



Health & Safety on Educational Excursions

Supplement 1: Standards for Local Authorities in Overseeing Educational Excursions



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Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Executive summary	2
	Paragraphs
Roles of the local authority and the establishment (such as a school)	1 – 9
Advisory role on outdoor education	1 – 2
Responsibilities of the head of establishment	3 – 4
Delegation	5 – 9
Risk assessment	10 – 29
Generic activity risk assessments	13 – 15
Excursion/site specific risk assessments	16 – 17
Ongoing/dynamic risk assessments and reassessments	18
Exploratory visits	19 – 21
Involving participants in risk assessments	22 – 24
Local authority & risk assessments	25 – 29
Competence	30 – 39
Training of staff	36 – 39
Policies and procedures	40 – 78
Contractors (providers)	49 – 50
Use of tour operators	51 – 54
Emergency procedures	55 – 62
Investigation of serious incidents	63 – 69
Reporting accidents and incidents	70 – 73
Disclosure Scotland Checks	74
Additional support needs & disability	75 – 76
Passports	77
Visa exemption	78
	Page
Other guidance	20



Introduction

This is one of three supplements to *Health and Safety on Educational Excursions: A Good Practice Guide (HASEE)*. The other two supplements are *Standards for Adventure* and *A Handbook for Group Leaders*. *HASEE* sets out principles of good practice, leaving it to leaders' professional and local judgement how to apply those principles. This supplement has been prepared for the purpose of providing more *specific* guidance.

The supplement, like *HASEE*, reflects good practice in all types of educational excursion – no matter who is doing the providing or who the learning. Good practice can take a number of forms. Local authorities, unions and others have issued their own guidance. The supplement does not seek to replace local or other professional guidance or regulations. Establishments should follow local authority guidance as a first recourse. No guidance should be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the law. That is for the courts.

HASEE and its supplements are available to print and download from www.scotland.gov.uk, and www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk. Further printed copies are available free on request from the Scottish Executive Education Department, Schools Division, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ, telephone 0131 244 0943.

Like *HASEE*, the supplement can be adopted or adapted by local authorities or others for their own purposes. Please acknowledge the Department as the source for any such use and declare any local variation of the text.

The supplement draws heavily from material produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Executive summary

This document builds upon the good practice set out in *Health & Safety on Educational Excursions (HASEE)*.

The good practice set out in this document includes:

- the role of the person nominated to advise on outdoor education issues;
- the role of heads of establishments and staff delegated by them;
- considering risk assessment at three levels:
 - generic
 - visit/site specific
 - ongoing/dynamic
- advice on competence and monitoring.

Nothing in this document changes the existing duties that local authorities and establishments have in relation to educational excursions. Nor does it lay down any new mandatory requirements. Instead, it is intended to enable establishments and local authorities to access good practice drawing on the advice which has been received on what works well in practice. In addressing their existing legal responsibilities, establishments and local authorities are invited to consider these suggested arrangements but are free to modify them in the light of their own needs and circumstances.



Roles of the local authority and the establishment (such as a school)

Advisory role on outdoor education

1. It is good practice for local authorities to have a nominated person who can advise schools on outdoor education issues. This might be that person's sole responsibility or be combined with other functions performed by the nominated person. The person performing this role would need experience in education, teaching or youth work and to occupy a position of sufficient authority in the local authority to influence change and people. The role would normally involve:
 - a good understanding of the legal responsibilities and powers of the local authority and its schools and similar establishments for all kinds of educational excursions;
 - a good knowledge of the practical difficulties facing school and other groups in all venues or environments including the lower risk ones;
 - being competent to assess the risks involved in excursions and to identify sources of advice where required;
 - monitoring the educational excursions carried out by the local authority's schools and similar establishments: this should include visiting establishments on a sample basis and observing activities, or arranging for this to be done by appropriate staff;
 - reviewing policies and procedures in the light of lessons learned, and sharing good practice more widely;
 - identifying training needs and advising on appropriate levels of delegation for approval of excursions;
 - approving (or disallowing) any excursions where the task of approval has not been assigned to establishment level;
 - notifying establishments of the minimum adult:participant ratios required by the local authority and whether the ratios can include competent adults other than competent establishment staff;
 - providing access to expert advice on excursions generally and on adventure activities, expeditions and overseas visits specifically;
 - providing establishments with the local authority's statement of policy and guidance. This should be based on risk assessment and set out the control measures required;
 - ensuring that group leaders and other establishment staff and other adults involved in educational excursions are assessed by the person approving the excursion as competent in their specific tasks;
 - ensuring that training is available, where required, for those who need that specific competence;
 - making sure that arrangements are in place to obtain the necessary Disclosure Scotland Checks (see paragraph 74);
 - making sure that arrangements are in place for informed parental consent.
2. The nominated person might seek and obtain the advice of other people, in whatever sector, who are competent in assessing the risks of a particular activity or type of excursion.

