

Isle of Wight Council
**EDUCATIONAL VISITS
AND OFF-SITE ACTIVITY**
August 2011
Health and Safety Assessment Policy

1 Document Information

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3 Introduction

It is the intention of this policy to meet legislative requirements by providing guidance relating to educational visits and off-site activities for school pupils..

This procedure incorporates the guidance given in July 2011 by the Department of Education in the Policy Briefing “Advice on Health and Safety for Schools, Including School Trips”¹

It is essential that every person involved in the planning and running of “Off-Site” activities is familiar with and understands the implications of the guidelines.

The term “Off-Site” refers to all activities arranged by the school, which take place outside the boundaries of its premises.

¹ Department for Education Policy briefing #34 – July 2011

4 Legal Framework

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

The Management of Health and Safety At Work Regulations 1999 require employers to:

- assess the risks of activities
- introduce measures to control those risks
- tell their employees about these measures

Under Health and Safety legislation, employees must:

- take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety
- co-operate with their employers over safety matters
- carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
- inform the employer of any serious risks

4.1 “In Loco Parentis”

School staff have a common law duty towards pupils under the age of 18 known as “in loco parentis”.

This means that teaching staff must take the same care of their pupils that a reasonable and careful parent would take in the same circumstances. The word ‘reasonable’ is open to interpretation. However, the standard of care must be of the highest order. A breach of this duty of care leading to injury or damage to a student can give rise to a claim for negligence.

The principal of “in loco parentis” applies to all members of staff, including non-teaching staff, who take responsibility for school pupils. Voluntary supervisors are also covered by this, although the law would expect a higher standard of care from the professionals because of their training and experience.

5 Insurance

The group leader must ensure, that adequate insurance arrangements are in place. Insurance may be provided by, for example, the school, a travel firm, or the organisation to be visited, as well as by an insurance company.

Additional arrangements may be necessary to obtain insurance cover for activities abroad and activities of a potentially hazardous nature. The group leader should carefully examine any exclusions listed in the policy. If there is any doubt about the cover the insurer should be asked for clarification.

The Council maintains an Off-Site Insurance Policy through ACE Europe – There are set terms and conditions (the Council has no ability to alter the terms and conditions) and most holiday activities are covered but it is important to note that there are some exclusions. If there is any doubt as to whether an activity is covered contact should be made with the Councils' Insurance and Risk Management and Insurance Section for clarification

It is important that copies of relevant documents, including this one, are taken with you on a visit. A copy of relevant documents should be distributed to all group leaders and accompanying adults for every trip

In the event of an emergency follow the procedure outlined in Appendix 1.

In the event of a claim that needs to be made contact the Risk Management & Insurance Section at the earliest opportunity. All completed claim forms should be sent to the Risk Management & Insurance Section in the first instance for onward transmission to the insurers.

5.1 Transport

When hiring coaches etc., the group leader should check that the company used has appropriate insurance cover by obtaining written confirmation that that the insurance policy applies to all people using the vehicle and all activities and journeys that are conducted.

Staff are able to drive school minibuses without any special licence, as long as their employer agrees, and as long as the following conditions are met:

- The staff member obtained their car driving licence before January 1997 **or**
- The staff member obtained their driving licence after January 1997, but has held it for **at least 2 years AND**
 - Is not being paid to drive the minibus AND
 - The minibus weighs no more than 3.5 tonnes and is used “not for hire or reward”

5.2 Private Vehicles

Privately owned vehicles ideally should not be used. If however, teachers or other adults elect to use their own cars to carry pupils on school visits, then the vehicle must be properly licensed and appropriately insured for use on school business

6 Approval Monitoring

Completed risk assessments are to be submitted to the Head Teacher for approval prior to any activity taking place.

The *Evolve* system used for the recording of School trips / visits and submissions where appropriate to the Health, Safety and Welfare Section for approval will be dispensed with from 31 December 2011 and there will no longer be a requirement on schools to use the system after this date.

Head Teachers may wish to stop using *Evolve* before this date if the requirements as set out in this Policy have been adopted by the school and relevant staff are fully conversant with their responsibilities under the new policy.

Under the Department of Education guidance there is no longer a requirement to have an Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) in each school, however, the Health, Safety and Welfare Section recommend that an EVC is appointed for each school as “best practice” to maintain knowledge within the establishment

The Health, Safety and Welfare Section will continue to be available to deal with any queries relating to off-site activities

7 Preparation

7.1 Risk Assessment

Risk assessments must be completed and included in the submission for approval by the Head Teacher. Where an activity is not considered to be hazardous (see Section 8) a Risk Assessment is not required to be completed for each trip / incidence. An initial assessment which covers the relevant areas / issues indicated below will suffice and it is recommended that the school's Health and Safety Policy incorporates school trips as a specific item, with relevant Risk Assessments for trips included.

