



Redscope Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

Redscope Primary School adopts the guidance and procedures issued in the Rotherham LA Circular 146 document ***Educational Visits- Policy and Guidelines*** and, where relevant, the DfES document ***Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV)***. This is to ensure consideration for the health and safety of all those involved and to maintain the educational quality of visits and value for money.

1. Procedures

- 1.1 Staff wishing to plan and undertake a visit (prospective visit leaders) should apply verbally to the headteacher or educational visits co-ordinator (EVC) for permission to plan the visit. Once granted they should submit notification of the proposed visit to the LA as early as possible during the planning process using EVOLVE.
- 1.2 Outline permission will be granted when all the requirements identified in ***Circular 146 section 4 and 5*** have been considered, the visit can be accommodated within the school timetable and the ethos of the visit is one with which the school wishes to be associated.
- 1.3 When the visit involves additional or high risk activities, foreign travel or is a residential visit then details of the visit will also be sent to the Borough Council Educational Visits Adviser by the headteacher or EVC for approval that all the procedures have been satisfactorily completed.
- 1.4 Once outline permission, and any necessary approval has been received the visit leader can complete the planning organisation and bookings for the visit. When all details are complete they must be submitted for final approval. This should be a minimum of 10 days before the visit.
- 1.5 Regularly repeated visits may receive block annual approval, subject to parents being made aware of every visit, especially any involving a return time outside the normal school day.

- 1.6 Following each visit the leader will undertake an evaluation to assess how the visit has gone. Any incidents or accidents will be reported in accordance with the reporting requirements. Leaders of visits that have involved considerable time or financial resources, such as residential visits, will produce a short report evaluating the travel and transport, facilities, quality of any providers and the success and value of the visit and submit this to the headteacher or EVC.
- 1.7 All school staff will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when the policy is reviewed.

2. Local Responsibilities

- 2.1 The headteacher is the responsible officer for ensuring visits are approved as necessary, that all visits approved can be accommodated within the timetable and that the ethos of each visit is one with which the school wishes to be associated.
- 2.2 The Educational Visit Co-ordinator is a staff member who has received relevant training and induction and is delegated with the following indicated tasks: -

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| To grant verbal permission that a leader may plan a visit after deciding that the timetabling and ethos of the visit are acceptable. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To submit notification of the proposed visit using EVOLVE | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To check that all requirements for approving a visit, as identified in Circular 146 section 4 and 5 , have been undertaken. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To liaise with headteacher and grant outline permission for a visit to go ahead | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To check that the further requirements for residential or foreign travel and additional or high risk activities have been undertaken. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To liaise with the LA on any visit involving residential or foreign travel and additional or high risk activities. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To grant final permission for a visit when all organisation and planning are complete and to signify this by approving the visit at school level through EVOLVE | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The school's current EVC is

Samantha Walpole

Note: Any tasks not indicated in the above list remain that of the headteacher.

- 2.3 The designated visit leader is in overall charge of the group and remains responsible throughout the visit.
- 2.4 It is the group leader's responsibility to carry out and write a visit specific risk

assessment, outlining the specific needs of the children they are taking on a visit. A copy must be provided for EVOLVE site and paper copy to be filed in EVC file.

3. Emergency Procedures

- 3.1 The risk assessment for each visit will identify the relevant emergency procedures during the visit. For visits extending beyond the school day this includes designating a home contact from the school who may be needed as a link between the party, the parents, the school and the LA in the event of an emergency.
- 3.2 In the event of a delay (of more than 1 hour), or of an incident resulting in harm to any attending participant, staff member or volunteer, then the school must be contacted as soon as possible to inform the headteacher or designated deputy so that they can decide: -
- A. If the incident is of a less serious nature then the next of kin or parents of those affected will be informed about what has happened (e.g. that the party will be returning late or that an incident has befallen a party member) and the action that has been taken so far. In appropriate circumstances the visit leader will be designated to undertake this task.
 - B. However, if the incident is very serious (e.g. involves a disabling or life threatening accident, or a fatality) then the headteacher, deputy or the home contact will inform the designated senior officer of the Education Service (Director or Deputy Director) and the school will instigate its critical incident plan (as identified in ***Coping with a Crisis***, produced by Pupil and Student Services). Officers of the authority will be allocated to support the school with the immediate incident and any necessary follow up or inquiry.
- 3.3 In the event of a party being overdue and without contact by more than 1 hour, the school, or the home contact, must investigate the reason and may, where appropriate, need to involve the police.

