



**Leicestershire  
Traded Services**

# **Management of Outdoor Learning, Off-site Visits and Adventurous Activities**

## **Policy and Guidance**

**Author: Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team**

**Reviewed By: Philip Broughton**

**Date Reviewed: 02/01/19**

**Review Due Date: 02/01/2021**

**Issue No: 4**

**We can  
do that. ✓**

# Contents

Contents.....	2
(Insert School/Academy Name) Management of Outdoor Learning and Off-site Activities .....	4
Introduction .....	4
1. Provision of Employer Guidance .....	4
2. Scope and Remit.....	4
3. Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements.....	6
4. Notification of Activities and Visits .....	6
5. Risk Management .....	9
6. Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support .....	10
7. Monitoring .....	10
8. Leader Competence.....	10
9. Charges for Off-site Activities and Visits.....	12
10. Vetting and DBS Checks .....	12
11. Parent / Carer Consent.....	12
12. Requirement to Ensure Effective Supervision.....	13
13. Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances .....	14
14. Insurance for Off-site Activities and Visits.....	14
15. First Aid.....	15
16. Inclusion.....	15
17. Planning.....	16
18. Using an External Provider.....	20
19. Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations .....	21
20. Transport.....	22
21. Farm Visits .....	22
22. Water Margin Activities.....	22
23. Water-Based Activities .....	23
24. Swimming.....	24
25. Residential Visits.....	25
26. Overseas Visits .....	26
27. Overseas Expeditions .....	27
28. Exchange Visits.....	28
29. Weather and Clothing.....	28
30. Definition of an 'Adventurous Activity' .....	29
31. Adventurous Activities .....	30
32. Emergency Procedures.....	31
33. Accident and Incident Reporting.....	31
34. The Value and Evaluation of Outdoor Learning .....	31

Appendix 1 – Adventure Activities.....	32
Adventure Activities led by Council/School Employees.....	32
Introduction.....	33
Adventure Activity Licensing.....	33
Open Water Swimming.....	33
Hotel (and other) Swimming Pools without lifeguards.....	33
Canoeing and Kayaking.....	33
Sailing.....	34
Walking in Open Country/Remote Terrain.....	34
Walking (including Hill Walking, Fell Walking, Rambling, etc.).....	35
Rock Climbing (including climbing walls and abseiling).....	35
Abseiling.....	36
Snowsports.....	36
Dry slope skiing and indoor slopes with artificial snow.....	37
Camping and Campcraft.....	38
Orienteering.....	39
Mountain Biking (and Off Road Cycling).....	39
Combined Water/Rock Activities (and other Hybrid Activities).....	40
Diving.....	40
Sub Aqua Provider Questionnaire.....	42
Contacts.....	45
Figure 1.....	46
Categories Of Activity And Levels Of Approval.....	46
Figure 2.....	47
Adventurous Activity Categories.....	47

# Highgate Primary School

## Management of Outdoor Learning and Off-site Activities

### Introduction

Highgate Primary School hereafter referred to as the school/academy acknowledges the immense value of off-site visits and related activities to young people, and fully supports and encourages those that are well planned and managed.

This document provides concise and supportive guidance for the planning and management of off-site visits and related activities.

### 1. Provision of Employer Guidance

The national online guidance resource [OEAP National Guidance \(Guidance for the Management of Off-site visits and LOtC \(Learning Outside the Classroom\) activities\)](http://oeapng.info/) is an invaluable reference document, which should be read alongside this policy. It is available from:

<http://oeapng.info/>

It is a legal expectation that employees **must** work within the requirements their employer's guidance; therefore **school/academy** employees must follow the requirements of this Policy Statement, and the "OEAP National Guidance".

Where a **school/academy** employee commissions Outdoor Learning activity, they must ensure that such commissioned agent has either:

1. adopted **school/academy** or OEAP National Guidance
2. have systems and procedures in place where the standards are not less than those required by OEAP National Guidance.

### 2. **Scope and Remit**

The OEAP National Guidance document [Status Remit and Rationale](#) clarifies the range of employees whose work requires them to use the guidance. In summary, it applies to employees whose work involves any one of the following:

- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of Learning Outside the Classroom;
- facilitating activities for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- deploying staff who will supervise or facilitate experiences of or for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;

This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

For a more expansive explanation of legal expectations, all users of the guidance are strongly recommended to read the OEAP National Guidance document: [Requirements & Recommendations for Employers](#) (Legal framework and employer systems)

## Responsibilities

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places overall responsibility for health and safety on educational visits with the employer:

- For LA maintained, community schools, special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools, pupil referral units, and early years settings, the employer is the local authority. These establishments **must** adhere to this guidance document.
- For academies, foundation schools, and voluntary-aided schools, the employer is usually the governing body or proprietor. Although welcome to do so, these establishments are not obliged to use **LCC** guidance. If using **LCC** guidance, this should be clearly stated. If not using **LCC** guidance, establishments are advised to ensure that the systems in place are as robust as those of **LCC**.

All persons involved in a visit have a specific responsibility, which they should be clear about prior to the visit taking place. Establishments should have a Visit Policy to clarify responsibilities and procedures.

For guidance on developing an establishment off-site visits policy refer to the **Establishment Off-site Visits Policy** template in the Resources section of the **OEAP National Guidance** document: [How to write an Establishment visit Policy](#) or on EVOLVE, resources section.

## Role-specific Requirements and Recommendations

OEAP National Guidance also sets out clear and detailed responsibilities and functions of specific roles that relate to roles found within most **schools and other child settings**. These are:

1. [Member of Board of Governors or Management Board](#)
2. [Head teacher/Principal](#)
3. [Manager of an establishment other than a school](#)
4. [EVC Educational Visits Co-ordinators \(EVCs\)](#)
5. [Visit or Activity Leader](#)
6. [Assistant Visit leader](#)
7. [Volunteer Adult Helper](#)
8. [Those in a position of Parental Authority](#)

Refer to the following responsibility checklists:

- **OEAP National Guidance** checklists: [Visit Leader](#), [EVC](#), [Head/Manager](#), [Parent/Guardian](#), [Management/Governor](#)
- **OEAP National Guidance** document: [Planning Basics](#)
- **OEAP National Guidance** PowerPoint: [Planning Visits, Off-site Activity and LOtC](#)

### 3. Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements

As an employer, the **school/academy** is required to ensure that its employees are provided with

- appropriate guidance relating to visits and Outdoor Learning activity;
- employer-led training courses to support the guidance to ensure that it is understood;
- suitable systems and processes to ensure that those trained are kept updated;
- access to advice, support and further training.

The **appropriate guidance** for the management of outdoor learning and LOtC in the **school/academy** is this Policy document and the **OEAP National Guidance** web site.

For the purposes of day-to-day **updating of information**, **school/academy** EVCs and Visit / Activity Leaders are directed to the website (which includes information on how to access the relevant courses) available on the following web link:

Leicestershire Traded Services website [www.leicestershiretradedservices.org.uk](http://www.leicestershiretradedservices.org.uk)

Where an employee experiences problems with finding the material they are looking for, or require clarification or further help and guidance, they should contact their establishment's Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), or the adviser nominated by their employer.

### 4. Notification of Activities and Visits

There are many varied off-site visits and activities organised by schools, colleges, and Duke of Edinburgh's Award groups. All of these ventures are authorised by the Head Teacher and/or Governing Body but in addition some assistance and general advice can be obtained from Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team, County Hall, LE3 8TA. Tel: 0116 305 5515, email [healthandsafety@leics.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@leics.gov.uk)

If advice is being sought we would ask that sufficient time is allowed for the request to be processed:

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| • School / College Groups                       | 6 weeks prior to the visit |
| • Duke of Edinburgh's Award - In scope activity | 8 weeks prior to the visit |
| - Out of scope activity                         | 4 weeks prior to the visit |
| - Local activity                                | 2 weeks prior to the visit |

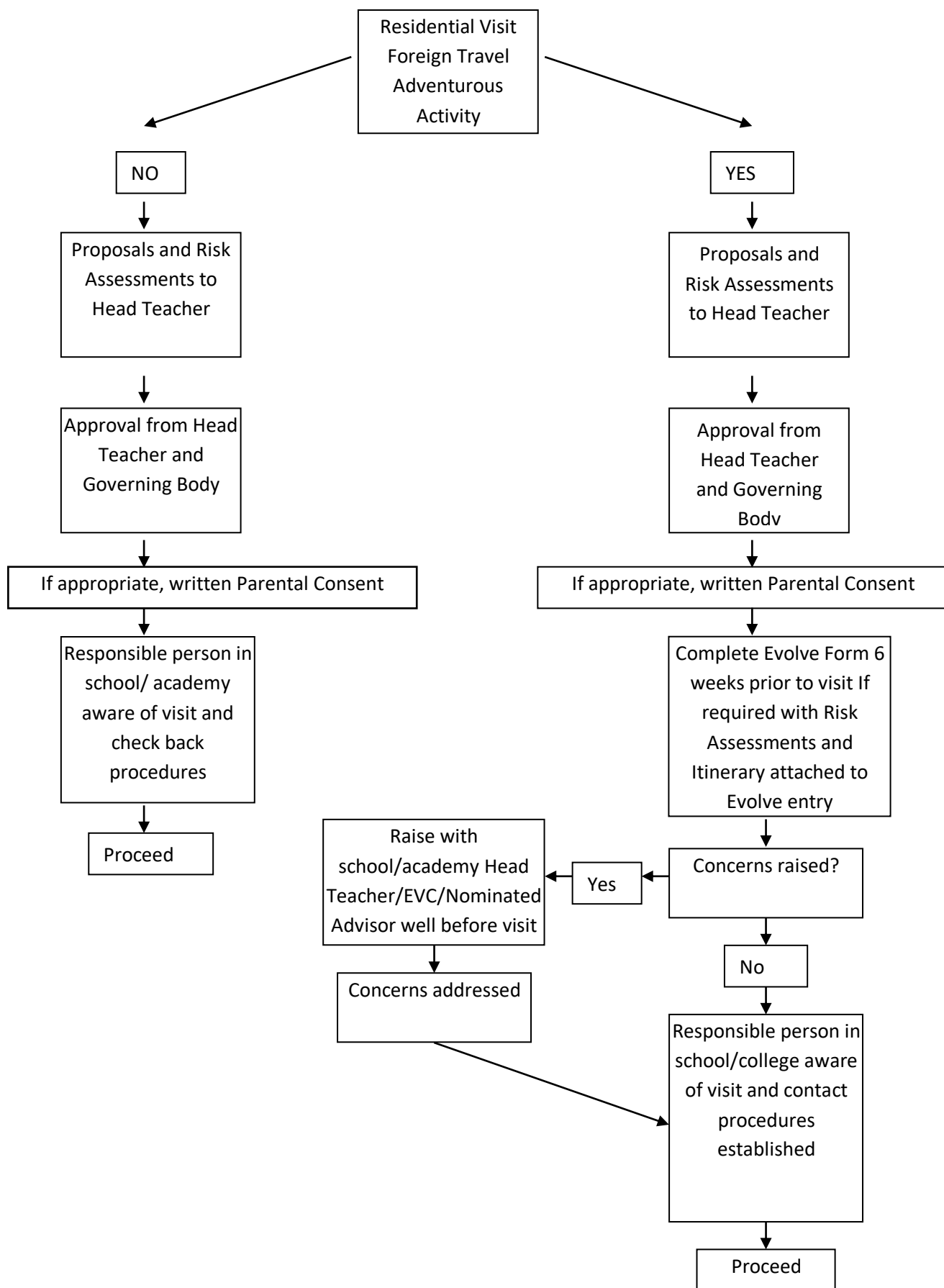
This timescale also allows for adjustments following advice or clarification requested.

