



# Educational Visits Policy

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**Key document details**

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# 1. Statement of Policy

This Educational Visits Policy is produced for use within Harris Academies.

It supplements the guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in June 2011 and February 2014, which the academy has formally adopted, through the Governing Body. Links to these documents are given below.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/335111/DfE\\_Health\\_and\\_Safety\\_Advice\\_06\\_02\\_14.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335111/DfE_Health_and_Safety_Advice_06_02_14.pdf)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf>

Additional guidance to follow best practice the academies should refer to the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel 'National Guidance': [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info)

Each Harris Academy has a strong commitment to adding value to learning beyond the statutory Academy day and beyond the Academy premises.

The Governing Body has given its approval to the following types of activities being arranged in support of the educational aims of the academy:

- Out of hours Clubs (music, drama, art, science, sport, homework etc.)
- Academy fixtures and training
- Common nearby visits (libraries, shops, parks, place of worship)
- Day visits for particular year groups (Zoo, seaside, farms)
- Residential study visits
- Overseas trips
- Adventure Activities, which might be classed as higher risk.
- Geography field trips
- Trips and visits that support the curriculum

## 2. Arrangements

### 2.1 Aims and purposes of Educational Visits

Each year the Academy will arrange a number of activities that take place off the Academy site and/or out of Academy hours, which support the aims of the Academy. Each academy is required to identify the purpose of the visit, how this relates to the curriculum and the learning outcomes. The range of activities are outlined in the Academy prospectus.

Within each curricular programme of work the teachers plan educational visits and activities that support the students' learning. Activities are planned in advance and parents/guardians are informed of these in due course.

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## 2.2 Approval Procedure and Consent

The Principal has nominated the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) (named in appendix 1) and the Governing Body has approved this appointment. The Governing Body has delegated the consideration and approval of educational visits and other offsite activities to the EVC and has nominated the Chair of the Governing Body as signatory on behalf of the Governing Body. The EVC should be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the school. The EVC will be trained as necessary.

The EVC will support the Principal in ensuring that competent staff are assigned to lead and accompany visits, and with approval and other decisions.

Before a visit is advertised to parents/guardians the Principal must approve the initial plan. The Principal will also approve the completed plan and risk assessments for the visit at a later date.

An exploratory visit should be made to the planned venue. If this is not practicable alternative arrangements will be made to gain as much knowledge of the site as possible by liaising with officials at the site or seeking advice from colleagues who have made previous visits. Site officials will be asked for copies of specific site risk assessments.

Where external contractors are involved in organising all or part of the visit the contract will be made with the Academy on behalf of the students. All payments for the visit will be made through the Academy accounts.

Written consent from parents/guardians is not required for pupils to take part in the majority of off-site activities organised by the academy (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/guardians will be told where their child will be at all times and of any extra safety measures required.

Written consent is only required for activities that need a higher level of risk management or those that take place outside school hours.

Parents/guardians will be asked to sign a general consent form when their child enters the academy which should be updated annually. This covers participation in 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).

Parents/guardians will be told in advance of each activity and given the opportunity to withdraw their child from a particular activity or trip. They will also be given the timetable for the activities that pupils are involved in and will be informed (by letter/phone call/through their son/daughter) if an activity has to be cancelled. For all residential visits, parents/guardians will be invited to a briefing

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meeting where they can ask for clarification of any aspect of the itinerary and organisation of the visit.

The Academy has separate policies for 'Charging and Remissions' and 'Equality and Diversity' which applies to all educational visits.

*A copy of the general consent form is on Appendix 2.*

### 2.3 Staffing

The Academy recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety on an Academy visit.

The EVC and group leaders must familiarise themselves with this policy.

Teachers and other staff are encouraged and supported to develop their abilities in organising and managing students' learning in a variety of environments through induction and training. The selection of staff for educational visits will be a key priority in the initial approval of any proposed visit.

The Academy will ensure that Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) screening is carried out for volunteer adults assisting regularly or on residential study visits. See Section 3.6 on Supervision for further guidance.

The Academy does not support additional people accompanying educational visits who are not students at the Academy or part of the agreed staff complement. This may include family members accompanying visits if the Senior Leadership is not satisfied that there is an educational benefit for the students.

The appointed Group Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange the visit. This will include, as necessary, making time or finances available to conduct an exploratory visit, briefing teachers and other staff, accessing training courses, reviewing and evaluating the visit or identifying time when the leader and EVC might work in partnership to undertake planning and risk assessments.