Responsibilities of the head of establishment

3. The role of heads of establishments is outlined at paragraphs 19-21 of *HASEE*. In practice, heads of establishments may delegate some of their functions to other members of their staff, although this will depend on the nature of the establishment and the type of excursion and outdoor activities which the establishment may engage in. Many establishments, particularly schools, have staff who have built up expertise in organising and leading certain activities and who are willing to share that expertise with colleagues involved in other visits. Local authorities and establishments should encourage the commitment of staff to offer advice at establishment level in the interests of fostering a culture in which health and safety issues are fully considered at all stages of the arrangements for educational excursions of any kind.
4. Issues for heads of establishments to consider are:
 - appropriate delegation of tasks within the establishment during the organisation and conduct of an excursion;
 - that all relevant local authority procedures and policies are being followed;
 - who will approve an excursion at establishment level or submit it to the local authority for approval if so required. It may be appropriate for the staff member leading the visit to perform this function and for the head of the establishment to countersign;
 - use of the model forms in *HASEE* that can be adapted for local authority or establishment use;
 - that arrangements are in place for the educational objectives of an excursion to be inclusive, to be stated in the pre-visit documentation, and to be made known to all relevant parties;
 - to be aware of the need to obtain best value. Appropriate consideration must be given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships;
 - that issues identified by exploratory visits have been satisfactorily resolved within the risk assessment;
 - that the accreditation or verification of providers has been checked;
 - that excursions are evaluated to inform the operation of future excursions;
 - arrangements for being kept informed of the progress of the excursion and for relaying this information to parents as necessary;
 - whether an appropriately competent group leader who will meet the local authority's criteria has been designated. It is likely that the person nominated by the local authority to advise on outdoor education issues will provide advice on the assessment of a group leader's competence in a specific activity. The head of establishment will be able to assess the supervisory ability of a staff member acting as group leader. The head of establishment should make a judgement on a member of staff's competence and suitability to lead a visit. Discipline on an educational excursion may, at times, have to be stricter than in the classroom;
 - for less routine excursions, the head of establishment will need to ensure, in consultation with the local authority, that advice can be obtained from an appropriate technical adviser as necessary;



- that there is a contingency plan (plan B), covering, for example, the implications of staff illness and the need to change routes or activities during the excursion (see below). The consent form should carry details of plan B;
- that time is made available to arrange for the induction and training of staff and volunteers and ensure that staff receive the induction and training that they need before the excursion;
- that sufficient resources are allocated to meet identified training needs, including attendance at courses arranged or held by the local authority. INSET sessions relating to educational excursions may be organised;
- that excursion evaluation is used to inform training needs. Further staff training should be made available where a need is identified;
- that arrangements are made for the recording of accidents and the reporting of death or disabling injuries as required. Accident and incident records should be reviewed regularly, and this information used to inform future excursions;
- help to ensure that serious incidents, accidents and near-accidents are investigated – see paragraphs 63 – 69;
- that staff are made aware of and understand local authority guidance on emergency planning and procedures. Training and briefing sessions must be provided for establishment staff;
- that the establishment has emergency procedures in place in case of a major incident on an educational excursion. These should be discussed and reviewed by staff. Ensure that participants, parents, group supervisors and others are given written details of these procedures;
- that the home base contact has the authority to make significant decisions. He or she should be contactable and available for the full duration of the excursion 24 hours a day. He or she should be able to respond immediately at the home base to the demands of an emergency and should have a back-up person or number;
- that the leader and supervisors are briefed about the emergency procedures as part of the risk assessment briefing and that the leader and supervisors have ready access to them during the excursion;
- that the leader and supervisors are briefed on the local authority's policies for the administration of medicines and the handling of clinical waste;
- that parents are fully aware of the importance of providing their own contact numbers, more than one, which will enable the parents to be contacted in case of emergency;
- that a procedure is established to ensure that parents are informed quickly about incident details through the home base contact, rather than through the media or participants;
- that support must be provided by the local authority's public relations unit when dealing with media enquiries;
- that checks are made that contractors have adequate emergency support procedures, and that these will link to establishment and local authority emergency procedures.