Please note that the service cannot give advice on the suitability of walking or trekking routes as these must be surveyed by the school beforehand and assessed by the visit leader immediately before the walk takes place using the principals of **SAGED – staff, activity, group, environment, distance**.

#### **NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE**

**All visits/activities are authorised by the Head Teacher/Head of Centre/Principal and/or Governing Body on behalf of the school/academy. All such visits must be notified to the Head Teacher/Head of Centre/ Principal and/or Governing Body well in advance and an acknowledgement received, leaders must be in receipt of this prior to departure. Failure to do so for school/academy employees would constitute a disciplinary offence.**

## School/Academy Visits Notification Route



## **Establishment Off-site Visits Policy**

As part of this guidance we will be supporting DfE advice and recommending that “Schools must set out health and safety arrangements in a written health and safety policy” or operational guidance. The LA has authority to request any such requirement both as the employer and under section 29(5) of the Education Act 2002. (DfE Advice on legal duties and powers for LAs, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, January 2011).

The establishment policy should reference this guidance document and define how the establishment will manage issues such as consent; the scope of ‘regular and routine visits’ (See section 19) and approval for such visits, for example, see section 20.

Refer to the Establishment Off-site Visits Policy template in the **OEAP National Guidance** document: *How to write an Establishment visit Policy* or EVOLVE, resources section.

Some examples of types of visit are given in Figure 1, below, with some further definitions of ‘adventurous activities’ given in Figure 2, at the end of the document.

### **Notification**

Head Teachers and EVCs should establish timescales for submission of visits that allow time for proper scrutiny – and for any necessary modifications to be made. Some flexibility may have to be allowed for contingencies but a culture of late submission of visits should not be permitted as it tends to result in poor planning. Generally the lead in period should be proportional to the complexity and nature of the visit – so for example residential and overseas visits normally require a longer ‘lead –in’ period.

Where a contract is to be signed and a deposit paid, the application should be submitted with an outline plan before a commitment is made in case of any major issues. In some cases this may mean a visit form is initially completed 12 to 18 months prior to proposed departure. Further details can be added at a later stage.

### **Outcomes and Benefits**

The **school/academy** recognises that Outdoor Education, Learning Outside the Classroom, adventurous activity and a range of recognised sports and physical activities have, as a common thread, the intention to produce positive outcomes in terms personal and social education in addition to improved health and well-being outcomes. Learning opportunities outdoors can provide significant opportunities for participants to engage in a distinctive experience where the measurement of learning gain is complementary and additional to the inherent personal, social and health gains. Work that takes place outside the classroom can provide a very powerful means of developing learning in all curriculum areas, and raise attainment.

It is unlikely that high quality will be achieved with consistency unless the activity takes place within a clear educational philosophy. Educational quality requires participants in activities to be engaged at a level that matches their abilities and development. Activities should, therefore, be adapted to present learning challenges at different levels appropriate to different group members or permit group members to take on different roles. It follows that young people’s progress should be monitored to ensure that they can be continually motivated by new challenges.

Clarity regarding the intended outcomes of the visit will help to ensure that the potential benefits can be achieved.

Work that takes place outside the classroom can provide a very powerful means of developing learning in all curriculum areas, and raise attainment. Experiential learning can also provide opportunities for development in other areas, including:



- Relationships
- Emotional & spiritual
- Cross curricular
- Individual
- Teamwork
- Environmental

Preparatory work should take place in advance of the visit where appropriate. This, in conjunction with activity that will take place during the visit, should feed into any follow up work.

Refer to **OEAP National Guidance document:**

[Rigorous evaluation of LOtC meeting Ofsted expectations](#)

[High Quality Outdoor Education](#) can be used as a tool by visit leaders to assist in both identifying outcomes and in the evaluation of the learning taking place.

## 5. Risk Management

As the employer, the school/academy has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed - requiring them to be reduced to an “acceptable” or “tolerable” level - but not to totally eliminate risks. This requires that proportional (suitable and sufficient) risk management systems are in place, requiring the school/academy to provide such support, training and resources to its employees as is necessary to implement this policy. The risk management of an activity should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating. The school/academy strongly recommends a “Risk-Benefit Assessment” approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes, see section on Outcomes and Benefits. This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is “acceptable”. HSE endorse this approach through their “*Principles of Sensible Risk Management*” and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

There is no legal requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format; but there is a legal requirement for the process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual, or harm several people. Staff should follow school/academy guidelines for completing risk assessments.

**On completing any risk assessments, the establishment should ensure that the documents are signed and dated appropriately and accompanying staff are made aware of the outcomes of the risk assessment.**

Visits that include adventurous activity commonly involve delivery by an external provider (see Section 18) and the provider will have responsibility for risk assessing and managing the activity. As such, the provider’s risk assessment is not the concern of the establishment leader, does not need to be requested from the provider.

Alternative arrangements (Plan B) should be included within the planning process where appropriate, for example, where weather conditions or water levels might be critical, or where an overcrowded venue might necessitate an alternative option.

It is good practice to involve participants in the planning and organisation of visits, as in doing so they will make more informed decisions, and will become more ‘risk aware’ and hence at less risk. They will also have greater ownership of the event.

This is endorsed by HSE in [Principles of Sensible Risk Management](#)

Refer to **OEAP National Guidance** document: [Planning Basics](#) for outdoor learning

Refer to **OEAP National Guidance** document: [Risk Management Good Practice](#)

Refer to **OEAP National Guidance** document: Organising a Residential Visit – Mind Map

Refer to **LCC** Example Risk Assessments found on Evolve – Resources Section.

## 6. Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has:

- either suffered a life threatening injury or fatality;
- is at serious risk;
- or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

As an employer, **LCC** is committed to providing emergency planning procedures to support LA Maintained Schools in the event of a critical incident.

**To activate support from the Major Incident Line, the following telephone numbers should be used:**

**Pager 07659 170195  
Mobile 07786 198283**

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: “**Critical Incident Management**”

These numbers should be carried by leaders at all times during an off-site activity but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. **Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.**

## 7. Monitoring

As an employer, the **school/academy** ensures that there is sample monitoring of the visits and Outdoor Learning activities undertaken by its establishments, either by attaching such monitoring duties to its officers, or by delegating these tasks to establishments. Such monitoring should be in keeping with the recommendations of OEAP National Guidance. There is a clear expectation that the monitoring function is a delegated task, principally carried out through systems put in place by the establishment EVC.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: [Monitoring](#)

## 8. Leader Competence

To be deemed competent, a school/academy Visit / Activity Leader, or Assistant Leader must be able to demonstrate *the ability to operate to the current standards of recognised good practice for that role.*

All staff and helpers must be competent to carry out their defined roles and responsibilities.

OEAP National Guidance sets a clear standard to which school/academy leaders must work. The guidance states:

*“A competent Visit /Activity Leader (or an Assistant Leader where they may take sole responsibility for a sub-group) requires:*

- *Knowledge and understanding of their employer’s guidance supported by establishment-led training. It is good practice for employers to provide formal and accredited training to support their guidance e.g. EVC Training, Visit Leader Training such training may be a requirement prescribed by some employers.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of establishment procedures supported by a structured induction process specified by the establishment.*

- *Knowledge and understanding of the group, the staff, the activity and the venue.*
- *Appropriate experience*
- *In some circumstances (e.g. first aid, adventurous activities) a formally accredited qualification.”*

Staff participating in off-site activities and visits must be aware of the extent of their duty of care and should only be given such responsibilities as are in keeping with the above guidance. It is particularly important that careful consideration of competence issues is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. Establishments should view the original documents and certificates when verifying leader’s qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.

Where a Volunteer Helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship to a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the Risk-Benefit assessment.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: [“\*\*Good Practice Basics\*\*”](#)

### **Assessment**

OEAP National Guidance provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competence. It is an expectation of **school/academy** Policy that all **school/academy** leaders and their assistants have been formally assessed as competent to undertake such responsibilities as they have been assigned in line with the OEAP National guidance.

The EVC and/or Head of establishment must consider the following when assessing the competence of a member of staff to lead a visit:

- a) What experience has the leader in leading or accompanying similar or other visits?
- b) Is the leader competent in planning and managing visits (has s/he completed Visit Leader Training?).
- c) What are the leader’s reasons for undertaking the visit?
- d) Is the leader an employee of the local authority / establishment?
- e) Does the leader have the ability to manage the pastoral welfare of participants?
- f) Does the leader exhibit sound decision making abilities?
- g) What experience has the leader of the participants he/she intends to supervise?
- h) What experience has the leader of the environment and geographical area chosen?
- i) Does the leader possess appropriate qualifications?
- j) If appropriate, what is the leader’s personal level of skill in the activity, and fitness level?
- k) If leading adventurous activities, has the leader been ‘approved’ by the **school/academy**?
- l) Is the leader aware of all relevant guidelines and able to act on these?

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: [Assessment of Activity and Visit Leader](#)

[Competence](#) and [Assessment of Competence](#)

### **LCC Visit Leader Training**

Based on a nationally agreed syllabus, this course is strongly recommended for all those who lead visits and **leader training of some kind is strongly recommended for visit leaders.**

## 9. Charges for Off-site Activities and Visits

Head Teachers/Managers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit/Activity Leaders must take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: [Charges for Off-site Activity](#)

## 10. Vetting and DBS Checks

**School/academy** employees who work *frequently* or *intensively* with, or have *regular access* to young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo an enhanced DBS check as part of their recruitment process.

For the purposes of this guidance:

- *frequently* is defined as "once a week or more";
- *intensively* is defined as 4 days or more in a month or overnight.

However, it must be clearly understood that a DBS check (or other vetting procedure) in itself, is no guarantee as to the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people. The placement of an adult within a situation of professional trust (where young people could be vulnerable to physical or mental exploitation or grooming) should always be on the understanding that an overview based on a common sense risk-benefit assessment process has been considered.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: ["Vetting and DBS Checks"](#)

## 11. Parent / Carer Consent

Section 35 of the Education Act 2004 states: '*Where a visit is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time, then parental consent is not necessary although it is recommended good practice to ensure that parents are informed*'.

*DfE Guidance issued in 2013 states:*

"Written consent from parents is not required for pupils to take part in the majority of off-site activities organised by a school (with the exception of nursery age children) as most of these activities take place during school hours and are a normal part of a child's education at school. However, parents should be told where their child will be at all times and of any extra safety measures required. Written consent is usually only requested for activities that need a higher level of risk management or those that take place outside school hours. The Department has prepared a "one-off" consent form which schools can ask parents to sign when a child enrolls at the school. This will cover a child's participation in any of these types of activities throughout their time at the school. These include adventure activities, off-site sporting fixtures outside the school day, residential visits and all off-site activities for nursery schools which take place at any time (including during school holidays or at the weekend). The form is available via the Evolve website – resources section.