### 2.4 Using an External Provider

An 'External Provider' is one that provides an element of instruction, staffing, or guiding, for example:

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

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The decision about the use of an external provider is the responsibility of the Group Leader, EVC, and Principal.

To confirm that all aspects of the operation of the provider are satisfactory, the academy will ensure that either:

- a.) The Provider holds an LOtC Quality Badge, or
- b.) A 'Provider Form' (see Appendix 3) has been satisfactorily completed by the provider

(If a Provider holds an AALA license\_(or any other accreditation) but not an LOtC Quality Badge, then a Provider Form is still required.)

For Providers that hold an LotC Quality Badge 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.

## 2.5 The Expectations of Students and Parents

The Academy has a clear code of conduct for Academy visits based on the Academy 'Behaviour Policy'. This code of conduct will be part of the condition of booking by the parents, and include the potential of withdrawal of a student prior to or during the visit if such conduct places a child or children at risk and would have led to a temporary exclusion from academy. The implications for parents as part of the agreement are outlined in appendix 4.

## 2.6 Emergency Procedures

The Academy will appoint a member of the Senior Leadership as the emergency contact for each visit. All major incidents should immediately be relayed to the Academy office, the office will relay the problem to the Senior Leadership, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.

The Group Leader will leave full details of all students and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency contact and the academy main office, including the home contact details of parents/guardians and next-of-kin, as appropriate.

The Group Leader will take with them a copy of the Business Continuity Plan on all residential study visits.

All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back through the Academy reporting systems.

The Academy will have emergency funding available to support the Group Leader in an emergency.

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## 2.7 Evaluation

All visits will be evaluated by the Group Leader with the EVC. A termly summary of all visits will be made to the Governing Body.

The EVC will ensure that any risk assessments prepared for the trip are dated as having been evaluated and/or modified following the visit to assist with the risk management on all future visits.

## 3. Guidance for Staff

### 3.1 Competence of Group Leaders

The competence of the Group Leader is the single most important contributory factor in the safety of participants. The EVC and/or Principal will consider the following when assessing the competence of a member of staff to lead a visit:

- What experience has the leader in leading or accompanying similar or other visits?
- Is the leader competent in planning and managing visits?
- What are the leader's reasons for undertaking the visit?
- Does the leader have the ability to manage the pastoral welfare of participants?
- Does the leader exhibit sound decision making abilities?
- What experience has the leader of the participants he/she intends to supervise?
- What experience has the leader of the environment and geographical area chosen?
- Does the leader possess appropriate qualifications?
- If appropriate, what is the leader's personal level of skill in the activity, and fitness level?
- Is the leader aware of all relevant guidelines and able to act on these?

### 3.2 Guidance for Group Leaders

Employers, school staff and others also have a duty under the common law to take care of pupils in the same way that a prudent parent/guardian would do so.

Group leaders will be selected by the Principal in conjunction with the EVC and be given overall responsibility for the preparation, supervision and conduct of the visit. They should be of sufficient seniority to direct other accompanying staff. Refer to appendix 5 for a checklist for group leaders.

Following the visit, the Group Leader should record any significant issues as a note on for both reference and to inform future visits.

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### 3.3 Duties of the Group Leaders

The Group Leader must ensure that they suitably manage the visit by ensuring that:

- The academy policies and guidelines are followed.
- The academy has an annual general consent form for each student.
- All required paperwork is submitted to the Principal and EVC for approval before the visit goes ahead.
- All accompanying staff are thoroughly briefed and clear about their specific duties and responsibilities.
- They are suitably competent to instruct/supervise students in any planned activity.
- They are suitably familiar with the visit location and centre.
- They understand child protection issues.
- They allow sufficient time to undertake the planning and organisation of the trip.
- They check their school journey insurance policy to establish the level of cover required.
- They undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment.
- They adequately brief parents/guardians and students.
- They obtain sufficient information about the students to assess their suitability for the visit and the planned activities.
- They ensure all accompanying staff are briefed on the nature of the group, age, health, capabilities and any special educational needs.
- They organise suitable and sufficient supervision proportionate to the numbers, ages and abilities of the group and the planned activities.
- They have sufficient competence and confidence to assess risks as they change throughout the visit and to make a decision to stop activities if the risk becomes unacceptable.
- They have adequate emergency procedures in place that are known to all relevant parties.
- They provide details of the activity for parents/guardians and students with an option to opt out of the activity and to obtain updated medical information if appropriate.
- They liaise with the location/centre to inform them that a visit is planned for a specific date.
- They ensure that transport is arranged in sufficient time (if required) and they should request copies of Insurance certificates and assurances from the company about the competency of their drivers.
- Documentation such as insurance, MOT, road tax for private vehicles transporting students is checked. Road tax and MOT checks can be made online through the DVLA ([www.vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk](http://www.vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk))
- They check there is a completed Provider Form (Appendix 3) if the external provider is not in possession of an LoTC Quality Badge.
- They have a copy of the Business Continuity Plan on all residential study visits.