Delegation

- 5.** It is good practice for a scheme of delegation to define the role and tasks of the local authority and the delegated tasks of the head of establishment and other establishment staff. It should include appropriate arrangements for the approval of particular categories of excursion – whether the task remains with the local authority or is assigned to the establishment – and make clear that any person delegated to carry out the task in the establishment is doing so on behalf of the local authority.
- 6.** There should be a clear rationale, derived from risk assessment, as to which types of excursion are approved at establishment level and which, if any, are to be approved by the local authority. Local approval forms should be available from the person nominated by the education authority to advise on outdoor education issues.
- 7.** Local authorities may decide to delegate a wider range of responsibility for approval to establishments that have staff members who are experienced and competent in organising the categories of excursion in question, and retain at authority level approval for establishments that do not.
- 8.** Risk assessors should apply lessons learned from relevant incidents, accidents or near-accidents which have occurred locally or nationally.
- 9.** The local authority should make it clear how the checks on contractor use are to be carried out and who should undertake them. Establishments may obtain additional advice on the selection of tour operators and other contractors from the person nominated by the local authority to advise on outdoor education issues.

Risk assessment

10. In order to promote safe practice, the establishment or the local authority (whichever is responsible for approving the particular excursion) will need to monitor, and, where necessary challenge, the objectives that have been stated for a visit. Before an establishment decides to arrange an educational excursion, it is good practice to consider what educational objectives it wishes to achieve, and then, how an excursion might help to achieve them.
11. Risk assessment and risk management are legal requirements. For educational excursions they involve the careful examination of what could cause harm during the excursion and whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more should be done. The aim is to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill. The control measures should be understood by those involved. Risk assessments should explicitly cover how additional support needs and medical needs are to be addressed. The programme of an excursion, as set out in the risk assessment and the consent form, should not be deviated from and should include details of contingency measures – plan B. The Health & Safety Executive has produced a leaflet *Five Steps to Risk Assessment* (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf) as a simple guide. It recommends that risk assessments be recorded and reviewed.
12. Risk assessment for educational excursions can be usefully considered as having three levels:
 - **generic activity risk assessments**, which are likely to apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place;
 - **excursion/site specific risk assessments** which will differ from place to place and group to group; and
 - **ongoing/dynamic risk assessments** that take account of, for example, illness of staff or participants, changes of weather, availability of preferred activity.

Generic activity risk assessments

13. These are usually prepared by the local authority, or by local authorities in agreement with one another. Establishment staff will not normally prepare them unless they have accumulated specific experience or other expertise. The local authority should check any generic risk assessment prepared externally (by, for example, an activity or expedition provider, tour operator, or National Governing Body) or by a member of an establishment's staff. The generic risk assessment will typically inform the health and safety policy of the local authority and associated procedures.

Examples:

- the lack of adequate risk management leading to drowning is a major cause of accidental death. Control measures would include assessing the water confidence and ability of participants; use of buoyancy aids; competent supervision, with the appropriate ratios for the specific environment, participant group and level of activity. The generic risk assessment should include advice, or a local ruling, on the circumstances in which swimming or paddling may or may not be permitted as a marginal activity. See *A Handbook for Group Leaders*;

- travel entails a risk of injury in a road traffic accident. Control measures would include qualified driver; number of drivers; maximum periods of driving; appropriate seat belts provided and worn; evidence of vehicle maintenance; appropriate supervision levels; and, if appropriate, knowledge of foreign law, experience of driving abroad and with left-side controls. Participants are also at risk as pedestrians from traffic. (Also travel as in using ferries, airports, long haul coaches, trains, underground/metro systems etc);
 - adventure activities. Centres licensed under the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 can be considered safe in the leading, instructing and equipping of the activities stipulated on the licence. These will have been inspected. Local authorities should not need to risk assess that part of any excursion. They will wish to assess other aspects of the establishment's planning for a visit – for example, accommodation, catering, transport, activities not stipulated on the licence. For non-licensable adventure activities, proof of competence from an NGB award or assessment by a technical adviser may be sufficient.
- 14.** The Department recommends that local authorities share policies, guidance and associated risk assessments with one another, and with employers of staff in independent schools. This would reduce duplication of effort and spread good practice.
- 15.** Risk assessors should apply lessons learned from relevant serious incidents, accidents or near-accidents which have occurred locally or nationally. Those in charge of independent schools may have need of recourse to outdoor education issues. This might be from their own outdoor education adviser within the school or from someone outside e.g. a local authority, where local arrangements permit. Local authorities and schools may wish to note that the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority website has a section called collective interpretations which may assist risk assessment.

