

# Section 5

## Visits abroad

THIS GUIDANCE COMPLIMENTS THE EDINBURGH CITY COUNCIL DOCUMENT "THE PROTECTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL VISITS". SCHOOLS/CENTRES INVOLVED IN VISITS ABROAD MUST REFER TO THIS DOCUMENT. TWO COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT WERE SENT TO ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND COPIES AVAILABLE TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS UPON REQUEST.

### General

- 1) Organisers of overseas visits should apply appropriate advice elsewhere in this manual and, in particular, should follow the detailed planning advice of Section 2. Though the organisational process is identical to that for comparable visits in the U.K., organisers will need to be particularly vigilant bearing in mind local customs, cultures, legislation and communication difficulties.
- 2) Notification to the LEA is required for all visits abroad. This is a policy change from 2005.
- 3) Schools/centres must understand that any cancellation not backed up by Foreign Office advice may result in parents seeking redress from school governors/management groups or the LEA. See [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk), travel advice country by country.

### Staffing

- 4) Staffing levels need to take account of the effect of possible staff illness or injury. Small groups with minimum staffing are particularly vulnerable in this respect and serious consideration should be given to increased staff ratios. All groups should contain at least two teachers/youth workers. Organisers must ensure that all staff are professionally reliable and appropriately experienced. See Section 2 for minimum recommended ratios.
- 5) It is desirable/or good practice, especially with self-organised visits, that at least one adult in the party should have a basic ability to speak and read the local language. This is likely to be essential in an emergency situation.

### Staff organised visits

- 6) The Package Travel Regulations may apply where the various elements of a visit are organised directly by a member of staff. Please refer to Section 7.

## Using an outside organisation such as a tour operator

- 7) It is essential that the financial bonding, accounting and contractual guidance in Section 7 is applied in full and that staff ensure that a provider is ABTA/ATOL registered.
- 8) If using an operator based abroad, organisers should be aware that the above Package Travel Regulations are based on an EEC Directive, which applies to all countries of the European Economic Area. Organisers must seek verification that the operator satisfies the relevant national legislation implementing the directive.
- 9) Where difficulties are perceived with aspects of the provision, then organisers should make a written record of events in case a subsequent claim is necessary.

## Preparing young people

- 10) Thorough preparation of young people for a foreign visit will contribute immensely to enjoyment, educational value and safety. Issues to consider will include:
  - language - even a few common phrases will help
  - cultural differences such as dress codes, rules, local customs, behavioural norms and attitudes to alcohol
  - in some countries, the risks associated with tap water and some foods, such as unpeeled fruit and raw vegetables, need explaining
  - communication - differing telephone systems, simple phrases, card with accommodation address, action in an emergency (see also Section 2)

## Documentation

- 11) It is essential that visit leaders take with them:
- travel tickets, passports and visas
  - a copy of the contract with the centre/hotel etc, if appropriate medical papers, e.g. Form E111s and significant medical histories
  - parental consent forms and permission for the group leader to authorise emergency treatment on parents' behalf
  - the telephone numbers and addresses, at home and in school, of the headteacher and of the school contact (or youth centre contacts and details)
  - the LEA emergency number available from your EVC/Head
  - the names of parents and the addresses and telephone numbers at which they can be contacted
  - copies of a list of group members and their details
  - details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number
  - the name, address and telephone number of the group's accommodation
  - location of local hospital/medical services
- 12) It is important that copies of all the above, including serial numbers of travel documents, passports etc, be taken and kept separately in the event of loss of originals.
- 13) Copies of most of the above information should be left at school for the duration of the visit. School emergency contact arrangements must ensure accessibility to such information at all times during the visit and to the LEA emergency contact, normally by reference to the emergency contact details supplied to schools and youth clubs each year.
- 14) Parents should have details or copies of the Insurance Policy.

## Travel

- 15) Travel by air or ferry needs careful organisation. Situations have occurred where airlines have attempted to split a party onto different aircraft. It is essential that this be resisted. Any special needs, such as wheelchair access, will need checking at the time of booking.
- 16) On ferries and in airports, it is easy for people to become 'lost'. Careful group management, frequent checks on young people, or sub-divided, adult-supervised groups and an easily identified group location will help.

