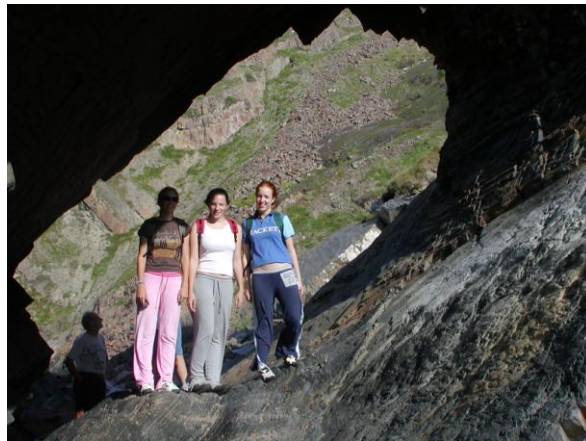




DOWNE HOUSE

Founded 1907

# PRINCIPLES FOR ORGANISING SUCCESSFUL OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Offsite activities and visits can greatly enhance the education and development of the girls involved. Girls can derive a great deal of educational benefit from all activities taking place offsite. Visits can promote an understanding of teamwork, develop investigative, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. They can also help to develop independence, self esteem, personal responsibility and respect for others with different needs or cultures. Visits are particularly successful when the activities are well planned, with opportunities to reflect upon experiences. Consequently, working off-site brings with it onerous responsibilities for staff and pupils.

## **OBJECTIVE**

All off site activities must serve an educational purpose, which is clearly related to the curriculum. However, the curriculum must be interpreted in its wider sense taking account of the boarding situation. Hence, it is accepted that activities which have a considerable element of recreation can be of benefit. Safety, security and welfare must be the prime considerations in all aspects of planning and preparation. Party leaders must be continually aware of the degree of care expected of them.

## **VISION**

**Creating the vision** We aim to:

- recognise what the activity can achieve for each girl,
- set high expectations of what each girl, and the whole school, can achieve,
- explain the impact of off sites activities on learning and achievement across the curriculum in a way that everyone involved can understand,
- explain the wider benefits of participation for young people in a way that everyone involved in the school and wider community can understand,
- review the outcomes and celebrate girl's achievements.

**Making the vision a reality** To achieve our vision we:

- manage the activity in a way that secures its long-term sustainability,
- create an environment that is safe and welcoming,
- are creative in providing the time, staff, equipment and resources to enable girls to learn and achieve,
- encourage and support the staff involved and provide professional development opportunities,
- listen to girls and staff and take account of what they say,
- involve parents/carers and listen to and take account of what they say,
- monitor the impact of off sites activities to ensure the school's vision is met.

**Inspiring and helping girls to learn and achieve** We will:

- show commitment and enthusiasm,
- provide positive role models,
- show confidence in our girl's ability to make progress and achieve,
- listen to young people and value what they say and do,
- raise girl's aspirations,
- take pride in and celebrate girl's successes,
- develop their own expertise as activity leaders,
- share and discuss with girls what they expect them to achieve, and involve them in setting targets,
- take into account what young people have already learnt and identify their progression,
- provide girls with relevant activities in environments that interest, challenge and motivate them,
- provide opportunities for girls to review and evaluate their own and others' progress,
- give girls advice and support to guide their learning, but also allow them time to think, reflect and make decisions for themselves,
- make effective use of the time, staff, equipment and resources available,
- ensure a safe environment whilst also enabling girls to understand and assess the risks involved and transfer this skill to other areas of their life,
- have a clear plan of action that sets out what they individually need to do to realise the school's vision.

## OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS

In planning off-sites activities we would wish to see ten outcome indicators of success. These can be used by staff to make judgements about the quality of provision.

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS
<p><b>Enjoyment</b> Young people enjoy participating in activities and adopt a positive attitude to challenge and adventure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> enjoy the activity - smile often!</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> opt into activities and participate fully,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> are keen to seek out new challenges,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> participate voluntarily in their free time,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> are keen to sign up to activities that are optional,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> talk about their experiences with enthusiasm;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> encourage their friends to take part,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> are keen to find out how to progress further (eg, by joining a club);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> take a full part in all aspects of the activity,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> want to progress further in the activities offered;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> attend regularly,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> talk about their activity with enthusiasm,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> encourage their friends to join.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Confidence</b> Young people are gaining personal confidence and self-esteem through taking on challenges and achieving success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> overcome their apprehensions to take part in challenging activities,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> want a second go at things they find challenging first time,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> succeed where before they felt they could not succeed,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> feel proud of what they have achieved,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> want to move forward to the next challenge</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> talk openly about their successes, and their failures,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> feel positive about themselves - have a 'can-do' attitude,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> display more social confidence - 'come out of their shell',</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> feel they can make a positive contribution to the success of their group, school or club,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> are able to recognise and modify aspects of behaviour that may restrict their own achievements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Awareness</b> Young people are developing their self-awareness and social skills, and their appreciation of the contributions and achievements of themselves and of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> are learning to appreciate their own strengths and current limitations,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> recognise where others can make a stronger contribution than themselves,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> willingly trust others and accept their support,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> recognise where others need support and willingly offer this,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> treat others with tolerance and respect,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> challenge intolerance or lack of respect in others,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> understand how their own actions impact on others,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> recognise and modify any aspects of behaviour that adversely effect their group,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> encourage others to achieve, .recognise and applaud the achievements of others, regardless of how these compare with their own,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> make new friends;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> take on roles as 'junior leaders', assisting younger or novice participants,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> take on roles of responsibility for planning and organising activities;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> contribute to the life of the school/House beyond the activities,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> respect others' private space,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> accept their share of domestic duties.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environmental Awareness</b> Young people are becoming alive to the natural environment and understand the importance of conservation and sustainable development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> have regular access to the outdoors as a learning resource,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> experience a range of different environments in different conditions,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> respond positively in challenging or uncomfortable environments (eg, darkness, inclement weather),</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> understand the impact of their activities on the environment,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> demonstrate care for the environment in their own actions (eg, leaving no litter),</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> are keen to participate in conservation activities,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> develop an interest in wider issues of sustainable development,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> appreciate and draw inspiration from the natural environment (eg, in oral or written reflection, artwork or photography),</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> experience and gain respect for the power of natural forces (eg, wind and waves);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> understand the impact of the activities on the local environment and economy,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> experience 'awe and wonder' in / response to the natural beauty of wild environments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity Skills</b> Young people are acquiring and developing a range of skills in outdoor activities, expeditions and exploration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> develop physical skills that they adapt and apply effectively in activities,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> develop relevant mental skills,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> acquire technical knowledge and skills in the use and care of activity equipment,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> know how to dress appropriately for activities,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> know what personal kit to bring and how to pack for activities and expeditions,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> understand how to keep themselves comfortable,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> recognise the value of training and practice in developing skills and improving performance,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> recognise the value of competition as a spur to high performance,</li> </ul>

