

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Regulations, Advice and Procedures Off-Site Activities and Hazardous Activities

Reading Borough Council, Education Department 2009

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS ABOUT

January 2009

Page i

INTRODUCTION

This document provides the regulations, advice and procedures for off-site and hazardous activities for the education service and its establishments of Reading Borough Council.

There are six sections. Each section defines and describes the policy of Reading Borough Council Education Department with regard to the area involved.

SECTION ONE The Legal Context and the Duty of Care

SECTION TWO Finance And Charging

SECTION THREE Off-Site Activities

This deals with activities arranged by or under the auspices of the Council's schools, which take place outside the boundaries of those schools.

It includes such things as day visits, short stay residential journeys, field studies out of school, foreign language exchanges and sport tours in this country and abroad.

SECTION FOUR Hazardous Activities

This sets out the minimum qualifications, staffing ratios and monitoring procedures which are required before an individual can lead pupils on the activities listed. There are three categories of Hazardous Activity:

- Outdoor pursuits such as hillwalking, canoeing and skiing;
- Activities that are part of the Physical Education National Curriculum;
- Other activities and activities that form part of the Outdoor Education Curriculum.

SECTION FIVE Emergency Procedures

For use in the event of a serious accident or incident involving off-site or hazardous activities.

SECTION SIX Appendix

- A School journey insurance scheme
- B Minibuses, regulations, advice and guidelines.
- C Rockclimbing, the Council teaching scheme.
- D Canoeing, the use of weirs, classification of types of water and flood warning systems.
- E Further Advice and Guidance
- F Forms
- G Adventure Activity Licensing Scheme
- H Ski Helmets and Waivers

HOW TO USE THE DOCUMENT

Each page is numbered in the bottom right hand corner and each sub heading is also numbered.

Each page is dated to allow a check on whether the most up to date version is being used.

There is a detailed set of contents at the front.

The document has been produced by Reading Borough Council and the systems associated with it are operated by the Off-site and Outdoor Advisory Service.

The Service can be contacted as shown below.

Off-site and Outdoor Advisory Service

This service exists to help and support Reading Borough Council Education Department and its establishments in their work in this area. If you have any questions, doubts or concerns the Service is there to help.

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The Service is staffed for most of the working week but should there be no-one there when you call you can leave a message on the voice mail. These messages are checked frequently. Any message you leave on any of the numbers given above will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

If it is an **emergency** then please refer to the emergency procedures in Section Five (yellow pages) of this document.

CONTENTS

PARA NO:	ITEM	PAGE NO:
	What this document is about	ii
January 2009		Page iii

Section 1	The Legal Context and the Duty of Care	1
1.01	Introduction	2
1.02	The duty of care	2
1.03	Implementing the duty of care	2
1.04	Voluntary supervisors	2
1.05	School pupils aged eighteen and over	2
1.06	Outside agencies	2
1.07	The Role of the LEA	3
1.08	The Educational Visit Coordinator	3
1.09	The Role of the Head Teacher	4
1.10	The role of the Governing Body	5
1.11	Responsibilities of the Group Leader	6
1.12	Responsibility of Teachers and other employees	8
1.13	Responsibility of Adult Volunteers	8
1.14	Responsibility of the pupils	8
1.15	Responsibility of Parents	9
Section 2	Finance and Charging	10
2.01	Terminology and charging	11
2.02	Possible types of funding	11
2.03	Deciding on types of funding	12
2.04	What can be charged for	12
2.05	What schools must pay for from official funds	12
2.06	Voluntary contributions by parents	13
2.07	Optional extras	13
2.08	Optional extras and separate contracts for staff	13
2.09	Outside agencies	14
Section 3	Off-Site Activities	15
3.01	Introduction	16
3.02	Further advice	16
3.03	How to use this section	17
The rationale of off-site activities		
Regulations		
3.04	Educational purpose	17
3.05	The educational element	17
3.06	Links with the curriculum	17
3.07	Recreational ventures	17
Preparation and planning		
Regulations		
3.08	Preparation and planning	18
3.09	Safety, emergencies and first aid	18
3.10	Planning lead time	18
3.11	Research, particularly of venues	18
3.12	Appropriate activities	19
3.13	Emergency contacts	19
3.14	Choosing outside agencies and travel companies	19
3.15	Things to look for when considering the use of organisations, companies and centres for off-site activities	20
3.16	Aims and objectives	20
3.17	Travel arrangements	20
3.18	Location	21

3.19	Information	21
3.20	Staff Qualifications and experience	22
3.21	Equipment	22
3.22	Programme preparation	23
3.23	Buildings and other facilities	24
3.24	Risk assessment process	25
Approval and monitoring		26
3.25	Day visits within the locality	26
3.26	Extended day visits	26
3.27	Residential visits and visits extending beyond 24 hours	26
Procedures		
Headteachers		
3.28	Approval by headteachers/EVC's and heads of establishments	27
Governors		
3.29	Approval by governors	27
3.30	Governors' approval at short notice	27
3.31	Information required by governors	27
3.32	Governors' responsibilities	27
3.33	Annual appraisal by governors	28
Education Authority		
3.34	Activities which require Education Department approval	28
3.35	How to obtain Education Department approval	28
3.36	When to ask for approval	20
3.37	How much detail is required on the monitoring form	29
Supervision and staffing ratios		28
3.38	Party leader	29
3.39	Definition of a teacher	29
3.40	Definition of other appropriate members of staff	30
3.41	Activities involving more than one school	30
3.42	Staff pupil ratios - minimum ratio	30
3.43	Day visits within the locality & extended day visits	31
3.44	Residential visits within the UK	32
3.45	Residential and day visits abroad	32
3.46	Minimum number of staff	33
3.47	Children, relatives or close friends of staff	33
3.48	Activities where pupils are not under direct supervision	33
3.49	Groups which include pupils of both sexes or where pupils are of one sex and the leaders are of the opposite sex	34
3.50	Supervising adults other than professional staff	34
3.51	Good practice in supervision and the standard of care	35
3.52	Head counts	35
3.53	Who to brief and how	36
3.54	Delegation of role	36
3.55	Check lists and information	36
3.56	Frequency and regularity of briefing	36
3.57	Briefing and frequently used venues	37
Further advice		
3.58	Calculating staffing ratios	37
3.59	Staffing ratios and hazardous activities	37
3.60	Children with special needs	37
3.61	Senior staff of small primary schools	38

Parental consent

Regulations

3.62	When is parental consent necessary?	39
3.63	Day activities	38
3.64	Information for parents where full consent may not be needed	39
3.65	The timing of consent and information for parents	39
3.66	Parents' evenings	39
3.67	Pressure on parents	39
3.68	Information on insurance	39
3.69	Parental consent for a series of activities	39
3.70	Parental consent and medical forms	40
3.71	Alterations to the parental consent form and Medical Form	40
3.72	Medical consent	40

Insurance

3.73	The Council scheme for school journey insurance	41
3.74	Residential and foreign visits	41
3.75	Day activities	41
3.76	Information to parents about insurance	41
3.77	Insurance for motor vehicles	41
3.78	The background to the types of insurance involved	41
3.79	Who pays for school journey insurance?	42
3.80	What school journey insurance covers	42
3.81	A summary of the liability insurance cover provided by the Council	42

School journey insurance arranged by Reading Borough Council

3.82	The arrangement	43
3.83	The policy	43
3.84	Arranging and paying for the Council school journey insurance cover - residential and foreign	44
3.85	Arranging and paying for the Council school journey insurance cover - day activities	44
3.86	Recovering the cost of the Council scheme	44

Transport

3.87	Mini buses and multi-person carrying vehicles	45
3.88	Drivers	45
3.89	Drivers hours	46
3.90	Alcohol	46
3.91	Private vehicles	46
3.92	Mobile telephones	47
3.93	Use of coaches	47
3.94	Advice on coach companies	47
3.95	Use of foreign coaches	48

Reclaiming Value Added Tax

Information

3.96	What purchases will incur VAT?	48
3.97	Residential visits	48
3.98	Procedures for reclaiming VAT	49

Section 4 Hazardous Activities

Introduction

4.01	How to use this section	52
4.02	Monitoring	52

4.03	Further advice and training	53
4.04	Governing body of sport coaching awards	53

Hazardous outdoor activities - water based

4.05	Water competence for participants	53
4.06	Board surfing	54
4.07	Canoeing and kayaking	54
4.08	Canoeing and kayaking - unsupervised	56
4.09	Canoe racing	56
4.10	Fishing	56
4.11	Canal and river cruising	57
4.12	Rafting, particularly white water rafting	58
4.13	Rowing	58
4.14	Recreational rowing on inland sheltered water	58
4.15	Dinghy sailing on inland sheltered water	58
4.16	Windsurfing	59
4.17	Coastal and offshore sailing	59
4.18	Jet skiing	59
4.19	Snorkelling	59
4.20	Recreational snorkelling in sheltered water	60
4.21	Sub aqua	60
4.22	Swimming	60
4.23	Water skiing	60

Hazardous outdoor activities - land based

4.24	Campcraft	61
4.25	Caving, potholing and mine exploration	61
4.26	Cycling general	62
4.27	Cycling (road and track racing)	63
4.28	Cycling (recreational)	63
4.29	Unsupervised cycling	63
4.30	BMX	63
4.31	Mountain biking	63
4.32	Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions	64
4.33	Expeditions including overnight camps	64
4.34	Gorgewalking and coasteering	64
4.35	Hillwalking - definition of winter and summer	65
4.36	Hillwalking in the UK	65
4.37	Hillwalking in other European countries	66
4.38	Horse riding	66
4.39	Pony trekking and casual riding	66
4.40	Orienteering - introductory activities	66
4.41	Orienteering	66
4.42	Rockclimbing	67
4.43	Skiing	68

Hazardous outdoor activities - air based

4.44	All air based activities	69
------	--------------------------	----

Areas of activity within the Physical Education National Curriculum

4.45	Physical Education	70
4.46	Athletics	70
4.47	Educational gymnastics	71
4.48	Formal gymnastics	71
4.49	Olympic gymnastics	71

4.50	Trampolining	72
4.51	Contact games between staff and pupils	72
4.52	Rugby	72
4.53	Swimming	72
4.54	Diving	74
Other hazardous activities		
4.55	Archery	74
4.56	Boxing	75
4.57	Bungee jumping, bungee running and fruit bat flying	75
4.58	Circus skills	75
4.59	Crossbow	75
4.60	Fencing	75
4.61	Judo	75
4.62	Other oriental martial arts	76
4.63	Karting	76
4.64	Kick Boxing	76
4.65	Roller Skating, Roller Hockey, Skate Boarding	76
4.66	Self Defence	77
4.67	Shooting (air rifle and pistol)	77
4.68	Weight training	77
4.69	Weight lifting	78
4.70	Wrestling	78
4.71	Paintballing	78
Section 5 Emergency Procedures		
5.01	Introduction and how to use this section	80
Party leaders and other supervisory Adults		
5.02	Introduction	81
5.03	First response - care of the group	81
5.04	Contacting your school	81
5.05	Legal and organisational concerns	82
5.06	General concerns	83
Contact personnel at school		
5.07	Introduction	84
5.08	First response	84
5.09	Next steps	84
5.10	Legal and organisational concerns	85
5.11	General concerns	85
Headteachers and senior staff in schools		
5.12	First response	86
5.13	Next steps	86
5.14	Legal and organisational concerns	87
5.15	General concerns	87

Appendices

Appendix A	Council school journey insurance scheme
Appendix B	Minibus regulations and guidance
Appendix C	Canoeing and kayaking information
Appendix D	Rock climbing guidance

Appendix E	Further advice and information.
Appendix F	Forms for hazardous activities
Appendix G	Adventure Activity Licensing Scheme
Appendix H	Ski Helmets and Waivers

SECTION 1

THE LEGAL CONTEXT AND THE DUTY OF CARE

THE LEGAL CONTEXT AND THE DUTY OF CARE

1.01 Introduction

The activities covered in this document take place within a legal framework. Anyone involved must operate within this framework if they are to act lawfully. This section describes the essential elements of that legal framework.

1.02 The duty of care

When teachers or others are responsible for the care, custody and control of the children of others, they must **take the same care that a reasonable, prudent and careful parent would be considered to take in the same circumstances.**

The duty of care applies to **all who take responsibility for the children of others but the law is likely to expect a higher standard of care from professionals and those who hold qualifications, because of their training and experience.**

This document represents the Council's view of the implications of this for practice in off-site and hazardous activities.

1.03 Implementing the duty of care

In implementing this principle and interpreting the meaning of "reasonable, prudent and careful", common sense should be applied. In doing so, those involved should:

- **try to think as a parent would think in similar circumstances;**
- **consider whether they would be able to justify what is proposed to professional colleagues whose judgement they respect and, ultimately, to a court of law;**
- **if they are in doubt they must not go ahead unless or until they have sufficient further information and advice to remove the doubt.**

1.04 Voluntary supervisors

A voluntary supervisor is someone who is assisting the Council to discharge its function under the supervision and control of the Council through appropriate employees,

1.05 School pupils aged eighteen and over

With these pupils those responsible for them should assume that **the duty of care which must be exercised is the same as for other pupils.**

1.06 Outside agencies

Where an activity involves an outside agency the party leader must take great care to ensure that the agency involved is competent and any establishment used is safe. Organisations should be approached directly to ascertain that the qualifications and experience of the staff are in line with the requirements of this document.

In many cases Outdoor Activity Centres in the United Kingdom must be licensed by the **Adventure Activities Licensing Authority.**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.07

ROLE OF THE LEA

Reading Borough Council in its role as an employer has a responsibility for the safety its employees and for the pupils in its care when they are participating in off-site activities to ensure that safe practice is in place. The main responsibilities are outlined below:

- Approving (or disallowing) visits where the task of approval has not been assigned to school level;
- Notifying schools of the minimum adult : pupil ratios required by the LEA and whether the ratios can include competent adults other than competent school staff;
- Providing advice on visits generally and on adventure activities, expeditions and overseas visits;
- Providing schools with the LEA's statement of policy and guidance;
- Ensuring that Educational Visit Coordinators, group leaders, other school staff and other adults involved in educational visits are assessed as competent in their specific tasks;
- Assessing the risks of all the visits that their schools undertake;
- Monitoring the educational visits carried out by the LEA schools to ensure that they have a stated educational purpose;
- Reviewing policies and procedures in the light of lessons learned and sharing good practice more widely;
- Determining which visits will require LEA approval and which may be approved by the school;
- To ensure that relevant training is available;
- To ensure arrangements are in place to obtain Criminal Records Bureau disclosure, as necessary;

1.08

THE EDUCATIONAL VISIT COORDINATOR (EVC)

Each school should have an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

This may be the head teacher. It could equally be a teacher or other member of the school staff – in which case the EVC will be appointed by and may act on behalf of the head teacher.

The EVC will be involved in the planning, management and approval of the establishments educational visits including adventure activities which are organised and led by school staff.

The Role of the Educational Visit Coordinator:

- To liaise with the Council to ensure that educational visits meet LEA requirements;
- To support the headteacher and the governors with approval and other decisions;
- To assign competent people to lead or otherwise supervise a visit;
- To assess the competence of leaders and other adults proposed for a visit, eg in ngb accreditation, experience, training etc.
- To organise the training of leaders and other adults going on a visit eg in first aid, hazard awareness etc;
- To organise thorough induction of leaders and other adults taking pupils on a specific visit;
- To ensure that CRB disclosures are in place;
- To work with the group leader to obtain the consent or refusal of consent of parents and to provide sufficient information to parents beforehand to enable them to make an informed judgement;
- To ensure that the group leader carries a complete nominal roll including pupils names, addresses and parental contact numbers and that the emergency contact at school also has a copy;
- To organise the emergency arrangements and ensure there is an emergency contact for each visit;
- To keep records of individual visits including reports of accidents and near accidents;
- To review internal systems and, on occasion, monitor practice.