Risk Assessments will need to be reviewed and updated either on an annual basis, or at an earlier date in the light of any significant changes

A risk assessment template can be found at:

www.iwight.com/council/health_and_safety/images/Sect2.28RiskAssessmentRecordFormFeb2011.pdf

The Risk Assessment will be based on:

- the hazards
- who might be affected
- safety measures required to reduce risks to acceptable level

The group leader should take into consideration the following factors when assessing the risks:

- type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken
- location, routes and means of transport
- competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff
- ratio of lecturers and supervisory staff to pupils
- group members' age, competence, fitness, temperament and the suitability of the activity
- pupils with a disability/learning disability
- quality and suitability of available equipment
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing
- emergency procedures
- how to cope when a pupil becomes unable or unwilling to continue, or displays challenging behaviour
- the need to monitor the risks throughout the visit
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) which apply to persons involved in trips or activities, must be included in the assessment and planning process.

7.2 Safety

Safety must be the prime consideration in all planning and preparation. Group leaders must be continually aware of the degree of care expected of them. In particular, care should be taken to ensure that the appropriate preparations are made to deal with any emergencies or situations that may arise.

7.3 Venue Research

The group leader must research the background and implications of an Off-Site activity thoroughly. In this context, knowledge of the venues is particularly important. Whenever possible, staff should have visited venues either on previous activities or on preliminary visits. When a venue includes naturally hazardous areas such as mountains and moorlands, coasts, forested areas and sizeable areas of still and moving waters, the need to undertake a preliminary visit becomes vitally important.

When a preliminary visit is not feasible, then importance must be placed upon seeking advice and information from the venue.

8 Hazardous Activities

Hazardous activities must be lead by staff holding appropriate qualifications. It is permissible to use staff who are not employed by the school, but in this instance, it is the responsibility of the activity organiser to ensure that checks are made to establish they are suitable qualified.

Hazardous activities could include:

- abseiling
- caving/potholing
- climbing
- hill walking
- windsurfing
- paddlesports
- sailing
- skiing
- activities occurring close to, or in, areas such as: quarries, beaches near cliffs, canals etc.
- any other activities that present hazards comparable to the risks with those activities specified above

This list gives examples of hazardous activities but others may be identified during the assessment process.

For activities identified as hazardous a separate Risk Assessment should be completed for each proposed trip, taking into consideration the areas highlighted in Section 7

9 Visits Abroad

Additional factors to consider:

9.1 Language

It is recommended that at least one member of staff should know enough of the local language to be able to engage in a basic conversation. It is also advisable for pupils to have a basic knowledge of the local language before the visit.

9.2 Visas / Passports

The group leader should ensure that all members of the group hold valid passports and visas (if appropriate).

9.3 Foreign Legislation

The group leader needs to check relevant legislation, particularly on health and safety e.g. fire regulations.

9.4 Culture

Body language, rules and regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs etc. that will be expected and which staff and pupils will need to be aware of.

9.5 Food and Drink

Group members should be warned of the dangers of drinking tap water and drinks containing ice cubes in certain countries. In some countries it is safer to drink bottled water, and care needs to be taken with raw vegetables, salads and unpeeled fruit, raw shellfish, and undercooked meat or fish.

9.6 Money

How to carry money and valuables discreetly. If larger amounts of money will be needed, it is advisable to take travellers cheques.

9.7 Telephones

How to use phones abroad, money required and code for phoning home.

9.8 Vaccinations

The group leader should find out whether vaccination is necessary and ensure all members of the group have received it in good time. Check whether the country to be visited requires proof of vaccination.

9.9 Insurance

The group leader must ensure that the group has comprehensive travel insurance appropriate to the visit.

9.10 Risk Assessments

It is recommended that even where a trip / activity abroad is not considered as “hazardous” new Risk Assessments are completed, even where the venue may have been visited previously.

10 Supervision Ratios

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any visit. The factors to take into consideration are:

- sex, age and ability of the group
- pupils with a disability/learning difficulty
- nature of activities
- experience of adults in Off-Site supervision
- duration and nature of journey
- type of any accommodation
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities
- requirements of the organisation/location to be visited
- competence and behaviour of students
- first aid cover

Where groups include pupils of both genders, these must be accompanied by both male and female staff, with the following exceptions:

- where an activity involves a small group on an activity lasts less than 24 hours, and does not involve an overnight stay
- where appropriate adult help is available at the group's venue and only the journey involves the presence of adults of one gender which conflicts with the make-up the group
- where an activity involves pupils working without direct supervision

It is acknowledged that there are occasions when it is appropriate for pupils to work in situations where they are not directly supervised in order to explore, however briefly, a carefully and clearly defined area. In such cases, particular care must be taken to ensure that pupils are appropriately trained, briefed and experienced for whatever is involved, and that the activity has been risk assessed.

There must be appropriate emergency procedures in place and pupils must have the knowledge and ability to follow them. Precisely what procedures are necessary depend upon the particular circumstances but these must be considered and agreed prior to undertaking the activity.

11 First Aid Provision

First aid provision should form part of the risk assessment.

Considerations when identifying first aid needs should include:

- numbers in the group and the nature of the activity
- likely injuries and how effective first aid would be
- distance to nearest hospital
- pre-existing medical conditions

First aid should be available and accessible at all times.

