



MVS Educational Visits Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy provides guidance for all educational visits and off-site activities. It aims to maintain the quality and effectiveness of the learning opportunities we offer to children at Maida Vale School and suggests strategies that can be used to promote best practice.

The policy draws on the DfE guidance 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools' and 'Health and safety on educational visits', and on Keeping Children Safe in Education, which applies in full to visits and off-site activities.

It also takes account of the Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales; the Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004; Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice for visits abroad; and the change to the definition of regulated activity with children made by the Crime and Policing Act 2026, which takes effect on 1 September 2026. A full list of the legislation and guidance to which this policy has regard is set out at section 9.

It also makes use of the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP) National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Off-site Visits and Learning outside the Classroom. The aim of this guidance is to reduce 'red tape', whilst providing an appropriate level of technical and up-to-date professional advice for anyone involved in visits and off-site activities.

By adopting this Guidance, visits and outdoor activities will be managed more effectively and consistently. While we recognise that other professional bodies' advice and guidance can play a major part in the development of visits and off-site activities, there may be areas where this policy differs to OEAP National Guidance, and as such, our guidance should be followed.

2. The Value of Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

At Maida Vale School, we believe that well-planned educational visits enhance learning and providing realistic situations to use and apply knowledge, skills and understanding. This may be just outside and beyond the classroom or through journeying far and wide on residential visits.

When school visits are well planned and structured, the values have been shown to be clear, and children can:

- use and apply their knowledge and understanding outdoors, in a different and often more stimulating environment,
- focus on specific environments, from geography trails to problem solving and team challenges, to develop their organisational, team working and leadership skills,
- develop awareness and understanding of environmental and sustainability issues, through fieldwork studies,
- raise their awareness and understanding of safety issues by becoming involved in managing risk before and during the visit through for example:
- using a student checklist, created for the visit,
- questioning: why have group leaders; best meeting place to return to if lost; what to do in an emergency; safest method of crossing the road in rural areas,
- essential equipment list to take on a residential trip,
- code of conduct at a venue,
- venue, provider and centre codes of conduct, and any site-specific rules,
- agreed procedures for moving as a group in public places and in unfamiliar environments, including designated meeting points, head counts and what to do if separated from the group,
- learn new skills,
- reinforce existing skills and knowledge by putting theory into practice and through interaction with others,
- enjoy the experience and learn from it.

3. The Aims of Visits and Activities

This policy outlines the procedures for planning, arranging and evaluating educational visits and off-site visits, including advice on risk assessment.

All visits and their activities are expected to have a clear educational aim. It is important that this is identified and understood by everyone concerned, to ensure that:

- high expectations are set, and codes of behaviour agreed,
- roles and responsibilities are clearly identified and determined,
- appropriate strategies are used to realise the aims,
- parents are fully informed through appropriate means.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Head, Senior Leadership Team and Visit Leaders must ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to make visits happen. Aims and objectives, expectations and risk management should be shared with the student group before departure. We have a duty to ensure that:

- children are always safe,
- we make children more risk aware to help enable them to manage themselves.

Parents:

- are made fully aware of the risks involved in educational visits and their activities,
- can be shown how risks are assessed and management strategies to reduce them,
- can make an informed decision about giving their consent.

Explanation and parental consent do not remove the responsibilities of the school and the Board of Directors under health and safety law.

Delegation of responsibilities must be done with a clear rationale, derived from a good knowledge of the people concerned; the visits and off-site activities; the aims and objectives; and the risk management required.

The key roles and responsibilities of the school are set out below:

4.1 The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors have the overall responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff and students. This key role ensures that the management of visits and off-site activities meets the regulations and conforms to the school's Health and Safety policy.

Under education law, the Board of Directors have the power to direct its establishments on health and safety matters. Non-compliance can lead to action by the Secretary of State.

4.2 The Headmaster

The Headmaster is responsible for all school visits and off-site activities, and must ensure:

- the management of all visits and off-site activities meet regulations and conform to the School's Health and Safety policy and that the party leader has carried out all the necessary procedures and practices associated with planning, carrying out and monitoring the activity or visit,
- child protection procedures are in place,
- all staff have access to the EVOSA Policy and other relevant documentation,
- the aims, expectations and planning need to have realistic teaching and learning strategies, as well as off-site group management strategies; in the case of curricular activities or those linked to the taught curriculum, these should be appropriate to the learning needs of the students involved,
- the nominated visit leader has sufficient time to carry out the planning tasks associated with the activity or visit,
- all risk assessment and management strategies regarding sites and venues used, and the groups taken, are in place and effective,
- adequate insurance cover is provided,

- all visits and off-site activities are monitored and evaluated to see how effective they are,
- good practice is shared, and strategies are put in place to improve any aspects that require it,
- there are on-going updates and awareness-raising training for all staff who require it, as well as educational visit and off-site training as required or agreed,
- When overnight stays are involved, there should be a known, 'home' contact based 'at school' to act as a conduit of information between parents and the excursion in case of emergencies or the need for consultation,
- contact arrangements, both for the party leader and at the establishment, are known to all necessary personnel,
- visit leaders are aware of any relevant characteristics about the young people in their care e.g., those who lack self-confidence, those with special needs, medical problems etc.

Competence

A person who possesses sufficient technical knowledge, experience and skills to be able to carry out the specific task and prevent danger or injury arising during the course of the work, or as a result of the work' is deemed to be competent.

The Headmaster is responsible for:

- setting the standards of competence required for each visit or off-site activity,
- identifying and appointing a Visit Leader who is competent and has the experience and expertise and who can respond to unusual circumstances,
- identifying and appointing a competent Assistant Visit Leader for large group day visits, and for all residential visits, to assist in the planning, and who can take over from the Visit Leader, if necessary,
- appointing supporting staff, ensuring there is a competent member of staff for each group on the visit or activity,
- ensuring that the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), Visit and Assistant Visit Leaders, supporting staff and other adults involved in educational visits and off-site activities are assessed/verified and meet the criteria required in their specific tasks.

Evaluation

Evaluation of a visit or off-site activity can involve all staff, students, parents and external providers, depending on its nature. Input from these different viewpoints can only help adjust and improve future visits and off-site activities.

Appraisals of staff who take the role of EVC, Visit and Assistant Visit Leaders must consider their roles and responsibilities.

Monitoring and Training

Although the School recognises the importance of organisation through paperwork, there should not be an over reliance on this aspect, as it can never be as effective as attending and monitoring visits and outdoor activities to identify further training needs of the Visit Leader and supporting staff.

The Head is responsible for:

- monitoring and evaluating key staff on their visits and off-site activities,

- providing access to training opportunities through e.g., IAPS, RGS or Osiris Educational Visits and Off-site Safety Management courses, INSETS at own school,
- providing the required training for the EVC, Visit and Assistant Visit Leaders and supporting staff,
- maintaining records of training and qualifications of school staff,
- identifying priorities for further training,
- identifying school-based resources and budget,
- keeping a record of all training.

4.3 The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The Head may delegate some of the responsibilities of their role to an EVC after consideration of the range and capacity of their role and its line management, monitoring and review. The post requires the active support of the Head and Leadership Team.

The EVC at Maida Vale School is Mr Bobby Hammond, Assistant Head Co-Curriculum. The EVC can be contacted through the School Office.

Training and renewal

The EVC has completed accredited Educational Visits Coordinator training [insert accrediting provider and date completed]. Consistent with the DfE guidance that a school should appoint an educational visits co-ordinator and make sure they have the training they need, and with OEAP National Guidance, the EVC's training is refreshed at least every three years. The next renewal is due in [insert month and year]. Between renewals the EVC maintains currency by attending accredited INSET and national courses and by keeping up to date with OEAP National Guidance and with changes to statutory guidance.

The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that the EVC's training remains current and for recording it in the school's central training record, alongside the training and qualifications of Visit Leaders, Assistant Visit Leaders and other staff who lead or accompany visits. Where the EVC is unavailable for an extended period, the Headmaster will nominate a suitably trained member of the Senior Leadership Team to act in the role, and that nomination will be recorded.

Knowledge and Understanding

The EVC should be specifically competent. Evidence of competence may be through qualification, but more usually will be through the experience of practical leadership over years of off-site education e.g., Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

Such a person should be an experienced Visit Leader with sufficient status within the school to guide the working practice of colleagues leading visits and off-site activities. This cannot be a purely administrative role, but certain functions may be delegated to an administrator.