1.09 The Role of the Head Teacher

Where the EVC is not the head teacher it would be considered good practice for headteachers to ensure the following:

- To delegate tasks to the EVC, having regard to the duties of the ECV as outlined;
- To agree who will lead a visit at school level and submit details of the visit to the LEA for approval if required;
- To ensure that arrangements are in place for the governing body to be made aware of visits as necessary so that questions can be asked;
- To ensure that the educational objectives for a visit are stated and to be made known to all relevant parties;

- To ensure that any issues including issues of risk assessment have been satisfactorily resolved;
- To ensure that accreditation or verification of providers has been checked;
- To ensure that visits are evaluated;
- To ensure that the EVC keeps the head teacher informed of the progress of the visit and that this information is relayed to governors and parents as necessary;
- Check that the EVC has designated an appropriately competent group leader who will meet the LEA's criteria;
- Ensure that there is a contingency plan covering events that may affect the party eg staff illness, changes of route, accommodation etc;
- Make time available for the EVC to arrange induction of staff and volunteers;
- Arrange for the recording of accidents and the reporting of emergencies as necessary;
- Ensure that teachers are made aware of and understand LEA guidance on emergency planning and procedures;
- Ensure that the school has emergency procedures in place in the event of a major incident on an educational visit;
- Ensure that the school emergency contact has the authority to make significant decisions. They should be able to respond immediately at the school base to the demands of an emergency and should have a back up person or number;
- Ensure that a copy of the nominal roll has been left with the emergency contact and that all parental contact details have been accessed;
- Establish a procedure to ensure that parents are informed quickly about incident details through the school contact rather than the media or via other pupils;
- To recognise that support must be provided by the LEA's public relations unit when dealing with media enquiries;

1.10 The Role of The Governing Body

The governing body will be involved in the over-all approval process of an educational visit and in ensuring that appropriate measures have been taken to ensure the safety of all concerned.

The governing body should ensure that guidance is available to inform the school's policy, practices and procedures relating to health and safety of pupils on educational visits. These should include:

- Measures to obtain parental consent on a basis of full information;

- To investigate parental complaints;
- To discuss and review procedures including incident and emergency management systems;
- To ensure that the head teacher and the EVC are supported in matters relating to educational visits and that they have the appropriate time and expertise to fulfill their responsibilities;
- Ascertain what governor training is available;
- Agree on the types of visit that they should be informed about.
- Ask questions about a visit's educational objectives, how they will be met and are they appropriate to the age and abilities of the pupil group;
- The governors should challenge the nature of the venture when the educational objectives are not clear or where the means to meet them do not appear to be realistic;
- To ensure that visits are approved as necessary by the LEA before bookings are confirmed and any payments made;
- To ensure that headteachers and the EVC have taken all reasonable and practicable measures to include pupils with special educational needs or medical needs on any particular visit;
- To ensure that early planning and pre-visits can take place and that the results can be acted upon;
- to ensure that bookings are not completed until external [providers have met all the necessary assurance and to ensure that specific items in the risk management are checked prior to departure;

It is not expected that governors should become directly involved in risk assessment and related matters unless they have an appropriate competence. Governors offering professional advice to schools should ensure that their professional indemnity insurance covers them in respect of the advice offered.

1.11 Responsibilities of the group leader

One person, who is the group leader, should have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have regard to the health and safety of the group.

The group leader should have been approved by the headteacher and governing body and must be an employee of the school. They should have sufficient experience and /or qualifications within the area of the activity they are proposing to lead.

The group leader should:

- obtain the headteachers prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place;

- follow Education Service regulations, guidelines and policies;
- appoint a deputy leader who is capable of taking on the role of leader if required;
- clearly define each group supervisors role and ensure all tasks have been assigned;
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- if necessary be competent to instruct in the activity;
- if possible be familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place;
- be aware of child protection issues;
ensure that adequate first aid provision will be available;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
- undertake and complete a risk assessment;
- review regularly undertaken visits and activities and advise Headteachers where adjustments may be necessary;
- ensure that leaders, teachers and other supervisors are fully aware of what the visit entails;
- have enough information on the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed;
- ensure that the ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group;
- consider stopping or modifying the visit if the risk to health and safety of the pupils is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality;
- ensure that group supervisors have details of the school contact;
- ensure that the group supervisors and the school contact have a copy of the emergency procedures;
- ensure that the leaders, teachers, supervisors and instructors have the details of pupils special educational or medical needs which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively;

1.12

Responsibility of Teachers and other employees

Teachers and other employees on school visits act as employees of Reading Borough Council whether the visit takes place within normal hours or outside those hours.

They must ensure:

- the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstance;
- follow the instructions of the group leader and assist with control and discipline;
- consider stopping the visit or the activity, notifying the group leader, if they think the risk to the health and safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

1.13 Responsibilities of Adult Volunteers

Adults not in the employ of the school and acting as volunteer supervisors on the visit must be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit.

Adult volunteers must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- not be left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment and child protection procedures have been carried out;
- follow the instructions of the group leader and other supervisors and assist with the control and discipline of the group;
- bring to the attention of the group leader any concerns about health and safety or discipline of the pupils at any time during the visit;

1.14 Responsibilities of the Pupils

The group leader must make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks;
- follow instructions of the leader and other supervisors including those at the venue of the visit;
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly especially where it is necessary to wear protective clothing and equipment;
- be sensitive to codes and customs especially if working abroad in a foreign environment;
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the group leader or supervisors about it;

Please note: Any pupil whose behavior may be considered to be a danger to themselves or the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways wherever possible.

1.15 Responsibility of Parents

Parents should be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should go on the visit. The group leader should ensure that the parents are given sufficient information in writing and that they are invited to any briefing sessions arranged for them. Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language.

Parents should also be informed as to how they can help prepare their child for the visit by:

- reinforcing the visits code of conduct;
- provide the group leader with emergency contact numbers;
- sign the parental consent and medical form;
- give the group leader information about their child's emotional, psychological and physical health which might be relevant to the visit;
- agree to any arrangements for sending a pupil home and who will meet the cost.

SECTION 2

FINANCE AND CHARGING

FINANCE AND CHARGING FOR OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

2.01

Terminology and charging

The laws relating to charging for offsite activities by educational establishments only applies to establishments which are in the category of schools, colleges and any other unit that comes within the education service.

A charge is:

Any sum payable by a parent for an optional extra to which they had agreed or for board and lodging. It is recoverable as a civil debt.

An optional extra:

Is an activity which takes place outside establishment hours;

- parents can choose whether their children attend or not;
- makes no profit from any charges made;
- divides costs equally among all pupil participants (that is charges on some cannot be used to subsidise others);
- cannot involve a charge for alternative provision for any pupils not attending;
- is not a statutory curriculum requirement.

A voluntary contribution:

Is a sum of money that an establishment has asked parents to pay on a voluntary basis.

Establishments can request voluntary contributions for anything. In so doing they must ensure that:

- the contribution is genuinely voluntary;
- pupils are not treated differently because their parents choose not, or are unable, to pay.

2.02

Possible types of funding

In this context there are three distinct categories of off-site activity:

- activities which take place out of establishment time;
- activities which take place during establishment time;
- activities financed by voluntary contribution.

There are statutory criteria which determine whether an activity can be charged for or not.

The form of funding that is possible will depend on the category of an activity.

It is always possible for an establishment to subsidise an activity from the funds available to them, providing that the subsidy is in line with the school's charging policy. It is also always possible for activities to be funded by voluntary contributions provided the criteria are met.

2.03

Deciding on types of funding

It is for the establishment to decide on the procedures they should adopt but in considering they might find it helpful to use the following:

- ensure that parents are fully aware of the nature and value of the activity and the nature and amount of funding required.
- decide whether the activity will be classed as being in school time or out of school time.
- decide what types of funding can and will be used;
- ensure that parents are fully aware of the nature and value of the activity and the nature and amount of funding required.
- ensure that the necessary level of funding is available before the school is financially committed.

2.04 What can be charged for

The number of circumstances in which a school can charge parents is limited.

The only two areas in which charges can be made for off-site activities are board and lodging and optional extras.

This is based on the Charging provisions of the Education Act 1988 and represents the statutory minimum requirement.

It is always possible to ask for voluntary contributions from parents.

2.05 What schools must pay for from official funds

Where an activity is part of the syllabus of a prescribed examination or is required to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education, then the activity must be paid for out of official funds on the following basis:

- **all transport and tuition costs (including teaching materials) must be covered by the school;**
- a charge can be made for **board and lodging;**
- where a pupil's parents receive Income Support or other statutory benefits such as free school meals then the school must also cover the cost of board and lodging.

Only two categories are at present recognised as forming part of the syllabus of a prescribed examination. These are field studies courses that are necessary for any **'A' level and GCSE courses.**

2.06 Voluntary contributions by parents

The advice of the Education Department is that voluntary contributions are the most effective, reasonable and easiest way of funding most off-site activities.

Schools relying on voluntary contributions from parents in order to fund an activity should make this clear at the outset in order to avoid disappointment should parents decide not to pay.

In such cases schools may decide to use their own funds to cover the costs of those who cannot or who are not prepared to contribute.

When considering voluntary contributions schools should advise parents that if insufficient voluntary contributions are received then the visit may have to be cancelled. Schools should also advise parents that in the event of cancellation due to insufficient funds being received any money paid to a tour company or to an activity provider up to the point of cancellation might be not be recoverable.

Schools might find it appropriate to seek voluntary contributions to a school fund which could then be used to fund activities. This has the advantage of knowing the amount of funding available in advance.

2.07

Optional extras

Because of the way that the law dictates how activities in and out of school time must be distinguished, the number of activities that can be classed as optional extras will be relatively small.

Charges for an optional extra can include:

- travel;
- board and lodging for pupils;
- materials, books, other equipment and entrance charges to facilities;
- non-teaching staff costs;
- school journey insurance;
- the cost of engaging supervisory staff for the activities and paying their travel, board and lodging and, where appropriate a fee.

2.08

Optional extras and separate contracts for staff

Where the staff supervising an optional extra activity are also employed by the LEA, and where there is an element of teachers' expenses in the charge to parents, then they should be employed on a separate contract for services to provide the optional extra. They would be paid their salary in the normal way and the position with regard to liability insurance would remain the same. The contractual statement need say no more than that the member of staff is employed on the same terms and conditions as apply to the individual's principal contract of employment.

Please note - If a school uses voluntary contributions rather than a charge for funding an optional activity then the requirements listed above, would not apply.

2.09

Outside agencies

The requirements on what parents can and can't be charged do not apply if an outside agency is charging parents. This is of limited use to schools as a practical way forward. **The school must have no connection with the outside agency and it could not, therefore, initiate an off-site activity arranged in this way.**

Anyone attempting to contrive a situation which allowed a school to initiate an activity and subsequently charge parents through an outside agency would be at risk of breaking the law.

SECTION 3

OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

3.01

Introduction

This section deals with those activities arranged by or under the auspices of Reading Borough Council Local Education Authority Establishments and which take place outside the boundaries of those establishments.

It includes such things as:

- short visits within the locality of the establishment;
- extended day visits within the UK and abroad;
- short and long stay residential journeys;
- field studies out of school;
- foreign language exchanges;
- sports tours in this country and abroad;
- Expeditions within the UK and abroad.

It does not include:

- work experience (unless it involves travel in a group);
- normal movement between two parts of a split site;
- usual journeys to and from the establishment to ones home.

The Government and the Education Authority take the view that off-site activities play an important part in pupils' education and that such work should be encouraged and supported. **There is no wish to impose unnecessary rules and procedures on teaching staff but it is important that these activities are well planned and executed with due regard to their legal context and accepted, normal good practice.**

The framework this section provides will assist parents, school governors, headteachers, teachers, group leaders and all others involved in ensuring that this is the case. It will enable schools to work in this area confident in the knowledge that they have the support of Reading Borough Council.

It is essential that this section is familiar to, and understood by all those planning to be involved in any off-site activity. For extended day visits, residential activities and those involving a foreign country, the headteacher or the educational visit coordinator and the party leader must sign the appropriate section of the off-site activities monitoring form (OHA 1) to confirm that this is the case.

3.02

Further advice

If a particular case is not adequately covered by the information in this document or that further advice is needed for any other reason, then this can be obtained through the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service.

**ADDRESS: Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service
Ufton Court
Green Lane
Ufton Nerve
READING RG7 4HD**

TELEPHONE/FAX: 0118 983 592 OR: 07831 472458

Emergencies

In any emergency please refer to emergency procedures in section 5 of this document (yellow pages).

3.03 How to use this section

The section is divided into parts under a number of major headings - as indicated in the contents. Each of these parts may be further subdivided into regulations, further advice and procedures.

The Rationale of Off-Site Activities – Regulations

3.04 Educational purpose

All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose which is clearly related to the curriculum, whether the school is in session or not.

Any activities which do not meet this requirement will not be approved by, and will not have the support of the Education Authority.

3.05 The educational element

This must be sufficient to ensure an element of rigour and discipline such that pupils will respond to instructions and advice from members of staff at least as readily as if they were in school.

It is inappropriate for educational establishments to provide holidays for pupils. It is equally important for safety that pupils do not regard any off-site activity as a holiday and that activities are not presented to them in this way.

3.06 Links with the curriculum

In most cases the relationship of the aims of an activity to the curriculum will be clear and obvious eg:

- the acquisition of language;
- skills in sport;
- field studies and scientific studies;
- cultural enquiries.

In cases where the relationship is less obvious, particularly to governors, parents and pupils, it is important that the explanation to all concerned is carefully thought through and clearly expressed.

3.07 Recreational ventures

It is accepted that some ventures which have a considerable element of pure recreation which can be of benefit to pupils but in all such cases schools must ensure that the element of rigour and discipline, referred to in 3.05 above, is present

3.08 Preparation and planning

Thorough preparation and planning are vital to the success of any off-site visit. Those who organise and lead off-site activities have considerable responsibilities for those in their care. Each of the following should be considered in the planning process and any evidence should be provided for the approval procedure as required.

3.09 Safety, emergencies and first aid

Safety

Safety must be a prime consideration in all planning and preparation. Party leaders must be continually aware of the degree of care expected of them (see section 1 of this document). In particular, care should be taken to ensure that appropriate preparations are made to deal with any emergencies and that appropriate first aid facilities are available at all times.

Emergency procedures

Section 5, the yellow pages, of this document describes procedures that allow the full range of Borough Council services to be employed in an emergency. If advice is required on how to design emergency procedures either for a school or a particular activity, advice can be obtained from **Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Services (see page 12)**.

First aid

It is strongly recommended that party leaders have sufficient first aid expertise available to deal with a likely emergency.

3.10 Planning lead time

Planning and preparation must be done sufficiently far ahead to ensure that there is no unreasonable risk to safety, quality or finance as a result of preparations being made in haste.

If this cannot be guaranteed in the time available then the activity should not take place and will not be approved by the Education Authority.

This point should be borne in mind by headteachers, the EVC and governing bodies when considering approval for off-site activities.

3.11 Research, particularly of venues

The party leader must research the background and implications of an off-site activity thoroughly. **Schools must take no risks in this regard.** 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 visits to venues are particularly important. Whenever possible staff should have visited venues either on previous activities or on preliminary visits. When a venue involves naturally hazardous areas such as mountains and moorland, coasts, forested areas and sizeable areas of still and moving water

this is vitally important. In cases where a visit is not feasible then great care must be taken in seeking advice and information from elsewhere.

Even if a visit has been possible it would be wise for schools to check their findings with the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service. The Service has extensive experience and knowledge in this area. It is also in a good position to seek additional information.