The Governing Body

- 4.1 The governing body wishes to be informed about all educational visits, prior to them taking place.
- 4.2 The governing body will receive reports from the headteacher detailing the school visits that have taken place each term.

Signature:Name:Date:
Chair of Governors

Signature:Name:Date:
Headteacher

Appendices

1. Visit Leader's checklist
2. Visit specific risk assessment form
3. Circular 146- section 4 and 5

APPENDIX 1

VISIT LEADER CHECKLIST

Basic Checks for All Visits

- Visit aims
- Notification on EVOLVE

- Pre-visit of venue

- Programme
- LEA Guidelines
- Leader Competence*

- Risk assessments*
- Planning
- Complete EVOLVE *

- Supervision
- Staff Briefing
- Student Briefing
- Parental Approval*

- Medical Problems
- First Aid*
- Insurance

- List of Students

- Emergency Procedure

Actions

Establish visit aims, discuss with staff and pupils
Start entering the visit information on EVOLVE as soon as possible
This should normally be done to inform the risk assessment
Schedule, worksheets, route cards
Read LEA 146 Educational Visit Guidelines
Appropriate numbers for group, qualifications, experience
Generic/specific assessments for each activity/venue
Provide detailed plan to EVC and line manager
Complete the EVOLVE submission and submit to your EVC.
Organisation of who, what, where, when
Objectives, individual responsibilities
Objectives, code of conduct, schedules
May be general for local work or specific for special visits – consent needs to be informed
Allergies, illness, disabilities
Emergency aider, appropriate first aid kit(s)
If required – complete relevant forms
Check indemnities and disclaimers with RMBC Insurance Section
Include medical problems and possibly home telephone
Contact and action to be taken

Additional Items for Journeys with Transport

- Kit lists
- Bank A/C
- Transport

- Drivers
- Travel Sickness
- Food

Additional Items for Residential Visits

- Parents' Meeting
- Diets
- Students personal details
- Liaise with accommodation
- Emergency Contacts
- Pocket Money

Additional Items for Travel Abroad

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EEC package travel regs* | Ensure your visit has a clearly stated educational aim and purpose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group Passport | Allow plenty of time to obtain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EHIC | Allow plenty of time to obtain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Currency and Travellers Cheques | Allow plenty of time to obtain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance | Complete relevant forms |

Additional Items for Adventurous Activities and Hazardous Environments

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AALA Licensing | Applies to some adventure activities when using an outside provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor Qualifications | Check in place - required for many adventure activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Competencies | Ensure evidence of competence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid | Higher level of first aid may be required for adventure activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Hazards | Take particular care with risk assessment and supervision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plan B | Ensure in place in case planned activities cannot take place |

* RMBC Mandatory Requirement

Appendix 2

SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT – To be completed by the school after referring to the relevant LEA Generic Risk Assessments for the visit: Page 1 of 2

SCHOOL: _____ ACTIVITY/VISIT LOCATION: _____

DATE(S): _____

Which generic risk assessment(s) have you referred to in respect of this visit?

VISIT/ACTIVITY SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT. Consider The following factors: location, activities, the group (pupils and staff), time of year, climate/weather conditions, any other significant hazards and risks which may be particular to your visit.

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK?	CONTROL MEASURES	WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS NEEDED?	TICK IF ALL IN PLACE

SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT – To be completed by the school after referring to the relevant LEA Generic Risk Assessments for the visit: Page 2 of 2

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES, PLAN B – What are your arrangements if your planned activities or visit cannot proceed as anticipated due to a change in circumstances such as severe weather, illness or other significant environmental or other factor(s).

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK?	CONTROL MEASURES	WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS NEEDED?	TICK IF ALL IN PLACE

ON-GOING RISK ASSESSMENT – Remember to assess the risks on the day and during the activity, many factors can change. Have an alternative activity (plan B) available and risk assessed in case it is needed (see above). Do not hesitate to alter or abandon the activity if the risks on the day become unacceptable.

EMERGENCY PLANNING – What is your plan for dealing with an accident or serious incident?