	<input type="checkbox"/> undertake training in first aid at an appropriate level, <input type="checkbox"/> understand something of the history and ethics underpinning sports and leisure pursuits.
<b>Personal Qualities</b> Young people are demonstrating increased initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, perseverance and commitment.	<input type="checkbox"/> are actively involved in the planning of their activities, <input type="checkbox"/> arrive on time, properly equipped and prepared for activities, <input type="checkbox"/> take responsibility for the care of their personal clothing and equipment, <input type="checkbox"/> undertake appropriate tasks with minimum levels of supervision, <input type="checkbox"/> demonstrate initiative in overcoming obstacles to their progress, <input type="checkbox"/> work towards self-reliance , <input type="checkbox"/> try hard to succeed at activities they find physically or emotionally challenging, <input type="checkbox"/> set realistic targets for themselves over an extended period, and keep focused until they succeed, <input type="checkbox"/> persevere with good humour in the face of discomfort, <input type="checkbox"/> take responsibility for not letting others down, <input type="checkbox"/> seldom miss training sessions, <input type="checkbox"/> make an effort to support other club activities (eg, fund raising), <input type="checkbox"/> take on positions of responsibility (eg, as junior committee members); <input type="checkbox"/> take care of their personal possessions, their dormitory areas and their personal hygiene.
<b>Key skills</b> Young people are developing and extending their key skills of communication, problem solving, leadership and teamwork.	<input type="checkbox"/> listen to instructions (eg, safety briefings) and respond accordingly, <input type="checkbox"/> come up with ideas and are able to express them, <input type="checkbox"/> understand the importance of listening to the ideas and opinions of others, <input type="checkbox"/> are able to describe their experiences orally or in writing (or using video and IT skills), <input type="checkbox"/> work co-operatively in planning activities and solving problems, <input type="checkbox"/> are willing to tryout a variety of ideas in order to find out what will work, <input type="checkbox"/> vary and adapt what they do in response to changing circumstances, <input type="checkbox"/> understand how team members take on different roles to achieve success, <input type="checkbox"/> are able to take on a leadership role where appropriate, <input type="checkbox"/> are willing to step back and allow others to take a leadership role, <input type="checkbox"/> are able to help their group arrive at a team decision and implement it.
<b>Health and Fitness</b> Young people are learning to appreciate the benefits of physical fitness and the lifelong value of participation in healthy leisure activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> keep themselves fit through regular physical activity, <input type="checkbox"/> have a positive self-image, <input type="checkbox"/> talk about the benefits to their health of participation in activities, <input type="checkbox"/> eat healthily, taking account of the energy requirements of different activities, <input type="checkbox"/> understand the risks to fitness and health posed by smoking, alcohol and drugs, and set an example in their own lifestyle; <input type="checkbox"/> take other regular exercise in addition to timetabled PE, <input type="checkbox"/> want to continue their interest in activities beyond school and into adult life (eg, by joining local activity clubs); <input type="checkbox"/> adopt a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating appropriate to the demands of their activities, <input type="checkbox"/> sign up for opportunities to participate in follow up courses where these are available; <input type="checkbox"/> understand how hard and how much they should train in order to balance the needs of their chosen activity with a healthy lifestyle.
<b>Increased motivation and appetite for learning</b> Young people are displaying an increased motivation and appetite for learning that is contributing to raised levels of attainment in other aspects of their education	<input type="checkbox"/> always aim to achieve their best, <input type="checkbox"/> are, or are becoming, self-motivated learners, <input type="checkbox"/> show a desire for new challenges and learning experiences, <input type="checkbox"/> have good or improving relationships with teachers, youth workers or adult leaders, <input type="checkbox"/> display good or improving behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> talk positively about school <input type="checkbox"/> demonstrate raised levels of attainment in other areas of the curriculum, <input type="checkbox"/> participate in a variety of aspects of school life, <input type="checkbox"/> draw inspiration from their activities in other subjects eg art
<b>Broadened Horizons</b> Young people are broadening their horizons and becoming open to a wider range of employment opportunities and life chances.	<input type="checkbox"/> are exposed to and becoming more aware of different environments and cultures, <input type="checkbox"/> are becoming more open-minded and less likely to express bigoted views, <input type="checkbox"/> are happy to leave behind the comfort of familiar environments and routines, <input type="checkbox"/> perceive a wider range of career options open to them and talk positively about these, <input type="checkbox"/> appreciate the work place relevance of key skills such as communication and teamwork, <input type="checkbox"/> appreciate the attractiveness to employers of self-reliance and commitment, <input type="checkbox"/> are aware, if appropriate, of employment opportunities in outdoor recreation, and the pathways to these, <input type="checkbox"/> are aware of opportunities to gain and use coaching qualifications in it their chosen activity, <input type="checkbox"/> respond to opportunities to volunteer their time to help others, <input type="checkbox"/> continue to participate in activities after they leave school, <input type="checkbox"/> always aim higher, and aspire to achieve in life to their fullest potential.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- DfE 'Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers' (2001) and Health And Safety Of Learners Outside The Classroom (DfE 2010) [HASLoC which replaces all HASPEV Docs] applies to all educational visits away from school
- The Board of Governors retains overall responsibility for health, safety and welfare. They must discharge health and safety responsibilities for educational visits.
- We have a higher expectation than for parents. We are not 'in loco parentis' (as a reasonable parent) rather 'in loco rhetoris' (compared to other teachers)

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Governing Body

There is a clear distinction between normal day to day activities involving out of school trips, where Governors would not be specifically notified, and those of a residential nature, especially those which might be classified as unusual, where Governors would need to be informed. The Governors should be advised in good time of such events at an Education Committee meeting of the Board of Governors and have the opportunity to comment and report to the full Board. It is vital to recognise the responsibility of the Governors by means of the submission of information and a formal request for their approval in the case of unusual activities. They must:

- Ensure that visits have clear, realistic and appropriate educational objectives.
- Agree on types of visits/activities (always residential) of which they wish to be informed.
- Help to ensure that appropriate preparation can take place
- Ensure the Headmistress and EVC are supported to be able to fulfil their roles
- Ensure guidance is available

### The Headmistress should

- Ensure visits comply with the school's policy documents
- Ensure educational objectives are clear
- Ensure all necessary actions have taken place
- Ensure there is a contingency plan in place
- Ensure emergency procedures are in place
- Allocate time and resources for staff training
- Appoint an EVC to do most of the above and the tasks identified below
- Ensure tasks delegated to the EVC are being carried out

### The EVC should

- Ensure educational visits meet school's requirements
- Outline approval – informal discussions – and formally approve with Head's support
- Ensure Risk Assessments are complete
- Deal with risk assessments
- Ensure that purpose of trip is clear to girls, staff and parents
- Ensure accreditation of external providers
- Evaluate or support evaluation of staffing, resources, finance, insurance, program, provider, venue
- Ensure parents and pupils are informed and parents give consent (covers all trips, activities and sports, though consent can be implicit and not always explicit)
- Offer management of trips service if required
- Organise emergency arrangements
- Keep records of visits, accidents or incident reports
- Review systems, monitor procedures, evaluate and improve

### The visit/event/activity leader must

- Obtain permission (including formal before any contact with parents takes place)
- Be approved to carry out the activity
- Follow guidelines, policies and procedures
- Have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit including direct responsibility for the pupil's health, safety and welfare
- Plan and prepare and assess the risks
- Collect all relevant information on the pupils and obtain suitable permissions from parents/guardians
- Consider staffing issues
- Keep the EVC aware of health and safety issues, and cancel the trip if Risk Assessments lead to major concerns
- Define the roles and responsibilities of other staff and pupils and ensure effective supervision of what they do
- Review and evaluate the trip and planning procedures

## **PREPARATION AND PLANNING**

**The importance of meticulous planning for any event, and the importance the school places upon it, cannot be over emphasised. All Party Leaders are required to follow the planning procedures as laid down in the guidance.**

Whether the visit is to the local shops or to the other side of the world, it is essential that formal planning takes place. This involves considering the risks and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them. Thorough planning and preparation are the key to the success of off-site activities. Those who organise and run off-site activities have very substantial responsibilities to those in their charge. Ensuring that activities are properly planned and prepared should also help reduce the degree of stress that can be involved.