The EVC has responsibility for the key roles outlined below.

- To act with the authority of the Head to support and encourage all members of staff to undertake regular, positive and fulfilling visits and off-site activities for children and assist them with their responsibilities in line with the School Educational Visits and Off-site Activities Policy.
- To produce an annual plan of educational visits and off-site activities with an agreed rationale for the "when and how they occur" as well as the implications for the curriculum and management of the school diary.

- To work with Visit Leaders to ensure that the aims of the educational visit or off-site activity are achievable and in line with those of the school.
- To be involved in monitoring educational visits and off-site activities to ensure that the guidance and regulations are followed.
- To attend accredited INSET and national courses and keep up to date with OEAPNG.
- To support the Head in their decision-making by:
 - confirming that the Visit Leader and Assistant Visit Leader are competent,
 - confirming that the staffing level and experience is appropriate accompanying staff and volunteers' experience where appropriate,
 - confirming that risk assessments have been carried out, where required,
 - confirming that non-disclosure agreements have been signed, where required,
 - recommending and organising the training of Visit and Assistant Visit Leaders and help organise the induction of staff,
- ensuring that the schools management of behaviour and other relevant policies can be transferred successfully and are consistently used, along with any specific venue or site codes of conduct,
- ensuring that information to parents and the process for obtaining consent are effective.

To support the Head in the management of visits and off-site activities by:

- establishing a clear picture of current practice,
- ensuring that the school complies with the requirements for reporting incidents and accidents (including "near misses"),
- ensuring that the Visit Leader and supporting staff are familiar with the Critical Incident Policy and know how to liaise with Principals, Head and Leadership Team should an emergency occur,
- arranging and supplying suitable record keeping packs for Visit Leaders,
- monitoring visits through post visit evaluation meetings,
- recording successful practice and contacts, and using them to make future visits more successful,
- setting targets for improvement in the evaluation form and intervening, when necessary, where practice is incorrect or unsatisfactory,
- managing the distribution of mobile phones for visits,
- ensuring that Visit Leaders produce all relevant administration with regards to charges for students and liaise with the Accounts team regarding budgeting requirements,
- liaise with the Health and Safety Manager and other relevant staff regarding any Health and Safety issues or requirements.

4.4 The Visit Leader

A Visit Leader should be appointed who has authority over the whole of each visit or off-site activity. If more than one school is involved in a combined visit or activity, an overall Visit Leader should be identified, usually the person with most experience. The person in charge should have at least been an Assistant Leader on a previous visit. Participant safety should not be compromised. If a suitably experienced Visit Leader cannot be found, the visit or activity should not take place.

The Visit Leader needs to understand both their own responsibilities and those of the other people in the process who contribute to the support and success of the visit or activity.

The Visit Leader must have:

- Person specific skills
- Be competent - through experience, having shown clear evidence of their ability to manage such a visit. This could be gained through acting as an Assistant Visit Leader to support a school visit or off-site activity.
- Be accountable - taking overall responsibility for the administration, programme, supervision and behaviour management of the visit.
- Be able to manage other adult members of the group and the children appropriate to the context, length of time away and aims of the visit.
- Have high expectations of what the children and the visit or off-site activity can achieve.
- Can be flexible - to adapt or change the programme to benefit the group.
- Can undertake a comprehensive review of the needs of the visit or off-site activity and to be able to risk assess the locations, groups travelling and competencies.
- Be able to put risk management procedures in place that can be used and monitored. Relevant experience is essential, and it may be necessary to:
- appoint and support an Assistant Visit Leader and agree a management and communication structure,
 - agree specific roles, responsibilities and communications systems,
 - agree incident and emergency procedures,
 - agree what will happen if the practicalities of the day require a major adaptation of the programme (on-going risk assessment, using Plan 'B').
- Pastoral skills
- Be able to suggest ratios according to group sizes.
- Be able to group the children appropriately, based on good experience of their behaviour and attitude, as well as any other relevant information.
- Be able to offer realistic inclusion strategies, whilst not compromising health, safety or the integrity of the visit or activity.
- Be able to induct all members of the group into these processes.
- Be aware of safeguarding issues.
- Be able to establish usable systems e.g., head counts and reporting in.
- Be able to put into action a suitable behaviour management system and/or code of rules. This might mean adapting that of the school to the outdoor context and/or establishment of specific agreements and procedures.
- Technical skills
- be suitably competent to teach/instruct/lead the children in the activities chosen, e.g., using their professional qualification in the outdoors or off-site, or arrange qualified professionals who can.
 - be of sufficient pastoral experience/competence to monitor sessions led by others, such as activity instructors, to decide if the relationship and approach is appropriate for the children. This would include intervening, if necessary.
 - ensure that appropriate first-aid provision is available.
- Management skills
- understand, follow and be able to use the Educational Visits and Off-site Activities Policy to put arrangements and procedures into place.
- keep up to date with new guidance such as that from OEAPNG.
- understand the importance of good planning and communication, from induction of other adults, through supervision and talking to the children.
- set realistic aims and objectives and support them with strategies that work.
- ensure that all appropriate group records and procedures are in place and that all leaders and base contacts have the details they require.

- be able to observe what is going on and base decisions on actual on-site evidence, as well as pre-determined planning. (e.g., due to changes in the weather or physical conditions, illness or injury, group motivation through to behaviour and leadership issues).
- understand the Schools' Critical Incident Policy and implement incident and emergency procedures should they arise.
- evaluate the visit thoroughly using feedback from staff, students, parents and others, venues and centres in a meeting with their EVC or Head of School.
- keep evidence of their ability to manage the other members of the group and the children in the group in similar contexts as part of their CPD.

4.5 The Assistant Visit Leader

For agreed day visits, and for all residential visits, an Assistant Visit Leader should be appointed. This person should have sufficient knowledge and understanding and should be fully involved in the planning of the visit. The person appointed must be capable of taking over from the Visit Leader if necessary. Person-specific, Pastoral, Management and Technical skills required should be the same as for the Visit Leader.

4.6 Supporting Staff

These people will assist the Visit Leader in all their tasks and activities and should have:

- Person specific skills
- the relevant experience and training to carry out the agreed tasks assigned to them,
- be able to contribute to the risk assessment and group management strategies and maintain them with their specific group.
- Pastoral skills
- be competent and confident in managing behaviour in outdoor contexts,
- be able to follow and contribute to the supervision and inclusion strategies used.
- Technical skills
- the necessary professional competence or activity-specific competence to ensure that position learning takes place. This includes monitoring practice and contributing to the visit or off-site activity evaluation and improvement.
- Management skills
- be able to show understanding of the school's arrangements and procedures and can carry them out,
- contribute to planning and setting of high expectations of behaviour and learning,
- the ability to observe, adapt and be flexible in changing circumstances.

4.7 Volunteers, Gap students and Teacher Training students

Volunteers, Gap Students and Teacher Training Students (who are not employed by the school) known collectively as Visit Support Staff (VSS) can play a useful role by accompanying school visits and activities. All VSS for visits and off-site activities must be approved by the Head and EVC. Parents and volunteers, who are not employed members of staff do not accompany residential school trips. VSS may be considered in the calculation of the minimum number of staff required to supervise the group. However, the number of VSS should not exceed the number of fully qualified teachers, unless with the express permission of the EVC.

Safeguarding checks for VSS

The checks required for a VSS depend on whether the role amounts to regulated activity with children. That question is decided by how often and in what circumstances the adult works with students, and not by whether the adult is supervised.

From 1 September 2026 the supervision exemption is removed by the Crime and Policing Act 2026, which amends the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. A VSS who teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises students is therefore in regulated activity where they do so:

- once a week or more; or
- on four or more days in any period of 30 days; or
- overnight, meaning at any time between 2.00am and 6.00am with the opportunity for face-to-face contact with students,

and this is now the case whether they are supervised by a member of school staff.

Where a VSS is in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate including children's barred list information must be obtained and confirmed as satisfactory, and the check recorded on the Single Central Record, before the VSS begins that activity. It is a criminal offence for a barred person to engage in regulated activity with children and for the school knowingly to permit it. This applies to existing volunteers whose roles fall within regulated activity for the first time because of the change.

A genuine one-off visit does not by itself meet the frequency or period condition and is therefore not regulated activity. In that case an enhanced check with barred list information is not required, but the VSS must be approved in advance by the Headmaster and the EVC, must be briefed and inducted by the Visit Leader, must not be left in sole charge of students or in a position of unsupervised contact, and must not stay overnight with the group. The school may obtain an enhanced DBS certificate without barred list information where it is eligible to do so, and identity is checked in every case.