SHARING RISK ASSESSMENT INFORMATION - How will you share risk assessment information with staff/pupils involved:

3. Rotherham LEA Circular 146- Section 4 and 5

4. VISIT NOTIFICATION AND APPROVAL SYSTEM

The LEA provides an electronic web based system called EVOLVE. This system can be used for the notification and approval of all visits. The LEA provides generic risk assessments, risk assessment proformas and other useful information and guidance via EVOLVE.

Log in to EVOLVE at <http://rotherhamvisits.org.uk>

Educational visits vary in terms of location, duration and regularity. Consequently, different notification and approval arrangements are appropriate for different types of visit. For these purposes, visits are classified into different categories:

- **Locally approved visits.** For educational visits and activities that are part of the regular curriculum and life of the school, which take place locally by walking or a short vehicle journey and which do not require remote supervision or involve significant hazards;
- **Notifiable visits.** For residential visits, adventure activities (whether licensable or not), international visits and visits where there may be significant hazards whether local or further afield.

Locally approved visits

LEA notification and approval through EVOLVE is not normally required for such visits, however, schools may wish to use the system to maintain uniformity in their procedures, take advantage of the statistical information that can be generated by EVOLVE or notify the LEA for the purpose of requesting advice and guidance.

These local off-site activities are part of the regular curriculum and life of the school and include: school swimming lessons, use of a local library and sports grounds, local fieldwork, sports matches with local schools, visits to a local church or travelling between sites on a split-site school. (Visits involving adventure activities, overnight stays, water hazards, remote supervision or other visits which do not happen regularly cannot be considered routine local visits).

For locally approved visits and activities, schools must:

- refer to the relevant LEA generic risk assessments. With reference to these, complete a specific risk assessment for each type of activity and review this annually or when a significant change in circumstances occurs;
- make it clear to parents through the school prospectus or a letter to parents that these regular activities take place;
- if the activity takes place after school hours, e.g. sports matches, parents should normally be informed in writing of the specific dates and times of each activity. If transport is involved, details of this should be made clear (see chapter 9, Transport);
- decide as part of the specific risk assessment what type of parental consent is appropriate. It is good practice to get parental consent for after-hours activities such as team matches, but this could be a general consent covering matches over a whole term or year;
- follow relevant LEA advice, (e.g. for physical education activities), and develop and follow any school policies and codes of practice considered necessary in respect of these types of visit;
- ensure the head teacher approves each type of visit annually through approving the relevant risk assessment(s).

Notifiable visits

LEA notification through EVOLVE is required for all such visits.

Notifiable visits include all local visits which are not routinely conducted by the school, which involve remote supervision or which are not part of the normal arrangements at school as well as all other educational visits including all residential visits, international visits and visits involving adventurous activities or hazardous outdoor environments.

Where a visit involves a venture new to the school, or visiting a developing country or remote area, or expedition, skiing or adventure activities using a provider/company not known to the

school, schools should take initial advice from the LEA Outdoor Education Adviser before making any financial commitments.

For all notifiable educational visits and activities, schools must:

- notify the LEA about the visit or programme of visits using EVOLVE as soon as the visit is proposed. One EVOLVE submission may be used to cover an on-going programme of similar visits for the term or for the year by adding repeat dates, there is no need to complete a separate form for each visit;
- refer to the relevant LEA generic risk assessments and complete a visit specific risk assessment;
- if a visit is one of a programme of similar visits, one risk assessment may be completed (generic and specific). This risk assessment must then be referred to before each visit and any amendments made as necessary;
- provide specific information to parents and obtain written parental consent;
- the head teacher should consider the EVOLVE submission together with the risk assessments, details of the proposed programme and all other relevant information and, if satisfied with the arrangements, use their EVOLVE pin number to authorise the visit. Head teachers may contact the Outdoor Education Adviser for advice before giving authorisation;
- **all the above stages need to be completed at least 7 days in advance of the visit** - this allows time for advice and guidance to be provided and acted upon, should this be necessary, before the visit takes place;
- **residential visits, visits involving adventure activities and visits abroad, always require LEA approval through EVOLVE** following the guidance contained in the DfES supplement to HASPEV called Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits;
- if using another provider, schools should refer to chapter 5 of these guidelines, Planning Visits, Risk Assessment and Risk Management. Schools should ask the provider to complete a Provider Assurance Form (Form C - see appendix 3).

