



Standard Circular 48
Revised January 2013

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Council Offices
211 Main Street
Barrhead
East Renfrewshire
G78 1SY

**PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE FOR
SCHOOL EXCURSIONS AND EDUCATIONAL VISITS**

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TO: HEADS OF ALL EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Dear Colleagues

PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL EXCURSIONS AND EDUCATIONAL VISITS

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to the large number of staff and volunteers who give their time and energy to enhance the educational opportunities and experiences available to the children and young people of East Renfrewshire.

The merit of educational trips and excursions cannot be overstated. Young people derive immense enjoyment and pleasure from these activities whilst also enjoying learning experiences which are not available in the classroom. School excursions and visits also help develop a spirit of community and friendship which is invaluable to the learning and teaching process.

The purpose of this document is to offer a framework within which these opportunities and experiences can be safely organised and undertaken. The vast majority of school excursions are very well organised and are incident free. The purpose of this document is to offer a set of principles which should enhance the safety and well being of participants, volunteers and Group Leaders whilst also responding to the understandable concerns of parents, carers and local authority staff who wish to ensure the highest possible standards of health and safety at all times.

No amount of planning can completely eliminate risk or guarantee that an excursion will be completely incident free. However, the management of health and safety on school excursions is part of East Renfrewshire Council's overall policy on Health and Safety and I am confident that by paying close attention to the principles laid out in this policy statement, Heads of Establishments and Group Leaders will minimise the risk and establish a culture of safety in all school excursions.

Heads of Establishments and Group Leaders should not feel discouraged from organising trips or excursions. Instead, they should know that when they do so in accordance with the principles set out in this document, they do so with my support and encouragement.

I hope your school excursion is happy, safe and enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

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SECTION A - GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

School excursions and educational visits can involve an element of risk. Whilst organisers of activities cannot give absolute guarantees of safety to participants (or their parents/carers) it is essential nevertheless that all possible precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of all involved. The expectations of the authority would be that Group Leaders responsible for children and young people would undertake the same care that would be expected of a prudent parent/carer.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act etc 2000 Section 2(1) states that:

“Where school education is provided to a child or young person by, or by Virtue of arrangements made, or entered into, by, an education authority it shall be the duty of the authority to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential”.

Excursions and educational visits are therefore an important and valuable part of our educational system and assist in fulfilling the discharge of legal duty of the authority.

The object of this Standard Circular is to clarify the procedures to be adopted to enhance the quality of these visits. Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay in the United Kingdom or abroad, it is essential that formal planning takes place and begins sufficiently in advance of departure. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties that may arise and make plans to reduce them. In practice the Head of Establishment, who is responsible for planning excursions/visits, will often delegate the detailed planning to the organiser/Group Leader of the visit. The Head of Establishment must satisfy themselves that the person planning the excursion/visit is competent to do so and has the necessary relevant experience or access to an appropriate Health and Safety Advisor.

There are different categories of off-site activities:

- i. curriculum based activities that take place on a regular basis and occur largely within school hours e.g. visits to swimming pools, field study sites, work experience etc
- ii. day visits, school trips and activities which would not be regarded as part of the normal school day and perhaps extend over normal school hours, but do not involve overnight accommodation e.g. visits to theatre, sports competition etc
- iii. activities/visits that require an overnight stay in the United Kingdom e.g. visit to outdoor centre, another city e.g. London, York
- iv. visits to another country outside the United Kingdom.

Heads of Establishment must ensure that children and young people with additional support needs are considered when they plan any kind of activity.

Any visit undertaken out with school must have the formal/written approval of the Head of Establishment and the appropriate documentation completed. Details of the documentation required are contained in the attached Appendices (see Section 2.3 Approval for excursions).

It is essential that consideration be given to:

- careful planning
- a realistic assessment of potential difficulties
- sensitive supervision
- promoting safety skills of, and strategies for, children and young people
- Standard Circulars (including child welfare guidelines and Master Safety Files)
- the law applicable to children and young people in countries to be visited
- ensuring compliance with current legislation, in particular, the Disability Discrimination Act.