Because any adult accompanying an overnight visit is in regulated activity, and because parents and volunteers who are not employed members of staff do not accompany residential school trips, VSS do not accompany residential or overseas visits.

Where a VSS supports visits or off-site activity on a recurring basis, for example a weekly games afternoon, a regular fixture or a Duke of Edinburgh programme, the EVC must assess at the point of approval whether the cumulative pattern of involvement meets the frequency or period condition and must arrange the appropriate checks before the activity begins. Where there is any doubt, the check is obtained.

Refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Recruitment Policy for further information.

VSS should be used to assist teachers with organisation and supervision during visits and off-site activities and will be given specific roles and responsibilities by the Visit Leader, though the teacher in charge of any group has direct responsibility for that group and all VSS that assist it. VSS and their groups should always remain within sight of a regular employed member of MVS staff, and this should be noted in the trip's risk assessment. Supervision remains a control measure required by this policy; it no longer determines whether the role is regulated activity.

The Visit Leader should ensure that the VSS understand their role and responsibilities towards the students, and they should be made aware of any students who require closer

supervision, such as those with special needs, or behaviour issues. Where the VSS is a parent, they will not normally be assigned to the group containing their own child.

4.8 Alcohol

The consumption of any alcoholic beverages during a residential trip must be considered as part of the risk assessment prior to the final approval of the trip.

The express approval of the Headmaster is required, on a trip-by-trip basis, before any member of staff may consume alcohol at any point during a residential visit. Approval is sought through the Evolve submission, is given in writing and is recorded against that visit. It is not a standing or blanket permission, and approval given for a previous trip does not carry over to another. The EVC advises the Headmaster, having regard to the risk assessment, the number and experience of the staff available, the nature and age of the group, the accommodation and the activities planned. Where approval is not given, the visit operates on a wholly alcohol-free basis for staff.

Where alcohol is permitted, there is a strict no drinking policy whilst staff are "on duty". This timescale incorporates the time from wake up through to lights out and encompasses time where children may have been handed over to a third party for activities. Staff must be aware that they could be called upon at any time within this period to assist with illness, accidents or evacuations and need to be in the correct frame of mind to fulfil their duties responsibly and effectively. Visit leaders need to ensure that at any given time over the course of a residential trip that there is always a minimum of TWO staff completely free of alcohol. In this situation, care should be taken to ensure that staff regarded as 'on duty' understand that they are not permitted to consume alcohol during this time since they have a duty of care over the students attending the visit and may be required to take professional decisions or actions. It is advised that one of these staff should be first aid trained. The duty rota should not unfairly penalise any leaders/staff who choose not to drink.

The duty rota must be prepared in writing before departure, recorded in the trip pack and uploaded to Evolve, and shared with every accompanying member of staff and with the school-based 'home' contact, so that at any point in the visit it is clear who is on duty and which staff are alcohol-free. Any change to the rota during the visit must be agreed by the Visit Leader and recorded.

Where sufficient staff are available on a trip, a visit leader may decide to allow staff to take some 'free time'. During this time these staff may consume alcohol (again within reason) if it has been approved as part of the visit risk assessment but should during this period under no circumstances be given any responsibilities around caring for the children on the trip. For staff not considered to be on duty alcohol consumption must be within limits ensuring that they are completely free of the effects of this by the start of the next working day.

In all cases, and whether or not a member of staff is on duty:

- alcohol is not consumed in the presence of students, in student accommodation areas, or anywhere students may reasonably be expected to be,
- alcohol is never purchased from trip funds, from the residential float or from money collected from parents,
- no member of staff who has consumed alcohol may drive, lead or supervise an activity, undertake a night duty, administer medication or accompany a student to a medical appointment,
- staff remain fit at all times to respond to an emergency, an evacuation or a safeguarding disclosure, and to exercise professional judgement.

This section is to be read with the Staff Code of Conduct, which applies in full on visits and off-site activities, including during periods of free time, and which continues to govern the professional conduct expected of staff acting in loco parentis.

Reporting concerns. Any concern about a colleague's use of alcohol on a visit, including a concern that falls short of an allegation that a student has been harmed, must be reported. It is raised with the Visit Leader immediately and reported to the Headmaster and the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity, and is dealt with under the low-level concerns procedure set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct. Where the concern relates to the Visit Leader, it is reported directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Headmaster. Staff must not wait until the visit has ended to report, and no member of staff will be criticised or disadvantaged for raising a concern in good faith.

5. Procedures for Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

Evolve

Staff will be provided with an Evolve account during the induction process where they will also learn how to add a trip, attach documentation (such as parent letters, risk assessments etc.) and evaluate a trip. Heads of Department and Line Managers will support new staff when organising education visits and the EVC is always available to support staff throughout the process.

All requests for day and residential trips must be made through evolve or the visit will not be approved. Staff wishing to run an education visit must ensure they gain initial approval with a half term's notice, for residential trips, they must gain initial approval with a term's notice.

Process

- Visit Leader creates form with initial information for initial approval.
- Once initial approval is granted, the event will be created in the school calendar by the EVC and the Visit Leader must complete form the rest of the form with detailed information, including the risk assessments.
- Meet with school Office Manager:
 - Please bring the list of students attending the trip and the School Office Manager will set up the event on MySchoolPortal.
 - Set up custom group manager on iSAMS ready for the day of your trip,
 - Parent letter (saved on Evolve) to be saved on MySchoolPortal and parents are given a link via the weekly parent bulletin so they can book and pay.
 - Catering Form - must be emailed to the Catering Team at least two weeks in advance of the trip.
- Book transportation, if required.

Before the final approval is granted, Visit Leaders and other accompanying staff must sign electronically using the 'Staff Declaration Form' on Evolve that they have read all risk assessments.

For significant trips, such as residential trips or where is significant risk (swimming, walking in mountainous terrain, kayaking etc.) the EVC will chair a pre-visit staff meeting with the Visit Leader and accompanying staff.

Staffing Ratios

Visit Leaders must ensure that students are supervised in accordance with the principles of "Effective Supervision" and to take account of:

- the nature of the activity (including its duration),
- the location and environment in which the activity is to take place,
- the age and gender (including developmental age) of the students,
- the ability of the students (behavioural, medical, emotional, educational needs),
- staff competence.
-

This means effective supervision of any given group must reflect the group chemistry. It is important that when planning a repeat or on-going series of activities, the previous plan (no matter how well it worked) is reviewed to ensure it meets current group needs.

Visits and off-site activities have been classified into three basic categories for approval.

When planning, the following should be taken into consideration:

- The ranges below are intended as starting points for Visit Leaders.
- The term "staff" below includes adults who take part in the visit/activity and have a specific role of responsibility (e.g., provider staff, professional guides, centre instructors, sports coaches).
- Actual ratios must be determined by the process of risk assessment.

Ratios during travel

- Ratios specifically for travelling to external sites may only be applied where staff or appropriate responsible adults will meet the group on arrival and ensure ratio requirements for the activities are met.
- As part of the planning process the age of the students, behaviour and size of the vehicle should be considered and recorded in the risk assessment.
- When a larger coach or double-decker vehicle is used, the number of staff must reflect this.
- Supervision levels need to be considered according to the students involved, the journey, and any breaks in the journey. Staff should be positioned on the coach so that they can observe all students.
- If ratios are lower than the recommended ratios below, the reasoning for this should be made clear in the risk assessment.

Ratio Ranges

The following staff-to-student ratios are provided as general guidance and must always be considered in consultation with the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) before finalising staffing arrangements. Staffing decisions should consider a range of factors specific to the trip, including the age and experience of the students, the nature and location of the activity, the gender mix of the group, any medical or behavioural needs, and the overall risk assessment. Final ratios must reflect a careful balance between ensuring student safety and providing appropriate supervision throughout the visit.

Day Trips - 1:15

Day Trips using TfL services - 1:12

Residential and Overseas Trips 1:10

Checklist for Visit Leaders

Day Visits

In advance of any day visit, the Visit Leader must ensure they have the following:

- Printed pack including paper copies of the risk assessments, student registers (including emergency contact information and an overview of dietary and medical information).
- School Mobile phone.
- Named First Aider with First Aid Kit.
- Cover work has been set and left with relevant staff member.

