



National
Guidance
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Head Teacher/Manager

See also NG document [3.3b "Check List – Headteacher/Manager"](#).

Outdoor learning and off site visits can have a profound effect on children and young people and their well-being; positively influencing behaviour and relationships, developing self-confidence and raising achievement. In an educational setting, 'real' experiences make learning more engaging, relevant, enjoyable and memorable and should be integral to the establishment's work.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places overall responsibility for health and safety with the employer. Who this is, varies with the type of establishment. It is critical that Head Teachers or Managers are clear about who is their employer. See NG document: [1c "Status Remit and Rationale"](#).

Employers have duties to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all employees and others who may be harmed by their activities. In addition, local authorities have a duty of care for the health and safety of all young people for whom they are responsible under the Children Act 2004.

As a Head or Manager, you should ensure that:

- You are familiar with your employer's policies for outdoor learning and off-site visits;
- All activities and visits comply with employer and establishment policies and National Guidance, and are notified or submitted for formal approval as required;
- Arrangements are in place for the governing body to be informed of such visits as required by your establishment's policy;
- You have clearly designated either yourself or a suitable member of staff as the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), and the designated person meets your employer's requirements, including undertaking training as required – see NG document [3.4j "Educational Visits Coordinator"](#);
- You have access to expert advice, such as from a competent outdoor education adviser;
- You have ascertained that all leaders are appropriately competent, confident and accountable to carry out the responsibilities they are allocated – see NG document [3.2d "Approval of Leaders"](#);
- You support your EVC in ensuring that all activities and visits are effectively supervised with an appropriate level of leadership – see NG document [4.3b "Ratios and Effective Supervision"](#);

- You support your EVC in ensuring that information has been shared with parents, and consent has been given if required – see NG document [4.3d "Parental Consent"](#);
- When you take part in a visit or activity, you and other members of the Visit Leadership Team are clear about your role (if you are not leading the visit, you should follow the instructions of the designated Visit Leader, who should have sole charge of the visit);
- Suitable safeguarding procedures are in place, including appropriate vetting of all adults including volunteers, helpers and visitors – see NG documents [4.3e "Safeguarding"](#) and [3.2g "Vetting and DBS checks"](#);
- You have assigned sufficient time for leaders to organise activities and visits properly;
- You support an apprenticeship/succession-planning culture to ensure sustainable activities and visits and the development of competent leaders and EVCs;
- Arrangements have been made for the medical and special educational needs of all participants and staff;
- Inclusion issues are addressed – see NG document [3.2e "Inclusion"](#);
- Suitable transport arrangements are in place – see NG document [4.5a "Transport – General Considerations"](#);
- Appropriate insurance arrangements are in place – see NG document [4.4c "Insurance"](#);
- Visits have contingency plans (a Plan B) to deal with changing circumstances;
- You obtain best value – consideration must be given to financial management, choice of external providers and facilities, and contractual relationships;
- Where charges are made to parents, these are within legal and employer requirements – see NG document [3.2c "Charging for School Activities"](#);
- Appropriate procedures are in place to account for the visit finances;
- Risk Management is proportionate, suitable and sufficient (see NG document [4.3c "Risk Management – an Overview"](#)) – it is good practice to adopt any materials made available by your employer to reduce bureaucracy;
- Where the activity or visit involves a third party provider, appropriate checks have been made and assurances obtained, a clear contract is in place setting out what the contractor is to provide, and the provider holds sufficient indemnity insurance – see NG document [4.4g "Selecting External Providers and Facilities"](#);
- Establishment policy identifies the types of visit that require a preliminary visit by staff;
- There are suitable emergency procedures in place for each visit, and your establishment has an Emergency Plan for off-site visits – see NG document [4.1d "Emergencies and Critical Incidents - Guidance for Establishments"](#);
- Details related to off-site activities and visits (including personal details of both participants and leaders) are accessible at all times to designated 24/7 Emergency Contacts in case of a serious incident;
- Serious incidents are reported to the employer as required by your employer's guidance, meeting the requirements of RIDDOR;
- All visits are reviewed, addressing issues raised by any incident and informing future visits – see NG document [4.2c "Reviewing"](#);

- Visits are evaluated against their aims and objectives – see NG document [5.1d "Evaluation"](#);
- Outdoor learning and visits are included within the process of establishment self-evaluation – see NG document [5.1c "Self-Evaluation and the Ofsted Framework"](#).