Parents must be told in advance of each activity and must be given the opportunity to withdraw their child from any particular school trip or activity covered by the form."

If schools choose to adopt a version of the DfE 'one-off' consent form they will need to put in place separate arrangements for ensuring that essential information is kept up to date including:

- Emergency contact names and numbers
- Medical issues and allergies

This guidance recommends that establishments continue to be use specific consent forms for more complex visits.

## **12. Requirement to Ensure Effective Supervision**

In general terms, the Law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is “effective”. However, as an exception to the above, Ofsted and DfE guidance prescribe ratios for Early Years; see [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)

Effective supervision should be determined by proper consideration of:

- age (including the developmental age) of the group;
- gender issues; such as mix of accompanying staff;
- ability of the group (including special learning needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc.);
- nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions;
- staff competence.

A visit must not go ahead where either the visit leader, EVC, or Head Teacher is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision exists. See Appendix 2.

Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group.

Particular consideration should be given to the additional implications that may arise if staff are to be accompanied by family members (or partners) on visits.

### **Children of group leaders and other supervising staff**

There are a number of issues of concern if staff propose to take their own children on a visit, for example:

- the child may not be insured;
- staff may be distracted by dealing with their own children, particularly if they are tired or unwell and this may compromise their ability to carry out their responsibilities for the rest of the group effectively;
- there may be additional costs incurred, which should be met by the staff member;
- the child is physically able and of a similar age to the group if taking part in activities.

Head Teachers/Managers and EVCs should review the risk assessment to consider whether the presence of a supervisor’s child will require these assessments to be modified. **Staff taking their own children on a visit should not be included in the calculation of the overall staff ratio i.e. there must be sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced staff to safely manage the group without them if necessary.**

**The Head Teacher/Manager must specifically check if insurance cover is in place for the child/children concerned.**

Refer to **OEAP National Guidance** documents: [Group Management and Supervision](#) , [Ratios and Effective Supervision](#) , [Vetting and DBS Checks](#)

### 13. Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management.

Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit. Establishment policy should clarify the circumstances where a preliminary visit is a requirement.

It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of the nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes that are now available, thus reducing bureaucracy.

Examples of such schemes include:

- The LOtC Quality Badge
- AALS licensing
- Adventure mark
- NGB centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

Refer to: **OEAP National Guidance** document [Preliminary Visits and provider Assurances](#)

### 14. Insurance for Off-site Activities and Visits

Employer's Liability Insurance is a statutory requirement and **the school/academy should check that it** holds a policy that indemnifies it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person employed by it. This cover should extend to those persons who are acting in a voluntary capacity as assistant supervisors. **The school/academy should check that it** also holds Public Liability insurance, indemnifying it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury from persons not in its employ, as well as for the accidental loss of, or damage caused to, property. Employees (as agents of the employer) are indemnified against all such claims, as are voluntary helpers acting under the direction of the employer's staff. The indemnity covers activities such as off-site activities and visits organised by all establishments and settings for which the employer is responsible.

The **school/academy** should also check that some level of Personal Accident Insurance is provided for all **school/academy** employees in the course of their employment, providing predetermined benefits in the event of an accident. However, Visit/ Activity Leaders should be advised that they should consider taking out additional limited personal accident cover either through the **school/academy**, privately, or obtain cover through a professional association.

**School/academy** Visit and Activity leaders should contact their Insurance Provider to seek clarification of the above, including any circumstances requiring early notification of specialist activities to the insurer. They should also ensure they have obtained current information regarding any special policies that may be available to offer more comprehensive cover.

Appropriate insurance must be in place for all visits.

For travel within the European Union (plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland), all participants must hold a valid EHIC (European Health Insurance Card). See [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) as this may change as the negotiations for leaving the EU proceed.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: "[Insurance](#)"

## 15. First Aid

First aid provision should form part of the risk assessment for all visits. This will help to determine first aid staffing and equipment.

On each visit one of the staff must be prepared to take the lead in managing first aid and take the role of appointed person. It is recommended that a competent first aider accompany visits, with a readily available first aid kit and the arrangements for providing first aid must be clear to all staff involved.

Competence may be recognised by prior knowledge and experience, or, preferably, as a result of formal training. Leaders are encouraged to attend a course run by the Red Cross, St. John Ambulance, First Response or other HSE recognised training provider.

At least one of the staff on any residential visit must hold a current First Aid qualification.

The level of staff competence which may be required will depend on many factors including:

- The nature of the programme and whether it is residential (**see note above regarding qualification**)
- Whether the programme includes adventurous activities
- The numbers in the group
- The extent to which "outside" first aid assistance is available (e.g. at a residential centre)
- The environment and particularly whether it is abroad or remote.
- The health and medical needs of group members.

First Aid requirements for Early Years are specified and must be adhered to; see [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#).

If staff are delivering outdoor and adventurous activities the leader (and/or assistant) must hold a current first-aid certificate and carry a suitable first-aid kit. (Where employees hold Outdoor Activity coaching qualifications, they will normally be required by the governing body of the sport to hold a current first aid certificate for the award to be valid). It is desirable for them to hold one of the HSE approved first aid courses designed to train people to cope with first aid situations in the outdoor environment.

Advice and assistance in arranging these courses can be obtained from the Health Safety & Wellbeing Service 0116 305 5515. Where adventure activities are provided by an AALA licensed provider, instructors should hold recognised first aid qualifications, in which case it may not be essential for school/youth service staff to hold a qualification.

Refer to **OEAP Employer Guidance** document: [First Aid](#)

## 16. Inclusion

Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion. If a visit needs to cater for young people with special needs, every *reasonable* effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

Establishments should take all *reasonably practicable* measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion should be promoted and addressed for all visits and reflected in establishment policy, thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- an entitlement to participate
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- integration through participation with peers

Employers, Head Teachers/Managers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit Leaders should be aware of the extent to which Inclusion is or is not a legal issue.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to:

- treat a disabled young person less favourably;
- fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: [Special educational needs and disability](#)

## 17. Planning

Planning should reflect the consideration of legal and good practice requirements, ensuring:

- The plan is based on establishment procedures and employer guidance.
- All staff (including any adult volunteer helpers) and the young people to be involved, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk management process.
- Those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained.
- Proportionate assurances have been obtained from any providers (making full use of national schemes that accredit that assurances have already been obtained by credible inspection regimes).
- Designated emergency contact(s) have been identified that will work on a 24/7 basis where required.
- All details of the activity provision are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity.

Other benefits include:

- Having a central record of all visits;
- Having a full record of staff experience, which provides a database of evidence to support decisions on competence;
- Providing a central record of staff qualifications;
- The EVC is able to produce customised reports for governors, Ofsted etc;
- If staff use the system regularly they rapidly become fluent and confident;
- All staff have ready access to employer guidance relating to visits.

If establishments choose to use other systems to record planning and risk management of visits (other than residential; overseas and adventure activities) they must ensure they are thorough and robust.

The extent of planning required is related to the complexity of the visit, see:

- Diagram 1: found below.
- **OEAP National Guidance** document: [Visit Leader Checklist](#)



- **OEAP National Guidance** [RADAR](#) model: based on SAGED: Staffing, Activity, Group, Environment, Distance.

It is strongly recommended that at a very early stage of the planning process, the provisional staffing team carry out a brain storming exercise in order to identify the benefits and learning outcomes that the activity (or range of activities) might achieve. If the outcomes are to be evaluated with any rigor (an Ofsted expectation), then it will be essential that these outcomes are prioritised, and appropriately targeted. A record of these outcomes will help keep the plan focussed and also be a vital part of the risk management process in providing some objectivity in a “Risk Benefit Analysis”. Once the targeted outcomes have been recorded, it will then be possible to identify appropriate on-going review and evaluation strategies, including indicators.

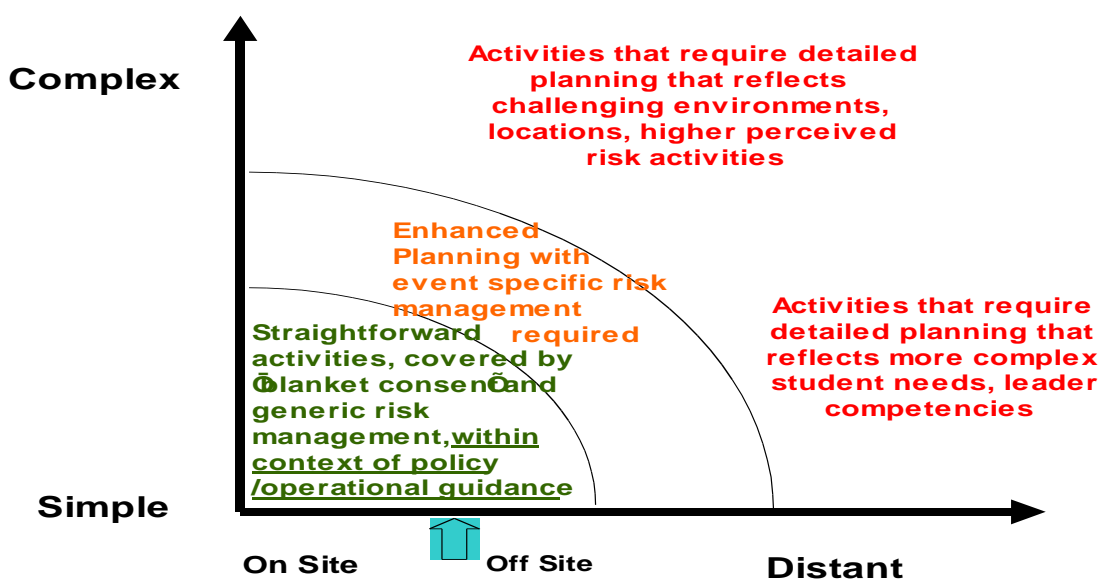
To reduce bureaucracy and encourage activity, establishments need to take account of the legalities regarding a requirement for formal consent. When an activity is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time and no parental contributions are requested, then a formal consent is not necessary. However, in the interests of good relations between the establishment and the home, it is good practice to ensure that those in a position of parental responsibility are fully informed.

This supports the move towards developing activity-specific policies at establishment level for regular or routine activities. Such policies should be robust and equate to “operational guidance” that makes it clear how the activity should be planned and delivered, meeting all necessary recommendations and requirements, as well as assuring educational quality.

The degree of complexity of a particular plan or policy (along with its supporting procedures) will need to reflect the nature and complexity of several variables that can impact on any given activity. These variables can be remembered as “STAGED” as explained below.