Excursion/site specific risk assessments

- 16.** These are usually undertaken by the establishment for each venue and are amended as necessary for different groups. They should be prepared or agreed by someone trained and competent to assess risks.
- 17.** Excursion and site specific risk assessments should inform establishment based policies and procedures. These establishment based procedures should complement, and not conflict with, those of the local authority.

Examples

- medical needs of pupils. Control measures include ensuring the group leader is aware of the known health problems of the group and the local authority policy on the administration of medicines to participants; sufficient medication is provided; there are sufficient adults competent in dealing with the medical problems in the group; and there are contingency measures in place for the group to be adequately supervised if an adult has to accompany a child to hospital;



- behaviour of participants. Control measures include a code of rules and behaviour, agreed as far as practicable with participants; rules for supervision (including model behaviour and example set by adults); and competence of supervisors to ensure disciplinary standards;
- weather etc. Control measures include obtaining local intelligence of tides; potential for flooding or flash floods; likelihood of sudden weather changes in mountains; streams that can change from benign to torrents in a short time etc; planning the itinerary to take the possibility of change into account; suitable clothing; ensure participants understand the risks and the reasons for the control measures, and having a plan B pre-assessed in case plan A has become too hazardous;
- crossing roads, railways, rivers etc. Control measures include local intelligence; information on where the controlled or otherwise less dangerous crossing places are; ensuring appropriate levels of supervision and that participants are aware of, and comply with, rules;
- group management decisions. Control measures include establishing meeting and collecting points; code of rules and behaviour agreements; cultural considerations such as dress codes, holy days; induction requirements for support staff etc.

Ongoing/dynamic risk assessments and reassessments

18. The group leader, or other adults with responsibility, should reassess risks while the excursion is taking place. Ongoing/dynamic risk assessments normally consist of judgements and decisions made as the need arises. They should be informed by the generic and excursion or site specific risk assessments and take account of local expertise on e.g. tides, potential for flooding etc. They are not usually recorded until after the excursion and should be reviewed to inform future planning. Examples of the need for ongoing risk assessment:

- changing weather, tiredness or illness within the group, behaviour, issues with other groups at same venue etc. Control measures would often include deciding to change to the pre-assessed plan B or swapping activities on the itinerary so that the activity can be carried out on a different day;
- emergencies. Control measures would include establishing the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible; ensuring that all the group are safe and looked after; establishing whether anyone has been hurt and getting immediate medical attention for them; ensuring that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures; ensuring that if a leader accompanies casualties to hospital, the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together; and informing the emergency contact at the home base;
- group leaders are always in charge. They should trust their own knowledge of the young people and use their own professional judgement. This may include challenging an activity leader where the group leader's knowledge of the group is superior, or intervening to prompt a change of plan, including stopping an activity if it has become too hazardous.

Exploratory visits

19. *HASEE* states that, wherever possible, the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit. It is good practice for the member of the establishment's staff leading a group to visit the site beforehand to gain first-hand knowledge of the area and route. This knowledge will then inform the risk assessment and pre-planning.
20. An exploratory visit will give the group leader greater confidence in his or her ability to supervise the participants. It will help the group leader to concentrate on the needs of the group rather than the unexpected demands of the environment. However, the potential for the conditions during the actual visit to vary from those encountered during the exploratory visit should be kept in mind. It should be borne in mind that overseas trekking expeditions cover a much wider range of terrain and circumstances than is found in the UK. The same good practice should be expected where some of the leadership of the group falls to a contractor.
21. If it is not possible to visit the site beforehand, the person approving the excursion or the person nominated by the local authority to advise on outdoor education issues will want to be satisfied that alternative arrangements are sufficient for an assessment to be made. Such alternatives might include obtaining advice from those with experience gained from previous excursions; heeding reports of previous excursions; the use of experienced and reliable local guides where appropriate; a reconnaissance visit by the group leader on arrival at the venue whilst the group remain in the hotel or hostel on residential visits (very often the group will need to rest up anyway). Any one or two of these, or of other measures, might not be enough for an adequate risk assessment.

Involving participants in risk assessments

22. *HASEE* Chapter 4 **Preparing participants** states that participants who are involved in an excursion's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and be less at risk. Any type of educational excursion can provide an important medium for education about risk.
23. Adventure activities enable participants to build upon their theoretical knowledge of risk management by providing active opportunities to test their knowledge in practice and develop transferable skills. But bear in mind that participants may have an exaggerated opinion of their own ability. The risk assessment should ensure that activities are appropriate to levels of ability and progression.
24. Bear in mind too that young people engaged in assessing risks may alarm parents about the nature of the hazards to be encountered on more adventurous excursions. The consent forms should adequately convey the real risks and the control measures. The statutory duty of care laid on local authorities and establishments by health and safety legislation remains where participants are assigned specific tasks relating to risk assessment.



