to the activity and staff and participants must be carefully briefed regarding the activity, its boundaries and how it will be managed.

Any planned entry into rivers or other open bodies of water are category C events and must be approved and carried out in accordance with the LA's operating procedures, risk assessment controls and guidance.

Paddling or walking in shallow water

This activity can only safely occur as part of a planned input. If qualified lifeguard cover is not in place the activity must be robustly managed as above and in accordance with DfES guidance contained in '*Group Safety at Water Margins*', available within the guidance and resources section of EVOLVE.

Leaders must be prepared not to proceed with planned activities if they are in any doubt about their ability to control the situation. A known viable alternative activity should be in place in the event of the original activities being unsuitable for delivery on the day.

Use of swimming pools

Provided that appropriate supervision and pastoral care is in place by staff, swimming activities as part of the school day at local authority pools will be adequately managed by existing LA guidance, National Governing Body guidance or statutory controls.

However using a public pool as part of a visit may pose a number of additional considerations particularly where facilities such as hotel pools or facilities abroad are utilised.

Adequate, qualified lifeguard cover must be in place in such environments and additional supervision provided by staff in accordance with the LA generic risk assessment and other LA swimming guidance. If this cannot be provided, swimming should only occur where staff hold relevant qualifications and appropriate supervisory cover is maintained as above.

When swimming is planned in privately managed pools as part of any event guidance should be sought from the OEA.

Farm visits

Farms can be dangerous places even for people who work on them; risks involve the dangers of farm machinery, contact with chemicals, animals and animal faeces. E.coli is a known infection danger from farm environment but other infection risks are also present. Taking children and young people to farms can provide a valuable experience for many, but such visits require careful planning regarding the choice of venue - only sites with a good reputation should be used. Issues such as access to hand washing facilities, clean environments provided for food consumption, careful briefing of participants and appropriate supervision must be in place.

High ratios of staff to participants may need to be in place to ensure safety, particularly with the very young or individuals with specific needs. Hand to mouth transmission remains the most frequent means of infection from E.coli and other infections. Briefing, supervision and hand washing remain the most effective means of protection.

'A Handbook for Group Leaders' contains advice on farm visits and has additional guidance on managing such events. It is available on the EVOLVE system's guidance and resources section.

Environmental and field study activities

These are usually carried out by teaching staff who are subject specialists and include urban field work, industrial studies, ecological and geological investigations. Subject leaders should be competent to lead such activities in non-hazardous sites and locations at minimal risk as part of category A and B activities.

Other environmental activities including the use of specialist tools, entry into water or heavy machinery may include higher risks and careful management and/or specific approval. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the OEA.

Activities with the armed forces

A number of courses and experiences are offered by the armed forces for young people as part of their recruitment initiatives. The army operates under the Crown and is exempt from other forms of guidance and regulation, so may not operate to National Governing Body award standards or hold insurance.

Where establishments signpost young people to such courses, it is vital that they make parents carers and guardians aware of the exact nature of the course, including the level of supervision provided by armed services personnel and the LA.

11. Emergency procedures

Staff during visits with children and young people have a duty of care to make sure that participants are safe and healthy and a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Leaders should not hesitate to act should the situation require this.

If an incident or accident occurs, the priorities are to:

- assess the situation
- safeguard the group
- attend to anyone injured
- where necessary, inform the emergency services and others who may need to know of the incident.

The Outdoor Education Adviser has emergency contact cards available for use by Visit Leaders and others which outline these actions.

All establishments or services should have a critical incident plan (see guidance '*Coping With a School Emergency*') which can be implemented for a major emergency or critical incident. This should include provision during visits and outside routine operating hours. Action following an incident should be in accordance with your service area's agreed emergency response protocol.

Further information and guidance on critical incident planning is available from the guidance and resource sections of EVOLVE and an example procedure is available within Appendix 6.

What is an emergency or critical incident?

An emergency can include any untoward occurrence that has a significant effect on a visit. It could be the breakdown of a vehicle, the onset of ill health among participants or staff, a fire occurring within accommodation used or a serious accident resulting in the hospitalisation or death of a participant.

Consequently judgements need to be made by leaders on visits and emergency contacts when it may be necessary to contact the Local Authority directly via the after hours emergency number (see Appendix 10). Clearly situations involving serious major injury, medical emergency, significant or multiple injuries, missing young people or fatalities require contact with the LA as soon as possible, for access to support and advice.

For less serious incidents, establishments and Visit Leaders may have sufficient resources to deal with the situation themselves and notify the LA via standard reporting mechanisms after the event.

Who takes charge in the event of an emergency?

Establishments should ensure that everyone involved in a visit, including leaders, supervisors, participants and parents are informed of who will take charge in an emergency, who the emergency contact person is and what action will be taken in the event of an emergency.

Role of the Visit Leader

The Visit Leader will normally take charge of an emergency situation when on a visit and needs to ensure that emergency procedures and back up cover is arranged.

As part of the planning process it is important to **check communications** in the area visited. If mobile phones are to be used, check that they will function in the location concerned. If abroad, check the international dialling codes. Leaders and participants should ensure they know how to call the emergency services in the location or country visited. On residential visits and abroad, where participants are working away from venue at which they are staying, it may be sensible that participants and staff carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation, and perhaps the mobile number(s) of leaders and details of the emergency contact person. However, it is not expected that all participants will carry a mobile phone on visits and for primary aged participants, it is accepted practice that they do not.

Immediate action required in the event of an emergency

The person in charge of a group to which an accident or incident happens, must take control of the situation and:

- establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible
- ensure that all the group are safe and looked after
- establish who is injured, provide immediate first aid and obtain relevant assistance from emergency services

- continue to care for the group and ensure that emergency procedures are being followed
- ensure participants taken to hospital are accompanied by an adult
- remain aware that you and others may be suffering from shock.