## Minibus driving abroad

- 17) Recent tragic incidents involving coach and minibus transport abroad make it essential that organisers apply, in full, the regulations and guidance of the manual 'Minibuses: Regulations and Operational Guidelines', Cambridgeshire County Council 1997 updated April 2002, summarised in Section 6.
- 18) It is particularly important that all party members are reminded of the dangers of unfamiliar, right-hand drive traffic. Special care is needed where the doors of UK vehicles open on the offside in right-hand drive countries.
- 19) Extended road travel will require regular, supervised stops to reduce fatigue and the likelihood of illness.

## Selection and checking of accommodation

- 20) Serious incidents have occurred in the past where hostel or hotel accommodation used by British groups has been insecure against intrusion by outsiders. There is also the unacceptable situation where group accommodation is jointly used for a variety of incompatible purposes, eg accommodation for adult groups. Organisers must ensure that appropriate checks, assurances and security arrangements have been made through the provider or by the tour operator. Written assurances should be obtained and recorded.
- 21) On arrival:
  - the requirements for security should be stressed and checked with the accommodation manager
  - a check should be made to ensure that all security bolts and locks are fitted and working
  - fire alarm and evacuation procedures should be clarified and a fire practice is conducted on the first evening
  - an accommodation plan/room layout should be obtained. Staff rooms should be on every floor used
  - other existing planned or possible use of the accommodation should be clarified.

Organisers must then decide whether or not to agree to occupancy.

- 22) Any serious or potentially serious incidents involving intrusion into the group's accommodation must be reported to the accommodation manager. This could be viewed as a critical incident and contact must be made with the base contact for advice/support.
- 23) Any sexual or physical abuse must be reported immediately to the local police and child protection measures implemented

## Exchange visits

- 24) Successful exchanges depend largely on having good relationships between partner schools/youth organisations. It is helpful:
- to have ground rules agreed between the partner schools/youth organisations and host families and for young people to be aware of such rules
  - to ensure satisfactory pairing of age and gender
  - if host families are made aware of the dietary or medical needs of the guest
  - if all involved are informed, in writing, of arrangements for collection and return of young people and the daily programme of the group

## Sporting activity participation

- 25) Young people on exchange visits, whilst staying with host families, often have the opportunity of participating in a diverse range of sporting activities, some of which may fall into the defined list of risk activities. To assist leaders to cope with this difficult situation it is recommended that:
- organisers clarify with parents that their sons/daughters whilst staying with host families, that they may be invited to participate in a range of activities over which the school and organiser has no direct control over this situation.
  - parents approve, in writing, of such possible participation by the addition of the following paragraph to the Parental Consent Questionnaire in Section 2:  
“I acknowledge that while my child is staying with the host family he/she may be involved in visits and activities, arranged by the hosts, of which the organiser/teacher has no knowledge and of which he/she has no control and therefore the organiser/ teacher will have no responsibility”

Such parental notification and approval should be obtained at the early planning stage.

## Child protection

- 26) In addition to the general guidance given in Section 9, organisers must apply the following practice when planning foreign exchange visits.
- 27) Organisers will be aware that they will have limited direct control over supervision while the young person is staying with the host family and that host families will not be subject to British law.

28) It is therefore particularly important that all reasonable checks have been made to ensure the suitability of hosts and the adequate preparation of the young person prior to the exchange. The following guidance is given as 'best practice'.

29) Organisers must ensure:

- good relationships and communications are established with the foreign school/youth organisation
- they are clear about the procedures in the relevant country for vetting the suitability of host families, including criminal background checks where these are available
- they seek additional assurance where the host school/youth organisation or agency does not have appropriate procedures in place to check host family suitability. If this is not forthcoming, then the organiser should seriously consider whether the visit should take place
- parents/carers are informed of the protective measures taken prior to confirming their son's/daughter's participation in the visit
- make regular checks on the welfare of the young people
- ensure that alternative accommodation is available

30) The following specific procedures are recommended by the Child Protection Service:

With regard to the hosting of foreign students by the families of Cambridgeshire students, as soon as a list of pupils who wish to participate in an exchange visit is available, it should be shown to the designated person. If there have been significant child protection concerns about a young person or if a young person is, or has been, on the child protection register, the designated person should contact Social Services for advice on whether it would be appropriate for the family to host a foreign exchange student. A follow-up discussion with the family should take place if necessary.

With regard to Cambridgeshire young people staying with family's abroad, the organiser of the trip should request that the organiser in the receiving country make similar checks to those above.