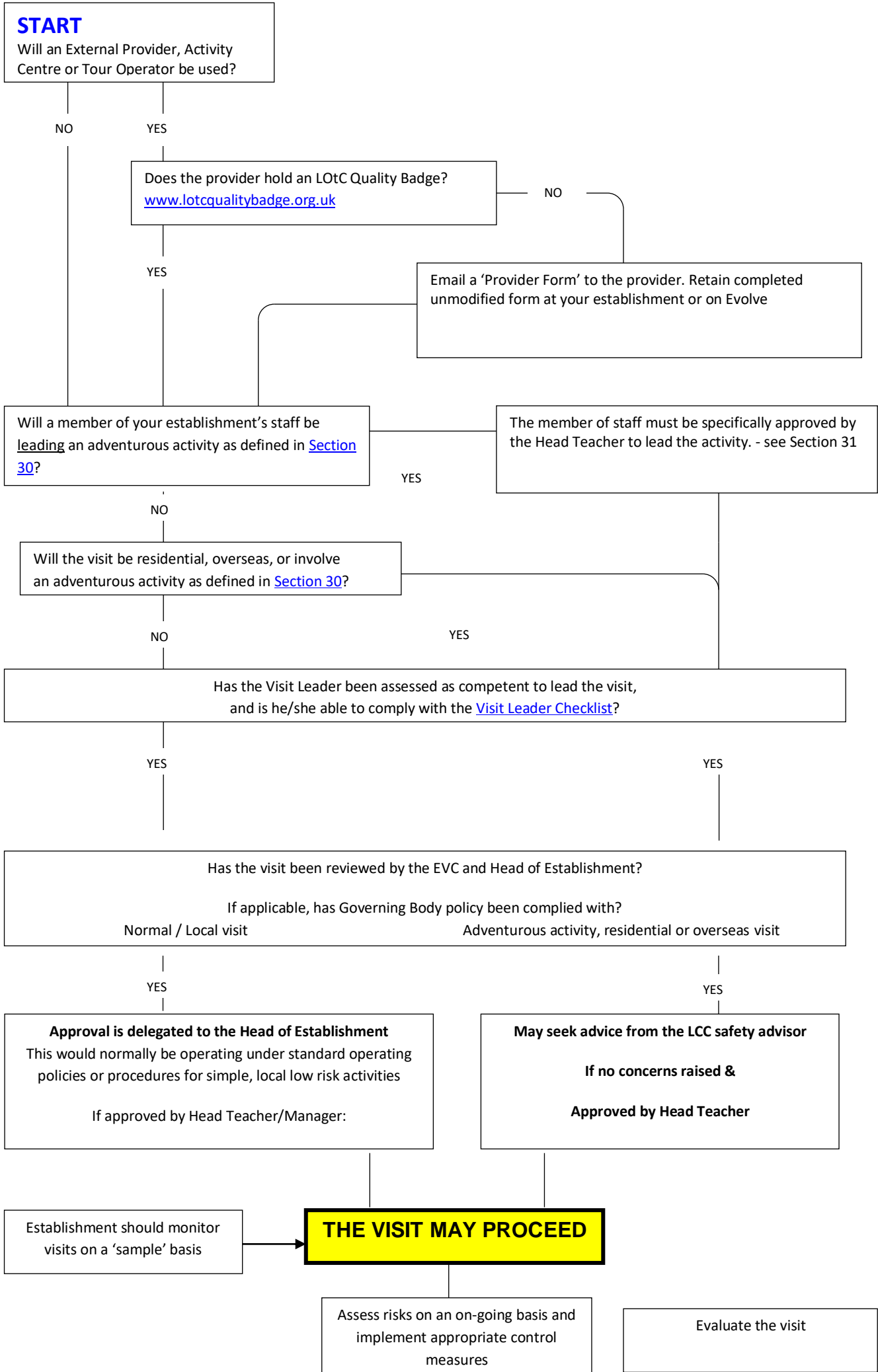
- **Staffing requirements** – trained? Experienced? Competent? Ratios?
- **Activity characteristics** – start? finish? possible delays? Connections? specialist? Insurance issues? Licensable?
- **Group characteristics** – prior experience? Ability? Behaviour? Special and medical needs?
- **Environmental conditions** – like last time? Impact of weather? Water levels?
- **Distance from support mechanisms in place at the home base** – transport? Residential?

Diagram 1



Refer to LOtC National Guidance document: [\*\*\*“Planning Basics”\*\*\*](#)

Refer to LOtC National Guidance Power Point: [\*\*\*“Planning Visits Off-site Activity and LOtC”\*\*\*](#)



## 18. Using an External Provider

An 'External Provider' normally provides one or more elements on an activity or visit such as instruction, staffing, guiding, or accommodation. This may be, for example:

- an Activity Centre
- a Ski Company
- an Educational Tour Operator
- an Overseas Expedition Provider
- a Climbing Wall where instruction is provided by climbing wall staff
- a Freelance Instructor of adventurous activities
- a Youth Hostel (where instruction is provided)
- a Voluntary Organisation (e.g. Scout Association), where instruction is provided

For the purposes of **school/academy** approval, an External Provider is **NOT**:-

- a Campsite
- Museums, galleries, etc.
- Tourist attractions
- Theme Park
- Farm
- a Coach, Train, or Airline company
- a Swimming Pool
- a Climbing Wall where instruction is provided by a member of your establishment's

### Residential Providers

You must make reasonable checks to ensure that the accommodation is suitable for your group. There should be appropriate security arrangements to prevent unauthorised persons entering the accommodation, separate male and female accommodation and washing facilities with staff accommodation close to participants' accommodation. In the UK accommodation should be: covered by a current fire safety risk assessment and / or advice has been sought from a fire officer and implemented. If abroad, the accommodation complies with fire, health and safety regulations which apply in the country concerned.

Some residential providers may hold a LOTC Quality Badge. If not it may be helpful to use the Provider Form to gather this information (and retain evidence). Alternatively you could carry out a pre-visit and take a checklist.

The decision about the use of an external provider is the responsibility of the visit leader, EVC, and Head of establishment. Further steps may include:

- Asking for written references from other groups if the provider is not known locally, and contacting the referees directly;
- Inviting presentations and quotations from providers offering a similar service to ensure that you are getting good value for money;
- Visiting a course being run for another group to observe standards and talk "informally" to staff from that group.

To confirm that all aspects of the operation of the provider are satisfactory, the establishment must ensure that either:

- a) The Provider holds an LOfC Quality Badge [www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk](http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk)

**Or**

- b) A 'Provider Form' has been satisfactorily completed by the provider.

Note: If a Provider holds an [AALA licence](#) (and/or any other accreditation) but not an LOfC Quality Badge, then a Provider Form is still required.

### **For Providers that hold an LOfC Quality Badge**

Check that the provider's Quality Badge will be valid on the date of your visit ([click here](#)). Staff must ensure the provider has at least **£5 million** public liability. No further action is necessary, other than to check the suitability of the provider/venue in relation to the intended aims or learning outcomes for the particular group. A pre-visit and recommendation from previous users will help you decide on its suitability.

See [www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk](http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk)

### **For Providers that do not hold an LOfC Quality Badge**

- Download a Provider Form from the Evolve website – resources section.
- Complete the top section.
- Send Provider Form to the provider (email, fax, post).
- On its return check that it has been satisfactorily completed.
- Keep Provider Form on file together with all other relevant documentation or upload to Evolve.

**Important:** The Provider Form should be sent to the provider at the time of making a provisional booking and no deposits should be committed prior to its satisfactory completion and return.

If the Provider has made any alterations to the wording of the Provider Form or is unable to comply, then you must discuss this with the Provider, and if necessary seek advice from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team prior to making a commitment with the Provider.

The satisfactory completion of an Provider Form does not necessarily signify that the service on offer will be appropriate for the young people from your establishment. A pre-visit and recommendation from previous users will help you decide on its suitability.

The above procedure is **not** sufficient for Overseas Expeditions (i.e. those which typically take place in remote areas of the world and/or in developing countries), for which separate arrangements are applicable and **must** be complied with; see [Appendix 1 – Adventure Activities and Overseas Expeditions](#).

## **19. Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations**

Employers, Head Teachers/Managers, EVCs and Leaders should have a basic understanding of where and when the provision of adventurous activities is legally regulated.

The Activity Centre (Young Persons Safety) Act 1995 established the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations and the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA), initially responsible to the DfE. The scheme is now the direct responsibility of HSE and operated through the Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS).

The intention of the regulations is to provide a regulatory framework to protect children, parents, teachers and schools when using providers of defined adventurous activities in closely defined

environments. The regulations and supporting inspection regime provide a formal process of professional inspection to accredit that providers have effective safety management systems and processes, meeting a national standard.

The definitive source of advice on the Licensing Regulations is to be found in the Health and Safety Executive publication: ["Guidance to the Licensing Authority on Adventure Activity Licensing Regulations 2004"](#).

Leaders should be aware that the AALS license is an assurance of safety. It does not accredit educational or activity quality.

**Regulations surrounding academies are complex so staff should contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team before organising potentially In-scope activities.**

Refer to LOtC National Guidance document: [ALA Licensing](#)

## **20. Transport**

Careful thought must be given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits. Statistics demonstrate that it is much more dangerous to travel to an activity than to engage in it and establishments **must** follow any specialist guidance provided in the **school/academy** transport procedures, if applicable. All national and local regulatory requirements **must** be followed.

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey, giving proper consideration to issues of driver-distraction when considering what supervision is required for the specific group of passengers being transported in a minibus.

Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration. Where this occurs, there should be recorded procedures.

Refer to **OEAP National Guidance document:** ["Transport: General Considerations"](#)

Refer to **OEAP National Guidance document:** ["Transport in Private Cars"](#)

## **21. Farm Visits**

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

Refer to **Farming & Countryside Education:** [www.face-online.org.uk](http://www.face-online.org.uk)

Refer to **OEAP National Guidance document:** [Farm Visits](#)

## **22. Water Margin Activities**

This section applies to:

**Activities that take place near or in water – such as a walk along a riverbank or seashore, collecting samples from ponds and streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow\* water. It does not apply to swimming and other activities that require water safety or rescue qualifications and equipment, or water-going craft.**

\*In this context, paddling means walking in shallow sheltered water (below knee height on the participants).

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

At the outset the establishment must decide whether the activity:

a) Falls **within** the definition in bold above - in which case the guidance below applies,

Or

b) **Exceeds** the definition in bold above - in which case this is a water-based adventurous activity and [Section 23](#) applies.

All staff involved in water-margin activities should be conversant with the guidance contained within [Group Safety at Water Margins](#). This document must be made available to all supervising adults in advance of the visit.

As with all visits, where appropriate there should be an approved alternative 'Plan B' that could be used where conditions dictate, and for which parental consent has been obtained if necessary. The leader must have previous relevant experience, and must have been assessed as competent to lead the activity by the EVC and/or Head Teacher.

### **23. Water-Based Activities**

For clarification of the differences between water-margin and water-based activities see [Section 22](#)

The **school/academy** acknowledges the immense educational benefits that water-based activities can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages water-based activities that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted. In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

The following are not regarded as adventurous activities:

- Swimming in publicly lifeguarded pools - see [Section 24](#)
- Water-margin activities as defined in [Section 22](#)
- Use of commercial craft, tourist boat trips, and similar activities for which young people would not normally wear personal buoyancy.

With the exception of the above, all other forms of water-based activities are regarded as adventurous activities.

The responsibility for the safety of participants in an adventurous activity will rest with either:

a) **An external provider** - see Section 18

The provider must hold a [LOtC Quality Badge](#) or complete a Provider Form

Note: If a Provider holds an [AALA licence](#) (and/or any other accreditation) but not a LOtC Quality Badge, then an Provider Form is still required.