Next steps

It may be necessary to notify a number of people following an incident. Details should include, the nature of the incident, date and time of occurrence, location of incident, names of casualties and others involved, details of injuries and action taken so far. People to notify may include:

- the police or other emergency service
- the British Embassy/Consulate (if abroad)
- the nominated contact person for the trip
- the LA emergency planning team (if you are unable to contact your base contact)
- insurance providers, particularly if medical assistance is required
- activity providers/tour operators.

Ongoing incident management

Ensure communication is maintained, including considering which telephone numbers should be quoted as the most appropriate means of remaining in contact with others and providing updates to your emergency contact person.

Write down accurately, as soon as possible, all relevant facts, witness details and if necessary preserve any vital evidence.

Keep a record of all events including the times of contact with base/other sources of assistance and action taken after the incident.

Ensure that accident reports are completed and if necessary further notification occurs such as contacting the Health and Safety Executive.

Control communication within the group, this will ensure that parents and guardians are appropriately informed of the incident and how it is being managed. Advise all not to speak to the media. The release of names and incident details can be distressing for those involved. Any media enquired should be directed to Nottinghamshire County Council Public Relations.

Establishment-based emergency contact

An emergency contact person must be in place for all visits. This person should be a member of staff with sufficient authority to make significant judgements and decisions. It is a function normally carried out by a headteacher or a manager responsible for an establishment or group of services.

It is advisable to arrange a second person as contact as a reserve measure. In the event of an incident, telephone lines are likely to become busy and this should be considered as part of the response to the incident.

The main function of the emergency contact is to provide assistance if necessary and act as a link between staff out in the field, the establishment, parents and carers and the LA. This person should have all information about the visit readily available to them for the duration of the visit.

A critical incident response form has been produced and should be used by staff when managing an incident see Appendix 6.

Information that may be required to manage an incident

For the duration of a visit, the leader and base contact person should have access to:

- details of the itinerary
- an accurate list of names of everyone in the group
- all relevant information regarding the group, including next of kin contact details and medical information

- means of communicating between the emergency contact and Visit Leader including after-hours if the visit extends beyond routine opening times or when the establishment office is open.

In addition, for residential visits and visits abroad, both the Visit Leader and the Nominated Manager/emergency contact person must have:

- next-of-kin contact details for staff
- address and contact telephone numbers for the group leader, the accommodation used and any tour operator involved
- 24-hour contact numbers for the head of establishment or manager's representative
- copies of insurance documents and contracts with travel operators
- LA after-hours emergency number (on emergency cards)
- For visits abroad, the visit leader is recommended to have photocopies of passport data pages, tickets and other important documents in case the originals are lost. Passport photographs of the group might also be taken.

For residential visits, arrangements must be made for 24-hour contact to and from the group and the establishment manager or a representative (who has the authority to make significant decisions). This contact is most often used during travelling days (e.g. due to travel delay). Emergency contact persons should ensure they have day and night contact details of parents and the LA. Arrangements should be made so that parents can contact the group in an emergency, via the establishment's emergency contact person or directly via the leader.

Action in the event of an emergency/incident on a visit:

- ensure that the Visit Leader is in control of the incident and establish if any further assistance is required
- refer to the establishment's Emergency Plan and/or '*Coping with a School Emergency*' document
- contact parents and next-of-kin of adults (although it may be agreed that the group leader should do this directly). In any event, the parents of any injured child must be informed as soon as possible. Parents of others on the visit should then be informed as appropriate
- inform as necessary the LA and senior management, arrange for assistance to be provided for the group if required and act as a link between the group and Nottinghamshire based support
- avoid making any comments to the media. Contact Nottinghamshire County Council Public Relations section and direct media enquiries to this number
- in the case of a serious incident, inform the LA as indicated in your emergency plan. Outside normal working hours, the LA should be contacted via the emergency after-hours telephone number
- if the incident is very serious or fatal, ensure the leader has informed the local police and if abroad, the British Consulate
- if the visit is abroad, after arranging immediate emergency care, contact the Risk and Insurance Section at County Hall or the insurers of the visit before incurring substantial medical or other expenses.

Help available

In the event of a serious incident, a range of support, including counselling and debriefing, will be available from Nottinghamshire County Council and other statutory and voluntary services. This should be facilitated by individual service area's operating procedures.

Reporting and reviewing of incidents and accidents

All leaders involved should prepare a written account of any serious incident as soon as possible noting all events and times. Note the names and details of any witnesses and, if possible, obtain a

written account from them. All accidents should be recorded in the establishment or visits related accident book in accordance with departmental/establishment guidance. Further recording may be necessary depending on the severity of injury.

If abroad, it may be necessary for the group to comply with local accident reporting procedures in the country where the accident occurs. Local police or the British Consulate should be able to advise on these procedures. If the incident involves a major injury, condition or fatality, the British Consulate should be informed. If the incident is the subject of a police investigation abroad, the British Consulate will assist British subjects in obtaining legal advice.

For insurance purposes, obtain and retain receipts and other documentation relating to any claim. Report any loss or theft of property to the local police within 24 hours of the incident and obtain written confirmation of this.

Nottinghamshire County Council's online accident reporting system, should be completed within 24 hours (or as soon as possible thereafter). Major injuries or conditions and fatalities must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive within 24 hours. The LA's Health and Safety Advisers will do this for establishments and can advise when and when not to report.

After any significant incident, establishments should undertake a review of the incident and their emergency procedures. Even if no injury was caused, it is good practice to record and review 'near misses' so that learning outcomes can be shared and practice improved. Visit Coordinators should record and review near misses and pass any issues that others could learn from to the LA's Outdoor Education Adviser. A form for this is available, see Appendix 7