Visit Leaders must also ensure they inform reception before leaving the school site and must carry out a safety briefing with all students and accompanying staff.

Residential Visits

In advance of any residential visit, the Visit Leader must ensure they have the following:

- Printed and laminated emergency contacts and emergency plan.
- Paper copies of the risk assessments, student registers and an overview of dietary and medical information.
- School Mobile phone.
- Named First Aider with First Aid Kit.
- Cover work has been set and left with relevant staff member.

For residential and overseas visits, an information meeting will be arranged with all parents and students attending the trip, the EVC will usually always attend this evening.

The EVC and other members of the SLT will chair a safety briefing before departure for all overseas and residential trips. This briefing will cover the following questions:

- Where am I going?
- What is the aim of the visit?
- How does the visit fit into my education?
- What equipment do I need to bring along?
- What group am I in?
- Who is the Visit Leader?
- Do I understand the school's Behaviour Policy in relation to educational visits?
- What has been agreed as a "Code of Conduct" for:
 - Behaviour,
 - dress/clothing,
 - equipment,
 - money,
 - food and/or sweets,
 - personal items (mobile phone, computer, smart watches, handheld games etc).
- Incident and emergency action:
 - What do I do if I am separated from my group?
 - What do I do if I am worried about my safety?
 - Are there any special agreements I need to know about?
 - Does the Visit Leader have any medicines I might need for the visit/activity?

For residential visits, additional topics will be covered:

- What is the name and address of our centre/accommodation?

- What is the telephone number?
- Where is the staff accommodation / base in case I need to contact them?
- What will I be doing in my free time?
- What are the nighttime procedures?
- When will I be given/informed of the Provider/Centre code of conduct for the trip including:
 - house/accommodation rules,
 - movement around the building,
 - access to rooms,
 - contacting staff,
 - meal and meeting times,
 - boundaries and code of conduct,
 - nighttime procedures,
 - emergency procedures (fire, incident, meeting points)?

A Student Checklist can be used as a way of giving information to the students and involving them in the process of health and safety on the visit or off-site activity.

Planning a regular timetabled visit or off-site activity

These are regular, timetabled visits and off-site activities, approved by the Head as part of the normal school timetable, which have generic risk assessments written by the staff in charge of the visit or activity, updated as necessary during the academic year.

Examples include visits to sports centres, playing fields.

External Providers, Licensing and Provider Assurance

Where any part of a visit or off-site activity is delivered by an external provider, activity centre, tour operator, guide or instructor, the Visit Leader must carry out and record provider checks before final approval is sought, and must have a written agreement with the provider setting out what each party is responsible for during the activity.

Adventure Activities Licensing

Under the Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004, a provider who offers certain adventurous activities to under-18s in the course of a business must hold a licence. The licensable activities fall into four categories: caving, climbing, trekking and watersports. They include, for example, abseiling and rock climbing, gorge walking and ghyll scrambling, caving and mine exploration, hill and mountain walking above defined thresholds, canoeing and kayaking, rafting, sailing and windsurfing.

Where a visit includes a licensable activity delivered by an external provider, the Visit Leader must:

- confirm that the provider holds a current licence by checking the register of licence holders maintained by the Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS) on behalf of the licensing authority, rather than relying on the provider's own assertion,
- check that the licence covers the specific activities and locations to be used and has not expired,
- record the licence number and expiry date on Evolve and retain a copy with the visit documentation.

A licence confirms that the provider has been inspected against national standards for the specified activities. It is not a general quality mark, it says nothing about activities outside its scope, and it does not displace the School's own duty to satisfy itself that the provider and the activity are suitable for the group. Where the School leads adventurous activities for its own students using its own staff, a licence is not required, but the member of staff leading must hold the relevant national governing body award or a technical competence expressly approved by the EVC, and this must be recorded on Evolve.

Provider assurance for activities that are not licensable

For activity that does not require a licence, the Visit Leader must obtain evidence of the provider's competence and safety management. The preferred evidence is:

- the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge, the national accreditation endorsed by the DfE, which covers both the quality of the learning experience and the provider's safety management arrangements, or
- for visits, fieldwork, expeditions and adventurous activities outside the United Kingdom, conformity with BS 8848, the British Standard specification for such ventures, or an equivalent independent accreditation such as Adventuremark.

Where a provider holds the LOtC Quality Badge or is accredited to BS 8848, the school need not repeat the checks covered by that accreditation, but the Visit Leader must confirm that the accreditation is current and covers the activities booked and must still complete the visit-specific risk assessment.

Where a provider holds no such accreditation, the Visit Leader must complete a full provider check before approval is sought, covering:

- the provider's risk assessments and safety management arrangements,
- the qualifications, competence and vetting of the instructors and other staff who will work with our students,
- the provider's safeguarding policy and the name and contact details of the provider's designated safeguarding contact,
- the provider's employer's liability and public liability insurance and the limits of indemnity,
- accommodation arrangements, including fire safety, room allocation, security and who has access to student areas,
- emergency and incident procedures, including how and when the school will be notified,
- references from other schools that have used the provider,
- for tour operators, the financial protection applying to money paid, for example ATOL or ABTA membership and the protection required by the Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018.

Accreditation, a licence and a written agreement do not transfer responsibility for our students to the provider. Students remain the responsibility of School staff throughout, and the Visit Leader retains the duty to monitor sessions led by others and to intervene where necessary.

Overseas Visits

In addition to the requirements for residential visits, the following apply to any visit outside the United Kingdom.

Travel advice

The Visit Leader must consult the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice for the destination, and for any country of transit, at four points: when the visit is first proposed, before any deposit or other financial commitment is made, before final approval is granted, and again immediately before departure. The advice consulted must be recorded on Evolve at each stage, and any change must be reported at once to the EVC and the Headmaster.

A visit will not proceed to, and will be withdrawn from, any area for which the FCDO advises against all travel or against all but essential travel. School travel is not essential travel. Insurance is unlikely to respond where a group travels against FCDO advice. The Visit Leader should also have regard to FCDO guidance on safer adventure travel and volunteering overseas and must subscribe to FCDO email alerts for the destination so that changes are notified during the visit as well as before it.

Entry requirements and documentation

The Visit Leader must check, and communicate to parents in good time, the requirements for passports (including validity periods and blank pages), visas, any electronic travel authorisation and any additional documentation required for students who are not British citizens or who hold a passport of a different nationality from their parents. Some countries require a letter of consent from a person with parental responsibility for a child travelling without a parent; where this applies the Visit Leader must obtain the documents in advance. Copies of all passports and travel documents are held securely by the Visit Leader and by the school-based 'home' contact.

Health Cover and Insurance

The Visit Leader must:

- check the health advice for the destination, including any recommended or required vaccinations, far enough in advance for parents to make arrangements through their GP or a travel clinic, and check the destination's rules on carrying prescribed medication,
- for travel to the EU and Switzerland, ensure that every student and member of staff holds a valid UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), and that a copy of each card is carried in the trip pack,
- make clear to parents that a GHIC gives access to state-provided healthcare on the same terms as a resident of the country visited, and that it is not a substitute for travel insurance: it does not cover private treatment, mountain or sea rescue, repatriation, or the cost of return travel if a student cannot travel as planned,
- confirm before final approval that the School's travel insurance is in place for the visit and covers medical and repatriation expenses, cancellation and curtailment, personal effects, and every adventurous or winter sports activity on the itinerary,
- declare to the insurer any pre-existing medical condition disclosed by a student or member of staff, and obtain written confirmation that cover is not affected,
- carry in the trip pack, in hard copy, the policy number, the limits of cover and the insurer's 24-hour emergency assistance telephone number, and ensure that the Assistant Visit Leader and the school-based 'home' contact hold the same details.

Communications and emergencies

The emergency plan for an overseas visit must record the address and telephone number of the nearest British embassy, high commission or consulate; the local emergency numbers (112 operates throughout the EU); the location of the nearest hospital to the accommodation

and to each activity site; and the arrangements for contacting the school-based 'home' contact across time zones.

Insurance

The school's trips and visits are insured by Marsh Limited. This insurance covers personal injury, public liability, medical and related expenses, personal effects, hired equipment, special activities and cancellations. Specific insurance is also taken out by departments who run residential trips to cover the above.