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- They leave full details of all students and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency contact and the academy main office.
  - Ensure that travel first aid kits are carried by the first aiders as well as spare medication along with details of students with medical needs.
  - The visit is evaluated with the EVC and a termly summary of all visits is made to the Governing Body.
  - That significant issues are recorded for both reference and to inform future visits.

### 3.4 Accompanying Staff and Volunteers must:

- Follow the instructions of the Group Leader.
- Help to maintain control and discipline.
- Be prepared to stop any activity if they feel the risk to health and safety is unacceptable.
- Not be left in sole charge of students except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment.
- Inform the Group Leader if concerned about the health and safety of students during the visit.

### 3.5 Planning

Risks are expected to be reduced to an *acceptable* or *tolerable* level, and not necessarily eliminated. Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

Visit planning should focus on those issues that are individual to the specific event, taking into account the needs of the group (including special and medical needs), the experience and competency of the staff team, and the leader in the context of the event.

Alternative arrangements 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.

### 3.6 Supervision

Staffing ratios will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and resources. Ratios should not be finalised until the risk assessment is complete. Group leaders will also need to consider the needs of students with SEN and/or physical disabilities. 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. Known behaviours, learning and physical needs should also be taken into account. The Group Leader should discuss this with the EVC to ensure any judgement is proportionate and not prohibitive.

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**Volunteer Adults:** At least half of the adults accompanying an educational visit should be staff based at the Academy (teachers or other members of staff). Organisers are encouraged to use other adults to meet (or exceed) the minimum staffing requirements. Sixth Formers (over 18) may also be used sparingly. Any volunteer helpers should be properly briefed on their responsibilities and especially on safety procedures and must be DBS checked if volunteering regularly or on a residential visit.

**Exchange Parties:** Academies arranging exchange visits, where for short periods of time children may be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related, must be aware that DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas. Host families in other countries, therefore, cannot be checked in the same way in this country. Schools should work in partnership with other schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are taken, they can also contact the relevant foreign embassy or high commission of the country in question to find out if similar checks can be done in that country. Where assurances cannot be sought parents/guardians must be made aware.

**Primary:**

For local walks and visits to historical sites, museums, places of worship and other low risk venues:

- 1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3 (under 5s reception classes should have a higher ratio).
- 1 adult for every 10-15 pupils in school years 4 to 6;

The group must be led by a teacher.

Residential visits, adventure activities and trips abroad will require higher levels of supervision and all accompanying staff and volunteers must be DBS checked.

Guidance on ratios for under 5's can be found in the 'Statutory Framework for the early year's foundation stage 2014'. Ratios outlined in the framework relate to classroom settings. Ratios should be assessed according to the activity and associated risk, the age and abilities of students, and should consider the experience and competency of the supervising staff.

**Secondary:**

**UK:** One adult per 15 students, with a minimum of two adults. The group leader must be a qualified teacher or other approved person employed by the Academy. In mixed parties, one male and one female adult. This applies up to and including Year 11 students.

For Year 11 students the ratio is the same for camps and journeys, but for day visits Year 12 and 13 may be accompanied by one adult for up to 20 students of one sex. Mixed sex groups still require one male and one female adult.

**Sixth Form:** Day visits of a routine nature may be made unaccompanied if authorised by the Principal or Deputy and advised to parents/guardians.

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**Abroad:** The Academy Policy is that visits abroad should be accompanied by a minimum of one adult to 15 students. Foreign Language Assistants may accompany trips, but do not count as adults in this calculation.