As preliminary visits may be an important part of the planning of activities, any reasonable costs incurred can be included in the overall cost of the activity or paid for by funds available to the school.

3.12 Appropriate activities

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 pupils 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.**

3.13 Emergency contacts

It is important that, as far as reasonably practicable, **it is always possible for groups to be contacted and that groups can make contact with the school.** It might be sensible to arrange regular exchanges of information if the activity is residential and lasts for a number of days. In this way parents can be assured of children's well being without having to make long distance phone calls and risk disturbing teaching sessions.

A member of professional staff not on the activity should act as the contact for the group out of school hours. They should have available all relevant information about the group, programme, venues and a copy of the groups nominal roll. The role of the emergency contact is detailed in section 5 (yellow pages).

Clearly emergency contacts cannot guarantee to be available at all times. **With this in mind it is wise, wherever possible, to have two or more contacts, particularly when an activity extends over a weekend or holiday period.** A mobile telephone can also assist with communications, allowing an emergency contact to be available for most of the time.

3.14 Choosing outside agencies and travel companies

It is important that schools take steps to learn as much as possible about the nature and guarantees of the services, safety arrangements and any teaching facilities that are included in any contract. In considering this schools might find it helpful to speak to colleagues who have used a company or facility on a previous occasion.

Access to such information can be obtained through the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service (see page 12) which has extensive records of past activities.

It is usual for payment to be made to companies in a number of stages sometimes well before the date of departure. Therefore it is essential that companies are financially secure by having some form of bonding or trust system that enables schools to recover funding or to return home should the company cease to trade before or during an activity.

Schools should use companies that are bonded through the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) or similar schemes. **Any company offering a residential package deal at an inclusive price which includes any two aspects out of accommodation, transport and other services is obliged in law to be bonded.**

3.15 When considering the use of organisations, companies and centres for off-site activities

It is now a statutory requirement that outdoor activity centres are licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority.

The only time that this does not apply is when the technical level of the activities involved is very low or that the centre operates outside the parameters of the scheme.

If a centre is not licensed, or if you have any doubts at all, you should check with the Off-Site and Hazardous Activities Service **before committing yourself**. This applies irrespective of whether the group is resident with the provider involved or not.

3.16 Aims and objectives

- be clear about what is needed, requirements should drive the choice of venue, not the reverse;
- beware the opportunity which is appealing but of limited value;
- where objectives are inappropriate or unclear then the risk of accident is greater;
- limited availability offers can provide good value but sufficient time should always be allowed to ensure that the approval procedures have been followed.

3.17 Travel arrangements

- are these reasonably priced, comfortable, and appropriate for the group?
- the likelihood of possible delays should be considered and contingency plans for delays should be in place;
- does the travel operator have rules of their own which might affect pupil staff ratios e.g.? **Most cross channel ferry companies and London theatres require a ratio in the region of one adult to ten pupils.** It is clearly important to check any such constraints before

bookings are made. Previous users may be of assistance in assessing the quality and safety of a service;

- are the arrangements for the journey itself likely to cause a problem?
eg sea crossings can bring their own difficulties in terms of supervision and risk assessment.

3.18 Location

- how far away is the venue? Long journeys can be tiring and stressful especially for younger children.
- is the cost in time and money worth the educational benefit?
- is the environment appropriate? It should be challenging but not involve unnecessary risk;
- could the environment be provided more easily or more cheaply elsewhere?
- does it provide what is required?
- is the climate appropriate? Hot sun, intense cold or high altitude can bring its own dangers. These factors should be considered and risk assessed carefully.

There is a wide range of choice and so there is no need to take the option that appears.

3.19 Information

It is important to gather as much information as possible relating to all aspects of the visit and the proposed activities. The following should be considered:

- beware the glossy brochure with limited information. **Good written information is a positive sign but is not a guarantee of quality and safety;**
- information should be clear, unambiguous and comprehensive. If you are not convinced or require more information don't hesitate to ask.
If the matter is serious have information confirmed in writing;
- can the provider visit the school? That is positive and helpful. It is a good idea to take a note of the meeting and have it agreed by those present;

- beware of any areas where there is a reluctance to give information. General statements need to be explored further. Phrases such as "staff are all highly qualified" require amplification before they mean very much.
Well founded operations should have no hesitation or difficulty in providing such detail;
- are the claims in the information realistic? If an outdoor centre claims to offer a large number of activities it is reasonable to be sceptical;
- if an organisation presents itself as a provider of holidays, a claim to run educational courses may need some exploration before a school can establish that **'educational'** is meaningful.
- some providers offer total supervision of pupils. **It should be noted that it is not considered to be legal to pass the duty of care to others in this way and therefore a supervising member of staff should be present with groups or sub groups at all times with the possible exception of organised down time which is set within clearly defined parameters.**

3.20 Staff qualifications and experience

- ask for specific details relating to the qualifications and experience of the staff who will be looking after your pupils;
- have the staff been CRB checked;
- do the qualifications meet Reading Borough Council requirements (see section 4, green pages). Who has guaranteed their competence?
- do staff have nationally recognised qualifications?
- where staff are only employed for the season check qualifications and experience each year;
- where staff are trained in house, how does the training relate to national standards and whop has vouched for their competency? Individual curriculum vitae are helpful;
- ensure that qualifications are relevant to the activity. An impressive sounding qualification might not be relevant to the activity;
- where a facility is approved by a national body such as the Royal Yachting Association or the British Canoe Union that is a helpful indicator;

- assessing the competence of staff may require technical knowledge. The expertise to do so is available through The Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service (see page 12).

3.21 Equipment

- find out as much as possible about the equipment to be used. Age, manufacturer and model are all useful indicators;
- how well is it maintained? Where someone has responsibility for maintenance that is a positive sign. Nice colours and clean condition are helpful but no guarantee of appropriateness and safety;
- a worn appearance is negative but does not necessarily mean poor quality;
- is the correct equipment available and used at all necessary times? Having it available and not using it when necessary is a negative sign;
- does it all work as it should, when it should?
- do staff know how to use it?

Technical knowledge is often necessary to make judgements in this area. The necessary expertise can be obtained through The Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service (see page 12).

3.22 Programme preparation

A clearly defined programme should be in place prior to the visit. This should form part of the information provided to parents and should be checked against the aims and objectives of the visit.

When compiling a programme you should consider the following:

- the provider should be capable of tailoring courses to suit the establishments needs. Where standard courses only are available this may indicate limited expertise or facilities;
- providers should be willing 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;**
- are you confident that you are going to get what you asked for?

- does the provider understand and appreciate the requirements of the National Curriculum?
- are courses genuinely designed to assist in meeting NC or other requirements?

3.23 **Buildings and other facilities**

- have the fire precautions been checked and approved by the local Fire Service?
- if abroad, do fire precautions meet the standard expected in this country?
- what are the arrangements for evacuation in case of fire?
Are they easy to understand, readily available and would they work?
- Do new arrivals go through a fire drill or at least have the arrangements explained to them?
- Are staff familiar with emergency procedures in the building?
- Is appropriate first aid equipment and expertise available?
- Has the provider made arrangements for access to medical help if it proves necessary?
- Vehicles used to transport groups should be clean and regularly checked;
- drivers should hold an appropriate licence (see Appendix A).

If sufficient information is not available from other sources then schools can approach the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service who have access to extensive information.

3.24 **Risk Assessment Process**

It is a legal requirement to perform a formal risk assessment as part of the planning of any off-site activity and this procedure should be an integral part of the planning for all off-site activities.

- **For details of the risk assessment forms see appendix F. They should be used at all times.**

Risk assessments assist leaders, supervisory staff and participants by directing attention to areas of concern and by aiding the process of arriving at an overall

judgement on the safety of an activity and then implementing controls to possibly lower the risk element of the activity.

The process can be applied equally to particular activities that take place over a day or part of a day, and to events lasting a number of days that involve a range of activities.

If at any stage you find that you are identifying an activity or part of an activity involving an unacceptable level of risk then that activity must not go ahead until it has been subject to controls which reduce the risk level..

Low Risk

A **low risk** activity is one in which the possibility and nature of an accident considered to be low and are not substantially different to those encountered in every day experience.

Medium Risk

A **medium risk** activity is one 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.

High Risk

A **high risk** activity is one in which the hazards encountered are well beyond the everyday experience of the group. The repercussions of an accident could lead to serious consequences.

Unacceptable Risk

An activity in which the level of **risk is unacceptable** is one in which the hazards encountered are far beyond the experience of the group and the party leader and therefore participation would almost certainly lead to a serious accident.

Approval and monitoring

3.25 Day visits within the locality

These are defined as activities that involve a journey within the locality of the LEA or of less than 20 miles or a travel time of 30 – 40 minutes, are less than twenty four hours duration and do not include either an overnight stay or a journey by air or sea and exclude journeys to London.

It is normally for headteachers or the EVC to approve these activities. It is not normally necessary for party leaders to obtain approval from the Education Department unless the activity is of a hazardous nature or unless the school is unsure.

A record of these activities must be kept by the school and that record must include the following details:

- the number of pupils;
- the number of staff;
- the venue;
- the nature of the programme.

3.26 Extended Day Visits

These are defined as activities that involve a journey of more than 20 miles or a travel time of 30 – 40 minutes, are less than twenty four hours duration and do not include either an overnight stay or a journey by air or sea.

It is for headteachers or the EVC to approve these activities but the LEA must be notified via the submission of an OHA 1 form. Direct approval will not usually be given from the LEA but advice may be given if it is perceived that all the arrangements and details are not fully in place.

A record of these activities must be kept by the school and that record must include the details as for day visits within the locality.

3.27 Residential activities and activities lasting more than twentyfour hours and those that involve either an overnight stay or a journey by air or sea.

These activities must be approved by:

- Headteachers or the EVC;
- Governing bodies as necessary;
- Reading Borough Council;
- Approval should be sought well in advance and certainly before you are committed financially to a venture.

Procedures

Headteachers

3.28 Approval by Headteachers/EVC's and heads of establishments

It is for headteachers/EVC's in liaison with their governing bodies to decide what procedures they should adopt with regard to granting approval for day and extended day visits. It is acknowledged that this might involve delegating detailed checking to appropriate staff before approval is given.

Approval should only be given to those activities which are in line with the regulations contained in this document. A guide for the use of Headteachers, EVC's and governors is included in the appendix as form OHA 8

Governors

3.29 Approval by governors

Activities which are more than twenty four hours, or involve an overnight stay, or a journey by air or sea, may require approval of the governing body. Where this is required it should be recorded in the governing body minutes.

3.30 Governors' approval at short notice

Where an opportunity for an off-site activity is being taken at relatively short notice headteachers might find it necessary to make arrangements with governors other than through the normal meetings.

3.31 Information required by governors

Governors must be given sufficient information, in sufficient time, to allow them to make a fair and objective decision. They should be given at least as much information as parents.

3.32 Governors' responsibilities

It is the responsibility of governors in this context to:

- ensure that an activity is appropriate to the aims of the school as an educational establishment:
- ensure that an activity is appropriate to the needs of the pupils involved;
- satisfy themselves that the school can be run efficiently in the absence of any staff on the activity;
- satisfy themselves that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the safety of the pupils involved and that they have no concerns about safety.

3.33 Annual appraisal by governors

It would be wise for governing bodies to undertake an annual appraisal of the off-site activities at the school in order to:

- ensure a suitable spread of such activities throughout the school;
- ensure that financial commitments for parents are reasonable.

Governors might feel it appropriate that information resulting from the annual appraisal of off-site activities should form a part of the annual report to parents.

Education Authority

3.34

Activities which require Education Authority approval

The approval of the Education Authority must be sought for all off-site activities that:

- are more than twenty four hours duration;
- involve an overnight stay;
- a journey by air or sea
- a journey to a foreign country

It is in order to seek approval once for a group of activities that are part of a course or series eg a series of swimming lessons.

3.35

How to obtain Education Authority approval

Approval is obtained by using the **off-site activities monitoring form OHA 1**. The form can be photocopied for submission for approval.

For details of the form see appendix F

Colleagues should be aware that if there is any doubt about the safety or quality of an off-site activity the Education Authority will be obliged to refuse approval, whether the school is financially committed or not.

3.36

When to ask for approval

It is strongly recommended that schools consider seeking approval as soon as the governing body has appraised the off-site activity programme for the year ahead.

APPROVAL MUST BE SOUGHT BEFORE A SCHOOL IS COMMITTED TO FINANCIALLY TO RUNNING AN ACTIVITY.

This implies that monitoring forms should be submitted for approval some months ahead of departure dates. It should be sufficiently far ahead for the approval and the details of school journey insurance cover where appropriate, to be sent to the school in good time and for any issues arising to be able to be resolved.

If insufficient time is not allowed then the visit may not be approved.

Requests for approval will usually be responded to within two weeks of receiving the OHA 1 form. **In calculating the time to send in the form colleagues should remember that delays in monitoring can occur during holiday**

periods or between the Spring half term and the end of the summer term which is the period of greatest activity.

3.37 How much detail is required on the monitoring form

Early monitoring is essential for educational value.

As much of the requested information on the OHA1 monitoring form should be given even if only in outline.

If the monitoring officer requires more information it will be asked for and can be provided later.

Supervision and Staffing ratios

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS SECTION OF THE DOCUMENT ARE CRUCIAL TO PUPIL SAFETY AND TO RECEIVING APPROVAL FOR THE VISIT

3.38 Party leader

Headteachers must appoint a party leader to be responsible for the running of an activity. **In most cases the party leader must be an appropriate member of staff in the employ of the school.**

3.39 Definition of a teacher

In this context a teacher is a fully qualified teacher, employed by the Education Authority, who is also on the staff of the school undertaking the off-site activity. This does not include **newly qualified teachers**.

3.40 Definition of other appropriate members of staff

Such staff would normally be on the staff of the school. They should also be appropriately qualified and experienced and approved by the Headteacher and the governors. .

3.41 Activities involving more than one school

Where activities involve a number of schools from Reading Borough Council **a member of staff should be appointed as the overall party leader**. In such cases headteachers must satisfy themselves that the care and supervision of pupils will be at least as good as if a member of the school staff were the party leader.

Where there are a number of schools from different Authorities making one group there are serious implications of liability that will require resolving prior to departure or it may result in the Adventure Activity Licensing Scheme being infringed. Party leaders should seek advice on this matter before making any arrangements.

3.42 Staff pupil ratios

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any visit.

The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of the group;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the nature of the activities;
- the experience of the adults in off-site supervision;
- the duration and nature of the journey;
- the type of any accommodation;
- the competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;
- requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
- competence and behaviour of the pupils
- first aid cover.

3.43 Day Visits Within the locality and Extended Day visits

As a general guide the following minimum ratios should apply:

- 3 Year olds – 1 adult to 2 pupils.
- 4 – 5 Year olds - at least 1 adult to 4 pupils.
- Years 1 (key stage 1) - 1 adult to every 6 pupils with a minimum of two adults
- Year 2 (key stage 1) – 1 adult to every 8 pupils with a minimum of two adults
- Years 3 to 4 (key stage 2) – 1 adult to every 10 pupils with a minimum of two adults
- Years 4-6 (key stage 2) – 1 adult to every 15 pupils with a minimum of two adults

- Year 7 – 9 (key stage 3) – 1 adult for every 15 pupils with a minimum of two adults.
- Year 10 onwards (key stage 4) – 1 adult for every 20 pupils with a minimum of two adults

Please note that these examples are minimum requirements. Party leaders should assess the risks involved and set an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group.

PLEASE NOTE: all day visits to London require a minimum staffing ratio of 1 / 10 with a minimum of two adults.

For Day visits within the locality and Extended Day Visits

Generally there should be a minimum of one employed staff member who is the party leader and who is in overall charge of the party plus other staff as required.