Local authority & risk assessments

- 25.** The local authority must provide health and safety guidance to those establishments and services where it is the employer. It must ensure that staff are trained in their health and safety responsibilities as employees and that those who are delegated health and safety tasks (such as risk assessment) are competent to carry them out. The local authority should draw up the generic risk assessments. The task may be assigned to an appropriately competent person who has training and experience or knowledge and other qualities appropriate to the task.
- 26.** The local authority should record the results of the assessment and include them in its policy statement and procedures. The assessment should include an overview of the range of excursions carried out by establishments and be informed by monitoring procedures. It should include an assessment of new areas of work.
- 27.** The local authority may delegate the preparation of excursion/site specific risk assessments to the establishment. Delegation should be informed by the local authority's generic risk assessment contained in its policies and procedures. The competence of the establishment to assess the risks and any risk assessment provided by a contractor should be taken into account. The local authority, when considering approval of an excursion, should refer to the establishment's risk assessment.
- 28.** The local authority must ensure that risk assessment training is available to employees. Training and information should emphasise that risk assessment is essential to the planning of an excursion and should cover the three levels of risk assessment. All supervisors of an excursion should be briefed on the risk assessment and each should take a copy.
- 29.** For further information on risk assessment see **Other guidance**. Also see the section on risk assessment in *Standards for Adventure*.

Competence

- 30.** The local authority should set the standards of competence required for each type of visit. The local authority should approve the assignment of competent staff. The head of establishment or member of staff delegated by the head of establishment may act on the local authority's behalf if competent to do so and arrange for the assessment of staff's competence to lead, manage, and control participants on an educational excursion. The person nominated by the local authority to advise on outdoor education issues will advise on the assessment of competence in specific activities. Knowledge of the group, the nature of the excursion and the environment to be used should be taken into the assessment. The establishment should seek advice from the person nominated by the local authority to advise on outdoor education issues where necessary.
- 31.** Local authorities should use accepted standards of competence – e.g. National Governing Body (NGB) awards or SVQs – as benchmarks for acceptable competence in adventure activities. Depending upon the circumstances, a number of alternative ways of proving staff competence may be acceptable. These could include in-house training and assessment approved by a relevant technical adviser. See *Standards for Adventure*.
- 32.** The local authority's scheme of delegation, made available to all establishments, should determine whether it is the local authority or the establishment that maintains a record of staff competent to lead specific adventure activities. Excursions should be approved, or not, with reference to the record of competence amongst other matters. The record should be periodically reviewed and staff should keep logbooks of their experience.
- 33.** The local authority should give clear guidance on supervision, stating what ratios might be appropriate. The guidance should advise how staff should be deployed in general and in specific circumstances and set out the standards expected of adults assigned to be supervisors. Competence and robust supervision should be stressed as essential to any excursion. Support should be made available for increasing the competence of staff who will take children with behavioural problems on educational excursions.
- 34.** Specific scenarios should be set out where staff will need to be particularly careful when making a decision. For instance, whether participants may be allowed to swim or paddle in rivers, lochs, the sea etc.
- 35.** Different circumstances will require different techniques of supervision, such as the difference between close and remote supervision, and the criteria for establishing self-reliant groups. (Note: remote supervision does not mean an absence of supervision). Details of supervision should be included in the information given to parents on the consent form.



Training of staff

- 36.** The local authority must ensure that all establishment staff who will lead or supervise an excursion have access to any training which may be necessary.
- 37.** The local authority should ensure that specific training for heads of establishments and other staff is provided. This may be via a local authority programme of training opportunities made available to establishments by external providers, including for NGB, SVQ or other awards.
- 38.** Training should include first aid, minibus driving, and life saving as appropriate. Training for group leaders should include all aspects of supervision, ongoing/dynamic risk assessment (including being prepared to stop an activity that has become too hazardous), and how to deal with an emergency. Where necessary, training on support for participants' medical and additional support needs will help excursions to be inclusive.
- 39.** The local authority should maintain a record of those establishments whose staff have received excursions training, and of those establishments whose staff still need training. The local authority should periodically check that training is up to date.