**All groups must be led by a teacher.**

Residential visits and adventure activities will require higher levels of supervision and all accompanying staff and volunteers must be DBS checked.

**Remote Supervision:** Young people must be supervised throughout all visits. Where they are unaccompanied by a member of staff or other responsible adult, e.g. D of E expeditions, 'down time' in a shopping mall, etc., this is known as 'remote' supervision.

'Remotely supervised' activities can bring purposeful educational benefits, and the progression from dependence to independence is to be encouraged. Such activities develop essential lifelong skills, including managing risk, self-sufficiency, interaction with the public and social skills, decision making, etc.

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

The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on professional judgement taking into account such factors as:

- prior knowledge of the individuals (including their maturity and levels of responsibility);
- venue and conditions;
- the activity taking place;
- preparatory training;
- the competence of the supervising staff;
- the emergency systems in place.

### 3.7 Risk Assessment

Health and safety law requires the employer to assess the risks to the health and safety of staff and others affected by their activities. The terms risk assessment and risk management are used to describe the process of thinking about the risks of any activity and the steps taken to counter them.

The Principal in conjunction with the EVC will ensure that the person assigned with the assessment task understands the risks and is familiar with the activity that is planned. Where a risk assessment is carried out the group leader must record the significant findings of the assessment.

The academy will take a common sense and proportionate approach remembering that risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable children to undertake activities safely, and not prevent activities from taking place.

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A risk assessment is not required every time an activity is undertaken that usually forms part of the school day, for example, taking pupils to a local venue which is frequently visited, such as a swimming pool, park, or place of worship. A regular check with the EVC to make sure the initial risk assessment for the particular activity remain suitable and sufficient.

The risk assessment should identify the following:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

*A copy of the 10 key points the HSE recommends considering is at Appendix 6.*

Copies of the risk assessment should be given to all teachers/supervisors on the visit, with details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the risks. A copy should also be given to the Principal and the EVC responsible for approving the visit.

Risk assessment is not a one off exercise. The visit leader should, where required, carry out a dynamic risk assessment while the visit is taking place. They should consider modifying or stopping the visit if the risk to the children is unacceptable. Visit leaders should put in place procedures (Plan B) for such an eventuality.

Group Leaders and the EVC should note that for providers that hold an LotC Quality Badge, activity risk assessments do not need to be completed by the Academy. The risk assessments pertaining to the activities organised and led by the provider have been externally assessed and they have been awarded the LotC Quality Badge. The Academy are still required to complete a risk assessment covering transport to and from the venue, the individual needs of the students, supervision and emergency arrangements.

When planning an activity that will involve adventure activities such as: caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports, the EVC must check that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. These regulations apply to adventure activities that take place in England, Scotland and Wales but these arrangements may be subject to change in the future.

### 3.8 Transport

When hiring buses and coaches it is essential that the company used is reputable. Group Leaders should request copies of Insurance certificates and assurances from the company about the competency of their drivers. Third party companies used regularly will be expected to provide copies of their insurance certificates on an annual basis or when there is significant change.

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The vehicle should be provided with seatbelts on all seats – with all seats forward facing, as the law requires for academy trips. Vehicles should meet all safety standards as required by law.

If private vehicles are used the vehicles must be roadworthy and adequately insured. Documentation must be checked by the Group Leader. See Duties of the Group Leader (Section 3.3). All cars must be fitted with suitable child restraints. Parents/guardians must provide specific permission for their child to be transported in a private vehicle.

If public transport is used it is advisable to make party bookings in advance and ensure that the risk assessment adequately covers all potential hazards.

### 3.9 Minibus Transport

The Federation policy on minibus transport is in line with the current DfE, DfT and ACPO guidance (November 2014).

Staff employed to drive minibuses are required to hold a full D1 License.

D1 (101) Licenses will automatically have been issued if the license was obtained before January 1997. Licenses obtained after this date are B class Licenses.

B class license holders will only be permitted to drive a minibus if the following conditions are met:

- The minibus weighs no more than 3.5 tonnes
- The minibus has no more than 16 seats
- The driver is over 21 years of age
- The driver has been driving on a full license for more than 2 years
- The driver is not specifically remunerated for driving through their contract of employment.

**All drivers are required to complete a MIDAS** or equivalent minibus driving training course (usually one day) before being permitted to drive. It is **essential that all minibuses have a Section 19 permit** in order for the Federation to negate the 'Hire and Reward' status applied to D1 (101) and B class Licenses.