Note: Whilst the responsibility for the safety of participants rests with the provider, the accompanying staff retain a 'pastoral' duty of care.

Or

b) **A member of your establishment's staff** – (see Section 31 and for further details on adventure activities refer to **the OEA for advice**). This person must be specifically approved by the **school/academy** to lead the activity.

In order to participate in water-based activities, participants should normally be water confident. Participants who lack water confidence may still be able to take part subject to consideration of all factors, including the activity itself and supervision arrangements. The level of water confidence of all participants must be known by the activity leader prior to the commencement of water-based activities.

Leaders should have knowledge of the water conditions/hazards (and potential changes) that might be encountered, and prepare accordingly. Local advice must be sought where appropriate, e.g. coastguard, harbour master, other site users, etc.

Personal buoyancy conforming to the appropriate National Governing Body must be worn at all times by all participants in water based activities, except, at the discretion of the activity leader, where the activity:

- a) takes place in a swimming pool, **or**
- b) is 'swimming', **or**
- c) is an activity for which personal buoyancy would not normally be worn by young people.

## **24. Swimming**

The **school/academy** acknowledges the immense educational benefits that swimming activities can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages swimming activities that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted.

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken. For paddling refer to [Section 22](#) Water Margin Activities.

All swimming activities and venues must be included within the visit plan, and lifeguarding arrangements checked in advance. This is particularly important in respect of visits abroad, where for example, a hotel pool may be available.

Particular consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Unknown locations and hazards, especially overseas.
- Changing environmental conditions.
- Supervisor complacency & lack of transferable knowledge.
- Adherence to local advice.
- Preparation and knowledge of young people, i.e. is it a planned activity?

**Young people must be supervised by a competent adult at all times whilst undertaking swimming activities. The following criteria apply:**

### **For Swimming pools (lifeguarded):**

- UK Swimming Pool safety is guided by various Health and Safety at Work Acts and Regulations. Pool operators have a duty to take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure that teaching and coaching activities are conducted safely.
- For publicly lifeguarded pools abroad, the establishment's staff must seek assurances that appropriate lifeguard cover is in place prior to participants entering the water.
- Unless suitably qualified, the establishment's staff should not have responsibility for lifeguarding. However, they do retain a pastoral role for participants at all times either through direct or 'remote' supervision.
- For swimming lessons, the **school/academy** should ensure the swimming teacher in charge or other pool employees/responsible adults supervising the participants are qualified according to current guidelines.

**Refer to National Guidance: [Swimming Pools](#) and [Open Water Swimming](#)**

**For open water swimming and pools without lifeguards refer to [Appendix 1 Adventure Activities & Overseas Expeditions](#)**



## 25. Residential Visits

The **school/academy** acknowledges the immense educational benefits that residential visits can potentially bring to children and young people, and fully supports and encourages residential visits that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted.

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

### Supervision on Residential Visits

Mixed parties engaged in journeys involving an overnight stay should normally be accompanied by at least one adult of each sex. In this case the responsible adult may be a parent or student over the age of 18, acceptable to the group leader, assessed as being suitable by the Head Teacher/Manager and DBS checked in accordance with council / employer guidance.

In Primary Schools where children are under 7 years of age it may be acceptable for female teachers only to accompany mixed parties provided the Governors, Head Teacher, parents and staff involved are satisfied that this is an appropriate arrangement.

**School/academy** staff retain a duty of care for young people throughout the visit – even if a provider is delivering activities or assisting with overnight supervision. They are always responsible for pastoral care and must be able to deal with an emergency effectively, at all times.

The **school/academy** has clear written policies relating to staff conduct on residential visits. Staff must not smoke in front of young people and should smoke away from buildings and clearly it would be unprofessional for staff to be intoxicated on any visit. There are clear disciplinary procedures in the terms and conditions of employment of staff in relation to Drugs and Alcohol. Policies should be discussed with volunteers as part of their briefing / induction.

Head Teachers, EVCs and Visit Leaders should check:

- That suitable and sufficient Insurance is in place for all participants (including staff and volunteers)
- All staff have been had appropriate DBS checks
- The accommodation is suitable for the group (for example the provider may hold a LOTC Quality Badge, or should complete the relevant sections of the Provider Form. Also refer to [Section 18](#))

Refer to **OEAP Employer Guidance** document: [Residential Visits Mindmap](#)

### Non-prescription medicines and residential visits

**School/academy** policy is that non-prescription medicines should not normally be given to pupils. This policy is designed to protect the best interests of the child, as well as those of staff. It takes into account several factors:

- the child may well be able to return home if s/he is unwell;
- generally the child will return home at the end of school and a parent/guardian can administer medication if appropriate;
- it should be relatively straightforward to visit a doctor, if required.

However this approach may be inappropriate **on a residential visit**. If a child develops toothache during the night, or a young woman is suffering from period pains, it may be both impractical (and inappropriate)

to call a doctor or visit casualty. In some circumstances (during a long coach journey to France for example) it may be difficult to visit a doctor to deal with a problem such as a migraine.

Taking into account the circumstances it may be appropriate, in accordance with the expectation of the 'duty of care', which the group leader holds, for him/her to use judgement and common sense (as a parent would) and provide a mild painkiller, however:

"Staff should **never** give a non-prescribed medicine to a child unless there is specific prior written permission from the parents. Where the Head Teacher agrees to administer a non-prescribed medicine it **must** be in accordance with the employer's policy. The employer's policy should set out the circumstances under which staff may administer non-prescribed medicines. Criteria, in the national standards for under 8s day care providers, make it clear that non-prescription medicines should not normally be administered. Where a non-prescribed medicine is administered to a child it should be recorded .....and the parents informed..... **A child under 16 should never be given aspirin or medicines containing ibuprofen unless prescribed by a doctor**".

### **(DFE - Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings)**

It must be emphasised that the group leader would take this role on a voluntary basis. Establishments should clarify their approach to non-prescribed medicines in their Visit Policy. They may wish to use a modified version of the Model Letter, to obtain parental consent for providing non-prescription medicines. Alternatively this could be incorporated into the main consent form for the visit.

## **26. Overseas Visits**

The **school/academy** acknowledges the immense educational benefits that overseas visits can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages overseas visits that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted. In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

**For all visits** it is essential that consideration is given to the following:

- a) Culture: food and drink, local customs, religion, expected behaviour/dress, gender issues, sanitary arrangements, corruption, political stability, local financial information, alcohol & drugs.
- b) Accommodation: checked for suitability, security, safety precautions and emergency evacuation.
- c) Transport systems have been assessed as safe for use.
- d) Advice should be sought regarding the need for inoculations (or other treatment) to be taken as a precautionary measure prior to the visit.

The visit leader should consider the relevant country information from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) ('Home' page, 'Travel & Living Abroad', 'Travel Advice by Country'). All relevant FCO information should be circulated amongst the staff team.

For travel within the European Union (plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland), all participants must hold a valid EHIC (European Health Insurance Card). See [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) and <https://www.ehic.org.uk/Internet/home.do>

### **Organising your own visit**

Visit Organisers who decide to arrange travel independently may seek the advice and help of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Travel Advice Unit or the government funded Central Bureau for Educational Visits (CBEVE).

Under The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992, schools/academies may themselves become organisers, where they contract directly with hotels and apartments for accommodation and with an airline, coach or ferry company for transport and/or with others for excursions.

As an organiser, however, the school/academy would have to provide sufficient guarantee for the refund of money paid over and for the repatriation of the consumer in the event of insolvency.

Group leaders organising their own visits should be aware of the EC Directive on Package Travel, Package Holidays and the Package Tours Regulations 1992, as mentioned above.

These regulations impose obligations and liabilities on the “re-organiser” or “other party to the contract” in the case of package travel. Schools/academies organising their own educational visits abroad should be able to justify why their visit is not within scope of these Regulations.

- A “package” is a combination of any two of: accommodation, transport and other tourist services. To be exempt from the Regulations, a package should not be a regular event.
- The regulations should not apply for visits that have a clear educational aim and are part of the curriculum of the pupils. Schools should therefore clearly state the main educational aim(s) of the visit on their visit approval forms.
- The package travel regulations are quite complex and schools unsure of their situation should contact the Department of Trade and Industry or CBEVE. The DTI advise that school ski trips (which are voluntary activities undertaken by some pupils) fall within the regulations unless they are organised only occasionally. Schools are therefore advised generally to organise ski visits through bonded tour operators. For schools making their own accounts under the control of a trustee may be the only realistic option.

Refer to **National Guidance:** [Overseas Visits](#)

## 27. Overseas Expeditions

The **school/academy** acknowledges the immense educational benefits that overseas expeditions can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages overseas expeditions that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted. In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

Overseas Expeditions (for the purposes of this document) are defined as those, which typically involve journeying in remote areas of the world and/or in developing countries.

There are stringent requirements on Overseas Expedition providers, and establishments may therefore need to allow **up to 18 months for internal scrutiny to be completed.**

Overseas Expeditions should only be approved by the Head Teacher if the provider either:

- a) Holds an LOtC Quality Badge [www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk](http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk) **or**
- b) Provides a statement of compliance with [Guidance for Overseas Expeditions, Edition 3](#)

The contract for the expedition **must** be with the school/academy not direct with parents (refer to Section K: Contracts and Legal Issues, of the above guidance).

For providers that do not hold a LOtC Quality Badge, ‘Guidance for Overseas Expeditions, Edition 3’ should be referred to when the proposal is initiated. This document contains information for both establishments and providers, and includes a checklist of vital aspects that **must** be considered prior to

the establishment making a commitment with an external provider. Overseas expedition providers are required to comply with the minimum standards specified in this document.

When planning an expedition and selecting a provider, establishments should particularly consider the educational aims of the venture, that appropriate progression takes place, and that the requirements relating to 'Best Value' are met.

**Visit leaders may find it beneficial to (the school/academy strongly recommends that leaders do) attend the one day course entitled 'Overseas Expeditions Fieldwork Course organised by the Royal Geographical Society [www.rgs.org/eac](http://www.rgs.org/eac)**

Refer to National Guidance: [Overseas Expeditions](#) and [Mind map overseas Expeditions](#) and also on EVOLVE, resources section.

## 28. Exchange Visits

The school/academy has adopted the **OEAP National Guidance** document: [Young People's Exchange Visits](#) on the OEAP NG website section 7f. **School/academy staff** are required to adhere to all relevant aspects of this guidance when organising exchange visits and homestays.

Please note that DBS checks may be required for host families in the UK – but host families abroad should fill in the [Host Family Stay Information Form](#) (see the above guidance document – translations are available). Control measures and contingency plans outlined in this guidance should be put in place.

- Refer to the British Council (Learning) [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)
- Refer to **OEAP National Guidance document:** [Exchanges & home-stays](#) and [Mind map Student Exchange](#)
- Refer to **OEAP National Guidance:** [Overseas visits](#)
- **Overseas Expeditions:** refer to [Appendix 1 Adventure Activities & Overseas Expeditions](#)
- See also EVOLVE, National Library, 'other documents' section for templates

## 29. Weather and Clothing

Where appropriate, the leader must obtain and act upon recent weather forecasts and local advice.