It is important for parents/carers to realise that schools/youth organisations take the matter of child protection during foreign exchange visits seriously and that 'best practice guidelines' are being adhered to. It should be made clear to parents/carers the specific steps that have been taken to minimise the risk to young people; (e.g. what checks have been carried out). However, parents/carers must understand that the risk cannot be eliminated altogether. In the end, parents/carers will need to weigh up the potential risks and set them against the potential benefits of their child taking part in a foreign exchange visit.

Schools/youth organisations may wish to include the above information in their guidance to parents about foreign exchange visits to avoid embarrassment to families and for general information.

Before the visit, young people should be equipped with relevant personal safety skills, including the ability to assess potential risk. Part of this teaching should focus on "what would you do if...?" scenarios so that the judgement of individual young people can be assessed (e.g. what would you do if you got lost in a strange town? What would you do if you became uncomfortable about the way a member of your host family was treating you?).

When dealing with a young person, who may have been abused, it is very important to ensure that any possible legal evidence does not become contaminated. The following basic principles should be adhered to:

- It is important that allegations are always taken seriously and are **NEVER** dismissed without proper consideration.
- In any circumstances where a young person has an injury, but no explanation is volunteered, it is acceptable to enquire how the injury was sustained. If this gives rise to concerns then a referral to the appropriate Social Care Agencies should be made.
- In circumstances where a young person volunteers/discloses information about abuse, listen to the young person. It is never acceptable to **CLARIFY** information by asking what happened. Where? When? And who was involved. **NEVER** suggest possible answers or have in depth discussions.
- **ONLY TRAINED INVESTIGATING OFFICERS SHOULD CONDUCT MORE IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS**
- Never stop a young person who is freely recalling significant events. The young person should **NOT** be asked to repeat their story to a colleague, or asked to write it down or pressurised to give more information.
- Always make a written record of any information volunteered to you, the record should be as verbatim as possible and include the time it was written, setting, personnel present, as well as what was said.
- Record all subsequent events up to the time of the Social Care and Health/Police intervention. Whilst there may be some delay do not be tempted to further discuss the disclosure with the young person.
- **ALL** concerns should be reported the headteacher / senior youth officer immediately.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Ensure the physical and emotional safety and welfare of the young person

**PROMPT ACTION PROTECTS EVERYONE : THE CHILD, STAFF, OTHER PUPILS AND THE SCHOOL/CENTRE**

For further information see the **LEA CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

# Medical

## Visits within the EEC

- 31) Despite the increasing co-operation between EEC member countries it is essential that organisers:
- as a result of recent changes to European law, a new E111 form has been introduced. If you are planning on travelling in Europe during 2005, you should apply for a new form as those issued before 19 August 2004 will no longer be valid. Your new form will be valid until 31 December 2005.
    - during 2005 the UK will be adopting the European Health Insurance Card. You can apply for an EHIC now by ticking the relevant box on the new E111 application form. It will then be posted to you automatically in 2005, prior to the expiry of your new E111 on 31 December 2005
    - the new E111 and the booklet "Health Advice for Travellers" is available from the Post Office or call 0800 555777
  - must arrange additional insurance on behalf of the party (see Section 8)
  - have an emergency cash fund to deal with medication or minor medical treatment. This fund needs to be substantial, especially with 'risk' activities such as skiing

## Visits outside the EEC

- 32) Insurance cover must be comprehensive. Seek advice from the Insurance & Risk Management Section, Resources Directorate, Shire Hall, Cambridge, tel : 01223 717267 / Loans & Insurance Section, Peterborough, tel : 01733 742050
- 33) Vaccination or inoculation requirements, which apply, to certain countries must be checked and fulfilled. The Department of Health gives advice on vaccination requirements in 'Health Advice to Travellers Anywhere in the World' .

## Passports and visas

- 34) Every member of the party must be covered by a current, valid passport and visa (where appropriate). Organisers must check, well in advance of the visit, the current requirements with regard to individual and/or collective passports. Collective passports are currently available for groups of between 5 and 50, under 18 year old British nationals and need to be arranged approximately eight weeks before departure. Application forms and guidance notes can be obtained from the Passport Office, Peterborough. Telephone **0870 521 0410 (general enquiries)** <http://www.ukpa.gov.uk> or Collective Passport Enquires to 01733 888350/352/353 e-mail: [Peterboroughcollectives@ukpa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Peterboroughcollectives@ukpa.gsi.gov.uk)

- 35) Organisers are strongly advised to check the validity of individual passports well before departure and to ensure their safety during the visit. It is advised that photocopies of the collective passport be taken on the visit in case of early return of one or more members of the party. For young people whose national or immigration status is in doubt, early enquiries to the Home Office should be made.