The purpose and rationale for each activity must be clearly set down in accordance with the school's aims and objectives as part of the pre-planning procedure. The purpose of the activity must be clear, be it social, recreational, academic, cultural or spiritual, and will be reflected in each departmental policy, which in itself, reflects the aims and objectives of the school.

All the appropriate documents will have been submitted and signed in the correct order. The completion and submission of the forms should be, in itself, a manifestation of the planning process. Guidance can be sought from the EVC.

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Purpose/Objectives**

It is important to identify the purpose and objectives of your activity as one of the first tasks. They must be the justification for the activity and for the risks that may be involved. In this way you will be able to judge if this is a worthwhile activity with meaning and validity.

### **Planning time**

Planning and preparation must be done sufficiently ahead to ensure that there is no unreasonable risk. If this cannot be guaranteed then we should consider that the activity should not take place.

### **Programme preparation**

When activities are in the planning stage it is important to ensure that the venue, programme and cost are appropriate to the aims of the venture, the needs and abilities of participants and the resources available. For example, if achievement of the aims requires a mountain environment or a foreign country then clearly the venue must reflect this. By the same token the venue should not involve more cost, greater distance or more potential hazard than is necessary and appropriate. A clearly defined programme should be put together prior to the visit. This should form part of the information provided to parents/guardians and should be checked against the objectives laid out for the visit and also the identified needs/abilities of the participants. When compiling a programme you should consider:

- Ideally a provider should be able, and prepared to, tailor courses to your requirements.
- Providers should be ready to discuss your requirements before you are committed. They should be concerned to help you in meeting educational and safety objectives.
- Providers should be able to demonstrate that effective risk assessment, followed by appropriate precautions where necessary, is an integral part of the way they work.
- You should be confident and have evidence that you are going to get what you have asked for/been promised.

### **Research, particularly of venues and location**

The party leader must research the implications of an off-site activity thoroughly. Experience over many years indicates that where accidents have occurred the cause can often be traced back to this initial crucial stage of the process. In this context knowledge of an activity and venue is important. When choosing a location the suitability of staff, participants and activities should be assessed. The following should be given consideration:

- The distance to the venue/location. Long journeys can be tiring and stressful in themselves.
- The cost in time and money is worth the educational benefit.
- The environment is appropriate. It may be challenging but not involve unnecessary risk
- The activity meets all the objectives set
- The climate and the weather conditions are appropriate at the time of the visit. Hot sun and heavy rain can bring their own dangers. This should be assessed carefully and the persons on the trip carefully considered.

### **Travel arrangements**

When making travel arrangements, the following should be considered:

- Are these reasonably priced, comfortable and appropriate?
- The likelihood of delay should be considered and the option with the least likelihood of disruption chosen.
- Does the travel operator has its own rules that might affect supervision ratios
- If the arrangements for the journey itself might cause a problem eg sea crossings can bring their own difficulties in terms of supervision

## **Staff**

Please consider:

- The qualifications and experience of the staff
- Do staff, particularly of Third Party providers, have nationally recognised, and evidenced, qualifications that meet NGB (National Governing Body) requirements? A facility that is approved by a national body such as the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), British Adventure Holiday Association (BAHA), School Travel Forum (STF) or Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) is a helpful indicator.
- How do you judge staff competence?
- Ensure that qualifications are appropriate to the activity, an impressive sounding qualification that is in another field is still not appropriate

## **Equipment**

Technical knowledge is often necessary to make judgements in this area, talk to the EVC. Try to:

- Find out as much as possible about the equipment to be used
- Find out how well it is maintained. Where someone has responsibility for maintenance that is a positive sign.
- Find out if the correct equipment is available and used at all necessary times?
- Find out if staff know how to use the equipment and where appropriate have the required qualifications to do so

## **Buildings and other facilities**

The following questions should be answered, when assessing the buildings and facilities available at a venue:

- Have the fire precautions been checked and approved by the Fire Service? If abroad, do fire precautions meet the standard expected in this country?
- What are the arrangements for evacuation in case of fire and are they easy to understand, readily available and would they work? Are the venue staff familiar with emergency procedures in the building?
- Do new arrivals go through a fire drill or at least have the arrangements explained to them?
- Is appropriate first aid equipment and expertise available?
- Has the provider made arrangements for access to medical help if it proves necessary?
- Are vehicles clean and regularly checked?
- Do drivers hold an appropriate licence?

## **Choosing outside agencies and travel companies**

It is important to take steps to learn as much as possible about services and facilities that are included in any contract. In considering this you might find it helpful to speak to colleagues who have used a company on a previous occasion. It is usual for payment to be made to companies, in a number of stages, well before the date of departure. Therefore it is essential that the company is financially secure. You must use companies that have some form of bonding. When considering the use of Third Party Providers the following should be considered:

- It is now statutory that activity centres are licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA). If a centre is not licensed, **or if you have any doubts at all**, you should check with the EVC.
- Be clear about your needs - they should drive your choice of provider, not the reverse. Beware the opportunity which is appealing but of limited value.
- Beware the glossy brochure with limited information. Good written information is a positive sign but is not a guarantee of quality and safety. Are the claims in the information realistic?
- Information should be clear, unambiguous and comprehensive. If you are not convinced or require more information don't hesitate to ask. Well-founded operations should have no hesitation or difficulty in providing such detail.
- Can the provider visit Downe House? That is positive and helpful.
- If an organisation presents itself as a provider of holidays, a claim to run educational courses may need some exploration before an establishment can establish that 'educational' is meaningful.

## **Day Trips/Activities**

- Follow the instructions in the Guidance document 'Planning an Off-Site Activity'

## **Residential Events**

- Follow the instructions in the Guidance document 'Planning a Residential Activity'.
- The Headmistress MUST give signed permission on form SJ1/2R before any approach can be made to the girls.

## **Emergency procedures**

We have a clearly defined set of procedures that should be followed in the event of an emergency. Staff are provided with a card on each off-site activity that details the procedures to be followed in an emergency. This card also contains emergency contact numbers for several members of the LT. It is important that, as far as reasonably practicable, it is possible for groups to be contacted and for them to be able to make contact with Downe House.

## **First aid**

There should be sufficient first aid cover. It is strongly recommended that party leaders have sufficient first aid expertise to deal with any likely problems. All staff at Downe House should be qualified in first aid at some level.