For Extended Day visits Years 12 and 13

For most cases there should be a minimum of two staff. However there may be occasions when due to the age of the pupils there may only be one teacher supervising. All such cases should be submitted for approval via the OHA 1 form.

3.44

Residential visits within the UK

As a general guide the following minimum ratios should apply:

- 3 – 4 Year olds – It is not generally suitable for this age group to be taken on residential visits.
- 5 Year olds - at least 1 adult to 4 pupils with at least two staff
- Years 1 to 2 (key stage 1) – 1 adult to every 6 pupils with a minimum of two adults.
- Years 3 to 4 (key stage 2) – 1 adult to every 8 pupils with a minimum of two adults.
- Years 4-6 (key stage 2) – 1 adult to every 10 pupils with a minimum of two adults.
- Year 7 – 9 (key stage 3) – 1 adult for every 15 pupils with a minimum of two adults.

- Year 10 onwards (key stage 4) – 1 adult for every 15 pupils with a minimum of two adults.

Please note that these examples are minimum requirements. Party leaders should assess the risks involved and set an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. **There should be a minimum of two teachers one of whom is the party leader and who is in overall charge of the party.**

There may be occasions in years 12 and 13 where due to the small number of pupils involved it is being considered that only one teacher is present. The LEA will review each visit where this is proposed.

3.45 Residential and Day Visits Abroad

As a general guide the following minimum ratios should apply:

- Years 1 to 2 (key stage 1) – 1 adult to every 5 pupils with a minimum of two teachers .
- Years 3 to 4 (key stage 2) – 1 adult to every 8 pupils with a minimum of two teachers
- Years 4-6 (key stage 2) – 1 adult to every 10 pupils with a minimum of two teachers
- Year 7 – 9 (key stage 3) – 1 adult for every 10 pupils with a minimum of two teachers.
- Year 10 onwards (key stage 4) – 1 adult for every 10 pupils with a minimum of two teachers

Please note that these examples are **minimum** requirements. Party leaders should assess the risks involved and set an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. **There should be a minimum of two teachers one of whom is the party leader and who is in overall charge of the party. One other teacher should be appointed the deputy leader and should be capable of assuming the leadership of the party in the event of the party leader being incapacitated.**

3.46 Minimum number of staff

In some circumstances relating to day visits it may be acceptable to have less than the minimum number of staff. These are generally as follows:

- where activities involve a journey of short duration and are in situations that are familiar to pupils, **and where additional appropriate adult help could be available in a short time**, should the party leader become incapacitated or other circumstances require additional adult support quickly;

- on a journey where additional help will be available at the group's venue, providing always that there is adequate supervision of pupils during the journey;
- activities that are not directly supervised by staff that conform to 3.48 below;
Please note: this point applies to all activities and at all times, irrespective of how long or short the period of time involved.

3.47 Children, relatives or close friends of staff

In situations where it is proposed that the children, close relatives or friends of staff accompany a school group on an off-site activity **then there is a serious risk that roles will conflict.**

Therefore the participation of any adults who are close relatives or friends of staff should be considered in the same light as that of other adult supervisors.

That is, any adults with the group should be there in a supervisory capacity sharing supervisory responsibilities.

The party leader should not be included in this category and should not have any of their own children included within the make up of the group. Any adult family or close friends should only accompany the group if they are present as an approved member of the supervisory staff.

Any children of staff should be of a compatible age to the pupils in the group and should be treated as any other pupil in the party.

Any exceptions to this must be approved by the Education Authority.

Where a child accompanying a member of staff is not a registered pupil at the school or any other Reading Borough establishment the party leader should check with the Council whether the Council's Third Party Liability Insurance would apply in the event of a claim being made in respect of an accident to that child.

It is unlikely that approval will be given for this to take place.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL ADULTS ACCOMPANYING GROUPS ON RESIDENTIAL VISITS MUST BE CRB CHECKED.

3.48 Activities where pupils are not under direct supervision

It is acknowledged that there are occasions when it is appropriate for pupils to work in situations where they are not directly supervised. Examples might be Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions, some field work exercises and in order to explore, however briefly, a carefully and clearly defined area. This would include shopping excursions.

In such cases, no matter how short the time scale may be, particular care must be taken to ensure that the following are observed:

- pupils must have the aptitude and maturity for, and be appropriately trained, briefed and experienced for whatever is involved;
- **parents must be given clear and detailed information in writing about what is proposed, before being asked to give their consent and must agree in writing;**
- there must be appropriate emergency back-up available and pupils must have the means, knowledge and ability to use it. The extent of back up depends on the circumstances.
- If there is any doubt as to what is appropriate here then further advice should be taken from the Off-Site and Hazardous Activities Service (see page 12). Such considerations should be taken into account well ahead of the event.

For further details see appendix E

3.49 Groups which include pupils of both sexes or where pupils are of one sex and the leaders are of the opposite sex

Parties must generally have staff of the same sex as pupils, with the following possible exceptions:

- where an activity involves a small group of pupils on an activity lasting less than twenty four hours and not involving an overnight stay;
- where appropriate adult help is available at the group's venue and only the journey involves adults of one sex being present;
- where an activity involves pupils working without direct supervision.

This regulation is concerned with the position of staff as well as the welfare of pupils. It would be wise to ensure that where pupils are supervised by adults of the opposite sex, parents are clearly aware of and in agreement with the situation.

Teachers are advised to take particular care in such circumstances. If there is ever a need, for example, for them to visit bedrooms or changing rooms for pupils of the opposite sex then they should always be cautious and considerate in choosing the time and style of such visits and should, wherever possible, be accompanied by an adult of the opposite sex.

Please note: while it is generally acceptable in these circumstances for female staff to be in sole charge of a mixed gender group it is not considered acceptable for male staff to be in a similar position or in charge of an all female group.

In either case the situation should be avoided.

3.50 Supervising adults other than professional staff (volunteers)

It is acknowledged that schools will often make use of responsible adults other than members of staff in order to ensure better supervision of pupils. It is for headteachers to decide whether such adults would provide suitable additional help. In making this decision it might be helpful to consider the following points:

- will the adults know the children and other adults involved;
- have they appropriate skills, qualifications or experience to offer;
- would staff and pupils be likely to respond to them as they would to teachers?

Such persons should not be asked:

- to supervise more than ten pupils at any one time;
- they should not be in a situation where they are remote from the support of teachers or other professional members of staff..

Please Note – All supervising adults should satisfy Criminal Records Bureau checks (CRB) especially on residential visits.

3.51

Good practice in supervision and the standard of care

It is most important that teachers and other supervisory adults are;

- aware of the high standard of care required of them on off-site activities;
- they must always be aware of potential dangers and take necessary safeguards. Section 1 of this document applies here and should be read with care.

Particular care must be taken in environments that are naturally hazardous such as;

- cliffs;
- coastal environments;
- forested land;
- areas close to running or open water especially in winter conditions;
- mountain and moorland areas especially in winter conditions;
- ferries or boats of any kind;
- areas liable to pedestrian and vehicular congestion eg airports, stations, concerts, theatres.

3.52

Head counts

Frequent head counts must be made. It is sensible to consider dividing pupils into smaller groups in order to facilitate counting. It is also strongly

recommended that key counts should be double checked by another adult and / or that a register should be taken.

3.53 Who to brief, and how

Leaders, teaching staff, other supervising adults, parents and pupils 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.

3.54 Delegation of role

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

3.55 Check lists and information

Each adult member of a group should carry check lists and any information that enables them to act quickly and effectively. Particular care should be taken if a group is to divide into smaller units. As far as is reasonably possible supervisory adults should know who is where and when. They should also be aware of all relevant emergency procedures.

3.56 Frequency and regularity of briefing

While an activity is in progress there should be regular daily briefings for pupils and staff.

3.57 Briefing and frequently used venues

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.

Further advice

3.58 Calculating staffing ratios

When deciding on the staffing ratio for a particular activity or part of an activity, the following should be taken into consideration;

- the duration and nature of the activity. eg does it involve situations in which particular care needs to be taken - see 3.51 above;
- the ages and characteristics of pupils. eg to what extent would you expect a group to behave in a disciplined manner and their age in relation to the activities;
- the needs and abilities of staff. eg do staff require rest periods in order for them to operate efficiently and what is their experience of similar activities;

- any domestic role of staff. eg if staff have to drive, supervise do the cooking of meals or other tasks is the staffing sufficient to ensure adequate supervision at those times;
- are there pupils who will require a particularly high level of supervision and are there enough staff to cope with checking of numbers and other arrangements.

3.59 Staffing ratios and hazardous activities

Specific advice on ratios for these can be found in section 4 (green pages) of this document.

3.60 Children with special needs

This will include all pupils with Education Authority statements of provision and other pupils identified by the school as having significant special needs. Headteachers need to ensure that an appropriate level of care and supervision is available to meet the needs of individuals within the group and that:

- The adult/child ratio should be at least equal to that provided in the school;
- At least one adult with appropriate skills for meeting the special needs of the pupils in the group should be available on all off-site activities;
- Where only one teacher is supervising, headteachers must be reasonably sure that pupils will not be put at risk should that teacher become incapacitated.

Where pupils are not under direct supervision 3.48 applies.

Where it is known that the special needs of a pupil or pupils predispose them to unpredictable behaviour, or to behaviour that might put them at physical risk, then the level of supervision should reflect what would be regarded as reasonable by colleagues who are trained and/or experienced in work with such pupils. **It should also be considered whether or not it is safe to take these pupils off the school site.**

In cases where they may endanger the safety and welfare of the group their inclusion in the party should be seriously considered and it advised that specific contracts relating to behaviour and possible return home are in place.

3.61 Senior staff of primary schools

The headteacher and deputy in a primary school should not be away at the same time without ensuring that the Education Authority and governing body are in agreement with the situation.

3.62 Parental Consent

When is parental consent necessary?

Written parental consent of some sort must be obtained for all official activities which take pupils off the school site and in particular:

- extended day visits
- journeys and visits lasting more than twenty four hours;
- visits involving an overnight stay;
- a journey by air or sea;
- any journey outside the UK
- all visits involving hazardous activities.

3.63 Day activities within the locality

In the case of activities within the locality, or are less than twenty four hours duration and not involving hazardous activities but where the pupils will be off the school site for a considerable part of the school day it is still recommended that some form of parental consent should be obtained. It is also recommended that parental consent should be obtained for any activity which parents might regard as unusual.

3.64 Information for parents where full consent might not be needed

Circumstances might arise where a headteacher decides that the formal **OHA 2** parental consent form is not necessary for day visits of short duration.

In this case it would be advisable for parents to sign a note to indicate that they have received and understood the information.

Where a series of short visits are to be made over a period of weeks eg swimming lessons or community work, one consent should be sufficient for the whole series. This should be renewed termly if necessary so that parents are reminded that these activities are still being carried on.

3.65 The timing of consent and information for parents

Information to parents must be fair and realistic and should be given in sufficient time for parents to make an unhurried and informed decision before they are financially committed.

There should be enough information to allow parents to make an objective decision and this information must be in a written form.

3.66 Parents' evenings

In addition to the written information in cases of residential visits a meeting with parents is appropriate in order to expand on written information or in order to answer parents questions. A true assessment of the journey must be presented

at this stage so that parents are able to make an informed choice. Information disseminated should be as accurate as possible.

3.67 Pressure on parents

Great care should be taken to avoid putting parents under undue pressure to allow pupils to participate. It must be accepted that parents may not agree to give consent to some activities.

3.68 Information on insurance

Parents must be informed of the nature and extent of insurance taken out on their behalf.

3.69 Parental consent for a series of activities

Parents need only be asked to sign one parental consent form in respect of a series of activities that are part of a course. Such consent should not be allowed to extend over more than one year and may be required over a shorter period such as every term.

It might be necessary to ensure that medical information is kept updated in such cases.

Procedures

3.70 Parental consent and medical form OHA 2

The Education Authority Parental Consent and Medical Form OHA 2 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 parents.

Copies of forms signed and returned by parents should be retained in the school until such time as all matters relating to an activity are finally settled.

The copy of the parental consent and medical form can be photocopied and used by schools.

3.71 Alterations to the parental consent form

Circumstances may arise in which schools may wish to alter the Council form in order to gain more specific medical information. This is in order but the wording on the Council form, particularly the section headed "**Statement**", is most important and any alterations should be checked with the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service before an altered form is used.

Please note: Where parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should not be taken on the visit but the curricular aims should be delivered to the pupil in some other way if this is possible.

3.72 **Medical Consent**

This should form part of the parental consent form.
Parents should be asked to agree to the pupil's receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic and or transfusion of blood or blood associated products as considered necessary by the medical authorities.

Doctors can be expected to carry out necessary emergency treatment without parental consent but it is possible that a surgeon in another country might be reluctant to operate on a pupil 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.**

Where parents withhold medical consent for a pupil participating on an activity it must be agreed with parents that any of its establishments or employees or volunteers assisting in the execution of its statutory duties cannot be held responsible for circumstances that might arise through not receiving medical care. Furthermore parents must undertake to be contactable at all times in the event of an emergency so that any responsibility for decisions affecting their child can be made by them and not the school staff.

3.73 **Insurance**

The Borough Council scheme for school journey insurance

PLEASE NOTE – Reading Borough Council has made an arrangement with its insurers that all off-site activities from Reading Borough Council schools will have this form of insurance - **UNLESS A SCHOOL CHOOSES OTHERWISE.**

This arrangement is not free to schools but this insurance can cover all types of off-site activity wherever they take place.

School journey insurance cover must be taken out, on behalf of parents, to cover risks arising from cancellation, loss of personal possessions, personal accident and medical expenses for off-site activities.

3.74 **School journey insurance for residential and foreign visits**

Insurance will be arranged for all visits via the OHA 1 form unless it is stated on the form that it is not required. **In cases where the borough councils insurance cover is not required the party leader must attach a copy of the insurance cover being provided.**

3.75 **Day activities**

A record of these activities must be kept by the school. The record must include details of the number of pupils and staff involved, the venue and the nature of the programme. **The OHA 3 forms for recording these details should be sent to the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service at the end of each school term.**

3.76 Information to parents about insurance

Parents must be informed of the nature and extent of insurance taken out on their behalf.

3.77 Insurance for motor vehicles

Please see under "Transport" and 'Appendix B the use of minibuses' for insurance related to the use of motor vehicles.

3.78 The background to the types of insurance involved

In the context of off-site activities two forms of insurance are relevant.

Liability insurance

This form of insurance covers the policy holder against claims being made and subsequently proven in a court of law by third parties. eg if an accident occurred and a claim of negligence was made and proven. Any damages that might be payable in such a situation would be covered by such a third party liability policy, provided that the terms of the policy had been met.

All employees supervising an off-site activity would be covered for such payments by Reading Borough Council's third party liability policy.

The same policy applies to volunteers acting as adult supervisors.

School journey insurance

This form of insurance provides cover for a series of risks irrespective of cause the cover includes:

- cancellation;
- loss of personal possessions and money;
- personal accident and death;
- medical expenses;
- public liability.

These risks might not be covered by a solely liability policy and there is inevitably a substantial time delay with liability insurance because of the need to prove the liability. School journey insurance is in addition to and separate from liability insurance.

3.79 Who pays for school journey insurance?

The Council does not, indeed probably could not lawfully, provide this form of insurance by paying for it out of official funds. What it does is to make arrangements for a policy of proven quality to be taken out easily by schools on behalf of parents, and for parents, or the school, to cover the cost.

