

# The EVC in action

## Approving visits

The EVC should encourage an outline early approval of a visit, and especially before financial commitment is made. Adequate notice allows all checking procedures to take place.

This policy is the starting point for the school/centre. There could be an additional concise Local Educational Visits Policy which keeps the senior management informed of this area of work. In some cases individual approval for a specific visit may be required.

Governing bodies/management groups should ensure that appropriate policies, approval mechanisms and other procedures are in place. They will not normally become involved in the approval process.

## School / centre / LEA approval system

The policy over the approval/ notification system of visits, agreed with the LEA, must be adhered to. For regular local visits the school/centre may wish to adopt a termly/ annual system of approval.

## Residentials

Residential visits involve extra issues such as staffing ratios, 24 hours duty of care and catering arrangements, and therefore more planning time will be required.

## Outdoor adventure

The school/centre should have a policy of approval for a visit involving outdoor activities, whether these are led by the organisation's own staff or outside organisations.

## Visits abroad

Visits abroad bring extra responsibilities and more advanced planning is required. In some cases this may stretch over a period of more than 12 months before the visit.

## Checking process

### Aims of visit

These should be clearly identified at an early stage, and be relevant to the young people and to the school/centre. As well as contributing to educational outcomes they will also affect safety.

### Staffing

This should be appropriate for the size, capability and age of the group and the nature of the activity. Adult Supervision Recommended Ratios can be found in Section 2, paragraph 125.

## **Finance**

The financial implications of a venture require detailed consideration at an early stage, and it is important to maintain records that can be verified, as they may be subject to audit.

## **Consent**

As a result of receiving detailed information of the visit or programme of visits written consent from parents/guardians must be obtained.

## **Risk management**

Managing risk is not solely about risk assessments. Each visit has a number of elements : location, activity, young people, staff, travel arrangements, that all can add risks to the overall visit. These risks can be reduced by good robust planning and preparation, competent staff, well prepared young people and well planned activity. Therefore, managing risks is not solely about good risk assessments, but the whole process of planning the visit to the successful execution of the plan. The EVC has a key role to encourage a robust system in their school/centre to manage risks effectively.

## **Emergency procedures**

Emergency contacts for the school/centre plus emergency contacts for all party members must be carried on all educational visits and visit leaders should understand the school/centre emergency procedures. For all visits, residential and day visits, the 'phone contact must be accessible at all times.

## **Competency of staff**

### **Staff training**

A programme of staff training should be in place for group leaders, first aid and for specific areas where required. eg Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, outdoor activities, visits to more remote locations.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers such as parents/governors etc. can make a valuable contribution to the success of an educational visit. It is important that volunteers are competent to carry out allotted tasks and understand their areas of responsibility.

Please check the LEA/school/centre policy with regard to volunteers and CRB checks. Any volunteer working on a residential must be CRB checked.

### **Annual staff meeting**

The EVC should hold an annual meeting to look at the issues of the schools/centre educational visits programme. Included in this will be a review of competence's, risk assessments, incidents, accidents, and emergency procedures.

## Young people

Educational visits offer a range of valuable experiences and wherever possible should be made available to all young people.

Adequate and appropriate preparation will enhance enjoyment, educational value and safety. The age, maturity and ability of young people will determine the nature and extent of such preparation.

The LEA Child Protection procedures must be considered and applied as necessary. The suitability and vetting of volunteers is particularly important.

The educational visits provided by the school/centre should reflect the inclusion policy. Special arrangements may have to be made for young people with specific special needs and these may include special equipment/staffing/programme implications.

It is important that visit leaders are aware of any special medical details or conditions at the time of the visit. Dietary requirements are an important part of the planning process for residential visits.

## Support

The Outdoor Education Adviser will be able to provide support to the EVC on adventurous activities, outside organisations, the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and other related issues.

Senior management should set aside sufficient time and resources to support the important work of the EVC.

## Web sites

Web sites can provide a great deal of support to the EVC. These may include organisations such as The Outdoor Advisers Panel, National Governing Bodies for Outdoor Activities or the DfES. Some of these sites are listed in the Appendices.

## Access to emergency procedures

All accompanying adults should carry a copy of the school/centre procedures. They should be reviewed annually so that they can be kept accurate and up to date. The EVC should ensure that the senior management team have access to the LEA Critical Incident Plan.

Telephone contact details should be collected for all parents of young people on the visit and should be available to the visit leader whilst the visit is underway. It is good practice to set up a parental telephone network to speed up communication for certain categories of visit.

## Feedback

All use of first aid kits, incidents and accidents on educational visits should be recorded and reviewed on a regular basis. The school/centre should adhere to the LEA policy on incident/accident reporting.

Reports on educational visits by young people and staff should be encouraged. They promote educational visits and provide opportunities for reviewing and improvement. There should be an annual report to the governing body/management committee.