## LEADERSHIP – SUPERVISION

**Supervision** – There are two types, both acceptable if risk assessed

- Close – pupils are in sight
- Remote – away from staff but within set control systems

### Supervision and Staffing Ratios

Party Leader – a party leader must be clearly identified though this may not be the person organising the activity. The Party Leader is responsible for the activity. The party leader must be an approved member of staff with appropriate skills, expertise and experience for the activity. Newly qualified staff are not considered to be experienced enough to take on the role of party leader without an experienced member of staff in a supervisory role.

Appropriate members of staff. Such staff would normally be working at Downe House, though we sometimes use family members (particularly those who are resident). They must be appropriately qualified and experienced. We accept external technical advisors as a party leader once they have been cleared. We must be satisfied that duty of care will be equal to that provided by Downe House staff and that all legal requirements for working with children have been met.

### Calculating staffing ratios

It is important to have an appropriate ratio of adult supervisors to children for any visit. The factors to be taken into consideration include:

- Age characteristics, needs and ability of the group
- Participants with medical needs
- The duration and nature of the activities
- The experience and competence of staff, both general and on specific activities
- The duration and nature of the journey
- The type of accommodation
- Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited
- Competence and behaviour of the participants
- First aid cover
- The needs and abilities of staff

All ratios are subject to change in relation to the specific activity. The final decision will be taken by the Headmistress in consultation with the LT and EVC but a general guide of the **minimum** requirement is:

Day visits in the UK (depends on distance)	1 adult to 20 girls (should be 2 adults, one of whom is female)
Residential visits in the UK	1 adult to 15 girls (must be 2 staff, one of whom is female)
Residential visits outside the UK	1 adult to 12 girls (must be 2 staff, one of whom is female)
Hazardous activities	Discuss with EVC

The circumstances in which it may be acceptable to have less than the minimum number of staff are:

- where activities involve situations that are familiar to participants, and where additional appropriate adult help could be available in a short time, should the need arise
- on a journey where additional help will be available at the group's venue
- local activities, for example PE matches, and where further adult help is available quickly
- activities that are not directly supervised
- for groups of participants that are 16+ and can be involved in the supervision process themselves

### Children, relatives or close friends of staff

- In situations where it is proposed that the children, close relatives or friends of staff (who are not a DH resident) accompany a group there is a serious risk that roles will conflict. Permission must be obtained.
- Any children of staff should be of a compatible age to the participants in the group and should be treated as any other participant in the party. The staff member cannot lead the trip and should not be counted in the staffing ratio.

### Activities where participants are not under direct supervision ie remote supervision

It is acknowledged that there are occasions when it is appropriate for participants to work in situations where they are not directly supervised. In such cases, no matter how short the time scale may be, care must be taken to ensure that the following are observed:

- participants must have the aptitude and maturity for, and be appropriately trained, briefed and experienced for whatever is involved
- the next of kin must be informed, before being asked to give their consent (by sending their girls to us parents have consented for most activities)
- there must be appropriate emergency back up available and participants must have the means, knowledge and ability to use it. The extent of back up depends on the circumstances
- in all cases staff are still supervising up to a clearly defined exit point
- if there is any doubt as to what is appropriate here then further advice should be sought from the EVC

### **Groups where activity leaders are male**

- Groups should have at least one female member of staff. This regulation is concerned with the position of staff as well as the welfare of participants. However, there are exceptions, in which male staff can lead groups alone, that have been sanctioned by the Headmistress. Staff members are advised to take particular care in such circumstances. It would be wise to ensure that next of kin are clearly aware.

### **Supervising adults other than professional staff**

It is acknowledged that we will make use of responsible adults other than members of staff to supervise participants. The Headmistress and EVC to decide whether such adults would be suitable. In making this decision we will consider:

- Will the adults know the participants and other adults involved?
- Have they appropriate skills, qualifications or experience to offer?

Such persons should not:

- be asked to supervise more than 10 girls at any one time
- be in a situation where they are remote from the support of staff members

### **Good practice in supervision and the standard of care**

It is most important that staff members and other supervisory adults are:

- aware of the high standard of care required of them
- always aware of potential dangers and take necessary safeguards
- Particular care must be taken in environments that are naturally hazardous such as;

### **Head counts**

Frequent head counts should be made. It is sensible to consider dividing participants into smaller groups with their own 'group leader'. It is also strongly recommended that counts should be double checked. Good practice is to have girls in minimum groups of three during all activities and set up a 'buddy system'. Do not rearrange groups unless absolutely necessary. When bringing groups back together ensure head counts are conducted to confirm that all girls are back.

### **Down Time**

Group leaders should ensure that pupils continue to be properly supervised during downtime before, between and after activities, including the evenings on residential visits. It is good practice to:

- ensure that all staff and pupils understand high standards of behaviour apply at all times, not just during activities
- ensure that all supervisors understand that their supervisory role continues throughout the event
- use down-time to brief the group on the planned activities for the day to come
- use down time for reflection on personal learning, group discussion or mildly active, non-academic activities
- apply the advice contained in "Remote Supervision" above, adapted as necessary, if it is felt reasonable to allow pupils some time without close supervision

### **Night Time**

Group leaders should ensure that:

- the group's immediate accommodation is exclusively for the group's use if possible
- teachers have sleeping accommodation on the same floor as the pupils' accommodation
- child protection arrangements are in place to protect both pupils and staff
- where hotel/hostel reception is not staffed 24 hours, arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visits and external doors must be made secure against intrusion and windows closed as necessary to prevent intrusion
- where possible, internal doors are lockable but staff must have reasonable access to the pupil accommodation. Don't be lulled into a sense of false security by local assurances
- all staff and pupils know the emergency procedures/escape routes in the event of a fire

### **Who to brief, and how**

Teaching staff, other supervising adults, the next of kin and participants directly or indirectly involved with an off-site activity must be fully briefed with regard to the nature of the activity, their role and responsibilities, and all arrangements that will or might be made.

### **Delegation of role**

The party leader must make a clear delegation of role and responsibility to the other staff members and supervisors involved in the venture, particularly in cases where the leader is not present.

### **Check lists and information**

Each adult member of a group should carry checklists, relevant emergency procedures and any information that enables them to act quickly and effectively. Particular care should be taken if a group is to be divided into smaller units.

### **Frequency and regularity of briefing**

While an activity is in progress there should be regular, at least daily, briefings for participants and staff. Briefing is no less important where a visit takes place on a regular basis and/or where the situation and local conditions are well known to the supervising staff.

## **COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS**

**No information should be passed to parents until consent for the activity has been signed by the Headmistress or EVC on the relevant forms. *Verbal permission is not formal permission.***

### **Parental Consent**

Specific parental consent is not necessary for most non-residential visits. By sending girls to Downe House parents/guardians accept that they are giving consent for many regular activities. However, it is good practice to notify parents of all events that their daughters are attending, particularly for all visits involving hazardous activities. For all residential activities away from Downe House it is necessary to get parental consent.