3.80 What school journey insurance covers

The risks covered by a school journey policy fall into five broad categories. These categories are sometimes further subdivided in some policies:

- costs arising from cancellation or delay due to causes beyond the control of the person insured;
- costs arising from medical treatment and associated matters such as hospital costs and costs involved in parents visiting the ill or injured pupil in hospital;
- costs arising from disablement, disfigurement or death arising from an accident. This is commonly termed personal accident insurance;
- costs arising from the loss of personal possessions and money;
- cost arising from causing damage or injury to another person or property;

3.81 A summary of the insurance cover provided by and available through Reading Borough Council Liability Insurance

The Council maintains and will continue to maintain Third Party Liability Insurance which provides for compensation to a third party where negligence, on the part of any person under contract of service with the Council or any volunteer acting on behalf of the Council, has been proven. **This policy is always in force and no action need be taken to ensure that cover is provided.**

Employer's liability insurance

Should an employee of the Council claim that the Council as employer has been negligent, and should that claim be proven, this policy would provide compensation for the employee. **This policy is always in force and no action need be taken to ensure that cover is provided.**

School journey insurance

The Council has arranged a policy which can be used by all schools to cover the risks under this heading. **Schools will be charged for the cost of this insurance.** If it is not required by a school then the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service must be informed.

Further details on Reading Borough Council insurance policies

Details of these policies are held in the Council's Insurance Section. If more details or information about them is required then reference should be made to that section.

School journey insurance arranged by Reading Borough Council

3.82 The arrangement

The Council has arranged a policy with the Royal Sun Alliance Insurance Company, which can cover all schools on off-site activities.

Schools do not have to use this arrangement.

However the Council has decided that in the interests of pupils and parents schools choosing not to use the policy must deliberately opt out of the arrangement for day, residential and foreign activities.

3.83

The policy

Essential details are given in appendix A.

They describe a standard school journey policy. The information is as supplied by the Company. A copy of the master policy is held by Reading Borough Council and the Off-site and Outdoor Advisory Service.

PLEASE NOTE: A policy is also available to cover winter sports. Details of that policy can be obtained from the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service. If schools wish to consider using this policy they should indicate accordingly on the off-site activities monitoring form OHA 1.

Procedures

3.84

Arranging and paying for the Council school journey insurance cover Residential and foreign activities

On the off-site activities monitoring form OHA 1 which is sent to the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service for these activities, there is a space to indicate whether a school wishes to use the Council scheme or not.

When monitoring is complete details of any cover being provided will be sent to schools along with a certificate of insurance.

If schools choose not to use the Council scheme then they must indicate this in the appropriate place on the off-site activities monitoring form. In these cases details of the alternative cover being taken out must be sent with the form. It is appreciated that alternative cover is likely to be used when schools are arranging an activity through a travel company, particularly for foreign visits. However in such cases schools must submit details of the cover provided so that it can be checked to ensure that it meets Reading Borough Council requirements.

3.85

Arranging and paying for the Council school journey insurance cover

Day activities

Each term schools will be sent a pro-forma OHA 3 on which they should record the details of day long activities for the term. At the end of the term the completed pro-forma should then be sent to the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service.

Schools will be reminded when the form is due.

At the start of each financial year, schools wishing to use the Council policy to cover day long activities will be invoiced for a deposit to cover their use of the

policy. This deposit will relate to their use during the corresponding year. At the end of the year there will be a final adjustment based on the following formula:

Total of insurance used - deposit = balance to be paid.

If schools choose not to use the Council arrangement they should notify the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service when the decision has been made. It would be advisable for the decision to have the approval of the governing body.

3.86 Recovering the cost of the Council scheme

It is for schools to decide how they recover the cost of insurance. It is suggested that they might consider including an amount in the overall cost to parents for each activity and holding it until payment is requested..

Transport

3.87 Minibuses and Multi-Person Carrying Vehicles

Vehicles

Drivers must check that vehicles are roadworthy, ensure that they have all necessary documentation and that they drive safely and within the law.

All Council vehicles must have a log book which is kept up to date. Drivers are responsible for making appropriate entries before leaving the vehicle. It is strongly recommended that vehicles not owned by the Council that are used for Council business should also use such log books.

Log books should indicate:

- Who was driving;
- To where;
- When;
- For how long;
- Any defects on the vehicle.

3.88 Drivers

Anyone wishing to drive a minibus on school business must have taken a driver assessment approved by the Council or possess a current PCV licence.

No person should drive if they feel incapable of doing so.

Where an adult accompanying a group is also driving there should be a non driving assistant to supervise pupils, unless all of the following have been implemented:

- the driver is entirely confident that they can effectively supervise pupils themselves;
- the journey is of a **short duration within the locality**, avoiding major trunk roads and motorways;
- the driver carries a means of communication and there are set procedures in place to summon assistance in the event of a breakdown or other circumstances arising.

3.89

Drivers hours

- Where a person drives a minibus, **the total working day, including driving time and all other duties including teaching, 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 which carries a degree of responsibility. Supervision of young people during a rest period would count as work. Sleeping time would not, even if there is a continuing general responsibility for an activity.**
- Drivers should either take a complete rest of at least 15 minutes before driving again after 2 hours or take a complete rest of at least 45 minutes before driving again after a maximum of 4.5 hours.
- 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.**

3.90

Alcohol

No alcohol should be consumed on vehicles used for transporting people on Council business. 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. They must never sit three to a double seat.

There is a range of legal requirements with regard to use in the United Kingdom and abroad, maintenance and acquisition of minibuses. Details of these and additional advice can be found in appendix B.

3.91 Private vehicles

When these are being used to transport pupils neither the Council's third party liability policy nor employer's liability insurance is effective. **Any claims, therefore, would in all probability have to be met through the driver's own insurance. The insurance policies on all such vehicles should be fully comprehensive.**

Where a vehicle is owned by a member of staff then the vehicle insurance policy must include a clause to the effect that they are allowed to use it for business purposes.

Where a vehicle is owned or driven by adults or pupils who are not members of staff then there must be no doubt that the insurance is valid when pupils are being carried. The drivers involved must check with their insurers.

Party leaders or headteachers must ensure that:

- insurance policies;
- driving licences;
- road tax;
- relevant MOT Certificates are current.

This should be done by asking those involved to sign a brief and appropriately worded document. See Appendix F

3.92 Mobile Telephones

Drivers of minibuses or persons transporting pupils in cars should not use mobile telephones when driving the vehicle and must conform to the law relating to the use of mobile telephones in vehicles.

3.93 Use of coaches

Private coaches used to carry children are required by law to be fitted with seat belts. 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;
- it is advisable for pupils not to use a seat which overlooks a stairwell on the coach and any others that are adjacent to entrances and exits, including emergency exits;

- Neither pupils 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.

3.94 Advice on coach companies

If headteachers require advice with regard to the use of a particular coach company then they might find it helpful to contact other schools to see if they have used the company in question or to contact Reading Boroughs Transport Department. The Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service can also advise. Whether the company is a member of the Bus and Coach Companies Operators Association might be a useful guide.

3.95 Using Foreign Coaches

British law is not binding for foreign coaches and therefore when abroad coaches may not be fitted with seat belts parents should be made fully aware of this and must agree to the participant travelling in these circumstances. It is advised that this should be done in writing. Foreign coaches used within the UK by foreign visitors on exchange visits might not be fitted with seat belts. UK schools must conform to British Law if sharing coaches supplied by foreign schools when they are visiting within the UK and only coaches fitted with seatbelts should be used.

Reclaiming Value Added Tax

3.96 What purchases will incur VAT?

VAT is not incurred on coach hire or fares on public transport. Most of the other purchases that schools are likely to make in connection with off-site activities will incur VAT. This includes, for example:

- accommodation (if purchased on its own);
- admission to museums, stately homes etc;
- petrol for school minibuses or private cars;
- printing, photocopying, purchase of maps and other materials directly attributable to an off-site activity which are bought in ;
- costs associated with pre-visits by staff to a venue.

Small items of expenditure

There is little advantage to be gained by reclaiming VAT for small items of expenditure.

3.97 Residential visits

VAT on residential educational visits can be reclaimed provided **all** the following conditions are met:

- the school is using private accommodation. That is, the accommodation is not operated by a local authority;
- the school is providing their own tuition or tuition is purchased at non-profit making establishments such as Lakeside YMCA Centre, Out of Town Centre, Rhos-y-Gwaliau Outdoor Education Centre or Tirabad Residential Education Centre. Under some limited circumstances tuition can be purchased from commercial companies.
- the activity has been approved by the Education Authority and a VAT exemption certificate has been provided by the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service;
- the activity is non-profit making;
- the supplier is able to identify the amount of VAT on the invoice;
- the bill is paid via the Council's finance department through the school's delegated budget - not private funds of the school.

Please note: INCLUSIVE PACKAGES. An inclusive travel package including for example accommodation, visits and transport will have an element of VAT included in the cost. Tour operators sometimes cannot show this VAT separately on invoices and, therefore, it cannot be reclaimed. If you are unsure whether this applies to a particular supplier it is important that you ask them before you are committed.

If you can reclaim VAT on a residential activity (see 3.97 above) you should not include VAT in the charges to those going. It should not be the intention of school visits to make a profit.

Residential activities where tuition is provided by commercial suppliers

VAT can only be reclaimed for these activities if demonstrably more than half the sessions are self programmed by the accompanying school staff and the conditions in 3.97 above are met in full.

VAT cannot be reclaimed for residential visits where schools are purchasing more than 50% of the tuition from commercial companies.

3.98

Procedure for reclaiming VAT on residential visits

When the off-site activities monitoring form (OHA 1) is submitted to the Education Authority in connection with residential activities, those wishing to reclaim VAT should indicate this in the space provided on the form. When approval for the visit is sent to the school a green VAT reclaim certificate will be attached. The reclaim certificate should be attached to any paperwork associated with payments made through the school's delegated budget. If you

are paying through a local bank account then the reclaim certificate should be attached to the monthly return to Educational Finance.

All invoices relating to the visit which include VAT must be paid through an official Council bank account (that is an imprest account, a local bank account or through the Accounts Payable system) and charged to the school's delegated budget so that payments appear on the school's financial print out. VAT cannot be reclaimed in any other way.

The contributions made by those going on the activity should be paid directly into the Council funds through your main school budget cost centre code

Keep all the records relating to the finance of the visit in a safe place for at least six years beyond the current financial year, in case Customs and Excise or the Council's auditors wish to see them.

Visits abroad

VAT cannot be reclaimed on activities to foreign countries.

VAT queries

If you have any queries on the VAT aspects of off-site activities you are advised to contact the Education Authority Finance staff..

SECTION 4

HAZARDOUS ACTIVITIES

Introduction

4.01

How to use this section

The section is based on the minimum qualifications, staffing ratios and monitoring procedures that are required before an individual can lead pupils on the activities listed. These in turn are based on nationally accepted standards; in particular those set by the various national governing bodies of sport. The section is divided into three main parts.

- **Hazardous Outdoor Activities**
 - Water based activities
 - Land based activities
 - Air based activities
- **Physical Education National Curriculum Areas of Activity**
- **Other Hazardous Activities**

The qualifications and experience required to teach or lead an activity are given first. Staffing ratios are given where relevant and possible. There is also further advice and information for some activities.

The list of these activities has grown over the years and new ones continue to appear. If advice is required for an activity not in the list then it is important that the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service (see below) is contacted for advice. **The absence of an activity from the list should not be taken to mean that it is without potential risk.**

4.02

Monitoring

Those wishing to teach or lead pupils in the activities listed requiring registration must be registered with Reading Borough Council via the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service.

A copy of the registration form that should be used is included in appendix F. This can be photocopied or, alternatively, additional copies can be obtained from the:

Off-site and Outdoor Advisory Service
Ufton Court
Green Lane
Ufton Nervet
READING

TELEPHONE/FAX: 0118 983 5922

Completed forms should be returned to the address above well before an activity is due to take place. Once registration is complete the applicant and the establishment will be sent a letter confirming registration for the activities applied for.

4.03 Further advice and training

This can be obtained from the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service who have access to a wide range of expertise and information.

4.04 Governing body of sport coaching awards

The recommendations of this document could put teachers and leaders to some expense as several governing bodies of sport require coaching award holders to affiliate annually if they wish awards to remain valid. The view of Reading Borough Council Education Authority is that they are primarily concerned that teachers and leaders reach a satisfactory level of coaching in the first instance and that this level is appropriately maintained. The Education Authority does not, therefore, require that in all cases unless specifically required to do so, all certificates and awards remain valid through the payment of annual fees to governing bodies of sport, although some teachers and leaders may wish to do this. It may be that individual establishments deem it appropriate for teachers and leaders to pay annual fees but that is a matter for them and their own governing bodies or management committees. In this context the Education Authority insurers have made the following statement:

“In certain activities, techniques and equipment change from time to time and we would expect that teachers and leaders are kept up to date with changing practices and that they do not use or instruct on equipment and techniques for which they have not had adequate training. It may be worthwhile taking a requalifying course periodically (e.g. every five years) to keep up to date with changing practices.”

In all activities a risk assessment must be undertaken. If visiting a centre the centres risk assessment for the activities will suffice. Where visiting instructors are coming into an establishment they should produce their own risk assessment. Where the activities are being done as part of the PE curriculum the relevant curriculum leader should produce risk assessments.

Hazardous Outdoor Activities - Water Based

4.05 Water competence for participants

This applies to all these activities.

In all situations where personal buoyancy is being worn there is not always a necessity for participants to be able to swim a set distance although this might be recommended by the sport or activity centre.

There is a need for participants to be sufficiently confident in water so that the teacher or leader is given no reason to think that they will react in such a way as to endanger themselves or others in the event of a capsize, or immersion for any other reason. In particular, there should be no known and/or acute fear of being in the water especially in open water situations.

If there is ever any doubt on this point then reference should be made to the qualified teacher/ leader for the activity. If there is still doubt advice can be obtained from the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service.

For those outdoor activities on water where personal buoyancy is not normally worn; eg recreational rowing in shallow and sheltered water, competitive style rowing, some flat water canoe racing and probably snorkelling and sub-aqua; **then all participants should be thoroughly competent and confident swimmers.**

Please note: many outdoor centres set a qualifying swimming distance eg 50 metres, before allowing pupils to participate in water based activities.

Where the following activities are to be experienced outside the UK teachers and leaders should check that the following qualifications are in place or that where foreign instructors are used that they hold an appropriate equivalent award.

4.06 Board surfing – registration required

This is regarded as a high risk activity. It is strongly recommended that any person wishing to take a group board surfing must make direct application to the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service using the registration form in Appendix F.

4.07 Canoeing and kayaking - registration required

The following British Canoe Union qualifications are considered appropriate for the types of water and boat indicated. See appendix D for details of the classification of inland water used here. Additional headings dealing with other aspects of the sport follow below. The BCU are implementing a new award scheme for instructing in this activity. Until this has been fully implemented the old award scheme should be applied.

Qualifications - Inland Water

Very Sheltered Water

The leader in charge must be a BCU Level 1 Coach for kayak or open canoe as appropriate with a valid canoe safety test and first aid certificate or a trainee level 2 coach..

Sheltered Water

The leader in charge must be a BCU Level 2 Coach or above for kayak or open canoe as appropriate.

Moderate Inland Water

The leader in charge must be a BCU Level 3 Coach or above for kayak or open canoe as appropriate.

Advanced Inland Water

For work at this level direct application must be made to the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service.

Qualifications – Sea

Very Sheltered Tidal Waters - holiday beaches, close inshore and calm conditions.

BCU Level 2 Kayak Coach or above

Moderate Tidal Waters - and quiet slow moving estuaries and tidal rivers.

BCU Level 3 Coach (Sea), or a BCU Level 3 Coach (inland / canoe) with appropriate 4 star.