## Insurance

\*see also Section 8

- 36) Comprehensive insurance cover must be effected for all party members involved in foreign visits. The Council administers an Off-site Insurance Scheme with insurers, Ace. Full details of the current policy and scheme are available from Insurance & Risk Management Section, Resources Directorate, Shire Hall, Cambridge, tel : 01223 717267/ Loans & Insurance Section, Peterborough, tel : 01733 742050
- 37) Many commercial companies offer insurance, often as an integral part of the visit package. Organisers are strongly advised to:
- check the detail of such insurance
  - check the suitability of such policies, where in doubt, with the Council Insurance Officer on 01223 717267 / 01733 746076
  - advise parents of the detail of the cover

## Dealing with emergencies

- 38) The recommendations given in Section 9 are of particular importance for visits abroad and organisers should check that adequate arrangements are made. All staff should be made aware of these emergency procedures.
- 39) Additionally, all staff should know the location and telephone number of the nearest British Embassy or Consulate. See [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) - UK Embassies Overseas



# OE2005: Approval of adventure activities & notification of visits/expeditions abroad

This form should be photocopied and used for approval/notification of the activities listed in Section 3 and 4 Visits Abroad involving overnight stays should also be included.

**Schools/Centres Seeking LEA Adventure Approval:**

- \* Complete Parts 1 & 2 and Adventure Approval Checklist 2 (Section 3) and Abroad checklist - if adventure activities are abroad
- \* Ensure each part is signed by the appropriate person
- \* Enclose wild country routes where applicable
- \* Send, with a copy of Adventure Checklist to the address overleaf

**Notification for Abroad**  
(Notification by Self Approving Schools)

- \* Complete Part 1 and Adventure/Abroad Checklist
- \* Ensure each part is signed by the appropriate person
- \* Send to the address below

**PART 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL ESTABLISHMENTS**

Name of School/Youth Centre \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Adventure Approval required

Overseas Notification only

Date of visit from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Name of visit leader \_\_\_\_\_

Total students	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	Male	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	Female	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	Age range	<input style="width: 150px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>
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Total Staff	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	Male	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	Female	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>	Total Volunteers	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>
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Geographical location \_\_\_\_\_

Address when Away \_\_\_\_\_

Your Contact Numbers when away \_\_\_\_\_

The Base Contact Person(s) and Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that appropriate insurance has been effected and that adequate emergency procedures are in place**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Visit Leader) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (EVC/ Head Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form, as appropriate, and send it with enclosures to  
 Stephen Brown,  
 Adviser for Outdoor Education, Grafham Water Centre, Perry,  
 Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 0BX  
**to arrive at least four weeks before the proposed visit.**  
**Telephone: 01480 813857 Fax: 01480 813850**



# Visits abroad - checklist

WHERE VISITS ABROAD ARE PLANNED AND FOLLOWING THE SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THE VISITS CHECKLIST (AND ADVENTURE CHECKLIST WERE APPROPRIATE), ORGANISERS SHOULD SATISFY THEMSELVES OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES BEFORE ANY FINANCIAL COMMITMENT IS MADE

- 1 Has Visits Checklist (and Adventure Activity Checklist, where appropriate) been satisfactorily completed? Has reference been made to The Protection of Young People in the context of International Visits?  yes
- 2 Do staffing levels and experience conform to the guidelines in Section 2, paragraph 125?  yes
- 3 Have adequate checks been made on accommodation security and safety (Section 5, paragraphs 20 - 23)  yes
- 4 On exchange visits:
  - i has the child protection guidance been followed? (Section 5, paragraphs 24 - 30)  yes
  - ii are satisfactory child protection measures in place?  yes
- 5 Is all documentation in place (personal, medical, passports, insurance)? (Section 5, paragraphs 11 - 14)  yes
- 6 Have arrangements been made for dealing with emergencies ? (Section 5, paragraphs 38 - 39)  yes
- 7 Where a travel operator is used, does it offer appropriate financial security? (Section 5, paragraphs 7 - 9)  yes
- 8 Have parents been fully informed of, and given their consent to, all the visit arrangements? (Section 2, paragraphs 34 - 39)  yes

Signed : ..... (Visit Leader) Date : .....

If answers to all relevant questions above are affirmative, then establishment approval of the visits could reasonably be assumed.

Signed: ..... (Head/EVC) Date : .....

Note : A copy of this questionnaire must be retained by the establishment were an incident necessitating the submissions of form IRF96 occurs.