### **Information for the next of kin**

Information to the next of kin must be in a written form, fair, realistic, contain enough information and should be given in sufficient time to make an unhurried, objective and informed decision before they are financially committed. Either by letter(s), including the initial letter, or during a meeting, parents should be informed of:

- Dates of the visit
- Visit's objectives and details of activities planned and/or itinerary
- Times, location and agreed method of delivering/collection of girls to and from point of departure and return
- Modes of travel including names of any tour company
- Size of group, level of supervision and any potential remote supervision that may take place
- Details of accommodation and security
- Procedures for pupils who may become ill
- Names of leader and other staff or accompanying adults
- Standards of behaviour. The code of conduct should be signed by parents and girls
- Outline details of insurance
- Clothing and equipment list
- Money issues

### **Next of kin/parents' meetings**

For residential visits or visits to a foreign country a meeting with the next of kin would in many cases be appropriate. This may not be practical so it is important that you offer parents/guardians the opportunity to communicate directly with the party leader to resolve issues and ask questions.

### **Medical Consent**

- The Medical Centre **MUST** be consulted before every activity. The Medical Centre will provide First Aid kits and any materials for students who have particular needs
- The Combined Consent Form (SJ6R) should be used in all cases where full consent is to be obtained. It must have all necessary information attached to it when it is given to the next of kin.
- Copies of signed forms should be retained until such time as all matters relating to an activity are finally settled
- If the consent form needs to include more information for a particular trip/activity contact the EVC if needed
- If the next of kin withholds consent the participant should not be taken on the visit but the curricular aims should be delivered to the participant in some other way. If the next of kin give a conditional consent the Headmistress should consider whether the participant might be taken on the visit or not
- Doctors can be expected to carry out necessary emergency treatment without next of kin consent but it is possible that a surgeon in another country might be reluctant to operate on a participant unless assured that the group leader had authorisation to agree to such treatment. When travelling abroad it is sensible to include a translation of the medical consent in the relevant foreign language.

## **INSURANCE**

The Downe House Insurance Policy covers all activities undertaken by girls and staff as part of extra curricular provision. It is important that Party Leaders of residential, or hazardous, activities liaise with the Bursar with regard to insurance. The Bursar will need to know, in all residential cases, how many girls and staff are involved, and in some cases will need a full list of names. If you are unsure, check with the Bursar.

## **TRANSPORT**

Transport, in various forms, presents an important element for consideration in all work out of school. Because of the immense variety of opportunities for travel which arise, all presenting an element of risk however small, there is a range of requirements which remain statutory in school and all staff should be familiar with these.

*Please ensure that all Downe House policy requirements have been met.*

The group leader must give careful thought to planning transport. The main factors to consider include:

- passenger safety
- the competence, licence, training, capacity and experience of the driver
- number of driving hours required for the journey and length of the driver's day (including non-driving hours)
- type of journey - locally or long distance driving ie motorways?
- contingency funds and arrangements in case of breakdown/emergency
- appropriate insurance cover
- weather
- stopping points on long journeys for toilet and refreshments
- supervision

### **Supervision on transport**

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk assessment for the journey. The driver should not normally be responsible for supervision. Driver supervision may be sufficient if a small number of children are being taken on a short journey. All group members should be made aware of the position of the emergency door and first-aid and anti-fire equipment on transport. The group leader should also be aware of alternative routes or means of travel in the event of delay or cancellation. Factors that the group leader should consider include:

- level of supervision
- Pupils should be made aware of safety rules and expected standards of behaviour
- safety when crossing roads as part of the journey
- safety on buses, trains, ferries and boats - the group leader should make clear to pupils how much or little freedom they have
- booking transport - arrange for seats to be reserved well in advance to ensure that the party can travel together
- safety of pupils whilst waiting at pick-up and drop-off points and when getting on or off transport, particularly when using UK vehicles abroad
- safety while on stops or rests during the journey - group leaders should plan with the driver sufficient stops at suitable areas to ensure the safety of all group members including the driver. Drivers of buses and coaches must comply with legislation covering maximum periods of driving and minimum rest periods
- safety of the group in the event of an accident or breakdown - the group should remain under the direct supervision of the group leader or other teachers wherever possible
- head counts should always be carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport
- responsibility for checking that seat belts are fastened
- pupils should be made aware that they are not allowed access to the driving area at any time
- group members should be made aware that travel sickness tablets should only be administered to a pupil with previous authorisation from the parents
- vetting non-teacher drivers

### **Drivers**

Anyone wishing to drive a minibus must have taken a driver assessment, and possess a relevant licence. No one should drive if they feel incapable of doing so for whatever reason. Where an adult accompanying a group is also driving there should be a non-driving assistant to supervise girls, unless:

- the driver is entirely confident that they can effectively supervise participants themselves and the journey is of short duration avoiding major trunk roads and motorways
- the driver carries a means of communication in the event of a breakdown
- drivers must check that vehicles are roadworthy and that they drive safely and within the law
- party leaders must ensure that insurance policies, road tax, MOT and driving licenses are valid
- Where a person drives a minibus, the total working day, including driving time and all other duties, should not exceed 12 hours, excluding rest periods, in any 24-hour period. In this context other duties means any activity in which the person is obliged to undertake a task that carries a degree of responsibility. Supervision of young people during a rest period would count as work
- Drivers should either take a complete rest of at least 15 mins before driving again after 2 hours driving or take a complete rest of at least 45 mins before driving again after a max of 4 ½ hours driving
- In making decisions about driving hours drivers must take account of the road conditions. If conditions are difficult then it would be wise to take more frequent rests. By the same token if there is nowhere safe to stop then it would be unwise to do so
- A relief driver should be available on pre-planned journeys of more than 4 hours

## **Alcohol**

- **No alcohol should be consumed on vehicles used for transporting Downe House girls and staff.**
- **Drivers must have a zero intake of alcohol during the eight hours before they drive.**

## **Number of passengers**

Each passenger must have a seat and each seat should be fitted with an approved seat belt.

## **Private vehicles**

When these are being used to transport girls the Downe House motor insurance is in effect if the relevant form has been completed and returned to the Bursar. Where adults who are not members of staff use their own a vehicle then there must be no doubt that the insurance is valid. The drivers involved must check with their insurers.

## **Use of coaches and coach companies**

The group leader, in cooperation with the ECA office, is responsible for ensuring coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. The Bus and Coach Companies Operators Association, Coachmarque or other national regulatory body might be a useful guide. Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed. Party Leaders should ensure the operators have the appropriate licence. The following advice applies:

- it is important to ensure that an appropriate vehicle for the length of journey and size of group is ordered and that the vehicle which arrives meets these requirements
- neither participants nor supervising adults should ever make a journey on an off-site activity while standing up
- entrances, exits and the driver's rear view should not be obstructed in any way
- if any of the group use a wheelchair, the party leader should ensure that transport used has appropriate access and securing facilities. It is appropriate to use portable ramps.