Policies and procedures

40. *HASEE* (Chapters 1 and 2) sets out what local authorities and others should bear in mind when excursions and their supervision are being planned. In order for the local authority, as employer, to manage its responsibilities, it will need to delegate or assign some of the related tasks.
41. The local authority should have a policy statement and guidance (as necessary) based on risk assessment. This will set out how to manage educational excursions within the statutory framework. It is good practice for the local authority to canvass the views of heads of establishments, teachers and other relevant staff, parents, technical experts and pupils or other participants where appropriate when preparing the statement and guidance.
42. The policy should name the person nominated by the education authority to advise on outdoor education issues and give contact details. It should include details of where advice can be obtained on specific activities and on related matters such as law, transport and child protection if not from the outdoor education contact.
43. The policy should describe how tasks of planning, supervising, organising and leading activities are carried out. There should be specific references to higher risk environments and activities.
44. The policy should also refer to insurance, transport, any use of contractors, and information for young people and parents (consent forms), emergency procedures and the criteria and procedures for Disclosure Scotland Checks.
45. Local arrangements and sources of further information should be made clear. The local authority may endorse *HASEE*, or other good practice guidance (e.g. from a union), when local guidance is not available.
46. Procedures should be backed-up by the provision of forms for risk assessment, the approval of excursions, the check-listing of group leader tasks, parental consent, use of external activity or service providers, emergency procedures, accident reporting etc. *HASEE* has a range of model forms that can be adapted as need be. Other organisations' guidance also carries such forms.
47. The local authority policies and procedures should be updated and accessible. Establishments should be notified of amendments. Statements and procedures should be regularly reviewed and informed by good practice. Establishments should be notified by newsletters etc. and key parts should be web-based.
48. The person nominated by the local authority to advise on outdoor education issues should share good practice by, for example, making the local authority guidance available to independent schools.



Contractors (providers)

- 49.** Contractors for educational excursions might be tour operators, expedition providers, outdoor education centres, local farms, museums, and national bodies such as the RSPCA, SYHA etc. Guidance should be provided by the local authority on the standards expected of contractors and should include selection criteria. The local authority should list the questions that establishments should ask contractors relating to safety management, and what to look for in the replies. Local authorities may demand different standards of the same contractor in accordance with the needs of their participant groups. However, the Department would encourage local authorities and establishments to work together, and with the contractor and contractors' representative bodies, to establish some commonality.
- 50.** Contractors are responsible for assessing the risks of those parts of the excursion appearing in the contract. *HASEE* Chapter 8 states that assurances should be obtained from providers that risks have been assessed and that the provider's staff are competent to instruct and lead participants of the group's age range on the activity. It is good practice to seek details of their safety management systems. Contractors should also provide details of any independent, inspection-based external verification. However, checks by the local authority or establishment do not relieve the contractor of any responsibility or liability. Where the establishment does not feel competent to assess the validity of contractors' safety systems or assurances, advice should be sought from the person nominated by the local authority to advise on outdoor education issues, who may also seek advice from a technical adviser.

Use of tour operators

- 51.** *HASEE* paragraphs 196 – 198 states that before using a tour operator group leaders should ensure it is reputable. The Department recognises that recently established companies might not have had the time to acquire a good reputation. The process of risk assessment detailed above will help such companies to present their credentials. The person nominated by the education authority to advise on outdoor education issues and the establishment should between them check that the company shows due diligence in checking, for example, the safety and suitability of the accommodation and transport (participants should not be expected to share beds, the road transport must have seat belts). The Department is advised that some companies act as agents and use service providers overseas. If this is so then the agent should be asked to explain how the health and safety of the group would be ensured. Details of insurance should be obtained and checked.
- 52.** An unexpected change of plan increases risk. Do you have a plan B for when, for example, your UK vehicle breaks down in France? Is your driver competent to drive your group in a French coach? Does the offered coach have seatbelts? Should you carry on by train? Do you have the language ability to cope with this? For further guidance see RoSPA's *Minibus Safety: A Code of Practice* (details under **Other guidance**).
- 53.** Some contractors may offer a pre-visit to overseas or other sites for group leaders free of charge. These may be arranged in conjunction with the local tourism authority. This can enable the group leader to gain a direct experience of the venue and environment and assist their appraisal of the contractor's risk assessment.

- 54.** However, the person nominated by the local authority to advise on outdoor education matters and the establishment will need to be mindful that 'free' family holidays might be offered to staff as an inducement to use a particular company. However, the costs would usually be loaded onto the package costs borne by the parents. This would not represent best value for them or good practice by the establishment, and might infringe staff rules and conditions of service.