Advanced Sea - Coastal waters in conditions up to force 4 wind strength and moderate surf (that is surf up to a metre high) BCU Level 3 Coach (Sea)

Offshore kayaking and canoe surfing in anything more than moderate surf. Specific application must be made to the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service using the registration form in Appendix F

Canoe Surfing

This is regarded as a high risk activity. Any person wishing to take a group canoe surfing must make direct application to the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service using the registration form in Appendix F

Recommended minimum staffing ratios

Level 1 Coach or Level 2 Coach Trainee with valid Canoe Safety Test and First Aid certificate:

Inland 1:8 (very sheltered water)

Level 2 Coach

Inland	1:8
Sea	1:6

Level 3 Coach

Inland	1:12
Sea	1:6

For activities that involve levels of difficulty beyond those referred to above, direct application must be made to the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service for advice on staffing ratios.

Please note: Outdoor Education Centres that have an AALA licence may have slightly higher ratios.

Please note: Where a group is making a journey that lasts for half a day or more, or where a group is operating too far away from a recognised and appropriately equipped base for emergency assistance and facilities to be readily available, then at least two suitably qualified staff must accompany the party. The ratio will also change depending on the type of water.

4.08 Canoeing and kayaking - unsupervised

Restricted Water

Young people may canoe without direct supervision, in groups involving a minimum of three people, providing they all hold a minimum qualification of the BCU 2 Star Award. They must have the written permission of their parents and also written permission from the appropriate head of centre or school and also a BCU Level 3 Coach.

Moderate Inland Water

Young people may take part in canoe expeditions unsupervised, in groups of at least three people, providing they all hold a minimum qualification of the BCU 2 Star Award, have the written permission of their parents and the written permission also of the appropriate head of centre or school and also a BCU Level 3 Coach. Such expeditions are usually only approved for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme where comprehensive training has been conducted beforehand.

4.09 Canoe racing - registration required

Qualifications

Leaders and coaches should hold the British Canoe Union Level 2 Coach Racing Award or above.

Recommended staffing ratios

The same staffing ratios as in 4.07 and 4.08 above apply.

Bouyancy Equipment

Please note: It is acceptable for those involved in flat water canoe racing to paddle without personal buoyancy between Easter Monday and 1 November, provided that:

- they have been promoted into Division 5 (K1) or above
- they are strong and competent swimmers
- their boats have adequate buoyancy
- the water area used is in normal summer conditions.

In all other canoeing personal buoyancy is essential.

4.10 Fishing - registration not required

Qualifications

The instructor / supervisor must be experienced in the type of fishing undertaken and have an appropriate level of knowledge and/or qualification in first aid, resuscitation and water safety.

Recommended staffing ratios

Coarse Fishing:

Still water 1:12

Running water 1: 6

Fly Fishing:

Still water 1: 6

Running water 1: 6

These ratios should be improved for novices.

Boat Fishing:

Still water and running water

- 1 member of staff per boat with a maximum of 4 people per boat depending on the size.

Appropriate personal buoyancy must be worn.

In all cases the person in charge of the boat must be competent in boat handling.

Fishing - Wading:

It is not recommended that schools should participate in this type of fishing.

Sea Fishing:

- An appropriate level of knowledge about tides, currents and wave activity is essential.
- From shore: a maximum of 1 : 6, depending on conditions.
- From a boat
This is regarded as a high risk activity. For work at this level apply to the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service using the registration form in Appendix F

4.11 Canal and river cruising - registration required

Qualifications

All those who wish to be in charge of boats on canals and rivers must have passed a relevant narrow boat handling course (for river, canal or equivalent) unless, exceptionally, it is possible for them to be registered as a result of previous experience and / or training.

Recommended staffing ratios

Department of Transport regulations state that the maximum number of berths in a boat is twelve. As a guide, there should be one adult to every three young people.

Boats

Please note: All boats used must comply with the British Waterways Board, The Environment Agency or other relevant Authority's licensing regulations, and hold a current certificate of compliance where appropriate.

On canal navigation in summer conditions non-swimmers must wear buoyancy aids when outside the cabin.

On river navigations over 1.5 metres deep, buoyancy aids must be worn at all times when outside the cabin.

In winter conditions buoyancy aids must be worn by all, at all times, on all types of waterway when outside the cabin.

4.12 Rafting and white water rafting - registration required

This is regarded as a high risk activity. Any person wishing to take a group rafting must make direct application to The Offsite and Outdoor Advisory using the registration form in Appendix F.

4.13 Rowing - registration required

Recommended qualifications

Teaching beginners - The Basic Teaching Award of the Amateur Rowing Association.

Coaching club crews - Club Coach Award of the Amateur Rowing Association.

Coaching to advanced competitive standard - Advanced Coach Award of the Amateur Rowing Association.

4.14 Recreational rowing on inland sheltered water - registration not required

Please note: Personal buoyancy should be worn for this activity unless the water is sufficiently shallow for participants to walk to the shore in the event of a capsized boat and that pupils are confident in the event of open water immersion.

Qualifications

A responsible adult, who has appropriate knowledge of water safety, resuscitation and lifesaving techniques should supervise this activity.

Staffing ratios

1:10 maximum but less if local conditions and the ability of the participants demand it.

4.15 Dinghy sailing, inland sheltered water - registration required

Qualifications

The teacher or leader in charge of the activity should hold a valid Royal Yachting Association/National Schools Sailing Association, Dinghy Sailing Instructors Certificate.

If more than one boat is used there should be a helmsman holding at least the RYA/NSSA. National Dinghy Sailing Certificate Level 2 or the Start Sailing Certificate Level 3 in charge of each boat unless otherwise approved by the Principal of the relevant RYA teaching establishment for each occasion. Where single handed sailing boats are used the teacher or leader in charge must also be experienced in handling and teaching in this type of boat.

Staffing ratios

- 1:6 single handed boats
- 1:3 for a two person boat
- 1:12 with a minimum of two staff for all other dinghies, depending on local conditions and abilities. Where more than one dinghy is used the activity should take place under the supervision of an RYA Senior Instructor or another approved by the Principal of the relevant RYA teaching establishment.

Where sailing is taking place at an RYA recognised sailing centre the above requirement will probably be met by the staff provided by the centre, but school staff should be careful to check.

Rescue Boats: The teacher or leader in charge should hold the Powerboat level 2 certificate of the RYA. This certificate should be upgraded with either the level 3 club rescue or level 4 fleet rescue endorsements when sailing takes place on open water.

4.16 Windsurfing – registration required

Qualifications

The teacher or leader in charge should have considerable experience of the activity and must hold the appropriate Instructors Award of the RYA National Windsurfing Scheme.

The activity should take place in a controlled area and all relevant and appropriate safety precautions should be taken.

Recommended staffing ratios

1: 6 maximum in controlled teaching situations.

Please note: A rescue boat should be manned or ready for immediate use.

The only exception is in small areas of shallow water not more than half a kilometre square where access is readily available from all points on the surrounding land.

4.17 Coastal and offshore sailing including dingy cruising and racing- registration required

This is regarded as a high risk activity. Any person wishing to lead a group in these activities must make direct application to the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service using the registration form in Appendix F

4.18 Jet skiing - registration required

This can be a high risk activity. Any person wishing to lead a group on this activity must make direct application to the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service using the registration form in Appendix F

Jet skiing should only take place at sites approved by the British Marine Industries Federation. Teachers and leaders should check that those instructing are qualified BMIF Personal Watercraft Trainers.

4.19 Snorkelling - registration required

Qualifications

Teacher / Staff member / leader must hold the Snorkelling Instructors Certificate of the British Sub-Aqua Club.

Staffing ratio 1:10 Swimming pools
2:6 Open water

4.20 Recreational snorkelling in sheltered water - registration not required

Young people engaged in social or recreational snorkelling must be confident and competent swimmers and should be supervised by an adult who is:

- an experienced and strong swimmer;
- has an appropriate level of knowledge of water safety;
- has knowledge and experience of snorkelling;
- has a Life-Saving and Resuscitation Award from the Royal Lifesaving Society or other equivalent qualification.
- Has an appropriate qualification to supervise the activity

Such snorkelling should only take place in swimming pools or sheltered water where emergency services are readily available and must be approved by the LEA prior to the activity.

4.21 Sub aqua - registration required

Qualifications

For introducing the sport in pools or sheltered waters the teacher/leader should hold the Club Instructors Award of the British Sub-Aqua Club.

At any level above this it is a high risk activity. Any person wishing to teach or lead must make direct application to the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service using the registration form in Appendix F.

4.22 Swimming – registration not required

See 4.52 for information on this activity.

4.23 Water skiing – registration required

Qualifications

The instructor should hold the Instructors Award of the British Water Ski Association.

Staffing ratios 1 per towing boat.

Hazardous outdoor activities - land based

4.24 Campcraft - registration required Qualifications

The teacher or leader should:

- have substantial experience of the type of camping involved;
- be familiar with the equipment to be used and the associated safety measures (this applies particularly to the use of cooking stoves. See appendix);
- be thoroughly familiar with the area to which they are going and the sites to be used;
- and / or the instructor should have attended a recognised training course such as the Basic Expedition Leader (BEL).

If there is any doubt as to the adequacy of the qualifications of anyone proposing to take a group camping it is important that the Off-site and Outdoor Advisory Service is contacted for advice.

Staffing ratios

Under this heading three categories of camping are recognised:

- Camping on a commercial site or using a recognised camp site having toilets, a shop and/or other facilities.
- Semi-permanent standing camps, for example, Scout and Guide facilities, where basic amenities such as permanent toilets and showers are not available.

There should be a minimum ratio of 2:12 but with at least two staff in each case.

- Remote standing camps that have reasonable access to emergency services and ready access to the nearest road. The road should be no more than two kilometres away from the site.

There should be a minimum ratio of two staff and a maximum party size of 12, including the two staff. It may be advisable to reduce pupil numbers in some circumstances.

Camping in places which are more remote than the above or that are in naturally hazardous terrain (for example high level camping in mountain areas) is dealt with under 'expeditions'.

4.25 Caving, potholing, mine exploration - registration required

Qualifications

Please note - Teachers and leaders in charge of this activity are registered not only for a given level of difficulty but also for the particular area to be used. In addition the specific caves or mines to be used must be listed.

Local qualifications for one area may be transferable to another area if a particular cave is well known to the leader involved. This is less likely to be the case with mines. Appropriate details should be made clear on the application for registration.

NCA Level 1 - caves or mines,

Horizontal systems with small drops that can be free climbed and where the flood risk is predictable.

The leader should have been successfully assessed at National Caving Association, Local Cave/Mine Leader Level 1.

This is a high risk activity when done at anything more than an introductory level. Any person wishing to teach or lead at a more advanced level than NCA level 1 must make direct application to the Off-site and Outdoor Advisory Service.

As an indication the following levels of qualification will be looked for.

NCA Level 2 - caves or mines, systems involving ladder and or abseil work.

Leaders should have been successfully assessed at Local Cave/Mine Leader Level 2.

For vertical caves involving the use of single rope techniques leaders should be qualified under the NCA scheme as Cave Instructors.

Staffing ratios

A minimum of two staff should be used. Maximum staffing ratios are:

Level 1 horizontal systems	2:8
Level 2 vertical systems	2:6

It may be that in some circumstances these figures will need to be substantially reduced.

4.26 Cycling general

Please note:

It is recommended that for all cycling activities the following precautions should be taken:

- cyclists must wear protective headgear that complies with appropriate British Safety Standards;

- appropriate protective clothing must be worn, for example gloves when mountain biking;
- bicycles must be in good working order.

4.27 Cycling (road and track racing) - registration not required

Recommended qualifications

The instructor/supervisor should be a cyclist experienced in the relevant branch of the activity who holds the appropriate coaching award of the British Cycling Federation or The English Schools Cycling Association.

Recommended staffing ratio

Road Racing: 1:5

Track Racing: 1:10 with not more than four participants on the track at any one time.

4.28 Cycling (recreational) - registration not required

Recommended qualifications

The instructor/supervisor should be an experienced cyclist who understands the safety requirements of group cycling.

If there is any doubt as to the adequacy of the qualifications of anyone proposing to take a group recreational cycling the Off-site and Outdoor Advisory Service can be contacted for advice.

Staffing ratio

1:10 minimum with two members of staff in most situations.

One member of staff would be adequate only in situations and areas with which experienced pupils were thoroughly familiar.

4.29 Unsupervised cycling

At the discretion of the headteacher responsible, young people may be given permission to cycle unsupervised, provided that they hold a Cycling Proficiency Certificate or are at a similar standard, relevant to the cycles and provided that they are wearing an appropriate crash helmet and other protective clothing and that parental consent has been obtained.

Please note: all young people taking part in cycling should be encouraged to take the Cycling Proficiency Certificate.

4.30 BMX – registration required

Qualifications

The instructor / supervisor should have knowledge of the Bicycle / Moto Cross Association guidelines, obtainable from the British Cycling, National Cycling Centre, Stuart St, Manchester M11 4DQ email Info@britishcycling.org.uk

Staffing ratio 1:10

4.31 Mountain biking - registration required

Qualifications

All leaders should be:

- competent at navigation in the terrain involved;
- technically competent at bicycle repair and maintenance;
- competent at first aid to an appropriate level;
- be approved under these regulations for hillwalking in similar terrain and conditions and hold the Basic Expedition Leaders Award or the Mountain Leaders Certificate (Summer)

Lowland areas

On roads and tracks in lowland areas the teacher or leader should be an experienced cyclist who understands the safety requirements of group cycling.

Mountain Biking - Off road or on tracks in hilly but non remote areas

The teacher or leader should be an experienced cyclist and should hold an appropriate qualification for leading groups in the type of terrain to be visited, e.g Basic Expedition Leader (BEL).

For cycling off road in mountainous, wild or remote areas the teacher or leader should be an experienced cyclist and have undergone appropriate registration for the areas to be visited, for example MLTB Mountain Leader Award (Summer).

4.32 Duke of Edinburgh's Award - registration required

For further information on Award qualifications for leaders, instructors and assessors, teachers and leaders are advised to contact the Scheme via the DOE award officer at Reading Borough Council.

4.33 Expeditions (including overnight camps) - registration required

Qualifications

The leader should be experienced in expedition work and campcraft in the type of area to be used. They should have a thorough knowledge of the area involved and be qualified, and if appropriate registered for the mode of travel and level of technical difficulty involved.

The Basic Expedition Leaders (BEL) provides a good base of training for all expedition work.

Leaders for more advanced expeditions must make direct application to the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service for advice and to ensure that the leader qualifications and leadership capabilities are adequate for the expedition planned.

4.34 Gorge walking and Coasteering - registration required

Qualifications

For activities such as these and similar activities there are no formal qualifications.

They are potentially hazardous and should not be undertaken by anyone who is not experienced and qualified in a range of outdoor activities.

Leaders should be careful to ensure that they have qualifications and experience appropriate to the more formal activities that are combined under these headings.

For example, gorgewalking requires a thorough knowledge of water safety, rockclimbing and in some circumstances mountain leadership qualifications.

If there is any doubt as to what is appropriate in a particular situation then reference can be made to the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service.

4.35 Hill walking information - the definition of winter and summer conditions

Summer conditions

These exist when there is no likelihood of snow and/or ice underfoot being present or forecast. **It should be noted that cold winds, rain and low temperatures are not unusual facets of summer conditions.**

Winter conditions

These exist when there is any likelihood of snow and / or ice underfoot being present or forecast - irrespective of the season or time of year.

Please note: Local weather forecasts from reliable sources should be obtained and carefully considered before a decision is made as to whether winter or summer conditions exist at a given location. "Reliable sources" in this context might be Weather Centres or the Meteorological Office. **It should never be assumed that because summer conditions apply at low level they will also apply on the hill.**

4.36 Hillwalking (hills, moors and mountains) in the UK - registration required

Qualifications - summer conditions

The leader must be an experienced hillwalker who has attended a recognised training / assessment course relevant to the standard involved and to the season of the year. Leaders must have a thorough knowledge of the area being used and the standards outlined by the CCPR, the Basic Expedition Leader Award and the British Mountaineering Council. Registration is possible at a range of levels depending on qualifications, experience and the ground to be used. The Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service can advise.