It is recommended that at least one adult accompanying the visit should be first aid trained and qualified.

12 Adventure Activities using Licensed Providers

When planning to use adventure activity facilities offered by a commercial company or by a local authority, the group leader should check:

- whether the provider is legally required to hold a licence for the activities it offers and, if so,
- that the provider actually holds a current and appropriate licence.

A licensed provider does not necessarily have to hold a licence for all its activities. Other activities may be accredited under non-statutory schemes. The provider can give information on what activities are licensed.

It is illegal for a provider of licensable status to offer a licensable activity without a licence. The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority can check on the licence status of a provider. Their contact details are as follows:

Adventure Activities Licensing Authority
17 Lambourne Crescent
Llanishen
Cardiff CF4 5GG

Tel: 01222 755715 Fax: 01222 755757

Web site address: <http://www.aala.org>

12.1 Changes to the Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority

A review is ongoing in 2011 / 12 of the requirements relating to the Licensing Authority and any changes and / or new requirements will be communicated to Head Teachers by the Health, Safety and Welfare Section as appropriate

13 Adventure Activities using Non-Licensable Providers

Not all providers are required to hold a licence.
Not holding a licence does not imply a lack of safety.

If proposing to use a non-licensable provider, the group leader should obtain in writing from the provider that:

- risks have been assessed and that the provider's staff are competent to instruct and lead pupils of the groups' age range on the activity; a copy of the providers Risk Assessment should be sought and reviewed
- the equipment is suitable for the activity and that its safe condition is checked before each use
- operating procedures conform to the guidelines of the National Governing Body for the activity where this is appropriate
- clear management and safety systems is in place
- there is appropriate provision for first aid
- there are emergency procedures

14 Emergency Procedures

A senior member of staff should be appointed to act as the group's contact out of school hours. This person should have available all relevant information regarding the group and its whereabouts. A register containing names and telephone numbers of ALL personnel on the trip should be kept by the emergency contact person.

An Emergency Contact Information sheet should be held by each member of staff accompanying the group. Emergency contact details are given in Appendix 1

If an emergency occurs:

- establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible
- ensure that all the group are safe and looked after
- establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention
- ensure that all relevant group members are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures
- ensure that casualties are accompanied to hospital by a member of staff
- notify the police if necessary
- notify the British Embassy/Consulate if an emergency occurs abroad
- inform the school contact
- notify insurers
- notify the provider/tour operator
- ascertain relevant telephone numbers required for future calls
- write down accurately all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence
- keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident
- complete an accident report form as soon as possible
- no-one in the group should speak to the media
- no-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties

The main factors for the school contact to consider include:

- ensuring that the group leader is in control of the emergency and establishing if any assistance is required from the school base
- contacting parents and keeping them as well informed as possible at all stages of the emergency
- liaison with the Head Teacher
- the reporting of the incident using appropriate forms if necessary; i.e. Reporting of Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)

15 Further Advice

If it is found that any aspect of organising an Off-Site activity is not adequately covered in this document or that clarification is needed for any other reason, further advice can be obtained from the Council Health, Safety and Welfare Team.

16 Related Documents

- Health and Safety Manual www.iwight.com/council/health_and_safety/healthan.asp

Appendix 1 Emergency Procedure

Policy Holder: Isle of Wight Council (School Journeys)
Policy Number: 51UK 602011

1. Ensure that all staff and young people are safe from further danger.
2. Ensure that rescue, medical care and hospitalisation is provided, as necessary.
3. Inform your school or LEA as soon as possible and ensure the appropriate arrangements are made to inform parents. In the case of fatality the police should also be informed.
4. Consider whether your party (including yourself) needs adult assistance and request the same from your school/LEA.
5. Do not speak to the press or media, other than to refer them to whoever is designated to deal with them in such circumstances.
6. Insure that any equipment is retained in unaltered condition.
7. Never admit liability of any sort.
8. Do not allow anyone to see a party member without a witness being present.
9. If necessary, ring the emergency assistance company, which is linked with your school journey insurance policy at the earliest opportunity.

N.B. No one, unless they are in a relevant official capacity, has the right to see anyone who does not wish to see them. In the event of any verbal communication, keep a written record of everything that is said, and happens.

If you need to use ACE Rescue, simply call the appropriate number below –it will help if you have as many details with you as possible when you call. Keep a separate record of the telephone and telex numbers.

From the U.K	0870 607 0684
From Outside the U.K	0044 870 607 0684
Telex	947736 EURA G

Please be ready to give:

- Name of your Local Education Authority
- Name & address of your school
- Policy Number (at top of page)
- Contact number(s) for where you are

And, depending on your situation relevant information such as:

- School's Emergency contact details
- Details of any individuals for whom help is needed
- Contact details for any doctors or hospitals involved
- Details of anyone that you would like to be contacted.

ACE Rescue handle many emergencies everyday – so be prepared to let them help you with solutions.