*British law does not bind foreign coaches and therefore coaches supplied might not be fitted with seatbelts as required within the UK. The next of kin should be made aware of this.*

## **Taxis**

Taxis should be booked through the ECA. We will only use reputable companies. We will cooperate with the company to vet drivers

## **Guidance for pupils**

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- arrive on time and wait for the transport in a safe place;
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- wear your seatbelt and stay seated whilst travelling on transport;
- never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or driving controls;
- bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions;
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- never lean out of or throw things from the window of the transport;
- never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- never run about or pass someone on steps or stairs while transport is moving;
- never kneel or stand on seats;
- never distract the driver or impede the driver's vision eg flash photos reflecting off windows;
- stay clear of doors after boarding or leaving the transport;
- after leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road;
- if you have to cross roads to get to the transport in the UK always use the Green Cross Code;
- if you feel unwell tell a teacher or supervisor;
- what to do if they miss the scheduled departure time.

## **FINANCIAL ISSUES**

Parents and pupils must be advised of the charging process for each activity prior to departure. For any expenditure over £20.00, explicit parental consent should be obtained. The cost of wholly curricular activities must be met out of Department budgets. Party leaders of residential activities MUST consult the Bursary regarding charging for trips. The EVC can also advise. Copies of any letters sent to parents about financial issues for a trip should be sent to the Bursary.

Once the trip has taken place, a list of those who took part plus any costs and any additional expenditure to be taken into account, MUST be passed to the Bursary immediately. This can be done on Merlin. The information required is:

- Girl's name in full, House and Year Group
- Full cost of the event for each girl
- Evidence of expenditure eg invoices, receipts

Sometimes a girl who has signed to take part in a trip will withdraw at the last minute. If this happens tell the bursary and whether she is to be charged for the trip. It is possible to replace a girl with another and then charge the new girl's account. However, there may be administration charges from tour companies for late changes and these will still need to be charged to the girl who has withdrawn. You must give as much detail as possible to the bursary so they can answer parent's queries without having to pass them to you.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

A set of vital information (SJ4/passenger list) is needed for each activity. Copies should be lodged with the post-box on the water tower and the Head's tray as well as copies taken on the activity.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

All those involved with off-site activities must be familiar with and able to use the Emergency Procedures. In the event of an accident or emergency it is imperative that these are adhered to. The Party Leader must follow the steps in the 'Outings Emergency Card'. The Emergency Contact and LT must follow the steps in the 'Base Contact Card'. (See Appendices 3 and 4)

## **PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL AND MEDICAL NEEDS**

We will make every effort to include pupils with special educational or medical needs in school visits, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone in the group. Special attention at the planning stage should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and what additional safety measures may be needed. Arrangements for taking medication and ensuring sufficient supplies for residential visits may be required.

All teachers supervising visits should be aware of the girls' medical needs and emergency procedures. Summary sheets held by all teachers, containing details of each pupil's needs and any other relevant information is one way of achieving this – information can be found on Merlin or from the Palmer Centre. If appropriate, teachers should be trained in administering medication eg epipens, and first aid. If the pupil's safety cannot be guaranteed, it may be appropriate to ask the parent to accompany a particular pupil.

The group leader should discuss the pupil's needs with the Palmer Centre. If appropriate Party Leaders should have, and have discussed with the girl, knowledge of:

- details of medical conditions
- written details of any medication required (instructions on dosage/times) and parental permission to administer
- parental permission if the pupil needs to administer their own medication
- information on any allergies/phobias
- information on any special dietary requirements
- information on any toileting difficulties, equipment or aids to daily living
- special transport needs for pupils who need help with mobility

Enquiries should be made at an early stage about access and facilities for securing wheelchairs on transport and at residential centres etc, if appropriate. If ramps are not going to be available in certain places, the organiser may wish to arrange to take portable ramps with them. The group leader should at an early stage assess whether manual handling skills will be needed and, if so, whether training should be sought. All teachers supervising the visit should be given the opportunity to talk through any concerns they may have about their ability to support the child. Extra help should be requested if necessary.

If teachers are concerned about whether they can provide for a pupil's safety or the safety of other pupils on a trip because of a medical condition, they should seek general medical advice from the Palmer Centre.

The group leader should check that the insurance policy covers staff and pupils with pre-existing medical needs.

## **PREPARING PUPILS**

Pupils who are involved in a visit's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. Pupils should be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.

### **Participation**

The group leader should ensure that the pupils are capable of undertaking the proposed activity. Pupils should be encouraged to take on challenges but should not be coerced into activities of which they have a genuine fear. Pupils whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such pupils should be sent home early. Parents and pupils should be told in advance of the visit about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a pupil will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

### **Equal opportunities**

Every effort should be made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate. All young people should be encouraged to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible. If a visit is to cater for pupils with special needs, a suitable venue should be selected.

### **Code of Conduct**

All girls on a residential activity must sign the Code of Conduct/Combined Consent Form (SJ6R). We expect parents to sign it too. Section C of the Code of Conduct for Residential Activities is the section in which staff can draw up specific behavioural requirements for the activities on their trip. The other sections are applicable to all residential activities.

### **Information to pupils**

The group leader should decide how information is provided, but must ensure that the girls understand key safety information. Pupils should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit/activity
- the background information about the place to be visited
- basic foreign words where appropriate
- relevant foreign culture and customs
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules
- why safety precautions are in place
- what standard of behaviour is required of pupils
- appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct
- who is responsible for the group
- what not to bring back either within the UK or from abroad such as drugs, knives etc
- what to do if approached by anyone from outside the group
- rendezvous procedures and contact details of staff etc
- what to do if separated from the group
- emergency procedures

For residential visits all group members should carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation in case an individual becomes separated. This applies to exchange visits when pupils will also need to know about any ground rules agreed between the group leader and host family.

If at any time there is a change in the planned schedule new activities should be assessed and pupils provided with the appropriate information.

### **Preparing pupils for remote supervision**

During any time that remote supervision takes place the group leader must ensure that pupils are aware of the ground rules and are adequately equipped to be on their own in a group. It is important that pupils understand and accept the ground rules. The size of each group should also be considered. As a minimum, pupils should have the following:

- telephone numbers and emergency contacts if lost AND knowledge of how to summon help
- money
- maps and plans and any other information for them to act effectively
- knowledge of out of bounds areas or activities:
- identity cards and a rendezvous point

## RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT (CONTINGENCY PLANNING)

### What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a **group management plan**. In other words, the means by which leaders 'steer' their group through to the objective of arriving home safe and sound. Whilst there are many types of risk assessment, it is important to recognise that the concept is quite simple:

- Somebody identifying a hazard;
  - Recognizing somebody is at risk from the hazard;
  - Putting some judgement on the potential likelihood and severity of the harm that might befall them;
  - Then critically putting in place the necessary control measures to rectify the problem.
- 
- Risk is the probability of harm occurring ie level of risk
  - Hazard is something with potential to cause harm

An important consideration is that the control measure is usually dependent on the person not the hazard. The process of Risk Assessment is common to everything we do during a normal day. What is uncommon is to write risk assessments down, but even then, the steps remain the same.

All activities **MUST** have a completed Risk Assessment form. Any activity that takes place without a completed and signed Risk Assessment form is uninsured. The Party Leader and staff bear all responsibility for anything that may happen during the trip and may also face disciplinary action at the completion of the event.

The EVC will help with completing the forms by, normally, providing a draft. However, it is vital that you consider the draft risk assessment, your needs in meeting the trip's objectives, your knowledge of the girls, and other guidance documents when completing your risk assessment.