For work in upland areas a significant distance from the road the qualification expected is the Mountain Leader Award (Summer).

Qualifications - winter conditions (see 4.35 above for definition)

This is a high risk activity. Any teacher or leader wishing to lead at this level must make direct application to the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service using the form in Appendix F

The level of qualification looked for is that of the Winter Mountain Leadership Certificate.

Recommended staffing ratio

Experienced leaders will be aware of the ratios that apply in different circumstances. If there is ever any reason for doubt then reference should be made to the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service

4.37 Hill walking in other European countries

Qualifications

It is now a legal requirement that mountain leaders in Europe must hold the European Mountain Leader Award or appropriate Guides qualifications. Any teacher or leader wishing to work in other European countries should contact the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service for advice on whether the area they are considering comes under this requirement.

4.38 Horse riding - registration not required

Qualifications

The minimum qualification for those in charge of this activity is the British Horse Society's Assistant Instructors Certificate. Instruction should only take place at riding establishments approved by the British Horse Society or that section of the society known as the Pony Club of Great Britain. In addition the establishment should follow the BHS Code of Conduct for Riding and Trekking Holiday Centres. A leaflet giving details staffing ratios for different kinds of rides is available from the BHS. These should be adhered to

Recommended staffing ratio 1:8

4.39 Pony trekking and casual riding - registration not required

Qualifications

Riding should only take place at an establishment recognised by the British Horse Society or that section of the Society known as The Pony Club of Great Britain. In addition the establishment should follow the BHS Code of Conduct for Riding and Trekking Holiday Centres. A leaflet is available from the BHS.

Staffing ratios

The above mentioned leaflet gives staffing ratios for different kinds of rides.

4.40 Orienteering - introductory activities - registration not required

Qualifications

Introducing the sport in well known and low level terrain where the safe limits can be easily defined - for example local parks and school grounds.

It is sufficient for the teacher or leader to be reasonably competent and have some experience in navigation and basic safety techniques.

4.41 Orienteering - registration required

Qualifications

- (a) Running coaching and training courses (that is where the teacher or leader designs and sets out the courses) in well known woods and other local terrain which could not be defined as wild country or mountainous, and where safe limits can be easily and clearly defined.
- (b) 'Colour coded' or 'badge' events where British Orienteering Federation standards of safety are in operation.

All permanent courses in the United Kingdom which have been set out according to the guidelines of the British Orienteering Federation.

The teacher or leader should hold the Instructors Award of the British Orienteering Federation or, exceptionally, be qualified by experience and other qualifications to operate at this level.

- (c) Running coaching and training courses (that is where the teacher or leader designs and sets out the courses) in all terrain in the United Kingdom that is not wild or mountainous.
- (d) Any organised event in the United Kingdom where British Orienteering Federation standards of safety are in operation.

The teacher or leader should hold the Club Coach Award of the British Orienteering Federation or, exceptionally, be qualified by experience and other training to operate at this level.

Orienteering at any level above this is a high-risk activity. The Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service (see page iii) must be approached for advice.

Staffing ratio

- (a) above. 1:20
- (b) above. 1:15
- (c) above. the ratio should be at least 1:15 but may need to be improved depending upon the circumstances.

At least two supervising adults should be available in most circumstances. If there is ever any doubt then advice should be sought from the Off-Site and Hazardous Activities Service

4.42 Rock climbing - registration required

Qualifications

Artificial Walls

The leader must be an experienced rock climber who has attended an appropriate training course and been placed on the Hazardous Activities Register.

Frequently this will mean having been trained and assessed under the Berkshire Rock Climbing Scheme. Details of this scheme can be found in an appendix.

Single Pitch Crag

The British Mountaineering Council Single Pitch Supervisors Award qualifies teachers or leaders for teaching seconding on single pitch crags. All leaders wishing to work at this should have this qualification.

This is a very high risk activity when done at anything more than an introductory level.

Staffing ratio

Artificial walls 2:10

Single pitch top roping

On rock and abseiling 2:8
or 2:10

In each of the above cases one registered leader and one trainee is an acceptable minimum staffing.

Single pitch leading on rock **It is not recommended that climbing at this level is done under the auspices of Reading Borough Council**

Multi pitch seconding **It is not recommended that climbing at this level is done under the auspices of Reading Borough Council**

High Ropes Courses

Persons supervising high ropes courses should be appropriately qualified in rock climbing skills in order to supervise this activity.

4.43 Skiing - registration required

Qualifications

Alpine downhill skiing and cross country skiing on the piste

Organising and running skiing activities

The party leader should hold the English Snowsport Ski Organiser's Certificate. This qualification is not sufficient for teaching skiing or for leading groups of participants while skiing on pistes unless the pistes are of a low level of difficulty, are well known to the leader, are in a safe condition and are unequivocally within the skiing competence of the leader and that of the group.

Recreational skiing

It is not recommended that pupils be allowed ski without adequate supervision under any circumstances. Those supervising recreational skiing must be appropriately qualified.

Leading groups on the piste

The party leader should hold the English Snowsport Ski Leaders Award. This is not a teaching qualification but is acceptable for leading groups on recreational skiing.

Teaching skiing

The teacher or leader should be qualified to teach at the technical level involved and in the piste conditions prevailing at the time. Appropriate qualifications include the Artificial Ski Slope Instructors Award, the Ski Party Leaders Award of the Scottish National Ski Council and the British Association of Ski Instructors Awards or their equivalent in other countries.

Off-piste and cross country skiing in remote areas

This is a high risk activity. Anyone wishing to undertake this activity must approach the Off-Site and Hazardous Activities Service (see page iii) directly for advice.

Staffing ratio

Alpine downhill skiing and cross country skiing on the piste.

Teaching should be given at a ratio approved by the governing body in the country involved. **It should not normally exceed 1:12.**

Supervision of recreational skiing should not exceed 1:12. This may need to be improved depending on conditions and circumstances pertaining at the time.

Please note: when pupils are under instruction a supervising adult from the party must accompany each group in addition to the instructor.

Instructors may not have the language, social skills and training necessary to deal with any behavioural or other difficulties which might arise. In addition it is not unknown for instructors to leave their groups at the time given for the end of a teaching session irrespective of whether they have rejoined their accompanying staff or not. Clearly this raises the possibility of pupils being left unsupervised in a potentially dangerous environment.

Snowboarding

It may be the case that snowboarding instructors have no nationally recognised qualification for instructing in this activity. However any instructor should have an appropriate instructor award for skiing and the activity should only take place under the conditions outlined above for skiing. If there are any doubts regarding this, the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service must be contacted.

FOR MOST RECENT GUIDANCE ON COMPULSORY WEARING OF HELMETS, SEE APPENDIX H

Hazardous outdoor activities - air based activities

4.44

All air based activities

All air based activities involve a high level of risk. Any person wishing to teach or lead on these activities must make direct application to the Off-Site and Hazardous Activities Service (see page iii).

The arrangement most usually looked for would be where activities take place at an establishment or club appropriately registered and / or recognised by the governing body of the sport involved and where those responsible are also appropriately licensed or approved.

This includes the following activities: flying, gliding, hang gliding, hot air ballooning, parachuting, parascending and any other air based activity.

Areas of activity within the Physical Education National Curriculum

4.45 Physical education

Almost all activities within the physical education curriculum are potentially hazardous, particularly those which involve contact with others. Anyone leading or supervising physical education should have regard for the safety of pupils at all times and should be familiar with guidelines and rules and regulations pertaining to specific sports.

Headteachers and teachers in positions of responsibility should be satisfied of safety arrangements and the experience, training and organisation of any teacher or leader undertaking any activity or sport.

In determining the size of teaching groups in physical education headteachers and teachers should take account of the nature of the activity, the age, size, gender, experience and developmental stage of the pupils and any statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

The ratio of pupils to teachers should typically reflect normal classroom organisation but because of the risk element in physical education more favourable staffing may be necessary in some circumstances.

For further advice on safe practice the publication 'Safe Practice in Physical Education', ISBN 1-871228-06-9, can be consulted. The document is approved by the DfES.

Alternatively Off-site and Outdoor Advisory Services can be consulted.

4.46 Athletics – registration not required

Qualifications

Teachers with a specialist qualification in the teaching of physical education will normally have completed a satisfactory course in the teaching of athletics during their initial training.

Teachers without specialist PE training should not attempt to teach the following events:

- shot,
- discus,
- javelin,
- hammer

- advanced techniques in jumping events (e.g. the Fosbury Flop)
- hurding involving the use of AAA approved hurdles
- steeplechasing

without having attended an Amateur Athletics Association coaching course for that event.

Please note: Athletics throwing events may be taught at Key Stage 2 providing primary athletic equipment is used. For example foam discus and javelins.

Staffing ratio: 1 teacher or leader per class

4.47 Gymnastics Educational gymnastics - registration not required

Qualifications – Secondary Schools

Teachers or leaders who have followed a specialist course in physical education will normally be competent to teach this aspect of gymnastics. There are, however, a few courses available where this aspect of PE will not necessarily have been covered.

Headteachers and others in similar positions of authority are advised to check this point.

Primary Schools

Teachers who have followed an initial training course for the primary school age group will not necessarily have followed a course in any form of gymnastics.

Provided that the subject has been included in their initial training, teachers or leaders are considered to be qualified to take this activity.

If no initial training in gymnastics has been included, the teacher or leader should have attended a suitable course in educational gymnastics for the primary school, or have gained appropriate experience before teaching this subject.

Staffing ratio

1 teacher or leader per class.

Please note: Chasing games such as 'pirates' and 'shipwreck' using apparatus as obstacles are dangerous and must not be taught.

The use of Trampettes, springboards and crash mats must not be used in gymnastics teaching in the primary school gymnastics curriculum and only where the teacher is suitably qualified in the secondary sector.

They can however be used in “extra curricular” activities provided the individual teacher is qualified to do so.

4.48 Formal gymnastics - registration not required

Qualifications

Specialist teachers of physical education whose initial training included a course on the teaching of gymnastics by formal methods should be considered competent.

Staffing ratio

1 teacher or leader per class.

4.49 Olympic gymnastics - registration not required**Qualifications**

Those involved should hold the appropriate British Gymnastics award for the level at which they are coaching.

If there is any doubt about what this means then the Offsite and Outdoor Advisory Service (see page 8) should be contacted for advice.

Staffing ratios

For teaching the BG Awards 7, 6, 5, 4 & 3	1:15
Awards 1 & 2	1:12
For teaching above the BG award scheme	1:12

4.50 Trampoline - registration not required

Trampoline as an activity within the national curriculum comes under the heading of gymnastics in this document. The sport is now administered by British Gymnastics.

Qualifications

- The minimum qualification for teaching trampoline skills, including tucked front and back single somersaults, is Grade I British Gymnastics Trampoline Coach.
- The minimum qualification for teaching shaped single somersaults is Grade II BG Trampoline Coach.
- The minimum qualification for teaching of double somersault is Grade III BG Senior Trampoline Coach.
- The minimum qualification for teaching of triple somersaults is Grade IV BG Senior Advanced Coach.

Staffing ratio

1:10 per trampoline, up to a maximum of two trampolines.

4.51 Contact games between staff and pupils

Staff must not take part in contact, or possible contact, games with pupils.

Groupings of pupils in team sports should take account of pupils' ages, size and gender.

4.52 Rugby - registration not required**Qualifications**

Specialist teachers of physical education whose initial training included a course on the teaching of rugby are regarded as qualified.

No one else should teach rugby unless they are qualified or experienced in line with Rugby Football Union guidelines.

4.53 Swimming - registration not required

Qualifications

Shallow water pools (approximate depth 1 metre)

- The teacher/leader in charge must have completed a Reading Borough Council Education Department course dealing with safety and the teaching of swimming in shallow water pools. This qualification must be updated every three years.

Deep water / public pools - use in the curriculum

- the teacher leader in charge must have either successfully completed a specialist course in physical education or hold the Amateur Swimming Association Preliminary Teaching Award and be in possession of the Royal Lifesaving Society's Bronze Medallion, the National Pool Life Guard, or National Aquatic Rescue Test For Teachers and Coaches of swimming or other equivalent lifesaving qualification.
The life saving qualification must be kept updated. A lifesaving qualification may not be necessary in public pools provided qualified lifeguard cover is provided.

Deep water / public pools - use for social or recreational purposes

- In public pools party leaders should be competent and experienced swimmers. If qualified lifesaving cover is provided at the poolside, they need not hold a lifesaving qualification.
- In any pools where no qualified life saving cover is provided, the teacher or leader in charge must hold a recognised lifesaving qualification as stated above and this should relate to the depth of water being supervised.

River, lake or sea

Recreational swimming in rivers, lakes or the sea is very high risk therefore:

- Party leaders should be competent and experienced swimmers.
- They must hold a current lifesaving qualification
- They should be competent in resuscitation techniques.
- Assistant leaders should also be competent swimmers.

See further advice in appendix E.

Please note: all those involved in teaching or supervising swimming and those who act as assistants, at whatever level, should have knowledge of how to administer artificial resuscitation.

Please note: all school swimming pools must be kept locked when not in use.

Staffing ratios

Key Stage 2. 1:20 maximum

(This will need to be reduced depending on the nature of the pool and the competency of the teacher and the pupils)

Key Stage 1 1:10. maximum

This may require revision depending on the depth of water, the size of the pool and the competency of the pupils.

For children with special needs the ratio will vary depending on the need.

The minimum staffing ratio for children suffering from epilepsy and other medical conditions that could affect the safety of pupils. In addition to the teacher or leader an additional adult should be designated to keep pupils with medical problems under constant observation.

These may require a 1/1 ratio or even greater if specified by the pupils medical practitioner.

4.54 Diving - registration not required

Qualifications

The person in charge should hold the Amateur Swimming Association Teachers Certificate for diving and an appropriate lifesaving qualification.

Please note: Diving by its very nature can be dangerous. The water must be deep enough to avoid possible impact with the bottom of the pool.

The following water depths are recommended:

- For shallow plunge dive 2 metres (where the angle of entry is no greater than 45 degrees)
- For vertical entry dive 3 metres minimum.

Please note: Water should be at least 0.9 metres deep for a shallow entry racing dive and this should only be performed by pupils who have the ASA competency award for shallow entry dives.

It is not recommended that Shallow entry dives are taught to the primary age group unless there is a minimum water depth of 2 metres. For further guidance please refer to the publication 'Safe Practice in Physical Education'.

Staffing ratio

1:20 but with no more than two pupils in the water at any one time.

Other hazardous activities

Please note: The list of these activities has grown over the years and new ones continue to appear. If advice is required for an activity not in the list then it is important that the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service is contacted for advice.

The absence of an activity from the list should not be taken to mean that it is regarded as without potential risk advice should be sought before any commitments are made.

4.55 Archery – registration required

Qualifications

The Certificate of Competence of the Grand National Archery Society entitles teachers or leaders to introduce the sport to beginners.

In order to progress further than beginner level the Club Instructors Award of the GNAS is required.

Staffing ratio

1 teacher per class

4.56

Boxing

The Education Authority does not recommend the teaching of this activity in any of its schools.

Please note: It is recommended that if it does take place it should only be where it occurs under the auspices of a recognised boxing club affiliated to the Amateur Boxing Association.

4.57

Bungee jumping, bungee running and fruit bat flying

The Education Authority takes the view that it is not appropriate that these activities should form any part of the school curriculum.

4.58

Circus skills - registration required

Any group wishing to be involved in circus skills such as juggling, unicycle, balancing, trapeze work and tightrope should operate via an appropriate training scheme. Advice on what might be appropriate can be obtained from the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service.

