



National
Guidance

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Adventure Activities

Rationale

Participating in Adventure Activities can be one of the highlights of a young person's learning experiences, particularly when it is within the context of a residential visit. While any off-site activity will probably be exciting, adding an extra dimension of personal challenge through participation in Adventure Activities can make the experience particularly memorable, the learning that takes place often being life-long.

Development through Adventure Activities can lead to a wide range of learning outcomes including:

- Awareness of and responding to risk to self and others - young people will undertake experiences where they identify and manage risk, so developing confidence to make decisions including about safety in a complex world where there are uncertainties.
- Personal and social development – providing real challenges through Adventure Activities opens opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context', development of social skills, and experience of personal responsibility.
- Citizenship and employability - activities designed to develop a young person's ability to work collaboratively.
- Learning about when and how to support, lead and follow are important life skills. They contribute to the capacity to take responsibility and play a role in the community.
- New ideas for physical exercise - Adventure Activities expose young people to alternatives to traditional ball sports and team games, contributing to healthy living.
- Opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves, them in each other).
- Opportunities to practically examine the components of challenge: chance of gain or benefit/risk of loss or harm/accurate goal setting and judgement/ willingness and commitment/activity outside the comfort zone (physical and/or emotional).
- Enhanced emotional intelligence (including a greater awareness of their own needs and the needs of others).
- Opportunities to interact with a wild environment leading to:
 - Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding.

- Better awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability.
- Recreation - the activities are likely to be seen as fun, providing enjoyment and purposeful leisure, which if pursued may contribute to well-being.

A well-planned educational programme including Adventure Activities can also be a powerful way of improving achievement and attainment within most curriculum subjects. Students are active participants, not passive consumers, and a wide range of learning styles can flourish. Such activities can enhance motivation for learning.

Leading Adventure Activities

If establishment staff are to lead Adventure Activities, it is essential that they are properly assessed as competent to do so. See document 3.2d "Approval of Leaders".

Using an External Provider

If establishment staff are not to lead the Adventure Activities, there are several options available:

1. There are many freelance instructors who can arrange activities by the day in school grounds or in the local countryside. They can often provide all of the equipment needed.
2. Some employers (such as local authorities) have their own outdoor and/or environmental centres. While their primary purpose may be serving the needs of a particular community, many will also provide services to outside groups.
3. There is a large number of centres operated by private companies and charitable trusts throughout the country. Some offer residential accommodation, and some provide for participants with special needs.
4. Some providers run Summer Camps, where young people can benefit from Adventure Activities during school holidays. These holidays provide opportunities for informal and recreational learning, as well as the chance to make new friends, gain in self-confidence, learn new skills and have fun.

For advice on selecting a provider and ensuring that they meet required standards, see document 4.4f "Assessing an Adventure Provider Check List".

Licensing and Accreditation

Adventure Activities for young people in England, Scotland and Wales are subject to the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. However, not all providers are required to hold a licence, and not all activities fall within the scope of licensing. See document 3.2f "AALA Licensing" for more detail.

If a provider holds a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, this is evidence that it meets safety as well as educational quality standards, and that it holds an AALA Licence if it is legally required to do so.

Provider Support for Learning

The Visit Leader is responsible for determining the desired learning outcomes, and it is of fundamental importance that these are discussed with the provider to ensure that the programme is designed to meet the needs of the group.

The discussion may consider aspirations for the group as whole but should also consider how the experience may help particular individuals within the group. For example, an activity may be good for developing self-confidence but if it is recognised that some in the group are already self-confident, it may be more purposeful to use a range of activities to develop those who are low in self-confidence while challenging the confident ones in other skill areas.

Outdoor centres can offer different levels of support and Visit Leaders should determine what is appropriate to the group's needs. The options available range from providing accommodation or equipment only, through to fully catered and staffed packages with specialists providing all activities and a programme tailored to the desired learning outcomes. Accommodation varies from camping barns, through hostels, converted ships and old manor houses to conference centre standard. There are centres where you can have sole occupancy and others where there will be several hundred young people on site.

You will need to balance considerations including cost, location/environment, the activities available, the quality and experience of specialist staff and the quality and type of accommodation, in order to find the best match for your budget, your visit leadership team's skills and experience, the participants' capabilities, aspirations and needs, and your desired learning outcomes.