Emergency procedures

- 55.** The local authority should develop emergency procedures, including those in the immediacy of an incident, in consultation with staff and relevant agencies. The procedures, with telephone numbers for use in emergency, throughout the excursion, by those on the excursion and those in the establishment, should be clearly outlined in written guidelines for educational excursions.
- 56.** The written guidelines should contain an immediate action checklist for use by the group leader in an emergency, and for local authority officers, home base contacts and heads of establishments.
- 57.** Procedures should be reviewed regularly with the help of people from all agencies involved in any incident.
- 58.** Named senior officers of the local authority should be accessible at all times in the event of an incident and an emergency contact point should be set up which relays information to them. Where necessary, a rota of staff on call in case of an emergency should be drawn up and disseminated. Procedures should be tested.
- 59.** The written guidelines should emphasise the importance of good communication with parents before, during and after an excursion. The local authority should provide guidance and support for establishments needing to communicate with parents.
- 60.** It is good practice to maintain appropriate public liability insurance cover. The local authority should make a statement of what insurance cover it provides (including personal accident), what needs to be provided by the establishment, and what is optional for the establishment or parents. The means by which insurance cover is obtained, and claims made, should be made known. Guidance could stress that compensation after the event is no substitute for prevention by careful risk management. Details of insurance should be provided in the consent form sent to parents.
- 61.** Advice to heads of establishments faced by a sudden death should be available. It should carry practical guidance on meeting police officers, on coping with media attention, and on the sympathetic treatment of distraught families, pupils and staff.
- 62.** Counselling services, media liaison (press office) and communications systems personnel should be made available to draw the onus of response away from the establishment.



Investigation of serious incidents

- 63.** Chapter 10 of *HASEE* gives advice on emergency procedures. When a serious incident has taken place on an educational excursion in the UK or abroad, the local authority will usually undertake its own investigation. This is good practice. A serious incident would include a fatality, but might also include serious injuries (e.g. those that in the UK are reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases or Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) and comparable incidents abroad), and incidents where no serious injury occurred but where the risk of injury was high.
- 64.** The purpose of the investigation will be to:
- determine the causes of the incident;
 - determine whether there are lessons to be learned;
 - provide information to bereaved parents;
 - exchange information with statutory investigation bodies as required e.g. police, Health & Safety Executive;
 - manage media enquiries.
- 65.** The investigation should begin as soon as possible, while key witnesses have good recall of the facts. If a contractor or other organisation is involved in the excursion, the local authority should agree roles with them to avoid duplication of effort. Care should be taken not to disrupt any parallel investigations by the police, HSE etc.
- 66.** There is usually no reason to wait for those parallel investigations to be complete before starting the investigation. However, before publishing any report, the local authority should check with the police, HSE etc. to ensure that publication will not jeopardise their investigations or any action that they may decide to take. When the investigation is complete, it is good practice to share lessons learned with all establishments in the local authority area, and with other local authorities.
- 67.** Local legal advice (and sometimes insurer's advice) will often suggest the merits of restricting information where it may be used for legal action. This should not mean keeping bereaved parents uninformed even where the local authority or establishment may fear legal action.
- 68.** It is good practice to identify an official who will act as the key point of contact for bereaved parents. This official should be sensitive to the family's needs and should preferably have some counselling competence. He or she should inform the family of the progress of the investigation, answering their questions as helpfully as possible, and providing them with the facts.
- 69.** Bereaved parents will need to know all the facts. In the long term, they will not be able to complete the grieving process if their questions remain unanswered. They will also need to know that any lessons learned will be applied. Denial of information is likely to compound and perpetuate their grief, and to increase the likelihood that they will resort to legal action.

Reporting accidents and incidents

70. The local authority should lay down procedures for establishments to use when reporting accidents and near-accidents to the local authority for monitoring purposes.
71. The local authority should establish procedures to ensure and help the statutory reporting of serious accidents and incidents involving violence. These are likely to be in scope of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases or Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Reports are made to HSE directly by the establishment or via the local authority as employer.
72. It is good practice to study reports of incidents in order to identify what consequent action may be necessary to limit recurrence, including the amendment of procedures. A named officer or adviser who can effect an urgent response, if necessary, will limit the risk of similar incidents happening elsewhere.
73. It is good practice to report near-accidents to the head of establishment and the person nominated by the local authority to advise on outdoor education issues so that lessons can be learned and appropriate training or re-training be arranged.

Disclosure Scotland Checks

74. *HASEE* (paragraphs 72-74) provides guidance on Disclosure Scotland Checks.