Participants should be adequately clothed according to:

- The time of year, prevailing weather conditions, altitude and exposure to elements;
- Likely changes in weather;
- The experience and strength of the party;
- The nature of the visit and environment.

When venturing away from immediate help, leaders should consider the need for:

- Comfort, insulation and shelter for a casualty;
- Comfort, insulation and shelter for the whole group;
- Provision of emergency food and drink;

- Torch;
- Possible need of signalling equipment and/or mobile phone (NB. Mobile phones may not work in remote areas);

It is primarily the responsibility of the visit leader, in consultation with other staff where appropriate, to modify or curtail the visit or activity (e.g. Plan B) to suit changed or changing circumstances - for example: over-busy lunch area, rain, rising water levels, etc.

### 30. Definition of an ‘Adventurous Activity’

The following activities are regarded as ‘adventurous’:

- All activities in ‘open country’ (see below)
- Swimming (all forms, excluding publicly lifeguarded pools)
- Camping
- Canoeing / kayaking
- Sailing / windsurfing / kite surfing
- Rafting or improvised rafting
- Use of powered safety/rescue craft
- All other forms of boating (excluding commercial transport)
- Water skiing
- Snorkel and aqualung activities
- Hill walking and Mountaineering
- Rock climbing (including climbing walls)
- Abseiling
- River/gorge walking or scrambling
- Coaststeering/coastal scrambling/sea level traversing
- Underground exploration
- Shooting and archery
- Snowsports (skiing, snowboarding, and related activities), including dry slope
- Air activities (excluding commercial flights)
- Horse riding
- Motor sport – all forms
- High level ropes courses
- Off road cycling/ mountain biking
- ‘Extreme’ sports
- Other activities (e.g. initiative exercises) involving skills inherent in any of the above

Refer to Figure 2, below.

‘Open country’ is normally defined as land above 300m, or more than 1.5 km (30 mins) from vehicular access. However, this is an arbitrary boundary and there may be occasions where this definition is inappropriate.

For further details on adventure activities refer to section 31, below.

The following activities are **not** regarded as ‘adventurous’. However, these activities must be supervised by a member of staff who has previous relevant experience and who in the opinion of the EVC and Head of Establishment is competent to supervise the activity:

- Walking in parks or on non-remote country paths
- Field studies - unless in the environments stated in ‘open country’
- Swimming in publicly lifeguarded pools
- Theme parks
- Tourist attractions (including commercial ‘show caves’)
- Pedal go-karts
- Ice skating (rink)
- Farm visits
- Local traffic survey
- Museum, library, etc.
- Physical Education and sports fixtures (other than the above)
- Water-margin activities as defined in [Section 22](#)

## 31. Adventurous Activities

The **academy/school** acknowledges the immense educational benefits that adventurous activities can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages adventurous activities that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted. In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

The responsibility for the safety of participants in an adventurous activity will rest with either:

a) **An external provider**

The provider must hold a [LOtC Quality Badge](#) or complete an Provider Form

Note: If a Provider holds an [AALA licence](#) (and/or any other accreditation) but not an LOtC Quality Badge, then a Provider Form is still required.

Note: Whilst the responsibility for the safety of participants rests with the provider, the accompanying staff continue to retain a 'pastoral' duty of care.

**Or**

b) **A member of your establishment's staff**

This person must be specifically approved by **the school/academy** to lead the activity.

For further details on adventure activities refer to [Appendix 1 – Adventure Activities and Overseas Expeditions](#)

### Leader Qualification for Adventurous Activities

In Appendix 1 of this document the appropriate qualification for an instructor is given for each activity. Teachers who provide these activities to young people on roll of their own school/academy are not required to be licensed by AALA but the same standards will be applied and they will need to hold relevant National Governing Body qualifications outlined in Appendix 1 of this document. Non possession of such an NGB award may be for a variety of reasons, therefore it does not necessarily mean such a person is not able to take such an activity. If the school/academy is leading an adventure activity such as canoeing, the Head Teacher and/or Governing body must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably competent to lead or instruct pupils in the activity.

### Criteria for Approval

Approval will normally be given where the leader of the activity has recent relevant experience, is appropriately qualified through the relevant National Governing Body and holds an appropriate first aid qualification.

In cases where no National Governing Body exists, the **school/academy** will make a decision based on factors which may include: technical advice, the leader's stated competence, observed competence, past experience, and attendance at training courses.

Internal approval within the school/academy will always be subject to a requirement that the leader must act at all times within the remit of his/her qualifications, and in accordance with National Governing Body Guidelines where these exist. Reference to the other aspects of the visit such as general management and supervision skills, the risk assessment should also be taken into consideration.

### 32. Emergency Procedures

Establishments should ensure that their Health and Safety policy includes off-site visits.

Staff involved in a visit must be aware of and adhere to their establishment's policy on emergency procedures.

For visits that take place outside normal establishment hours:

- A completed [Emergency Card – Visit Leader](#) (or equivalent) must be with the Visit Leader at all times, **and**
- A completed [Emergency Card – Home Contacts](#) (or equivalent) must be with the emergency home contact(s) at all times.

Refer to **OEAP Employer Guidance document:** [Critical Incident Management: The Employer's Role, Emergency Planning: The Establishment's Role, Emergency Procedures for Visit Leaders](#)

### 33. Accident and Incident Reporting

Establishment managers must ensure they meet the requirements of the RIDDOR regulations and good practice. Refer to **school/academy** procedures and forms. Accidents are reported via the AssessNET system.

Academies must ensure they have equivalent procedures to meet the requirements of the law and good practice.

### 34. The Value and Evaluation of Outdoor Learning

The Ofsted report "[Learning Outside the Classroom – How Far Should You Go?](#)" (October 2008) makes statements in the strongest terms to support the value of Outdoor Learning, including the fact that it raises achievement. Head Teachers, Managers, OVCs and Visit Leaders are strongly recommended to familiarise themselves with the main content of this report.

Refer to OEAP Employer Guidance document: "[Ofsted and LOtC Summary](#)"

However, it also highlights the finding that *even where LOtC is highly valued and provided to a high standard, it is rarely evaluated with sufficient rigor* – i.e. in the way that classroom learning is evaluated – and a methodology to address this is provided within the OEAP Employer Guidance document: [Rigorous Evaluation of LOtC: Meeting Ofsted Expectations](#)

**Appendix 1 – Adventure Activities**  
**Adventure Activities led by Council/School Employees**  
**Contents**

Adventure Activities led by Council/School Employees.....	323
Introduction .....	33
Adventure Activity Licensing .....	33
Open Water Swimming .....	333
Canoeing and Kayaking.....	33
Sailing.....	34
Walking in Open Country/Remote Terrain.....	34
Walking (including Hill Walking, Fell Walking, Rambling, etc.).....	35
Rock Climbing (including climbing walls and abseiling).....	35
Abseiling .....	36
Snowsports.....	36
Dry slope skiing and indoor slopes with artificial snow .....	37
Camping and Campcraft .....	37
Orienteering.....	38
Mountain Biking (and Off Road Cycling) .....	38
Combined Water/Rock Activities (and other Hybrid Activities).....	38
Diving.....	39
Sub Aqua Provider Questionnaire .....	41
Appendix 2 – Ratios.....	44
Contacts .....	45
FIGURE 1 .....	46
CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITY AND LEVELS OF APPROVAL .....	46
FIGURE 2 .....	47
ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITY CATEGORIES.....	47



## Introduction

This appendix includes specific information relating to the adventure activities. If you are planning an adventure activity for which procedures are not outlined in this section, you should follow the National Governing Body guidance for that activity including any requirements for staff competence, qualifications, safety equipment, ratios, etc. (where this is available).

The following notes are provided to make clear the range of national and local qualifications available, **and to outline the minimum standards of competence required by the school/academy**. Suggested Staff/student ratios are included - but ratios should always be reviewed as part of the risk assessment. Refer to **Guidelines for Offsite Visits and Adventure Activities**:

- [Section 31 Adventure Activities](#)

Where national or local coaching awards exist, they provide a useful benchmark for levels of technical competence, but managers/Head Teachers **and EVCs should balance this with knowledge of the experience and competence of the member of staff to be leading the activity**. Even the most exhaustive of national qualifications is assessed in a matter of days, or at the most weeks. It is usually outside the remit of these qualifications to measure group control, or the ability to deal with difficult or disruptive young people. In many instances, these qualities coupled with a clear understanding of the leader's own working limitations, are as important to the safe running of activities as good equipment and technical competence.

**Where qualifications are specified or relevant, the Manager/Head Teacher/EVC must ensure that any employees or volunteers running activities produce evidence of their qualification (original certificates and logbooks must be produced),**

Awards held by instructors / leaders must be currently valid with the National Governing Body, including:

- Paid up membership where required
- Valid First Aid qualification where required
- Evidence of recent / current activity and or revalidation where required

## Adventure Activity Licensing

Under some circumstances providing adventure activities to under 18s without a licence can be a criminal offence. Managers/Head Teachers and EVCs must ensure that proposed activities do not breach licensing regulations. Advice is available from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team.

Refer to **OEAP National Guidance** document: [Adventurous Activities](#)

## Open Water Swimming

**No Open Water Swimming can take place without prior school/academy approval.**

## Hotel (and other) Swimming Pools without lifeguards

Establishments should check the lifeguarding position in advance. No swimming can take place unless local appropriately qualified staff are available.

## Canoeing and Kayaking

**National Governing Body:** The British Canoe Union

## Relevant Qualifications

Administers a wide variety of coaching qualifications, which are relevant to different circumstances:

Coach Level 1-5

These qualifications are available in 3 basic types of craft (Kayaks, Open Canoes and Placid Water Open Cockpit Kayak). They are also split between inland and sea for kayaks. Advice is available from the BCU.

**Canoeing activities must be run by staff/instructors with appropriate B.C.U. qualifications.** They must be operating within the remit of their award: advice is available from the BCU.

## Sailing

**National Governing Body:** The Royal Yachting Association

### Relevant Qualifications

Instructor

Senior Instructor

There are separate qualifications for tidal areas.

Staff running sailing activities must hold current RYA qualification(s). They must be operating within the remit of their award: advice is available from the RYA.

### Walking in Open Country/Remote Terrain

The **school/academy** acknowledges the immense educational benefits that open-country activities can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages open-country activities that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted.

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

For the purposes of **school/academy** approval, 'open-country' 'remote terrain' is normally defined as terrain, which is moorland or more than 300m above sea-level, and from which it would take more than 30 minutes travelling time to reach any accessible road or refuge. However, this is an arbitrary boundary and there may be occasions where this definition is inappropriate.

Open-country activities are regarded as 'adventurous' and therefore these visits require full Head Teacher approval.

The responsibility for the safety of participants in an adventurous activity will rest with either:

a) **An external provider** - see [Section 18](#).

The provider must hold an [LOtC Quality Badge](#) or complete a Provider Form

Note: If a Provider holds an [AALA licence](#) (and/or any other accreditation) but not an LOtC Quality Badge, then a Provider Form is still required.

Note: Whilst the responsibility for the safety of participants rests with the provider, the accompanying staff continue to retain a 'pastoral' duty of care.

**or**

b) **A member of your establishment's staff** - see requirements below.