Visit monitoring

In order to comply with its obligations under health and safety law, as employer in community, community special and voluntary controlled schools, the LEA must undertake monitoring of educational visits. This takes three main forms:

- monitoring of EVOLVE;
- in the field visits;
- visiting schools.

Monitoring of EVOLVE

The LEA will monitor EVOLVE submissions and may need to request further information from schools or provide advice and guidance, which must be acted upon by schools, in support of the visit.

For residential visits, adventure activities (category B and C activities as defined in chapter 11, Types of Visit), visits abroad and for other hazardous visits the LEA will indicate approval of the information provided on EVOLVE. **For these visits, schools must ensure that they receive this approval from the LEA before the visit takes place.**

In the field visits An LEA representative will need, from time to time, to attend school visits as they are taking place in order to review the conduct of such visits and to ensure that they are being conducted in accordance with LEA guidelines and the proposals outlined in relevant planning and approval documents, including risk assessments. Schools will be contacted in advance of such visits and will be informed of the protocol for conducting and reviewing such an in the field visit.

Visiting schools

An LEA representative will also need to visit schools to review planning and approval systems as well as risk assessment and other relevant arrangements for managing educational visits.

As for in the field visits, schools will be contacted in advance of these visits and will be informed of the protocol for conducting and reviewing such a visit.

5. PLANNING VISITS, RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Teachers proposing an educational visit should consult their EVC as early as possible to decide whether the visit can take place. Notification of the proposed visit should be sent to the LEA as early as possible during the planning process using EVOLVE. After completing the first two screens, EVOLVE will indicate whether approval for the visit should be given at school or LEA level.

A Visit Leader Checklist is provided in appendix 1 to assist with the planning and organisation of visits.

Further advice is available from the Outdoor Education Adviser (see appendix 11 for contact details). Where a visit involves a venture new to the school, particularly when visiting a developing country or remote area, or expedition, skiing or adventure activities using a provider/company not known to the school, schools should take initial advice from the Outdoor Education Adviser before making any financial commitments.

Educational aims of the visit

All visits must have clear educational aims. Visits may have a particular curriculum focus, e.g. field work or a language exchange visit, or may contribute to pupils' personal, social and health education and/or cultural awareness. All involved, including leaders, parents and pupils should understand the aims of the visit.

Researching locations and use of other organisations

In choosing the venue for a visit, leaders should consider the age of the pupils and their ability to cope with the length and type of travel. Consideration should also be given to staff experience and knowledge of the environment to be visited.

Through the process of risk assessment, consideration should be given to the risks associated with the proposed location and journey. After consideration, it may be appropriate to avoid certain options and choose others. In researching information about other countries, visit leaders should refer to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice website (see appendix 11) and select information for the particular country. This website lists specific security and health risks of specific countries and provides other useful information.

Using a tour operator

Many educational visits are self-organised, ensuring that the programme can be planned to meet the particular educational needs of those involved. However, in certain cases, it may be wise to arrange visits through specialist providers or tour operators. Schools should always choose a reputable operator experienced in providing for school groups. The Outdoor Education Adviser can provide schools with contact details of providers and tour operators used by other Rotherham schools. Reputable operators should be able to demonstrate their awareness of the health and safety concerns of schools and LEAs, and should provide activities that meet UK safety standards. If they offer certain adventure activities such as water sports or rock climbing in the UK they must have an AALA license. They should offer accommodation which is suitable for young people, which meets health and safety and fire regulations. They should be able to provide copies of their safety audits and risk assessments and may offer leaders a subsidised inspection visit. Tour operators who subcontract service delivery to other providers, (e.g. a ski tour operator who organises ski school, accommodation and transport in a package) must give the school assurances that the contractors will provide a suitable level of service to the school. All tour operators should be asked to complete a Provider Assurance Form, Form C (see appendix 3). No contract should be entered into and no payments should be made to any provider or tour operator until the school is satisfied that there is good safety provision.

Who is responsible when outside agencies take pupils out of school?

An increasing number of outside agencies are offering to take pupils out of school on educational visits to contribute to a range of learning and development programmes. Examples include youth services, the connexions service, the armed forces, colleges of further and higher education, commercial adventure companies and other, employment related, organisations.