Volunteers should hold the necessary license (as set out above) and should undergo MIDAS training or equivalent before they are permitted to drive. Staff acting as volunteer drivers have the right to refuse to drive based on their volunteer status.

Driver fatigue or distraction has been highlighted as a factor in recent minibus incidents nationally.

For journeys not exceeding 1 hour, a single teacher/driver **may** be considered adequate, subject to the nature of the group and the driver's ability and confidence to manage that group. For journeys involving between 1 hour and 4

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hours driving, a second responsible adult should be present to supervise the group.

For journeys involving over 4 hours of driving, the second adult should be a suitably qualified minibus driver. For journeys involving over 4 hours, at least one of the drivers should have had a rest period of at least one hour prior to the start of the journey. Further regular rest periods must be taken – a 15 minute break every 2 hours is recommended.

Drivers must not drive if unwell or if on medication or receiving medical treatment which advise against driving. It is the responsibility of the driver to notify the academy if they are taking medication or have a medical condition which may affect their ability to drive.

Seat Belts: Students and staff travelling in minibuses must wear seat belts by law.

**Overloading:** The minibus is overloaded if the total weight (bus + fuel + passengers + luggage) exceeds the **maximum laden weight** for the vehicle. This weight is printed on the vehicle and in the handbook. For guidance, the vehicle should only carry passengers, driver and hand luggage.

The use of a trailer greatly increases the maximum laden weight and is **essential** when transporting a full load of older students plus luggage.

#### **LIABILITY FOR DRIVING AN OVERLADEN VEHICLE RESTS WITH THE DRIVER**

### 3.10 First Aid and Medical Needs

The requirement for first aid cover is subject to the findings of the risk assessment. Where there are students or staff present with a pre-existing medical condition, or where there may be a need for emergency medication to be administered, a first aider should be in attendance. First aiders must also be in attendance on residential study trips, overseas trips and trips where large numbers are travelling.

'Emergency First Aid' e.g. a 6 hour non-assessed course, is generally suitable for routine urban visits, however the nature of the visit may indicate that a higher level qualification is appropriate, especially in circumstances where it is likely that access by the emergency services may be delayed.

Travel first aid kits should be carried by the first aiders as well as spare medication along with details of students with medical needs.

### 3.11 Insurance

Each academy is covered by school journey insurance; additional insurance may be required for activities which are higher risk. Academies are advised to check their school journey insurance with their Finance team before arranging additional cover.

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## 4. Adventurous Activities

### 4.1 Definition of an 'adventurous activity'

The following activities are regarded as 'adventurous':

- All activities in 'open country' (normally defined as land above 300m, or more than 1km from vehicular access)
- 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 indoor climbing walls)
- Abseiling
- River/gorge walking or scrambling
- Coasteering/coastal scrambling/sea level traversing
- Underground exploration
- Shooting / archery / paintballing
- 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
- 'Extreme' sports
- Other activities (e.g. initiative exercises) involving skills inherent in any of the above

### 4.2 Safety during adventurous activities

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

**a) An external provider**

Any external provider must hold an LotC Quality Badge or complete a Provider Form (Appendix 3). (If a Provider holds an AALA license (and/or any other accreditation) but not an LOtC Quality Badge, then a Provider Form is still required.)

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 the Academy's staff**

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Staff taking responsibility for adventurous activities must be able to demonstrate an appropriate level of competence before the activity is allowed to proceed and should ensure the recommendations set out below are followed for each activity.

#### 4.3 Water-based activities

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.

All 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 guidance 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.

#### 4.4 Swimming

All swimming activities and venues must be included within the trip 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.

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

##### **Swimming pools (lifeguarded)**

UK Swimming Pool safety: 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 assurances must be sought that appropriate lifeguard cover is in place prior to participants entering the water.

Unless suitably qualified, the school 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.



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For swimming lessons, the school should ensure the swimming teacher in charge or other pool employees/responsible adults supervising the participants are qualified according to current guidelines.

### **Hotel (and other) swimming pools**

Lifeguarding (a valid RLSS UK National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ), or equivalent in the country visited is appropriate accreditation) arrangements will be checked in advance of any visit.

If lifeguarding arrangements are not provided at the pool then the Group Leader will bear the full responsibility for ensuring swimming safety, and specific approval to lead the activity will be required.