The Visit Leader must confirm the scope of cover for the particular visit before final approval is sought and must not assume that an activity is covered. Adventurous activities, winter sports, high-value equipment, hired equipment and travel outside the United Kingdom must each be checked against the policy, and any pre-existing medical condition declared to the insurer. The additional requirements for overseas visits, including GHIC and emergency assistance arrangements, are set out above.

Evaluation

Following all visits, Visit Leaders should complete the Evaluation Form on Evolve, staff are reminded by email three days following any visit. This enables the EVC and Visit Leaders to review how the whole process worked.

The evaluation should include the actual travel and activities involved, the process of planning and liaising with the EVC and Head for approval and how new venues or providers were received by staff and students.

As part of this process, the risk assessment and emergency plans should be reviewed to ensure that they were appropriate, and all risks were suitably assessed.

Visiting Speakers

The Visiting Speaker Form (see Appendix 1) must be completed and passed to the EVC as far as possible in advance of the event. If the speaker has not addressed students at MVS before, submit the first page and obtain approval before carrying out the steps overleaf and finalising arrangements with the speaker.

Maida Vale School is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for students, staff and visitors and promoting a climate where everyone will feel confident about sharing any concerns they may have about their own safety or that of others. We value the input of visitors and external agencies to enrich the experiences of our students. We ask all visiting speakers to familiarise themselves with these guidelines in terms of safeguarding as required by the Department for Education.

Prevent duty and due diligence

The school has a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, and must have regard to the Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales. Visiting speakers, and external organisations providing assemblies, workshops, performances or activities either in School or as part of an off-site visit, fall within the scope of that duty.

Before a speaker or external organisation is approved, the EVC must ensure that proportionate due diligence has been carried out and recorded on the Visiting Speaker Form, including:

- an open-source search on the speaker and on any organisation, group, charity or campaign they represent, and on material they have published or endorsed,
- consideration of the aims, funding and affiliations of that organisation,
- sight in advance of the presentation, materials, film or resources to be used, including anything to be given to students or shared with them electronically,
- consideration of whether the content is appropriate to the age, maturity and needs of the students, and whether contested political issues are presented in a balanced way,
- consideration of whether the speaker or the content could reasonably be regarded as promoting an extremist ideology, undermining the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, or drawing students towards terrorism or radicalisation.

Approval is given by the Headmaster on the recommendation of the EVC, and in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead where any question arises. A member of staff must be present throughout the event and must be prepared to intervene, to challenge, or to stop the event, if the content departs from what was agreed, is inappropriate, or gives rise to concern. Any concern arising before, during or after an event must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will consider whether a Prevent referral or a referral to the Channel panel is appropriate and whether the police should be informed. A record of the event, of the due diligence carried out and of any concern raised is retained by the EVC.

The same considerations apply to speakers, guides, exhibitions, venues and providers encountered during an off-site visit. Where a visit includes a talk or session delivered by a third party, the Visit Leader must carry out the same due diligence and record it on Evolve. If you have a concern that a student is being harmed or is at risk of harm, or if you receive a disclosure (intentionally or unintentionally), please ask the Heads PA, or any member of the MVS staff, to assist you in contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Nicola Grant-Stevenson, as quickly as possible so that you can report this to her. Please do not attempt to investigate the concern.

Please also note the following:

- Visitors should sign in at the School Office and should bring formal photograph identification (such as a driving licence, bus pass, passport or employer's ID badge)
- Visitors must wear the visitor's badge issued to them, always, until they sign out on departure.
- Visitors must follow any specific health, safety and hygiene measures the school has put in place.
- Any messages communicated to students should not undermine our values of the rule of law, democracy, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Activities should be appropriate to the age and needs of the students.
- Visitors must be always accompanied by a member of staff, unless otherwise agreed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Parental Consent

Consent for a visit or off-site activity is given by a person with parental responsibility for the student. Two levels of consent operate.

Blanket consent under the parent contract

On accepting a place at Maida Vale School, parents consent under the parent contract to their child taking part in the routine, local and regularly timetabled off-site activities that form an ordinary part of school life. This covers:

- regular timetabled visits and activities approved by the Headmaster as part of the normal school timetable, such as games and physical education at the school's usual playing fields and sports centres,
- local visits on foot or by public transport, taking place within the normal school day, such as visits to galleries, museums, libraries, places of worship and local fieldwork sites,
- attendance at fixtures, rehearsals, competitions and similar events organised by the school within the normal school day.

Parents are informed of these activities through the weekly parent bulletin, the school calendar and, where appropriate, a letter or MySchoolPortal notification, and may withdraw their child from a particular activity by contacting the school. Blanket consent does not reduce any other requirement of this policy: a risk assessment, current medical and emergency contact information, and appropriate staffing and supervision are required in every case.

Specific written consent

Separate, specific and informed written consent must be obtained before a student takes part in:

- any residential visit,
- any visit outside the United Kingdom,
- any adventurous activity, including those licensable under the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations, and activities such as climbing, caving, watersports, kayaking, sailing, skiing, open-water swimming and mountain or hill walking,
- any activity extending significantly beyond the normal school day, or involving an early departure or a late return,
- any visit carrying a higher level of assessed risk, using an unfamiliar provider or venue, or involving a period of remote supervision in which students are in small groups without an adult present,
- any activity where parents would reasonably expect to be asked.

The information given to parents before consent is sought must be sufficient for them to make an informed decision. It must cover the aims of the visit, the itinerary and accommodation, the activities and their principal risks and control measures, travel arrangements, the staffing of the visit, the cost and what it includes, the code of conduct and the consequences of breaching it, the arrangements for medication and medical treatment, and how the group may be contacted.

The consent obtained must include: consent to the activities described; disclosure of medical conditions, allergies, dietary requirements and current medication, and of any recent injury or illness; consent to the administration of medication and to emergency medical, dental or surgical treatment where a parent cannot be contacted in time; consent to travel by the means described; acknowledgement of the code of conduct, including the arrangements under which a student may be sent home early at the parents' expense; and, for visits abroad, passport, GHIC and insurance information.

Consent must be recorded and available to the Visit Leader before departure. A student for whom the required consent has not been obtained may not travel.

Where parents are separated

Consent may be given by any person with parental responsibility. Where parents are separated, the School will normally act on the consent of the parent who completes and returns the form, unless it has been notified of a court order or written agreement restricting that parent's ability to consent, or unless it is aware of a disagreement between the parents about the activity.

Where the School is aware of such a disagreement, of a court order affecting the child, or of any restriction on contact or on travel, the Visit Leader must consult the EVC and the Designated Safeguarding Lead before the student's place is confirmed, and specific written consent must be sought from each person with parental responsibility. This applies with particular force to visits outside the United Kingdom, where taking a child out of the jurisdiction may require the consent of every person with parental responsibility or the permission of the court. Any concern that a visit might be used to remove a child unlawfully must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

The school will not act as arbiter between parents. Where consent cannot be resolved, the student will not travel until the position is clear. The provision of information to each parent, and the handling of contact details, follow the school's arrangements for separated parents and parental responsibility set out in the parent contract and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and the Data Protection Policy.

Digital Images and Consent

In most visits and activities, the school may wish to use photographs and moving images to demonstrate the successes of the visit to record and evaluate what went on for others within the school community to see.

Photography/filming is permitted in almost all cases, so long as it is not for public broadcast or being undertaken by someone not connected with the school. Any images taken will follow the procedure for usage as outlined in the ICT (Acceptable Use) Policy. The Visit Leader is responsible for ensuring that all images are deleted from school and personal phones.

During school visits, the school will strive as far as is reasonable to comply with parental requests for specific images. A professional judgement should be made by the Visit Leader on images published to ensure that people in the images are appropriately dressed, and the action shown is clearly demonstrating good behaviour.

Mobile Phones and Personal Devices

Students' use of mobile phones, smart watches and other personal devices on visits and off-site activities is governed by the Student Phone Policy, which applies off site as it does in school and which deals specifically with trips. The Visit Leader must set out in the parent letter and in the pre-visit briefing whether devices may be brought, when and where they may be used, and how and where they will be stored, including the arrangements overnight on residential visits. Any variation from the Student Phone Policy for a particular visit must be approved by the EVC, recorded on Evolve, and communicated to parents and students before departure.

The Visit Leader must also make clear:

- that the school accepts no responsibility for loss of or damage to personal devices,

- the arrangements for students to contact home and for parents to contact the group, which are normally through the school mobile phone held by the Visit Leader rather than through students' own devices,
- the expectations for taking and sharing photographs and video, which must comply with the Student Phone Policy, the ICT (Acceptable Use) Policy and the code of conduct for the visit, and the absolute prohibition on the use of any device in bedrooms, bathrooms, changing areas or any other private space,
- that devices must not be used in any way that undermines the safety, supervision or cohesion of the group.