This person must be specifically approved by the **school/academy** to lead the activity.

**The following minimum levels of technical competence apply where a member of the establishment's own staff intends to lead an open-country activity.**

### **Walking (including Hill Walking, Fell Walking, Rambling, etc.)**

**National Governing Body:** The Mountain Training England [www.mountain-training.org/home-nations/england](http://www.mountain-training.org/home-nations/england) and Sports Leaders UK (SLUK) [www.sportsleaders.org/awardsqualifications](http://www.sportsleaders.org/awardsqualifications)

#### **Relevant Qualifications:**

##### **SLUK Basic Expedition Leader (BEL, previously BELA: formerly BETA!)**

A basic qualification for Leaders wishing to take groups walking or camping in rural areas, in summer conditions (NB. does not include hill walking). The BEL award is a suitable training programme for staff wishing to lead groups in the low level areas, using well marked footpaths without technical difficulties.

##### **Walking Group Leaders Award (WGL)**

Nationally recognised fell walking award for leaders of walking groups in summer conditions, in non-mountainous hilly terrain (Known variously as upland, moor, bog, hill, fell or down), with well-defined obvious boundaries, such as roads and coastlines, where any hazards within it are identifiable and avoidable and where wild camping or movement on steep ground is not involved.

##### **Mountain Leader Award (ML)**

This award is intended for those who take groups walking and camping in hills and mountains during the summer months, where the use of ropes is not envisaged. Includes movement on steep ground, and leadership on this terrain.

##### **Winter Mountain Leader Assessment**

This is a separate course, which assesses leaders in the more arduous conditions which can be found in winter, including movement on snow and ice.

##### **Mountain Instructor Assessment (MIA), Mountain Instructor Certificate (MIC)**

These awards both have the summer ML as a prerequisite, but they require additional rock climbing and mountaineering skills. The latter award also requires the winter "ML" and includes winter climbing on snow and ice.

**For hill walking (excluding low level walks on well-marked public footpaths without technical difficulties) the member of staff/instructor must hold the appropriate MTE qualification. They must be operating within the remit of their award: advice is available from MTE.**

### **Rock Climbing (including climbing walls and abseiling)**

**National Governing Body:** The British Mountaineering Council, and Mountain Training England

#### **Relevant Qualifications**

##### **Climbing Wall Award (CWA)**

Remit is artificial climbing walls, with separate endorsements for teaching abseiling and lead climbing.

##### **Single Pitch Award (SPA: formerly SPSA)**

Nationally recognised qualification for instructing rock climbing on climbing walls and suitable single pitch crags.

### **Mountain Instructor Award (MIA)**

This requires the summer ML Award as a prerequisite. It includes lead climbing and multi-pitch climbing as well as top roping.

### **Mountain Instructor Certificate (MIC)**

This requires the Summer and Winter ML Awards and involves lead climbing, top roping, and winter snow and ice climbing.

Staff running rock climbing or abseiling sessions requiring the use of ropes must hold the appropriate MTE qualification. They must be operating within the remit of their award: advice is available from the MTE.

### **Abseiling**

Staff supervising abseiling should be qualified to the standards outlined above (Abseil module required for CWA).

### **Snowsports**

The **school/academy** acknowledges the immense educational benefits that snow sport activities can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages snow sport activities that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted.

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

Snowsports (e.g. skiing and snowboarding) are regarded as adventurous activities.

There are advantages to snow sports taking place during term-time as opposed to during the establishment holiday period. These include: greater choice generally, less queuing for lifts, less crowded slopes therefore less chance of collisions occurring, less crowded resort, higher possibility of 'sole use' of accommodation, lessons more likely to be conducted by permanent snow sport establishment instructors (as opposed to 'casual' instructors), greater likelihood of English speaking instructors, considerable cost savings through avoiding high season (possibly allowing more young people to participate), etc.

It is strongly recommended that a member of staff intending to organise a snow sport visit (**but not instruct**, lead or supervise on snow) should hold the Snow sport Course Organiser Award (SCO), administered by Snow Sport England [www.snowsportengland.org.uk](http://www.snowsportengland.org.uk) and must have previously accompanied at least one educational snow sports visit. It is good practice for staffing to include one or more Alpine Ski leader.

Young people may only participate in snow sports when under the direction of an appropriately qualified and competent person. This would normally be an instructor employed by the local snow sports school. Establishments should therefore consider the merits of fully instructed lessons of 4/5 hours duration per day.

A member of staff intending to lead skiing or snowboarding (i.e. not using a ski school instructor) must be qualified as below and have been approved- see [Section 32](#)

**Skiing:** The minimum qualification to lead skiing on snow is:

- The Alpine Ski Course Leader Award (ASCL) [www.snowsportengland.org.uk](http://www.snowsportengland.org.uk) **or**
- The Alpine Ski Leader Award (ASL) [www.snowsportscotland.org](http://www.snowsportscotland.org) **or**

- BASI Level 2 Alpine Instructor or higher [www.basi.org.uk](http://www.basi.org.uk)

**Snowboarding:** The minimum qualification to lead snowboarding on snow is:

- The Snowboard Leader Award (SBL) administered [www.snowsportsotland.org](http://www.snowsportsotland.org) or
- BASI Level 2 Snowboard Instructor or higher [www.basi.org.uk](http://www.basi.org.uk)

NOTE: A skiing qualification is not appropriate for instructing or supervising snowboarding and vice versa.

Young people must not participate in off-piste activities except when under the instruction of a ski school.

## Helmets

**The wearing of helmets is now highly recommended by all participants including staff. In practice this means:**

- All participants and staff **should consider** wearing approved snow sport helmets.
- Helmets should normally be worn during snow sport activities, and **must** be worn when local laws or regulations dictate this.
- In specific circumstances, based on risk assessment instructors / staff may determine that they are not required. A risk assessment might indicate that the wearing of a helmet was unnecessary and would or might interfere with the activity. For example, a helmet would not be required for cross-country skiing (langlauf, ski de fond). Helmets might not be required by staff without skis assisting people on or off uplift or “collecting” a group at the bottom of a nursery area. This may also be true for complete beginners learning in a segregated, gentle area through which faster skiers and snowboarders could not pass. If in doubt, helmets should be worn.

Helmets must be correctly fitted and appropriate for purpose. Staff should learn how to fit helmets so that they become competent and are able to spot if they are being worn incorrectly. Where helmets are rented, they should be fitted by the person renting the equipment to you (as are skis etc). If a parent supplies the helmet, they are responsible for it being in a serviceable condition (at the start of the snow sports tour at least) and fitting correctly. Staff should still check this.

It is possible that hire shops/tour operators will not have sufficient stocks of helmets in place so it is essential to discuss this with them in plenty of time so that adequate stocks can be made available. If you are arranging equipment rental in the UK it is useful to book helmets as part of this package to ensure all participants have suitable helmets. If not, contact your tour operator to ensure all participants will be provided with suitable helmets as part of the equipment package. Provision of helmets should be ‘costed’ as part of the overall package, not as an optional extra.

**Important:** Some resorts in USA or Canada may have unacceptable **liability waiver requirements**. The establishment must check the liability position prior to making a commitment. All ski companies should be requested to fill in and sign the Provider Form – and ask if waiver statements are required.

## Dry slope skiing and indoor slopes with artificial snow

Training on artificial slopes is often used as a preparation for ski trips, and may be used as an activity in its own right. Students should receive instruction from qualified staff (minimum qualification Club instructor). Instructors can normally be booked in advance at most slopes. The maximum group size should be 10.

It is recommended that a member of staff should accompany lesson groups (or if not, observe the lesson to ensure appropriate behaviour).

### **Clothing**

Helmets worn according to risk assessment and ski slope operator's guidance– check on availability before booking.

Tumbles on dry slopes can be painful and students should wear thick trousers and have their arms covered.

Gloves or mittens should be worn. Thick socks should be taken.

### **Supervision by staff**

Students who have/are receiving qualified instruction may be supervised during additional practice sessions after lessons, by staff who are experienced skiers provided the participants all meet the standards of competence required by the venue. The maximum number of students in such a group should be 5.

Students should not be allowed to ski alone.

### **Camping and Campcraft**

Camping may be an end in its own right, or it may provide cheap residential accommodation and the means to engage in other activities. There is no specific National Governing Body but the following qualifications provide useful training and experience of camping:

- **The Basic Expedition Leaders award (BEL)**
- **The Walking Group Leaders Award (WGL)**
- **The Summer Mountain Training England Scheme (ML)**
- **Level 2 Basic Food Hygiene Award – If staff are preparing food for pupils**

**It is particularly important that a qualified first-aider is available during camping trips.**

### **Group Size**

One instructor should not supervise more than ten camping. Both male and female staff should normally supervise mixed groups.

### **Before any trip**

Training should be given in erecting the tents and **especially in the safe use of stoves.**

Permission should be sought to camp.

Communal equipment should be fully checked as well as personal equipment.

### **Emergency Equipment**

A first-aid kit must be available and should contain burn dressings.

**There is a high fire risk from cooking in tent doorways and this should usually not be permitted**

### **NOTE**

- Staff responsible for purchasing tents should consider buying tents with entrances at each end, because of the additional safety they provide in case of fire.

- Staff should be aware of the dangers involved in refilling Trangia stoves with methylated spirits, and from changing Camping Gaz cylinders. Stoves requiring the gas cylinder to be punctured should not be used (i.e. gas cylinder/bottles should be re-sealable).
- Where appropriate, fuel for stoves should be held by the leader/instructor, who should supervise the refuelling of stoves.
- If Duke of Edinburgh's Award groups are camping unaccompanied they should be visited at least once in the evening or morning.

## **Orienteering**

### **National Governing Body**

British Orienteering Federation (BOF)

### **Relevant Qualifications**

BOF Teacher/Leader Level 1/2

BOF Instructor

1. Orienteering is an activity, which can be run at a variety of levels from a school playing field to mountains in wild country areas. Clearly the experience and expertise required of staff will increase with the demands of the terrain, and of course the progress of the group. (At a low level in a familiar area, suitably experienced staff may need no additional qualifications).
2. Staff should be wary of sending individuals off on their own particularly in parks and other open areas in the town. Depending on the circumstances it may be more appropriate to organise the groups into pairs or larger groups. Whistles should be issued for emergency use, particularly in wild country areas.
3. On rugged terrain or in wooded areas participants must wear full leg and arm cover. Footwear should be appropriate to the circumstances.

## **Mountain Biking (and Off Road Cycling)**

### **National Governing Body and Relevant Qualifications**

There is no one body nationally recognised as the "Governing Body" for mountain biking. However organisations such as [CTC](#) and [MIAS](#) offer training and assessment, which have wide recognition.

The British Cycling Federation offers advice on touring, etc.

1. Cycling on busy roads is hazardous, particularly with large groups. Routes should be selected to avoid main roads, and all roads if possible. If roads must be used then participants should cycle in single file, if possible with a member of staff at the front and back of the group.
2. Helmets are required at all times.
3. Bikes should be maintained in good condition and checked before use.
4. Staff should be aware that there is not an automatic right of way for cycling on public footpaths or canal towpaths. (Public roads and bridleways can be used - permits are available for some canal tow paths.) Access should be checked where necessary. Group leaders should be conscious of the erosion which can be caused by mountain bikes, and avoid sensitive areas.