The role of the lifeguard is:

- To directly supervise the pool and the pool users, exercising appropriate levels of control. (Note: the lifeguard should remain on the poolside at all times except in the case of an emergency)
- If necessary, brief pool users in advance regarding rules (e.g. no diving, running, etc.).
- To communicate effectively with pool users.
- To anticipate problems and prevent accidents.
  - To intervene to prevent behaviour which is unsafe.
  - To carry out a rescue from the water.
  - To give immediate first aid to any casualty.

The above must be accomplished in the context of the normal operating procedures and the emergency plan for the pool, which should be considered before swimming takes place. Full familiarisation of the systems described should be walked through at the pool.

Staff must be aware of the procedures in the event of an emergency, and who at the venue will provide back up. Staff should also know if they have exclusive use of the pool, as other pool users may increase the supervision role of your lifeguard.

If a young person holds an appropriate qualification then their role should be emergency lifeguard action, and supervision should remain the responsibility of the school staff.

#### **4.5 Open water swimming** (i.e. not in a swimming pool and not a 'water-margin' activity)

Particular consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Unknown locations and hazards, especially overseas.
- Changing environmental conditions.
- Supervisor complacency.
- Adherence to local advice.

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- Preparation and knowledge of young people, i.e. is it a planned activity?
  - The designated lifeguard must be dedicated exclusively to the group, and the location used must fall within the RNLI/RLSS definition of a 'safer bathing area'.
  - Local advice must always be sought.

For free swimming activity: A valid National Beach Lifeguard Qualification (NBLQ) or equivalent in the country visited, see [www.lifesavers.org.uk](http://www.lifesavers.org.uk) Note: this is for beach/sea only, not inland water. **Or** For structured or programmed activity: A valid RLSS UK National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTAC) or equivalent - see [www.lifesavers.org.uk](http://www.lifesavers.org.uk) or a valid RLSS UK Water Safety Management Award (WSMA), with appropriate endorsement.

#### 4.6 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 (slow moving and not above the knees). It does not apply to swimming and other activities that require water safety or rescue qualifications and equipment, or water-going craft. Water Margin activities are NOT considered an adventurous activity. It is essential however that staff take extra precautions with student working in and around water.

All staff involved in water-margin activities should be conversant with the guidance contained within *Group Safety at Water Margins*: (<http://www.rospea.com/leisure-safety/water/advice/>). This document must be made available to all supervising adults in advance of the visit.

#### 4.7 Open-country activities

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

- a) For leaders of walking groups in mountainous terrain within the UK and Ireland:
  - Mountain Leader Award (Summer or Winter as appropriate) [www.mltuk.org](http://www.mltuk.org), or
  - A written statement of competence by an appropriate technical adviser
- b) 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, and where any hazards within it are identifiable and avoidable, and where wild camping or movement on steep ground is not involved:

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- Walking Group Leader Award [www.mltuk.org](http://www.mltuk.org) or;
  - A written statement of competence by an appropriate technical adviser

c) For leaders of walking groups in terrain 'easier' than that defined in b):

The leader must demonstrate an appropriate level of competence. This may include one or more of the following:

- Countryside Leader Award. See [www.countrysideleaderaward.org](http://www.countrysideleaderaward.org);
- Sports Leaders UK Level 2 Award in Basic Expedition Leadership (BEL);
- Completion of a suitable 'Leader Training' Course;
- A written statement of competence by an appropriate technical adviser;
- Evidence of recent, relevant experience, appropriately corroborated;
- An assessment of competence (written or implied) by the Principal.

#### 4.8 Snowsports

A member of staff intending to organise a snowsport visit (but not instruct, lead or supervise on snow) must hold the Snowsport Course Organiser Award (SCO), administered by Snowsport England - [www.snowsportengland.org.uk](http://www.snowsportengland.org.uk) - and must have previously accompanied at least one educational snowsports visit.

Young people may only participate in snowsports when under the direction of an appropriately qualified and competent person. This would normally be an instructor employed by the local snowsports school. Leaders 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 follows:

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.snowsportsotland.org](http://www.snowsportsotland.org);

or

A statement of competence by an appropriate 'technical adviser' Snowboarding:

The minimum qualification to lead snowboarding on snow is:

The Snowboard Leader Award (SBL) administered by [www.snowsportsotland.org](http://www.snowsportsotland.org) or statement of competence by an appropriate 'technical adviser'.