Staff use of mobile phones and cameras on visits is governed by the Staff Code of Conduct and the ICT (Acceptable Use) Policy. Staff communicate with students only through School devices and School systems, and never through personal accounts.

Any concern arising from a student's use of a device on a visit, including online safety concerns, the sharing of nude or semi-nude images (including images created or altered using artificial intelligence), bullying, or contact from an unknown adult, is a safeguarding concern and must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy under the arrangements set out below.

Student communication

The following questions represent the type of information the Visit Leader should provide students who will be taking part in the visit/activity. The Visit Leader must also ensure that the students clearly understand what they must do in any situation. This list may need to be adapted to suit the age and ability of the group, and its aims and purposes.

Safeguarding

The Visit Leader must nominate a safeguarding lead for each trip. Where the safeguarding lead is not a member of the school pastoral team, the Visit Leader must appoint a pastoral lead who is familiar with the students taking part in the visit.

It is important that all concerned feel confident that their professional judgements are correct, and by putting simple and straightforward principles into practice, they will be taking appropriate action. Members of staff acting in loco parentis on school trips are strongly advised only to go into students' bedrooms in pairs in the safeguarding interests of both child and adult.

The Visit Leader will be responsible for coordinating any safeguarding issues on the visit.

They will have full knowledge of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and will refer to it and follow its procedures where required. The trip safeguarding lead nominated under this section is a point of co-ordination during the visit; they do not replace the Designated Safeguarding Lead and do not decide what action is taken on a concern.

Reporting route

Any concern that a student is being harmed or is at risk of harm, any disclosure made by a student, and any allegation or low-level concern about a member of staff, a volunteer, a provider's employee or any other adult, must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or to a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

The DSL at Maida Vale School is Toby Fisher; the DDSLs are named in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Concerns must be reported at the earliest opportunity and on the same day. They must never be held over until the group returns to school and must not be reported only to the Visit Leader. The Visit Leader must not attempt to investigate a concern. The DSL or DDSL will implement the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including referral to children's social care, the police or other agencies where necessary.

The Headmaster is not the reporting route for safeguarding concerns and does not determine what action is taken on them; that responsibility rests with the DSL. The Headmaster will be informed of a serious incident on a visit under the Critical Incident Management Policy and will be informed of any allegation against a member of staff in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Where a concern or allegation relates to the Headmaster, it is reported to the Managing Director, Mr Theo Brehony and is not raised with the Headmaster.

Availability of the DSL during visits

Consistent with the commitment given in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, a DSL or DDSL is contactable at all times during any visit or off-site activity. This includes evenings, nights and weekends throughout a residential visit, visits overseas (making allowance for time differences), and any activity taking place outside term time.

Before departure the Visit Leader must ensure that:

- the trip pack contains current mobile telephone numbers for the DSL and each DDSL, together with the out-of-hours contact arrangements,
- accompanying members of staff, and any Visit Support Staff, knows who to contact, how, and that they may contact the DSL directly,
- the school-based 'home' contact for the visit holds the same information,
- for visits overseas, the numbers are recorded in international dialing format and at least one leader carries a device with roaming or local connectivity, with a charged power bank.

Refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further details.

Medical Conditions, Allergies and Medication

Arrangements for students with medical conditions and allergies are set out in the Medical Conditions Policy and in the Allergy Policy, section 8, which deals specifically with trips and visits. Both apply in full to visits and off-site activities and must be followed alongside this policy.

A student must not be excluded from a visit, or have their participation limited, because of a medical condition, allergy or disability, except where a risk assessment shows that to be necessary and proportionate. Reasonable adjustments must be considered under the Equality Act 2010 at the planning stage, when the itinerary, provider and accommodation can still be influenced, and not at the point of departure.

At the planning stage the Visit Leader must:

- obtain from iSAMS and from the School Nurse an up-to-date record of the medical conditions, allergies, dietary requirements and medication of every student attending, and check it against the information given by parents on the consent form,
- obtain a copy of the individual healthcare plan, allergy action plan or asthma plan for each student who has one, and carry it in the trip pack,

- record in the risk assessment the specific arrangements for each student with a significant medical need, including the arrangements at night on a residential visit,
- ensure that at least one member of staff on the visit is a trained first aider, that accompanying staff have been trained in the recognition of anaphylaxis and the use of adrenaline auto-injectors and inhalers, and that every member of staff knows which students are affected and what to do,
- notify every provider, activity centre, accommodation and catering supplier in writing, well in advance, of all allergies and dietary requirements, obtain written confirmation of the arrangements, and check them again on arrival,
- plan for eating away from the accommodation, including restaurants, packed lunches, snacks on journeys, food bought by students and food brought by other students, and brief students accordingly,
- identify the nearest medical facilities to the accommodation and to each activity site and record them in the emergency plan.

Medication

- Prescribed medication is carried in its original labelled packaging, with written parental consent for its administration, and a record is kept of every dose administered and of any dose refused or missed.
- Students competent to carry and use their own medication, in particular inhalers and adrenaline auto-injectors, must do so and must have always it with them. Staff must check this at the start of each day and before each activity.
- At least two in-date adrenaline auto-injectors must be available for each student prescribed one, and the school's spare adrenaline auto-injector and spare inhaler must be taken on the visit.
- Controlled drugs, and medication requiring refrigeration, require specific arrangements agreed in advance with the School Nurse.
- For visits abroad, the Visit Leader must check that the medication may lawfully be taken into and used in the destination country, and that quantities, packaging and supporting documentation meet the requirements of the airline and of the destination.

Where a student's medical needs change between the giving of consent and departure, parents must inform the school, and the Visit Leader must review the risk assessment before travel.

Refer to the Allergy Policy, in particular section 8, and to the Medical Conditions Policy for further detail.

First Aid

The school's Health and Safety Policy ensures that the school, as far as possible, is an accident-free environment. The same standards apply off-site, at all visits and activities.

The school must provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel at its locations to enable employees, students and visitors to be given first aid. The provision of a first aider does not prevent accidents but is an important part of the control measures that follow risk assessment.

First aid kits must be topped up with the requirements for the activity, group or environment in which it may have to be used. This should be part of the detailed planning process.

Recording and Reporting Accidents and Incidents

All accidents and incidents to children, staff and volunteers must be recorded, no matter how minor. Any serious injuries must not only be recorded but also reported to the person

nominated as RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) for UK based incidents.

Any accident that occurs requiring first aid, doctor, hospital or other medical attention must be entered into the Activity Centre's (or site's) accident record file. The Visit Leader must ensure they know where the file is located and ensure entries are made, where applicable. The Visit Leader must also record it in their records on behalf of the school.

If it is believed an accident could involve insurance liability, the school insurance must be contacted on the day of the occurrence. The Visit Leader must contact the Health and Safety Manager with full details of the incident, so that the Health and Safety Executive and where relevant the school's insurance brokers can be informed without delay. The Visit Leader must discuss this with the Centre Manager.

Critical Incidents

A critical incident can be defined as any event that is disruptive beyond our typical coping abilities and which threatens the safety or health of a member or members of the group and the planned visit. Examples are:

- a serious accident or fatality within the group,
- a traffic accident,
- sudden illness / sickness,
- a lost student,
- assaults,
- terrorism,
- natural disasters.

In the event of a critical incident the Visit Leader and accompanying staff must carry out the following in this order:

1. Assess the situation.
2. Protect the group from further injury or danger.
3. Render first aid or other service as appropriate.
4. Call Emergency Services (999 or 112) (Europe 112) as appropriate stating:
 - a. the nature of the emergency,
 - b. your name, address and telephone number,
 - c. the location and nature of the incident,
 - d. the names of the individuals involved,
 - e. the condition of those involved and where they are presently located.
5. It is probable that leaders, supervising staff and children will be in a state of shock, therefore:
 - a. move the remainder of the group to some secure accommodation and place under the care of staff able to protect them from further harm,
 - b. calm and comfort children, and staff, and arrange for their evacuation,
 - c. if necessary, request the police to assist.
6. Contact the Headmaster or designated contact at school as soon as possible. Provide full details of the incident. They will advise and assist the Visit Leader in taking the appropriate course of action.