Additional support needs & disability

75. *HASEE* (paragraphs 95 and 103 – 104) relate to participants with additional support needs being taken on excursions. Changes to the law bring educational excursions into scope of disability legislation. From September 2002, changes to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, place new duties on local authorities and schools not to discriminate against disabled pupils for reasons relating to their disabilities.
76. The establishment and the person nominated by the education authority to advise on outdoor education issues should check that all reasonably practicable efforts have been made during the course of risk assessment to include disabled participants in educational excursions; and to include those disabled participants who wish to take part in educational excursions out of establishment hours. This will usually entail discussion with the participant, parents, group leader and other supervisors, the manager of the venue to be visited, the tour operator etc.

Passports

77. Some states may not allow in a traveller whose passport will expire within a few months of entry. The group leader should personally check the passports of all supervisors and participants to obviate the risks of anyone being turned back from the borders of the venue country or any countries being traversed en route. The group leader should contact the UK Embassy or Consulate of the relevant country or countries for details.



Visa exemption

- 78.** Participants who are not British nationals will normally need a visa to travel to another EU member state unless visa exemption has been secured for them. Details of visa exemption, which is available only for members of a school group taking part in an educational excursion, and not for other youth groups, are available from the Home Office on 020 8760 8773 or the British Council on 0161 9577755.

Other guidance

Health and Safety Executive

Guidance to the Licensing Authority on the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 (HSC £9)

A Guide to Risk Assessment Requirements – (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg218.pdf)

Avoiding ill health at open farms: Advice to farmers with teachers supplement – Agricultural Information Sheet no.23 (revised 2002)

Five Steps to Risk Assessment – (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf)

Adventure activities centres; five steps to risk assessment (£4.50)

Managing Health and Safety: Five Steps to Success – (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indq275.pdf)

Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools revised edition 1999 (HSC 179 £10.50)

Reducing Risk Protecting People 2001

Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee (AAIAC): *Statement of Risk Perception in Adventure and Outdoor Activities*

Everyone's Guide to RIDDOR 95 – HSE31 – free leaflet or available in priced packs. ISBN 0 7176 1077 2

Others

The Administration of Medicines in Schools – Scottish Executive Education Department – (www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/amis-00.asp)

For guidance on Farm Visits, see Scottish Executive website – (www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/health/ecsip-00.asp)

Work Experience: A Guide to Promoting Quality and Work Experience: Case Studies of Scottish Schools – (www.ltscotland.org.uk/edresources/publications.asp?cat=pub&educationkey+Enterprise%20in%20Education)

Health Advice to Travellers Anywhere in the World – Available free from most Post Offices, travel agents and local libraries or Free Phone 0800 555777

Safe Practice in Physical Education – The British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education – (www.baalpe.org/publications.htm)

Information about adventure activity providers covered by the Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme – (www.aala.org.uk)

Self Assessment and Guidance – Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) – (www.aala.org.uk)



The Wales Tourist Board, VisitScotland and the British Activity Holiday Association provide voluntary inspection schemes to complement licensing for providers of activities that are out of scope of licensing

Get Safe for Summer – Amateur Swimming Association – (www.asa-awards.co.uk)

Safety on British Beaches – Joint publication by the Royal Life Saving Society and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) £13.49. Available from RoSPA

Safe Supervision for Teaching and Coaching Swimming – Amateur Swimming Association and others. 2nd edition 2001 Tel: 01509 618700

Group Safety at Water Margins – Central Council for Physical Recreation – (www.ccpr.org.uk)

Minibus Safety: A Code of Practice – RoSPA and others 2002 – (www.rospa.com/pdfs/road/minibus.pdf)

A Practical Guide to Safe School Trips – Scottish School Board Association – (www.schoolboard-scotland.com)

Guidance published by the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for various adventure activities. NGBs also maintain leader training and assessment programmes

Safe and Responsible Expeditions and Guidelines for Youth Expeditions – Young Explorers' Trust, c/o RGS-IBG Expedition Advisory Centre. £5 inc. p & p or free from website – (www.rgs.org/eacpubs)

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)'s Expedition Advisory Centre, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR provides advice, information and training to anyone planning an overseas expedition. Tel 020 7591 3030 – (www.rgs.org/eac)

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has its own clear structure, procedures and guidelines – (www.theaward.org)

Guidance is produced by many of the voluntary youth organisations

Quality, Safety and Sustainability – Field Study Centres: A Code of Practice – National Association of Field Studies Officers (NAFSO) – (www.nafso.org.uk)

The Waterways Code (leaflet) and *The Waterways Code for Boaters* (video) are available from British Waterways – hq@britishwaterways.co.uk – Tel: 01923 201120

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust has produced a range of guidance on personal safety, including booklets, videos and training courses – (www.suzylamplugh.org)



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