## Staff Ratio

At least 1:8. It is recommended to have two staff with the group especially on roads and in wild country.

## Combined Water/Rock Activities (and other Hybrid Activities)

This category encompasses a wide range of activities and environments each with their own level of objective danger. A number of highly publicised accidents have occurred involving hybrid water / rock activities, and they require careful planning combined with judgement and experience. There is no single NGB qualification relevant to these activities, but certain Awards will be more or less relevant, depending on the specific environment. For activities involving movement on steep rock, and/or use of ropes, rock climbing or mountaineering qualifications may be appropriate, but for some gorges, knowledge of caving techniques may be more relevant. Expertise in white water canoeing may enable more effective ongoing risk assessment of water hazards.

The HSE has produced an information sheet '[Combined water and rock activities: Guidance for providers](#)' available from:

HSE - Publications: Free Leaflets - Entertainment and Leisure [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

As there is no single NGB qualification appropriate to all hybrid activities, leaders must hold relevant related qualification(s), supplemented by 'in house' site specific approval following appropriate training, with assessment and certification from an 'in house' expert.

Where combined water/rock activities are planned, ample advanced notice should be given to the EVC/Head Teacher to ensure that these requirements have been met.

## Diving

Diving activities must be delivered by a reputable contractor with HSE approved diving qualifications e.g., PADI, BSAC, NAUI. Diving instructors must have an annual diving medical and be passed fit to dive. The contractor must complete the [Diving Contractor's Declaration form](#) below.

All activities and procedures must conform to the [HSE Approved Code of Practice \(ACOP\) for Recreational Diving Projects \(L105\)](#). The Dive Plan and Risk Assessment must be available for inspection.

## Ratio

For open water, the ACOP requires the minimum size of the dive team (excluding students) to be three: (one on the surface and two in the water). The person on surface watch has a key role in the event of an emergency, and this person must be:

- Competent
- Well briefed
- Familiar with the dive plan
- Able to raise the alarm and summon further assistance

The instructor/ student ratio should be determined by the dive risk assessment and project plan, but should not exceed the recommended levels of the appropriate diving organisation. It must take account of the age and experience of the students.

Leaders of school/youth groups should note that the maximum group sizes and ratios permitted by some diving organisations can be relatively high and this is an aspect of 'quality', which may be partially



affected by commercial pressures rather than just risk assessments based on prevailing conditions. Low instructor to student ratios (less than 1 to 4) and a competent well-briefed surface watch are major factors in the quality and safety of initial dives with young people. The maximum group size and ratio should be clarified and agreed prior to booking.

Whilst the HSE ACOP is not enforceable abroad, it forms a useful basis for checking the suitability of overseas providers, and is a model of best practice.

If teachers or other **school/academy** staff are to take part in diving activities, then technically they are 'diving at work' and it is good practice for them to have a diving medical.

Equipment must be maintained by a competent person in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice and servicing should be recorded.

**Sub Aqua Provider Questionnaire**

Provider \_\_\_\_\_ School/Group \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Will all sub aqua activities undertaken comply with the Approved Code of Practice (Recreational Diving Projects, HSE 2014)? .....
- 2. Is diving equipment serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's service schedule (and any relevant national or international standards) and have cylinders been tested for fitness for use in accordance with regulations? .....
- 3. Is all maintenance carried out by a competent person? Are written records of inspection and maintenance kept, and available for inspection? .....
- 4. Do all members of the dive team hold HSE approved diving qualifications at an appropriate level for the planned activities?.....
- 5. Which governing body will the dive team operate under? .....
- 6. What will the size of the dive team be (excluding students)? .....
- 7. Will the dive team include any members of the school / group staff? (If so, state their role)  
.....
- 8. Have all members of the dive team had a Diving Medical within the last 12 months, and been passed fit to dive? .....
- 9. What will the ratio of diving instructors to students be? .....
- 10. Will a competent well-briefed person be on surface watch (for open water dives)? .....
- 11. Will the surface watch be a member of your staff team? .....
- 12. Has any formal enforcement action been taken against you? .....
- 13. How long has your company been in operation? .....
- 14. How long have the instructors, who will be working with the young people, been in your employment in their present capacity?  
.....
- 15. About how many young people have undertaken diving courses with your company previously? .....
- 16. What award will the young people be working towards?  
.....

Please return this form together with the Dive Plan and Risk Assessment for the training programme.

## **The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme**

For guidance on operating DofE please contact the Regional Office;

(T): 01213089470

(F): 01213085561

(E) [centralengland@DofE.org](mailto:centralengland@DofE.org) .

## Appendix 2 – Ratios

Ratios are very difficult to prescribe and in reality will be determined by the risk assessment.

When considering staffing of an activity or visit, it is essential to recognise that the following guidance represents the *minimum* level of staffing only. Adequate consideration must be given for the maintenance and welfare of the whole party in the event of one or more adults having to leave the group for any length of time.

### DAY VISITS

The following ratios should be considered the minimum for off-site day visits: For example visits to local historical sites and museums or for local walks in normal circumstances.

- Years 1 to 3 a ratio of 1:6 (1 adult to 6 children)
- Years 4 to 6 a ratio of 1:10 - 15 (1 adult to 10 - 15 children)
- Year 7 onwards a ratio of 1:15 - 20 (1 adult to 15 - 20 children)

### RESIDENTIAL VISITS

- For all residential visits, at home or abroad, a good rule of thumb is 1 adult to 10 young persons.
- All residential visits must be accompanied by at least two adults.
- Where possible, there must be a member of staff of each sex for mixed groups. In the case of a single sex group there must be at least 1 member of staff of the appropriate sex

Where children are of infant school age (less than 7 years old) it is desirable to have mixed gender supervision. However, if this is not possible then reasonable care should be exercised at all times, e.g. boys being taken into the female toilet by female staff. If this is the case and the school cannot arrange mixed gender supervision for mixed gender parties of under sevens, parents should be informed of this and their views taken into consideration. Parents should agree to single sex supervision of a party on the permission form. Head Teachers/governing bodies must take single sex supervision into consideration as part of risk assessment and must take the safety of all pupils at all times as an overriding factor when deciding whether or not the visit should take place. The safety of the supervising staff and the recent trend towards litigation should also be considered, especially in the case of single sex supervision of a mixed gender party.

- On residential visits at least one of the adults must hold a valid first aid certificate.

## Contacts

<b>Health and Safety Adviser .....</b>	Health and Safety Team Office: 0116 305 5515 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:healthandsafety@leics.gov.uk">healthandsafety@leics.gov.uk</a>
<b>Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager .....</b>	Colin Jones Office: 0116 3057552 E-mail: <a href="mailto:colin.jones@leics.gov.uk">colin.jones@leics.gov.uk</a>
<b>Legal Services .....</b>	David Morgan Office: 0116 3056007 E-mail: <a href="mailto:david.morgan@leics.gov.uk">david.morgan@leics.gov.uk</a>
<b>Insurance questions.....</b>	David Marshall-Rowan Office: 0116 3057658 E-mail: <a href="mailto:david.marshall-rowan@leics.gov.uk">david.marshall-rowan@leics.gov.uk</a>
<b>LA Emergency Contact for visits (24 hour) .....</b>	Pager 07659 170195 Mobile 07786 198283 E-mail: <a href="mailto:emergencymanagement@leics.gov.uk">emergencymanagement@leics.gov.uk</a>
<b>OEAP Employer Guidance</b>	<a href="http://oeapng.info/">http://oeapng.info/</a>
<b>National Library</b>	<a href="http://www.national-library.info">www.national-library.info</a>
<b>LOtC</b>	<a href="http://www.lotc.org.uk">www.lotc.org.uk</a>
<b>LOtC Quality Badge</b>	<a href="http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk">www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk</a>
<b>Outdoor Education Advisers Panel</b>	<a href="http://www.oeap.info">www.oeap.info</a>

## Figure 1

### Categories Of Activity And Levels Of Approval

CATEGORY	LEVEL OF APPROVAL	ACTIVITY	ENVIRONMENT / LOCATION
A	HEAD OF SCHOOL/ACADEMY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports fixtures, within the county</li> <li>• School Swimming – formal teaching in life-guarded pools</li> <li>• Regular visits to libraries, places of worship, study support centres, local parks and open spaces, local shops etc.</li> <li>• Fieldwork in environments with no technical hazards (e.g. Bradgate Park, Swithland Woods, Leicester City Centre etc.)</li> <li>• Visits to local/city museums and Space Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local parks, residential areas and shopping areas.</li> </ul>
B	HEAD OF SCHOOL/ACADEMY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Day Visits to museums, attractions and parks some distance from the City. (Conkers, Alton Towers, Farm Visits etc.)</li> <li>• Theme Parks and other tourist attractions</li> <li>• Seaside resorts</li> <li>• Zoos</li> <li>• Ice skating</li> <li>• Swimming in public, lifeguarded, pools</li> <li>• Walking in 'normal' country</li> <li>• London</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walks in '<b>non-remote</b>' country <b>Non-remote Country</b> – enclosed farmland, fields, low land forest – not moorland, mountain (above 300m) and/or where it is possible to be more than 30 mins from a road or refuge.</li> <li>• 'Water Margin' activity</li> </ul>
C	HEAD OF SCHOOL/ACADEMY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any visit/activity involving a Residential (overnight stay) element including Camping and 'school sleep overs'.</li> <li>• Any visit abroad</li> <li>• Any visit involving 'adventurous activities', led either by a Centre, an outside provider or staff member (See Figure 2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits to hazardous environments</li> <li>• Overseas Expeditions</li> <li>• Any water-base activity</li> <li>• Any activity in Winter mountain conditions</li> <li>• Open Country/Remote terrain more than 30mins from a road (above 300m)</li> <li>• Near cliffs or steep terrain</li> <li>• Areas subject to extremes of weather or environmental change</li> <li>• Swimming in non-lifeguarded pools or open water</li> </ul>

## Figure 2

### Adventurous Activity Categories

Rock Climbing Abseiling Ice Climbing Gorge Walking Ghyll Scrambling Sea Level Traversing	Canoeing Kayaking Dragon Boating Wave Skiing White-water Rafting Improvised Rafting Sailing Sailboarding Kite surfing Use of powered craft boats Windsurfing	Hillwalking – in ‘open country’ Mountaineering Fell Running Pony Trekking Off Road Cycling Off-piste Skiing	Pot-holing Mine Exploration Caving
Quad biking Go-Karts Horse Riding	Archery Rifle Shooting Fencing	<u>Remote areas:</u> Orienteering in ‘remote terrain’ Expeditions in ‘remote terrain’ Fieldwork in ‘remote terrain’ and in water	Climbing Walls High Ropes Courses Dry Slope Skiing Grass Skiing Water Skiing Snorkelling Scuba Diving

These are not exhaustive lists. If you are in doubt about the level of activity you are undertaking contact the Health and Safety Adviser for further advice. There are a number of activities, which are not currently covered by **school/academy** insurance and cannot, therefore be undertaken:

- **Paint Balling**
- **Air Sports – paragliding, parascending, gliding, parachuting**