7. Do not allow group members to telephone home until contact has been made with the Headmaster.
8. Agree with the Head or designated contact at school who will contact affected parents and call as soon as the facts are established.
9. Retain all equipment involved in an unaltered condition.
10. Do not allow anyone to see any group member without an independent witness being present.
11. No-one, unless they are in a relevant official capacity, has the right to see anyone who does not wish to see them.
12. Do not make any statements to the press/media or allow anyone else to make statements other than expressions of sympathy.
13. Refer all press/media to the Headmaster.

Transport

Public transport

Common sense operating procedures should be considered and managed by everyone:

- Pre-collect fares for payment unless this is part of the educational objective.
- Appropriate supervision should meet the ratios given in that section. Staff should be well spaced out along the bus or train and both up and down stairs where applicable.
- A code of behaviour must be agreed prior to travelling and be realistic in use, including noise levels, movement, respect for other passengers, eating and drinking.
- Regular head counts are needed, in particular just before and after getting on and off.
- Any equipment and personal baggage taken should be stored carefully and out of the way of others.
- Supervise getting off buses, tubes and trains particularly carefully and ensure that the bus has stopped moving.
- Staff must adopt the procedure that one teacher goes into the transport first, and another enters last, with the other teachers interspersed to avoid students being left behind.
- Meeting/collection points must be able to cope safely with the age, experience and number concerned and not present a hazard, such as being close to the road edge.

Bus/ Coach travel

Buses and coaches should only be booked using ReadyBus. The Visit Leader must consider the following:

- all coaches are required to be fitted with seat belts when carrying children. The use of seatbelts is to be maintained by the whole group including Leaders and staff.
- that seat belts and lap restraints are in use, particularly at the start of any journey and following any stops.
- supervising staff should be spread throughout the coach and use their seatbelts. Where seat belts are fitted, the number of passengers (of any age) cannot exceed the number of seats, or usable seatbelts (i.e., if they are broken, the seat is unusable).

It is also sensible to:

- note the position of the emergency doors and exits and ask for them to be checked,
- make sure everyone knows what to do in an emergency,

- sit supervising staff close to the emergency exits, by the driver (to avoid distractions) and at other seats where necessary,
- agree times for food and drink on the journey and have a system for collecting litter,
- plan comfort breaks,
- select good meeting/collection points for getting on and off. Be aware of the hazards of coach parks and service stations. Try to park next to a pedestrian area or easily supervised location,
- when taking comfort breaks, request the driver to stop as close as possible to the service station amenities to avoid the group having to cross large open car parking spaces,
- make sure students know the meeting point, and always have a member of staff on duty there,
- ensure students move around service areas and other public spaces in pairs or small groups, know the meeting point and the time to return to it, and are counted back on to the coach,
- have regular head counts.

For long coach journeys and travelling abroad by coach it is essential to check that the company concerned has appropriate experience and coaches for these ventures. Where the tour operator organises the coach travel, similar reassurances should be made.

The Visit Leader must consider the following:

- Modern long-distance coaches are used, with seatbelts and full facilities: toilets, videos, etc.
- Drivers are appropriately recruited e.g., checks on criminal records, employment history.
- Driver names are clear and the regulations about driving hours and similar are known.
- The number of seats is suitable, not just for numbers but for storage of luggage and equipment especially for ski holidays and Music tours.
- Similar journeys with considerable luggage will require extra storage, above and beyond the normal, e.g., extra empty seats.
- Do not accept comments such as 'only mid-sized cases can be brought on a ski trip'.
- Drivers need to be adequately trained for snow conditions and coaches appropriately equipped.
- Driver competency and general attitude should be monitored. Whilst there are many good drivers, leaders should make their own judgements and intervene where necessary. The duty of care to the group is paramount. Any concerns should be raised early.
- Be aware if specialist or agreed coaches are replaced at short notice. The comfort and safety of the group on long journeys is essential.

Private cars must not be used to transport students. They are not covered under the school's insurance.

Air travel

Taking a group through an airport, customs and then flying takes careful planning and preparation. Considerations are as follows:

- Limits on luggage on and inside the plane need to be planned.
- Constraints on what can be carried means that, for children, items such as batteries, scissors and aerosols may be banned. They need to be warned.

- Special meals or diets need to be ordered in advance.
- In-flight activity can be made available and is recommended.
- A member of cabin crew assigned to look after a group or a particular child's needs.
- Wheelchair services need to be booked well in advance.
- Movement, noise levels, eating, etc, all need to be part of an agreed code of conduct.
- Movement around airports can be problematic. The direct supervision strategies should be consulted, and agreements made for meeting places, head counts and reporting numbers to the Visit Leader.

Rail travel

The Visit Leader must consider the following:

- Entry to and exit from the stations need to be planned to keep the group together, when moving through busy locations.
- Platform waiting time should be kept to a minimum and this may require a suitable waiting area nearby being established.
- Reserved seats and carriages are important for supervision and keeping the group together.
- A code of conduct and good discipline are essential, given the potential dangers.
- Keep the group away from platform edges (use the lines provided).
- Always wait until the train stops and then provide a signal to move forward or disembark.
- Do not allow the group to touch carriage doors when the train is moving.
- Take extra care where there is a gap between carriage and platform (some children may need assistance).
- Luggage should be stored carefully, and a quick check made by the Visit Leader.
- Make the group aware of simple hazards or issues: hot drinks, litter, toilet use.
- Agree a code of conduct to cover movements, noise levels, respect for other passengers, eating and drinking, as well as general behaviour.

The Underground

Managing the overall situation is difficult and should not be entered into without thorough planning and briefing. This mode of transport must not be contemplated for significantly large groups. Points for consideration:

- A code of conduct (as above) and operating procedures need to be carefully agreed, for those who are not acquainted with the system. It should be described and illustrated. The stations are noisy and crowded, and not like other railway stations.
- The children must know what to do if something goes wrong, e.g., children boarding the wrong train.
- Tickets should be purchased in advance.
- Avoid rush hours.
- Have very small groups, each with a designated leader.
- Try to have two groups together, with a leader at the front and the back, in case the doors close unexpectedly, so there are no students left unattended on the platform.
- Take care using escalators or lifts - supervision must be direct and effective.
- Move from one designated waiting point to the next designated waiting point, i.e., more secure locations.
- Practise good platform control and operating procedures (see rail travel above).
- Brief the children and young people on the route and what is likely to happen.

Ferries, Boats and Ships

The generic guidance below needs to be applied to the group concerned, in accordance with their age and experience, and the leader's expectation of their behaviour:

- A code of conduct and operating procedures must be agreed, and everyone should understand their roles and responsibilities so that everyone should know what to do and where to go in an emergency.
- Poor behaviour must be addressed immediately.
- Supervision strategies should start with small groups under the care of a specific leader, these leaders in turn reporting their head counts and other information through the next tier of supervision to the Visit Leader.
- A group base should be established. The more exclusive to the group that this can be made, the better.
- Movement from this base should only be by agreement with the Visit Leader concerned.
- Out-of-bounds areas should be established, and each group walked through the boundaries set and locations to be used.
- The Visit Leader or their representative must always be in a known place, normally the group base.
- The vessel's communications system for messages should be known and the group should introduce themselves on arrival to key personnel (having pre-booked and discussed their needs).
- Everyone should know what to do and where to go in an emergency.
- Access to alcohol is possible and needs to be assertively forbidden.
- The key systems to be known:
 - emergency siren system,
 - muster station procedures,
 - that a member of the crew will take charge.

Financial Considerations for Visits (that are chargeable)

It is imperative to establish that the visit or venture represents value for money:

- Are costs reasonable?
- Is it within the scope of most families?
- Will the parents be willing to pay?

The charges made to parents for visits and activities, should not exceed the costs incurred by the schools.

The cost areas to be considered may include:

- the charges of any commercial provider,
- the transport components,
 - rail, ferry, flights,
 - bus, minibus, coach,
- accommodation, board and lodging,
- staffing and instruction. This includes costs at your location, if required to make the event happen.
- the costs for the Visit Leader and accompanying staff to supervise the group,
- equipment hires,
- insurance (basic and top-up),
- entry charges to facilities,
- pocket money can also be collected,
- pre-visit costs,

- any free places offered by centres should be considered.