The initial planning documents should be discussed with the EVC (who will probably have provided staff with a draft) before presentation to the Headmistress. These will demonstrate the preliminary Risk Assessment. Formal Risk Assessment for trips being undertaken for the first time does not preclude Informal Assessment, which might involve consulting the weather forecast or other specialist agencies. This will include the furnishing of all relevant licences, permits and qualifications on the part of any Residential Centre such as Field Centres, Water Parks or Resort Centres or Outward Bound Agencies. These must be current and dates must be checked.

Risk Assessment and risk management are a legal requirement. They involve the careful examination of what could cause harm during the visit and whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more should be done. The aim is to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill. The control measures should be understood by those involved. Risk assessments should explicitly cover how special/medical needs are to be addressed.

### **Why Should Visits Be Risk Assessed?**

There are two main reasons to do so:

1. The process will inform your group management plan and improve your control of safety. The old adage, 'It is better to plan and not need it, than to need it and not plan' is particularly true - especially when thinking about 'Plan B's'.
2. Good, recorded group management plans not only contribute towards the safety process, they demonstrate that leaders have followed good practice.

### **What Is Expected?**

Essentially, leaders need to be duly diligent in preparing a management plan for their visit, but they do not have to demonstrate superhuman powers of pre-cognition. They simply have to deal with what is **reasonably foreseeable** and respond within a **reasonable** range of measures.

Leaders should concentrate on **significant** risks; there is no expectation for insignificant risks to be included in a formal risk assessment. Professional judgement, particularly when backed by experience, is sufficient to deal with such situations within schools and it is no different when off-site. Where examples of current good practice exist, leaders should ensure they are followed. If alternative practice is to be followed it should be of an equivalent standard or better.

It is recommended that at least two staff (usually EVC and Party Leader) participate in the planning process. Two professionals considering options strengthen the argument that the measures taken have been reasonable.

Finally, the natural discipline of writing down agreed plans and the potential need to evidence the process are good reasons to ensure decisions are recorded formally. Of key importance, it also means that the management plan can be readily shared as an active dynamic document.

**Remember:**

- You cannot and should not eliminate risk
- Prepare for and bring risk to a reasonable level through professional judgements
- Manage risk
- There will always be accidents

<b>Risk assessment is:</b>	<b>Risk assessment needs to be</b>	<b>Risk assessment should</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A living dynamic process – not a piece of paper filed away</li> <li>○ A careful examination of what, in the course of events, could cause harm to people</li> <li>○ An aim to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sensible</li> <li>○ Simple</li> <li>○ Manageable</li> <li>○ Proportional</li> <li>○ Suitable and sufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify significant hazards</li> <li>○ Assess the risk of harm</li> <li>○ Put control measures in place</li> <li>○ Check if anything else is needed</li> <li>○ Use simple assessment language eg high, medium, low</li> <li>○ Then assess the residual level of risk</li> </ul>

**Examples of things to consider in Risk Assessments**

- Is there adequate supervision?
- Are there regular head counts?
- Have you money for emergencies?
- Has all documentation been prepared and checked?
- Is the system for communication adequate?
- Do all staff and pupils know what to do in an emergency?
- Are there sound procedures for coping with a 'lost' pupil (or staff)?
- Have you considered 'What if .....?'
- For residential trips, have you copies of all passports, visas etc – email them to your hotmail account?
- Are there clear parameters for when activities cannot take place? Especially hazardous activities?
- Are you having regular meetings of staff and pupils during the day for review and planning/preparation?
- Are you ready to 'expect the unexpected'?

**Four levels of risk**

Low	an activity in which the possibility and nature of an accident are not substantially different to those encountered in everyday experience. This will include most activities
Medium	an activity in which the hazards encountered are outside the group's experience but by adopting principles of safe practice should bring them down to an acceptable level. Measures can be used to minimise the risks
High	an activity in which the hazards encountered are well beyond the everyday experience of the group. The repercussions of an accident could lead to serious consequences. However, measures can be put in place to address the risks
Unacceptable	an activity in which the hazards encountered are far beyond the experience of the group and the party leader. Measures cannot be utilised to deal with the risks

**Three degrees of risk assessment****Generic**

- Likely to apply to an activity whenever and wherever it takes place ie policy
- Or fits part of the specific risk assessment eg travel hazards

**Visits/event specific**

- Will differ from place to place and group to group but can be modification of general template
- Prepared by school staff and include activity hazards, pupil behaviour hazards, group management/supervision
- We rely on the institution's own Risk Assessments and systems eg coaches, reputable tour companies/organisations

**Ongoing**

- Risk assessment does not end when the visit begins. Changes to the itinerary or weather, incidents (whether minor or major), staff illness - all or any of these may bring pupils face to face with unexpected hazards or difficulties and give rise to the need to re-assess risk. These judgements and decisions made as need arises are not normally recorded but part of evaluation after visits. This means that the written risk assessment document may not apply and may need to be adapted to a given situation. This is acceptable if the staff making the changes can justify them after the event and they would be judged to have acted in the manner of another responsible member of staff.

**Plan B**

- good forward planning will always include alternative plans in case the itinerary needs to be changed
- group leaders faced with potential difficulties will feel more confident to change the itinerary if a pre-assessed alternative is available
- regardless of whether alternatives have been pre-assessed, always take time to reassess risks if the itinerary changes

## **HAZARDOUS ACTIVITIES**

Most activities within the realm of off-site activities contain an element of danger and hazard. The Risk Assessment process should address these issues. However, some activities contain a greater element of hazard and risk than others.

For the purpose of obtaining approval for an off-site activity, the list below (which is not a definitive list as there may be another activity not identified below that would be added to the list) will be regarded as hazardous activities. A judgement will be made at the time of application for permission and risk assessment whether these (and other hazardous) activities will be permitted. Those marked with \* will almost certainly be prohibited. In all cases you must refer to the BAHA guidelines and the West Berks Manual guidelines on hazardous activities.

### Land Pursuits

Angling/Fishing  
Archery  
Air Rifle Shooting  
Archery  
Bungee Jumping \*  
Camping  
Caving/Potholing  
Climbing (artificial and rock)  
Cycling  
Expeditions  
Fencing  
Fell Walking  
High Ropes  
Horse Riding/Pony Trekking  
Initiative courses and low ropes  
Judo/Karate etc  
Karting  
Motor Sports  
Mountaineering  
Orienteering  
Shooting  
Skiing  
Trampolining  
Trekking

### Water Pursuits

Angling/Fishing  
Canal Boating  
Canoeing  
Coasteering  
Power Boating  
Rafting (White Water)  
Rowing  
Sailing  
Sub aqua and snorkelling  
Surfing  
Swimming  
Water Skiing  
Windsurfing

### Air Pursuits

Balloonng  
Flying  
Gliding  
Hang-Gliding \*  
Parachuting  
Paragliding \*  
Parascending \*

## **POST TRIP EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES**

It is important to evaluate all activities. We can use this evaluation to make judgements about activities, to help prepare more effectively for similar activities in the future, and to reject events/activities/providers if needed. The purpose of evaluation is:

- to assess if objectives were achieved
- to prepare for the next time ie risk management
- to identify improvements, successes, value for money and value for time
- an affirmation of our purpose
- to complete documentation for inspection and review ie an evidence trail

We ask all leaders of residential activities to complete a formal document (SJ10). For non-residential activities our evaluation is less formal, though it would be appreciated if leaders would, if they feel appropriate, formalise their comments, either by email, or by completing the form used for residential activities.