Heads of Establishment are reminded that the authority has agreed that only those visits which are educational in nature should be permitted during term time. As such, the learning outcomes of the excursion or educational visit must be clearly stated. If it is not possible to include children and young people with additional support needs in the activity, then equivalent learning outcomes must be delivered by other means for that child or young person. These must be fully discussed and agreed by a parent/carer and/or, where appropriate, the young person.

Planning for all educational visits/trips/excursions should take full account of any child or young person with a disability (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act), additional support needs (as defined by the ASL Act 2004) and as detailed in the authority's Accessibility Strategy document. The school has a duty to ensure that all children and young people have equal access to the curriculum supported, as appropriate, to their individual needs. Additional guidance can be sought from the appropriate Head of Service or appropriate Health and Safety Advisor.

The Head of Establishment must ensure that all documentation pertaining to all visits/trips/excursions are retained for one full calendar year from the date of the visit, regardless if it is a day/residential or overseas visit. The normal retention policy for all financial records should continue e.g. five years after the date of visit.

Heads of Establishment require to note that other Standard Circulars should be read alongside Standard Circular 48 where appropriate e.g. Standard Circular 33: Safety in Outdoor Education Activities and Standard Circular 57: Child Protection.

Excursions or environmental studies programmes which involve visits to remote countryside, hill-walking or use of boats or canoes etc. have characteristics similar to outdoor education activities. Therefore, for this type of activity procedures laid down in Standard Circular 33 apply. The guidance in the "Health and Safety in

Physical Education Revised Code of Practice” should also be consulted if physical or sporting pursuits are being undertaken, e.g. taking pupils on a skiing visit or participation in activities where being able to swim are essential. Section 9 of the “Health and Safety in Physical Education Revised Code of Practice” clearly outlines the strict rules for the supervision and conduct of swimming and water related activities.

While there is a great educational value in visits to working farms, such visits can be hazardous and there are issues for schools and educational establishments with regard to identifying, assessing and managing the range of health and safety risks to which children could potentially be exposed. Further information on this topic is available from the Scottish Government website on <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/03/20839/54389>

2.0 Responsibilities for Excursions

2.1 Legal Framework

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employers are also under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who maybe affected by their activities. This includes participants in off-site visits.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, made under the 1974 Act, require employers to:

- Assess the risks of activities
- Introduce measures to eliminate or control those risks
- Tell their employees about these measures

Also under the Health and Safety legislation employees must:

- Take reasonable care of their own and others’ health and safety
- Co-operate with their employers over safety matters
- Carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
- Inform the employer of any significant risks.

These duties apply to all educational excursions/visits when children and young people are under the care of a teacher. In addition to the statutory duty under health and safety legislation the authority has a common law duty to take “reasonable care” of children and young people under their control.

Where the member of staff (employee) adheres to the policy and procedure of the employer they avoid personal liability and the risk of any disciplinary action being taken by their employer.

2.2 Local Authority

East Renfrewshire Council Education Department is committed to:

- Providing written guidelines for Heads of Establishment/teachers and Group Leaders including advice on risk assessments; relevant Standard Circulars, Health and Safety Documents and Master Safety Files
- Providing access to technical advice where necessary
- Assessing proposals for certain categories of excursion (see section 7)
- Having emergency procedures in place for dealing with major incidents or emergencies
- Ensuring training needs have been addressed (contact Health and Safety Team, Education Department)
- Having appropriate insurance cover in place
- Having appropriate procedures in place to monitor and review safety during off-site excursions and activities (see section 4).

2.3 Approval for Excursions

It is of prime importance that clear procedures are followed for approval to be given for all educational excursions and outdoor activities.

A school excursion co-ordinator must be appointed as the main contact for the planning and organising of educational visits by the establishments. They must be aware of the need and method of completion of risk assessments. They will act as a source of guidance for event organisers.

The Group Leader responsible for the excursion **must** complete the Insurance Questionnaire and this can be accessed through <http://members.maxwelllucas.com/> (for new user click on sign up, when prompted input policy number then your email address) prior to consideration of any excursion and the questionnaire must be included in the information sent to the Head of Service for approval of the excursion.