For residential visits a float should cover:

- snacks, prizes and resources bought on the visit and must be calculated into the total budget. Receipts are required.
- staff teas and coffees and meals during the visit and must be calculated into the total budget. Receipts are not required, but confirmation of amount handed over to each staff member should be given to the Finance team on return.
- emergency money, proportionate to the number of children and adults on the visit. For emergencies only, handed back at the end of the visit, with receipts for the money spent.

6. Health and Safety and Welfare of Students

Staff, students and parents involved must be aware of the importance of the health and safety and welfare of the children on the visit. As such, it is a responsibility shared by the whole group.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999 set out responsibilities. Legislation is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive. The key elements of the legislation are:

The Board of Directors must ensure:

- the health, safety and welfare of all their employees,
- the health and safety of children, both within the school locations and when undertaking visits and activities,
- the health and safety of visitors to the school locations. The term 'visitors' means anyone entering the school locations, for whatever reason.

Employees should:

- take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety,
- co-operate with their employers,
- carry out visits and activities in accordance with advice, guidance, training and regulations,
- inform their employers of any significant issues or serious risks.

7. Risk Assessment and Management

Risk assessment and risk management must be carried out for all visits and off-site activities to identify, assess and manage risks (requiring them to be reduced to an acceptable level), however risk assessments may not necessarily eliminate them altogether. Written risk assessments are not required for every activity, however the DfE guidance 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools (2022)' states that any significant findings should be recorded in writing and risk assessments suitable and sufficient.

When assessing risk, the Visit Leader should consider the following:

- Good quality leadership is probably the biggest single factor in ensuring safe visits.
- Involving students in discussion.

- Seeking out local knowledge. It is easy to think that conducting an activity once a year for seven years is seven years' experience. It's not - it's only seven days.
- Ask for advice from the EVC or other experienced members of staff if you are unsure.

7.1 Generic risk assessment

For a straightforward visit or activity in familiar territory, a generic written risk assessment is likely to apply. It has previously been prepared by the school, and this might be accompanied by an additional risk assessment provided by the external educational provider/centre. Examples include regularly used sports centres, swimming pools and games fields and take into consideration risks such as water or weather hazards, illness, injuries, fire, other hazards including traffic, and threat of abuse.

7.2 Visit / Activity specific risk assessment

The Visit Leader must consider whether there are any additional significant risks that are not covered by the school's generic risk assessment, or an accompanying risk assessment provided by the external educational provider/centre. If there are, then these are written up in a specific risk assessment.

A preliminary visit should be made by any Visit Leader to a location or activity that is not familiar to assess the risks. If a preliminary visit is not feasible, the Visit Leader will need to consider how best to complete the risk assessment. Once written, the risk assessment can be re-used and adapted for next time.

Staff involved in any visits including swimming or water-based activities (e.g., kayaking, sailing) must update the swimming competency information immediately before trips to ensure the information is up to date.

7.3 Ongoing and dynamic risk assessment

Ongoing and dynamic risk assessments are not written - these are the actions that staff members take to minimise risk while the visit or activity is taking place. This involves all on-site issues (such as water, weather, accidents, supervision, other users, transport, student wellbeing) and responding appropriately to manage the risk and are based on the acceptance that the trip or activity leader has the relevant experience to make these assessments.

When carrying out ongoing or dynamic risk assessments, variables to consider include:

- Staff - Competency? Training? Further training required? Experience? Is the ratio of staff to students sufficient?
- Activity - Simple or complex activities? Consent? Insurance? Licences?
- Group - Prior experience? Behaviour? Equality? Medical / SEND Needs?
- Environment - Boundaries? Access? Forecast? Water levels?
- Distance - Venue? Transport? Journey time? Residential?

Where assessment of risks is carried out during the trip or activity, this may prompt a re-write or include an addition to the relevant risk assessment on return to school.

8. Data Protection

Before departing, the Visit Leader must ensure they have all appropriate documentation and that this is stored securely using Evolve. Any hard copies of sensitive personal data should be carried in a labelled opaque plastic wallet. This will allow its return to the school in the event of loss. This data includes any information other than basic lists of students and staff on the trip.

Staff must ensure that any personal information they take on trip (e.g., parental consent, contact details or medical information) is stored safely and securely for the duration of the trip. All hard copies of sensitive personal data should be carried in the trip pack by the Visit Leader. This will allow its return to the school in the event of loss. This data includes any information other than basic lists of students and staff on the trip. Where possible access the information via iSAMS rather than taking hard copy forms.

9. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has due regard to the following legislation, statutory guidance and other advice.

Legislation

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and by the Crime and Policing Act 2026 (removal of the supervision exemption from regulated activity with children, in force 1 September 2026)
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, section 26 (the Prevent duty)
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018
- Road Traffic Act 1988 and the regulations governing seat belts and the carriage of children in minibuses and coaches

Statutory and departmental guidance

- DfE, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- DfE, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- DfE, Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools (updated 2022)
- DfE, Health and safety on educational visits (2018)
- DfE, Regulated activity: removal of the supervision exemption - guidance for schools, colleges and childcare settings (2026)
- DfE/DfT, Driving school minibuses: advice for schools and local authorities (2013)
- Home Office, Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales (2023)
- FCDO travel advice, and FCDO guidance on safer adventure travel and volunteering overseas
- Health and Safety Executive guidance for schools, including its guidance to the licensing authority on the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations

Other advice and standards

- Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Off-site Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom
- Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS) register of licence holders
- Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, LOfC Quality Badge
- BS 8848, Specification for the provision of visits, fieldwork, expeditions and adventurous activities outside the United Kingdom
- Independent Schools Inspectorate regulatory requirements and inspection framework

Related School policies

This policy is to be read alongside the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Staff Code of Conduct; Recruitment Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Critical Incident Management Policy; Allergy Policy (in particular section 8); Medical Conditions Policy; First Aid Policy; Behaviour Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Student Phone Policy; ICT (Acceptable Use) Policy; Data Protection Policy; and the parent contract.

10. Further Guidance

The following websites are seen as recommended starting points for planning safe, enjoyable and educationally worthwhile experiences.

Outdoor Education Advisory Panel

- Up-to-date guidance, endorsed by the HSE:
<http://oeapng.info/>

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

- Tackling the health and safety myths:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk>

- Guidance to the Licensing Authority on the Adventure Activity Licensing Regulations (1996)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/>

- Five Steps to Risk Assessment:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>

- The safe operations of the ski slopes:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg371.pdf>

Planning Visits

- National Education Union

Health and safety in schools and colleges (National Education Union):

<https://neu.org.uk/advice/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-schools-and-colleges>

Types of Visit

- Quality, Safety and Sustainability - Field Study Centres - A Code of Practice (National Association of Field Studies Officers) Tel: 01780 782386
- Beach Visits: RNLI Beach Safety <https://rnli.org/safety/beach-safety>

Visits abroad

- Health and Safety Advice to Travellers <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>
- How to obtain a Global Health Insurance Card <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>

General

- The British Activity Providers Association <http://www.thebapa.org.uk/>
- The Royal Geographical Society (with the British Institute of British Geographers) Expedition Advisory Centre provides advice, information and training to anyone planning an overseas expedition.

<http://www.rgs.org/>

- Transport for London provides free transport for school groups on the underground, buses, Thameslink and the Docklands Light Railway. The advice line for the scheme is 0343 222 1000 and the website is <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/schoolparty>
- The general travel advice line can offer information on route planning and station layouts. Apart from its commitment to the safety of its passengers, Transport for London does not offer specific advice on health and safety for school groups but refers them to 'Health and Safety of Students on Educational Visits' and HSE risk assessment guidance.
- 'The Canal and River Trust' website: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/>

Adventurous activities and provider assurance

- Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS), including the register of licence holders: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/>
- Council for Learning Outside the Classroom - the LOfC Quality Badge scheme, the national accreditation for providers of learning outside the classroom, endorsed by the DfE.
- Adventuremark - a safety accreditation for providers of non-licensable adventurous activity.
- BS 8848 - available from the British Standards Institution.

Safeguarding, Prevent and regulated activity

- DfE, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Regulated activity: removal of the supervision exemption (in force 1 September 2026): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-or-volunteering-in-regulated-activity-with-children>
- DfE, Health and safety on educational visits: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>

- Educate Against Hate - DfE and Home Office resources on the Prevent duty for schools.

Visits abroad

- FCDO foreign travel advice, including free email alerts for a destination:
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>
- FCDO guidance on safer adventure travel and volunteering overseas, published on GOV.UK.
- TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre) - country-by-country health and vaccination advice.