Unless pupils have been given official leave of absence not to attend school, such activities will need to contribute to their education, the curriculum and the learning programmes of the school. Therefore, schools must take responsibility for ensuring that such visits and activities are conducted safely and appropriately.

Further advice and information is available from the Outdoor Education Adviser (see appendix 11).

Exploratory visits (pre-visits)

An exploratory visit should normally be made by the leader to become familiar with the venue, plan activities and undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. If the school is leading part or all of the programme and/or is organising its own accommodation, an exploratory visit is normally essential. If the entire venture, including any recreational time or evening activities, is arranged through a known and reputable tour company, as described above, 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 EVC and should be addressed in the risk assessment for the venture.

If for any reason a pre-visit does not take place, the visit leader must obtain sufficient information to complete a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and plan the visit properly. This might include information from a tour operator, from other schools or colleagues who have used the company or visited the location, from the Outdoor Education Adviser and from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Travel Advice unit. Particular care must be taken on any venture for which a pre-visit has not taken place.

Many schools use the same venue on a regular or an annual basis. Schools 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.

Accommodation checks

Schools should take all reasonable steps to ensure that accommodation and other facilities used on the visit are suitable and safe. If travelling abroad standards of health and safety including fire precautions in other countries vary, and may be less stringent than from those in the UK. Information provided by a tour operator should be considered carefully during the risk assessment process. If a school is independently arranging accommodation, a pre-visit should normally be made.

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 party knows what to do in the event of fire or other emergency including the location of an agreed assembly point.

Risk Assessment

As with any other aspect of school activity, schools must give careful consideration to the hazards involved in the visit and ensure that risks are managed at acceptable levels. Risk assessments are a legal requirement and 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. Insignificant risks can be ignored, but this will depend upon the context and teachers will be well aware of the need to be careful where children and young persons are concerned;
- all reasonable steps are taken to identify 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. This means that they should have sufficient training and experience or knowledge appropriate to the hazards and risks encountered.

Information on the risk assessment process is available in LEA Circular 88, Education Services Health and Safety Policy, section 3.1. Training and information on risk assessment is available from the Council's Safety Advisers and the Outdoor Education Adviser (see appendix 11 for contact details).

All activities involve a level of risk. Risk assessment includes the assessment of significant hazards and their management so as to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Three levels of risk assessment

The three following levels of risk assessment, taken together, constitute a sound risk assessment process. They must all be undertaken for educational visits.

- A written **generic risk assessment** of the common risks of the activity is the employer's (the LEA's) responsibility. Schools must refer to generic risk assessments in planning and conducting visits.
- A written **specific risk assessment** of the activity, including the particular risks of the venue and programme, the medical and behavioural needs of the group and the expected environmental conditions during the visit, is the responsibility of the school and is usually completed by the visit leader and EVC.
- An **on-going risk assessment** which is not normally written down at the time of the activity. It is the continuous process of sound judgements made by competent people before and during the activity. This is the responsibility of the visit leader and other staff on the visit.

More detailed information on these three levels of risk assessment is provided below.

Generic risk assessments

A set of written generic risk assessments for educational visits is available to schools on the Rotherham LEA web site www.rotherham.gov.uk by following this path: learning > schools > outdoor education > educational visits guidelines. These cover most risks associated with the most common visits undertaken by schools. If schools are planning a visit or activities not covered by these generic risk assessments, the EVC should contact the Outdoor Education Adviser for assistance with obtaining a relevant generic risk assessment.

For each visit, the leader and EVC must consider the LEA generic risk assessments and decide which ones apply to their visit. These should then be followed in respect of the specific visit. The visit leader should indicate that the appropriate control measures will be in place by ticking in the relevant column and signing each form.

Specific risk assessments

After referring to the relevant generic risk assessments, two or more staff, usually the leader of the visit, who will have normally pre-visited the location and the EVC or deputy visit leader should carry out the written specific risk assessment for a visit. All members of the party may have a valuable contribution to this risk assessment, therefore the more people, as appropriate, that make a contribution, the stronger the risk assessment is likely to be. Specific risk assessments should refer to relevant school policies and procedures, e.g. the school's behaviour policy, where appropriate. The specific risk assessment should not repeat the generic risk assessments but should follow from the points raised in the generic risk assessments. For examples of the issues to consider, see page 24 below under the heading *Risk Assessment Step 1 – What are the Significant Hazards?* Many schools do this by logically thinking through the visit from beginning to end. This assessment should form a useful framework for the planning for the supervision and arrangements for the visit(s).