4.59

Crossbow

The Education Authority takes the view that the firing of crossbows should not be permitted under any circumstances by schools.

4.60

Fencing - registration required

Qualifications

- Basic instruction in foil, epee and sabre - the Amateur Fencing Association Basic Coaching Certificate in the appropriate discipline.
- For more specialised instruction in foil, epee and sabre - the FAA Intermediate Coaching Award in the appropriate discipline. For more advanced specialised instruction - AFA Advanced Coaching Award in the appropriate discipline.

Professional coaches who are members of the British Academy of Fencing are acceptable at all levels.

Staffing ratio

1:10

4.61

Judo - registration required

Qualifications

The minimum requirement for a qualified teacher to teach judo in a school is either:

- the Green Belt of the British Judo Association 5th KYU; or
- the British Judo Association's Teachers Certificate.
- A visiting coach who does not have qualified teacher status should hold the Brown Belt 1st KYU and have completed a recognised course in teaching and coaching the sport.

A person holding a personal performance grade 1st KYU (Brown Belt) or above of the British Judo Association may act as an **assistant instructor but should not take responsibility for group coaching.**

staffing ratio 1:20

Please note: Judo should only take place where appropriate mats are available.

4.62 Other oriental martial arts - registration required

Recommended qualifications

The qualifications required to teach will vary according to the discipline concerned. Schools and youth clubs involved in teaching these activities should ensure that they are working according to the recommendations of the relevant national governing body with regard to coaching qualifications and staffing ratio.

Should there ever be any doubt as to what is appropriate in a particular case then reference should be made to the Off-Site and Hazardous Activities Service

4.63 Karting - registration required

All karting should be done according to the rules and regulations of the National Schools Karting Association (NATSKA) with regard to the organisation of events and driver licensing except where it is being done at a nationally recognised and maintained track as a recreational activity.

4.64 Kick Boxing

The Education Authority does not recommend participation in this activity in its schools.

4.65 Roller Skating, Roller Hockey, Skate Boarding – registration required / not required (see below)

Qualifications

These are not normally required for these activities in a recreational context. For roller hockey competition the teacher / leader should be a qualified coach who has been trained and registered by the BRHA – the national governing body.

Teachers responsible for roller-skating, roller hockey or skate boarding activities should undertake a risk assessment before allowing the activity to take place. Care should be taken with regard to the possibility of contact during the activity.

Equipment

Whether recreational or competitive the person in charge must ensure that proper safety equipment is worn. As a minimum requirement, a helmet with a chin strap which is fastened and elbow / shin pads. For roller hockey there should also be padded shorts, a box and a full or half face visor attached to the helmet. Goalkeepers must wear the basic equipment listed above and full-face mask or visor, padded gloves, shoulder / chest / abdominal pads, and a pair of goalkeeper leg pads.

4.66 Self Defence - registration required

Qualifications

Teachers / leaders will normally be expected to have an Oriental Martial Arts background related to one of the governing bodies recognised by the Sports Council. They should also have a qualification equivalent to instructor grade in the discipline concerned.

4.67 Shooting – air rifle and air pistol – registration required

Teachers and leaders wishing to introduce this activity to young people are recommended to do so through the auspices of a recognised club affiliated to either the National Rifle Association or the National Small Bore Rifle Association.

Please note: some parents will not permit their children to participate in this activity.

Specific parental consent should be sought.

Qualifications

(a) Club Coach Award of the NRA.

(b) Club Coach Award of the NSBRA.

Staffing ratio 1:5

4.68 Weight training - registration not required

Qualifications

Teachers or leaders with specialist qualifications in physical education who have had a course of instruction in weight training at a recognised college of education may be regarded as adequately qualified.

Teachers coaching a known group may coach their group with dumbbells, fixed weights and cardio-vascular equipment if they hold a BAWLA Leader qualification.

Those coaching classes and writing specific programmes for clients must have one of the following F.I.A. approved qualifications:

BAWLA Instructors Award

British Powersport Instructors Award

Powersport Instructors

YMCA Fitness Training Certificate

Fitness for Industry Certificate – Instructors and Advanced Instructors

Life Works Unlimited Trainers Certificate

Shape Gym / Weight Training Certificate
P.E.A. Health and Exercise Studies Certificate

Those offering advanced coaching in this activity should hold the Coach Award of the BAWLA.

Please note: Pupils involved in weight training should be supervised by a qualified teacher or coach at all times.

Weight rooms should be kept locked when not in use.

The following age restrictions should apply:

- Age 12+** Stamina equipment only. For example running, rowing and canoeing machines.
- Age 14+** All fitness room equipment with the exception of loose weights. Discretion needs to be used by the instructor/supervisor as to the physical suitability of some young people of 14+ to use the equipment.
- Age 16+** All fitness room equipment including loose weights.
- Age 16+** Unsupervised use
All fitness room equipment with the exception of loose weights, providing the participant has passed an appropriate test and is capable of working in an unsupervised situation.

Staffing ratio

Loose weights	1:6
Multigym	1:10

- 4.69 Weight lifting**
The Education Authority believes this activity is unsuitable for inclusion in the school curriculum.
If it is done as an extra curricular activity it should observe the requirements of the British Amateur Weightlifting Association.
- 4.70 Wrestling**
The Education Authority believes this activity is unsuitable for inclusion in the school curriculum.
If it is done as an extra curricular activity it should be under the auspices of a club affiliated to the British Amateur Wrestling Association.
- 4.71 Paintballing**
The Education Authority believes that where paintballs are fired at each other then this activity is unsuitable for inclusion within any activity in any of its establishments. It is only acceptable where paintballs are fired at a static target.

SECTION 5

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

5.01

Introduction and how to use this section

These procedures are recommended for use in the event of an accident or incident involving off-site or hazardous activities.

There are sets of procedures for party leaders, contact personnel at the school, senior staff, EVC's and headteachers.

The information is arranged so that each set of procedures can be lifted out and photocopied. For this reason there is a substantial amount of repetition across the sets. Some elements are relevant to every role.

These sets of procedures are also available from the Off-Site and Outdoor Advisory Service and are printed on card to be carried in a pocket.

It is strongly recommended that schools should have carefully worked out emergency arrangements allowing parties away on visits to contact their base at all possible times. It is rarely possible for one person to guarantee to be available on the end of a telephone at all times but this can be substantially achieved either by having a list of possible contact numbers and / or a mobile telephone. **It is strongly recommended that all involved, or likely to be involved, should be familiar with the procedures and how to use them.**

A key element in any emergency may be the method used to deal with the press and media. It is strongly recommended that schools should have someone responsible for and experienced in this area and through whom all such communications are channelled.

The 24 hour emergency contact for a serious incident concerning any group from any Reading Borough Council Education Authority Establishment is.

Reading Borough Council 0118 939 0900

The Director of the Education Department can advise on procedures in particular cases.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Party leaders and other supervisory adults

5.02 Introduction

It is important that these procedures are implemented as quickly as possible. They should be carried, along with appropriate information (telephone numbers for example) whenever possible.

5.03 First response - care of the group

- Ensure all staff and pupils are safe from further danger
- Ensure all necessary steps have been taken to provide rescue, medical care and hospitalisation of anyone who is injured or missing
- Ensure appropriate steps are taken with regard to the welfare of all concerned.
- If an incident has, or is at all likely to, involve the press or media, it is important that you inform your contact person at home, or if they are not available, contact **Reading Borough Council 0118 939 0900 requesting that they inform the Education Department Duty Officer as soon as possible.** It could save much anxiety on the part of colleagues and parents.
- Do not let party members telephone home until contact has been made with the school and / or Education Department.

Please note – DO NOT let anyone speak to the press or media other than to refer them to the Press and Information Officer at Reading Borough Council. This applies equally to all members of the party, staff and pupils. The press and media will know how to contact Reading Borough Council.

5.04 Contacting your school

In the case of a fatality or other serious accident or incident inform your Emergency contact person as soon as possible.

Indicate clearly: that it is an emergency and give the following information;

- who you are;
- where you are;
- what has happened to who;
- what has been done so far and
- your telephone exchange and number (including direct dialling codes if at all possible - particularly if you are abroad).

The contact person will normally arrange for parents and others to be informed. (See 5.06 for the definition of a serious accident or incident.)

If this is not possible immediately, telephone the **Reading Borough Council Emergency Contact** on **0118 939 0900** requesting that they **contact the appropriate Education Authority Duty Officer**. It is important that you are clear about how to do this before you depart.

For the purposes of these procedures a serious incident is defined as:

- an accident leading to a fatality, serious or multiple fractures, amputation or other serious injury;
- circumstances in which a party member might be seriously at risk;
- serious illness;
- any situation in which the press or media are, or might be, involved.

Contacting the Education Authority During Normal Office Hours

Telephone **READING BOROUGH COUNCIL - 0118 939 0900**

When the telephone is answered indicate clearly that it is an emergency and ask to speak to an Education Authority Senior Officer.

Contacting the Education Authority out of normal office hours

Telephone **Reading Borough Council 0118 939 0900**

The call should be answered by a Reading Borough Council Security Officer

Indicate clearly: that it is an emergency;

- that you need to speak to the Education Authority Duty Officer as soon as possible;
- who you are;
- where you are;
- your telephone exchange and number (including direct dialling codes if at all possible particularly if you are abroad).

You will either be given a private number or the message will be passed on and an officer will contact you as soon as possible.

5.05 Legal and organisational concerns

In the case of a fatality
In the United Kingdom,

- notify the police as soon as possible;
- give them details of what has happened;
- what you have done so far;

They will take all necessary statements and notify the next of kin if this has not already been arranged through your emergency contact.

In foreign countries the procedures will vary. Local police should be able to advise.

- **If in doubt follow United Kingdom procedures until told to do otherwise by an appropriate official of the country concerned.**
- Ensure that you retain all equipment involved in an accident or incident in an unaltered condition.
- **NEVER ADMIT LIABILITY OF ANY SORT.**
- Do not allow anyone to see any party member (staff or pupil) without an independent witness being present.
- No-one, unless they are in a relevant official capacity, has any right to see anyone who does not wish to see them. Should any person not in a relevant official capacity try to force a confrontation, do not say anything and call the police.

Please note – DO NOT speak to the press or media other than to refer them to the Press and Information Officer, Reading Borough Council. (The press and media will know how to contact Reading Borough Council) this applies equally to all members of the party, staff and pupils.

5.06

General concerns

- Be as helpful and compassionate as possible with the parents of children involved.
- Keep a careful written record of all facts, events and circumstances and retain this until all matters are finally settled.
- All these procedures will not necessarily be relevant in every serious accident. They will all be relevant in the case of a fatality. They should be kept in mind and to hand in all cases.
- For the purposes of these procedures a serious incident is defined as: an accident leading to a fatality, serious or multiple fractures, amputation or other serious injury;
- circumstances in which a party member might be seriously at risk;
- serious illness;
- any situation in which the press or media are, or might be, involved;
- Be sure you are prepared for emergencies with, for example, money for the telephone and knowledge of the telephone numbers and codes that you might possibly need.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Contact personnel at school

5.07

Introduction

The contact should always be a member of the professional staff of the school. If the contact person is also the headteacher or a senior member of staff of the school then this should be read in conjunction with the procedures for headteachers and senior staff which follow.

5.08

First response

The first report of an incident can come from many sources. If you receive a call write down:

- callers name, address and telephone number;
- location and time and
- the nature of the incident;
- the names, condition, and location of individuals involved;
- details of any assistance required.

Please note – DO NOT speak to the press or media other than to refer them to the Press and Information Officer at Reading Borough Council. This applies equally to all members of the party, staff and pupils. (The press and media will know how to contact Reading Borough Council)

5.09

Next steps

Ensure that information about an incident is passed to the headteacher or whichever other senior member of staff can be contacted.

It is most important that this is done immediately.

If it is not possible contact the Education Authority contact.

It is important that you are clear about how to do this before the group departs.

It might not always be possible for the emergency contact to be in a position to take a call from a group. Clearly it is preferable that this should be the case as far as is reasonably possible. This should be borne in mind when the contact person is being chosen.

Contacting the Education Authority During Normal Office Hours

Telephone **Reading Borough Council 0118 939 0900**

When the telephone is answered indicate clearly that it is an emergency and ask to speak to an Education Authority Senior Officer.

Contacting the Education Authority out of normal office hours

Telephone Reading Borough Council 0118 939 0900

The telephone will be answered by a Reading Borough Council Security Officer.

Indicate clearly:

- that it is an emergency;
- that you need to speak to the Education Authority Duty Officer as soon as possible;
- who you are;
- where you are;
- your telephone exchange and number (including direct dialling codes if at all possible particularly if you are abroad).

You will either be given a private number or the message will be passed on and an officer will contact you as soon as possible.

5.10 Legal and organisational concerns

- **Never admit liability of any sort.**
- As far as is possible, do not allow anyone to see staff or pupils without an independent witness being present.
- No one, unless they are in a relevant official capacity, has any right to see anyone who does not wish to see them. Should any person not in a relevant official capacity try to force a confrontation, do not say anything and call the police.

5.11 General concerns

- Keep a careful written record of all facts, events and circumstances and retain this record until all matters are finally settled.
- Be as helpful and compassionate as possible with the parents of children involved.
- Keep details of emergency procedures to hand and ensure that you have the means to implement them – details of all possibly relevant numbers for example.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Headteachers and senior staff in schools

These emergency procedures should be to hand at all reasonable times.

5.12

First response

The first report of an incident can come from many sources.

If you receive a call write down:

- the name and address of the caller
- the telephone number of the caller, including dialling codes
- the location of the incident;
- the time the incident occurred;
- the nature of the incident;
- the names of the individuals involved;
- the condition and location of any injured;
- details of any assistance required.

5.13

Next steps

Ensure that the appropriate Education Department Duty Officer has been contacted.

- Ensure parents are informed as quickly and as compassionately as possible.
- In serious cases and certainly in the case of a fatality the most rapid and effective way of achieving this will probably be through the local police, explain the circumstances and give appropriate details.

PLEASE NOTE - Any delay at this point could mean that parents could experience distress by learning of an accident through other sources such as the press or media.

- The police cannot stay long. Little more than half an hour because of other responsibilities.
- It is important that arrangements for other forms of support and help for parents are then made available as quickly as possible.

One way of achieving this might be to seek help from **Social Services using their emergency standby telephone number: Bracknell 01344 424 010** and ask to speak to the Social Services Department, Children and Family Duty Desk (Forest Care).

Whatever is arranged, details should be passed on to whoever is in charge of arrangements so that a course of action can be agreed that will:

- facilitate the use of available resources as necessary;

- ensure all necessary support for those involved;
- ensure parents, relatives of other participants involved are informed as rapidly as possible so as to avoid being unnecessarily distressed.
- ensure as far as possible that all communications with the media or press go through a suitably experienced person who is responsible for public relations.

5.14 Legal and organisational concerns

- ensure that all equipment involved is retained in an unaltered condition.
- never admit liability of any sort.
- no one should see any person involved without an independent witness being present.
- no one, unless they are in a relevant official capacity, has any right to see anyone who does not wish to see them. Should any person not in a relevant official capacity try to force a confrontation, do not say anything and call the police.

DO NOT speak to the press or media other than to refer them to the Press and Information Officer at Reading Borough Council 0118 939 0900.

5.15 General concerns

- Be as helpful and compassionate as possible with parents;
- Keep a careful written record of all facts, events and circumstances and retain this until all is finally settled.
- All these procedures will not necessarily be relevant in all cases. They will all be relevant in the case of a fatality. Whatever, they should be kept in mind and to hand.

For the purposes of these procedures a serious incident is defined as:

- an accident leading to a fatality, serious fractures, amputation or other serious injury;
- circumstances in which a party member might be seriously at risk;
- serious illness;
- any situation in which the press or media are, or might be, involved.