Evaluation should cover:

- Planning and preparation
- Activities, accommodation and transport
- Providers
- Incidents and Near Misses
- Staffing
- Group selection
- Money and budget
- Equipment
- Timings
- Enjoyment value
- Group feedback
- Effectiveness of Risk Assessment and Code of Conduct
- Would you repeat the activity

***We have a series of internal documents on dealing with the day to day organisational requirements for organising and running a successful off-site activity. These have been referred to above in this document.***

## Our Statement of Minimum Standards

<b>PEOPLE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Most activity leaders hold relevant NGB awards for most of the activities they lead, and in all other cases their competence is ratified by an approved qualified technical advisor</li> <li>○ Some activities have an approved technical advisor. The remainder are also consulted as and when they are needed</li> <li>○ There is an up-to-date matrix of all activity leaders, and all qualifications (including in-house approval where appropriate), with renewal or revalidation details where applicable</li> <li>○ All staff (including activity leaders, supervisors, assistants, accompanying adults in positions of responsibility etc) and all participants are given a verbal (and sometimes written) briefing about their roles and responsibilities at, or before, the start of their involvement, supported by discussion and clarification on an on-going basis</li> <li>○ All activity leaders are inducted before they lead that activity</li> <li>○ All leaders are involved in systematic appraisal sessions</li> <li>○ All leaders receive training. Training takes place throughout the year</li> <li>○ There is an individual training log for each leader where details are kept of all internal and external training and assessment (both formal and informal)</li> <li>○ Activity leaders should be experienced members of staff or, due to staff turnover, supervised by experienced members of staff</li> <li>○ A limited number of 'retained part-time' staff are used on a regular basis, and are fully inducted into our procedures</li> <li>○ We expect the same level of experience and qualification from our volunteer leaders and supervisors as we would from a 'professional' engaged to do the same job</li> </ul>
<b>OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Written operational procedures are maintained which cover all venues and all activities</li> <li>● Operational procedures are reviewed pro-actively at regular intervals. In addition, operational procedures are reviewed regularly. Resulting updates and revisions are relayed to all leaders before the activity recommences</li> <li>● Separate risk assessments have been carried out for each activity and each significant venue, and the results recorded. Key issues have been incorporated into operational procedures</li> <li>● Formal management meetings take place regularly, where operational procedures are discussed and evaluated</li> <li>● General written incident, accident and emergency procedures are maintained which cover all activities and venues. These are covered during the induction of activity leaders, and are periodically reviewed</li> <li>● Significant incidents, accident and emergencies are reported and recorded internally. All 'RIDDOR' incidents are reported to the appropriate Health and Safety Executive. There is an annual review of these and learning points extracted. These are added to the operational procedures where necessary.</li> <li>● There are 'Emergency Contacts' at Downe House reachable by telephone 24 hours a day for activity leaders to contact when they are away from Downe House</li> <li>● All groups leave details at a central location indicating where there will be operating, and update it if things change. They also indicate when they will return. If they fail to return this process will identify their absence and an appropriate person will be alerted at an appropriate time. Procedures are permanently in place for locating and returning the group to a secure base without necessarily involving emergency services.</li> </ul>
<b>EQUIPMENT, VENUES, FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● An event can be cancelled at any time up to the start and at a number of key points throughout, and alternative plans have been drawn up and can be implemented</li> <li>● There is a range of equipment, in excellent condition, for all activities</li> <li>● All hired equipment is subject to formal routine maintenance checks. In addition, all items are checked at the point of hire</li> <li>● A clear written statement, with precise details of the sort of equipment which participants will need is sent out well in advance. This is checked well before the activity takes place and if people are inadequately equipped, a supply of essential items is available. Activity leaders are only allowed to authorise the use of personal equipment that is known to them to be effective</li> <li>● Most of the group equipment (and all participant equipment) for an activity is supplied by the organisation running the activity. Activity leaders may supply their own equipment</li> <li>● Routine checks and maintenance is usually carried out on key equipment by the same person and records of these are maintained. Equipment is also checked when it is taken out and again when it is retained. Items for repair or disposal are isolated in an accessible and clearly marked container/area</li> <li>● An appropriate first aid kit is supplied to all activity leaders and 'top-up' supplies are available as required. Procedures require these to be carried for all activities. There are additional supplies readily available</li> <li>● All activity leaders hold valid first aid qualifications. Validity and renewal is monitored centrally</li> <li>● For an 'unaccompanied' activity, all participants are trained by Downe House staff (or technical advisors). All participants are checked to be sufficiently competent and sufficiently well-informed to undertake the activity. They are all briefed fully on what is expected of them and what to do in case of an incident, accident or emergency. A pre-departure check is carried out on their equipment</li> <li>● For any 'unaccompanied' activity individuals can pull out at any time. Any incident, accident or emergency will be identified immediately</li> <li>● New or unfamiliar venues are always checked in advance, preferably by the activity leaders who will lead the activity there. Checking may be by liaison with the travel/tour company Safety Management System and Risk Assessments for foreign activities</li> <li>● All activities are covered by the appropriated NGB accreditation scheme</li> <li>● We have sought guidance on all relevant legalisation and have followed all relevant advice. We are certain there is no legislation we are unaware of</li> <li>● All participants, leaders and onlookers are automatically covered by Personal Accident and Public Liability Insurance. In addition staff and the organisation has Professional Indemnity Insurance</li> </ul>

## **GUIDELINE DOCUMENTS**

- West Berkshire Manual
- Health And Safety Of Learners Outside The Classroom (DfE 2010) ([HASLoC] [Replaces all HASPEV Docs])
- Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (DfES 1998) [HASPEV]
- Standards for LEA's in Overseeing Educational Visits (HASPEV Supplement 1)
- Standards for Adventure (HASPEV Supplement 2)
- A Handbook for Group Leaders (HASPEV Supplement 3)
- Group Safety at Water Margins (DfES)
- Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers (DfES, 2001)
- School staff and their roles beyond the Classroom (DfES, 2005)
- High Quality Outdoor Education (English Outdoor Council, 2005)
- Good Practice in Adventure Activities within the Education Sector (AALA, 2002)
- Working with Young People in the Outdoors (OEAP, 2004)
- Five Steps to Risk Assessment (HSE, 2003)
- BAHA Safety Standards
- Demystifying Risk Assessment (NST, 2004)
- Child Safe (Avon & Somerset Constabulary, 2004)
- Trips and Visits Pocketbook (Teachers' Pocketbooks, 2004)
- Remote Supervision Guidance Notes (MLTE)
- National Guidelines for Climbing and Walking Leaders (MLTE, 2005)
- The Protection of Young People in the Context of International Visits (City of Edinburgh Council Education Department, 2002)
- Minibus Safety Code of Practice (ROSPA, 2002)
- Weekend Duties
- School Insurance Policies