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.

As for a generic risk assessment, a specific risk assessment should involve the five steps to risk assessment recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), see below.

On-going risk assessments

While written risk assessments must be completed before the visit, risk assessment does not end as the visit begins. On-going risk assessment is a process which is the responsibility of visit leaders (and participants) throughout each visit. As indicated above, it is not normally written down at the time of the visit, it is the process of sound judgments being made by competent people managing risk during the visit or activity.

Leaders must therefore apply the relevant control measures, monitor how effective they are, change, adapt and revise them as required.

Changing circumstances – controlling on-going risks

Educational visits take place away from the school site where many factors are subject to change outside the control of the visit leaders. **Plans and activities must therefore 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.

To control on-going risks, it is good practice for leaders to:

- think ahead;
- seek local knowledge;
- not make promises they may not be able to keep;
- have an alternative activity available - Plan B;
- be prepared to say “no”;
- have effective emergency procedures in place;

For example, leaders may need to:

- check the forecast and monitor the weather, water levels, conditions underfoot, traffic levels;
- monitor pupils’ and leaders’ response and motivation;
- adapt outdoor programmes because of, for example, high winds, high water levels, low temperatures or pupils’ reactions ;
- 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. a lifeguard for a swimming pool does not arrive as requested);
- alter an activity because of reduced staffing (e.g. the behaviour, illness or injury of a pupil requires the attention of one or more adults).

It is good practice to have a risk-assessed alternative plan available, a “Plan B”, in case the programme needs to be changed.

For further guidance on on-going risk assessment, refer to the DfES publication “Handbook for Group Leaders” (see appendix 11).

Five steps to risk assessment

Risk Assessment Step 1 – What are the Significant Hazards?

A hazard is anything that can cause harm e.g. a fast flowing stream, the top of a cliff, a busy road. Risk is the chance that someone will be harmed. Concentrate on significant risks such as death or serious disabling injury from falls or traffic, drowning, fire, over exposure to sun, heat or cold, poisoning, infection, injury from animals, moving machinery, abduction, abuse and getting lost. For a specific risk assessment schools are advised to think through the following hazards, not all of which will be relevant to every visit:

Travel - Are there any specific hazards you need to plan for such as, breaks in journey, road crossings, use of private cars?

Accommodation – consider hazards at the accommodation including fire hazards, building standards, stairs, balconies, hygiene; security of accommodation (including risk of intruders); hazards in the grounds or immediate location.

Locations - it is best to consider each location (e.g. city centre, beach, river, country walk, farm) the group will be visiting in turn. Identify any specific hazards e.g. water, fast traffic, crowds, contact with animals or machinery etc which will require specific consideration. For

visits abroad also consider the hazards specific to the country (visit the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website as a start).

Activity hazards - consider all activities you will be undertaking with the relevant generic risk assessments and follow the generic risk assessment control measures. If the generic risk assessments do not cover your activities, contact the Outdoor Education Adviser or Safety Advisers.

Hazards during "informal" activities - arrangements for any activities under remote or indirect supervision; evening , recreational or "free-time" activities; night-time arrangements.

Medical, behavioural and special needs - individual pupils' behaviour and special educational or medical needs (take advice from the school's special needs co-ordinator and from parents via the parental consent form) some individual pupils with special needs may have, or may require, their own specific risk assessment; illness or injury particularly if this could occur away from immediate medical assistance; if abroad, health hazards specific to the country to be visited.

Supervision of the group - the age and ability of the pupils (the control measures will include the number and competence of staff required and the rules for pupil behaviour); if indirect or remote supervision is proposed the specific control measures should include the plan for this; issues of child protection and personal safety; homes used for exchange visits.

Other significant hazards specific to the visit - refer to any similar previous visits and any "near-miss" reports held by the EVC; consider if there are any other significant hazards not covered above.

Changeable factors – for example if weather could affect the programme, control measures should include obtaining a forecast and being able to change plans if necessary; include an alternative "Plan B" which is also risk assessed.

Emergency plan - incident or emergency - control measures should include planned emergency procedures.

Risk Assessment Step 2 - Who is at Risk?

This could be a member of the school group or someone not connected with the group.