Pupils may only take part in off-piste activities if under the direction of a suitably qualified local instructor, AND they will remain within the designated controlled areas, AND off-piste activities are specifically covered by insurance. Group Leaders

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should check their school journey insurance policy to establish the level of cover provided.

#### 4.9 Overseas Visits

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

- Culture: food and drink, local customs, religion, expected behaviour/dress, gender issues, sanitary arrangements, corruption, political stability, local financial information, alcohol & drugs.
- Accommodation: checked for suitability, security, safety precautions and emergency evacuation.
- Transport systems have been assessed as safe for use.

The Group Leader should consider the relevant country information from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website. 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).

#### 4.10 Overseas Expeditions

Overseas Expeditions are defined as those which typically involve journeying in remote areas of the world and/or in developing countries.

Overseas Expeditions will only be approved if the provider either:

- a) Holds an LOtC Quality Badge or
- b) Provides a statement of compliance with Guidance for Overseas Expeditions, Edition 3.

For providers that do not hold an 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.

#### 4.11 Weather, Clothing and Survival

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

Participants should be adequately clothed appropriate to the nature of the visit and the environment, the experience and strength of participants, the time of year and expected weather conditions, altitude and exposure to elements.

When venturing away from immediate help, leaders should consider the need for comfort, insulation and shelter for a casualty, or for the whole group, and

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provision of emergency food and drink etc. The need for signalling equipment and/or mobile phones and torches should also be considered.

It is primarily the responsibility of the Group Leader, in consultation with other staff where appropriate, to modify or curtail the visit or activity to suit changed or changing circumstances, for example, over-busy lunch area, rain, rising water levels, etc.

## 5. Emergency Procedures

### 5.1 Introduction

Despite good planning and organisation there may be accidents and emergencies which will require on the spot response by the group leaders. Adequate provision for minor first aid must be available when the party is 'in the field' and the leader should ensure that the levels of supervision are sufficient to allow the group to be split where necessary. A mobile phone is a useful aid.

Activity centres should have their own emergency procedures. Details of these must be obtained in advance of the visit and compared with the recommended framework below. If there is any doubt about the safety of the arrangements the trip should not take place.

### 5.2 Recommended Procedures:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency.
- Make sure all other members of the party are accounted for and safe.
- If there are injuries immediately establish their extent, so far as possible, and administer appropriate first aid.
- Establish the names of the injured and call whichever emergency services are required.
- Advise other party staff of the incident and that the emergency procedures are in operation.
- Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies the injured child/children to hospital.
- Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout and arrange for their early return to the academy.
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all students and staff are accounted for.
- Control all access to phones (particularly students) until contact is made with the Principal emergency contact point or designated senior member of staff and he or she has had time to contact those directly involved.

### 5.3 Give full details of the incident to the Principal or designated contact:

- Name;
- Nature, date and time of incident;

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- Location of incident;
  - Details of injuries;
  - Names and telephone numbers of those involved;
  - Action taken so far;
  - Telephone number for further contact.

#### 5.4 Serious Incidents

For serious incidents where the media may be involved, try to identify alternative telephone numbers as other lines will quickly become jammed. It is not for the Group Leader or other party members to discuss matters with the media, procedures for this are given below. Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be divulged to the media.

The Principal or designated senior staff member should alert the CEO and the PA to the CEO at the Harris Federation Head Office giving details as above. The Federation may identify further actions or help required (which might include financial assistance). Alternative and additional phone lines may need to be identified at an early stage.

The Principal or designated senior staff member should arrange to contact parents/guardians of those involved. For a serious incident the Principal or designated senior staff member should contact parents/guardians of all party members. It is also his/her responsibility to act as a link between the group involved, the Chairman of Governors, Harris Federation and parents/guardians.

If it is necessary to talk to the media, the Federation Press Office will do this initially. A member of the Press Office staff will be designated as the point of contact for the media and all involved should direct questions and requests to this person. This person will liaise with the emergency services, possibly on site.

The Group Leader should write down, as soon as practicable, all relevant details while they are still fresh in the memory. Other staff members might also be asked to do so. A record should be kept of the names and addresses of any witnesses. Any associated equipment should be kept in its original condition.

- Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.
- All accident forms should be completed as soon as possible and Insurers, the Health and Safety Executive and the Federation should be informed as appropriate.