Consider:

- pupils;
- teachers and other leaders;
- other people;

Risk Assessment Step 3 - Evaluate the Risks and Decide Whether Existing Control Measures are Adequate or More Should be Done.

What control measures (measures to reduce the risks to an acceptable level) need to be in place before the visit?

These may include:

- following the LEA policy for educational visits and generic risk assessment control measures, relevant procedures of the school and, if abroad, following Foreign Office advice;
 - relevant school policies and procedures (for example the school's behaviour policy and emergency plan);
 - ratios, experience, and training of staff including first aid;
- Rotherham LEA Circular 146 (August 2009) 26
- specific supervision arrangements for the visit (how staff will be deployed);
 - knowledge of area to be visited, preparatory visit and check of locations and providers;
 - flexibility to change programme, alternative plan "B" ;
 - planned emergency procedures;
 - briefing of leaders, pupils and parents ;
 - other controls;

What further control measures or actions are needed before, at the start of or during the visit?

These may include:

- check of pupils' equipment and clothing;
- daily review of weather and programme;
- briefing of leaders;
- briefing and monitoring of pupils ;
- other measures specifically required for the visit. e.g. if in or near water, review of water levels.

The control measures specified in the risk assessment must be followed in preparing for and conducting the visit.

After considering the control measures, consider whether the residual risk is acceptable or not, if not, more needs to be done or the programme needs to be altered accordingly.

Risk Assessment Step 4 - Record your Findings

A proforma for recording a specific risk assessment is contained in appendix 2. Schools should use this form as a planning tool to identify hazards and actions to be taken.

For regular visits, schools can develop a portfolio of specific risk assessments and, if helpful, a school code of practice for running these visits. For these regular visits these risk assessments can then be referred to and amended as necessary for each visit rather than rewritten for each visit.

All leaders, pupils and parents should be aware of the risk assessments and control measures relevant to them. The visit leader should provide other leaders and staff with copies of the risk assessments, using the risk assessment proforma to identify who needs to be informed of what.

Risk Assessment Step 5 - Reviewing your Risk Assessment

Generic and specific risk assessments must be reviewed before every visit

This ensures leaders are familiar with the hazards and control measures and provides a check that circumstances have not changed and the risk assessment needs amendment. It is good practice that risk assessment portfolios are reviewed annually. Risk assessments should also be amended as a result of any relevant learning outcomes from visits.

Near accidents or “near misses”

At the end of a visit, the leader should review the venture and report any issues of significance to the school's EVC so that lessons can be learned in order to improve practice next time. It is important to share learning outcomes with other leaders in the school and it is good practice for the EVC to let the Outdoor Education Adviser know of any issues that might be of use to other schools or the LEA. A Visit Evaluation Form is included in appendix 9.

Risk assessment when using other organisations

Schools do not need to complete risk assessments for aspects of visits that are the responsibility of a provider or other organisation. For example, it is not necessary for a school to complete risk assessments for adventure activities provided by a tour operator or commercial adventure activity company. The school must however check that the provider has suitable and sufficient risk assessments and the necessary control measures are in place. To obtain written assurances, schools should ask tour operators and providers to complete the LEA's Provider Assurance Form C (see appendix 3). After the form is returned from the provider, the school must carefully check it to ensure that the recommended specifications are met. Schools needing help with interpreting information provided should contact the Outdoor Education Adviser.

While a provider is responsible for their aspects of the programme, the school must undertake an overall risk assessment of the visit including assessments of aspects of the visit which are the school's rather than the provider's responsibility, including any selforganised

travel, supervision of the pupils and any excursions or activities organised by the school.

If a provider 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 EVCs must confer with the head teacher and, if necessary the, Outdoor

Education Adviser, before allowing the visit to proceed.

Whilst 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 health or safety. The visit or activities must not proceed if safety concerns cannot be satisfied. If necessary contact the head teacher and/or Outdoor Education Adviser or the Council's Safety Advisers for advice. If provision during a visit is not satisfactory, collect evidence to support a complaint. Detailed photographs may be useful. Other parties may be prepared to provide support by a brief written statement or by leaving you their name and address. The school should write to the company detailing the complaint, stating clearly what action is required and enclosing copies of any evidence. A copy of the 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 or the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority can be informed. A claim for compensation can be made in the Small Claims Court. The Council's Legal Services will be able to advise.