The Group Leader can write to parents to inform that they are considering the excursion, with an indication of the approximate costs but no firm arrangements should be given at this time.

Approval in Principle: (Appendix 1)

All requests for residential and overseas visits must be approved by the Head of Establishment using form Appendix 1. If the Head of Establishment gives approval on this form, this will allow the member of staff who is planning the trip (Group Leader) to proceed to the next stage - finding costs from travel companies. Where the Head of establishment considers there may be significant risks or policy issues attached to any visit, a copy of Appendix 1 should be forwarded to the Head of Service at this stage.

Please note: No contractual or financial agreements can be entered into at this stage.

Formal Approval of Educational Visits and Journeys: (Appendix 2) –minimum of 8 weeks prior to excursion

As soon as detailed proposals are available, the Group Leader should complete Appendix 2. The Head of Establishment must ensure that Appendix 2 is completed and sent to the Education Department's Health and Safety Advisor who will forward to The Head of Education Services for formal authorisation.

A copy of all associated risk assessments should also be included to enable an informed decision to be made on the trip. All forms **must** be fully completed or they will be sent back to the school without consideration of the excursion taking place.

Please note: The Head of Establishment must receive formal approval from the Head of Education Services before any contractual arrangements can be made with travel companies.

Please note:

All excursions which take place under the auspices of East Renfrewshire Council must have obtained approval from the Head of Establishment for day excursions and by the Head of Education Services for residential and overseas visits.

This includes excursions where staff only are in attendance without any pupil contingent.

The forms to be completed are:

- **Appendix 1** - Application form for approval in principle for permission to start arranging a residential or overseas visit. **This remains within the establishment and does not normally require to be removed.** – see Approval in Principle: (Appendix 1)
- **Appendix 2** - Application form for approval of residential and overseas educational visits. Completed forms should be signed by the Head of Establishment prior to the commencement of any excursion or activity. A

copy of the form and associated risk assessment should be submitted to the Head of Education Services for formal approval to be given

- **Appendix 3** – Application form to arrange educational day excursions and visits. Forms should be signed by the Head of Establishment prior to the commencement of any excursion or activity. This remains within the establishment, and does not require to be forwarded.

2.4 Planning Excursions

Whether the excursion is to a local park, museum or swimming pool, or includes a residential stay in the UK or abroad, it is essential that formal planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them. In practice, the Head of Establishment - who is responsible for planning excursions - will often delegate the detailed planning to the organiser of the excursion or the Group Leader. Heads of Establishment must satisfy themselves that the person planning the excursion is competent to do so and has the necessary relevant experience. They must also provide appropriate support.

Please note: Each school should send the Health & Safety Adviser a full list of all planned excursions for the following school year, by the end of the school term in June. This list should be reviewed and updated at the start of each term. If visits are organised at shorter notice than this the Health & safety adviser should be contacted immediately.

2.5 Risk Assessment

East Renfrewshire requires a Risk Assessment for all visits or activities to be undertaken as a means of assessing the risk to both pupils and staff.

A written risk assessment must be carried out by the Group Leader, and be discussed and agreed by other teachers or Group Leaders, prior to the excursion or visit and should be made available for inspection by the Head of Establishment or Head of Education Services as appropriate. The risk assessment must be signed by the risk assessor and Head of Establishment.

A written risk assessment for an excursion or visit need not be complex but should be comprehensive. Heads of Establishment should ensure that the person assessing the risks is competent to do so. Training can be arranged by contacting the Health and Safety section for the education department.

A formal assessment of the foreseeable risks that might be met on an excursion should have the aim of preventing or reducing the risks. Children and young people must not be placed in situations which expose them to unreasonable levels of risks. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risk can not be contained, or the programme modified, then the excursion or visit should not take place.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- a) What are the hazards?
- b) Who might be affected by them?
- c) What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to a reasonable level?
- d) Can the Group Leader ensure the safety measures in place are adhered to?
- e) Can an assessment of the effectiveness of the safety measures and any proposed changes be made?
- f) What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Within the risk assessment for educational excursions there are three levels which can be usefully considered.

i) Generic activity risk assessments identify common hazards affecting groups in similar situations. Many situations on visits can be assessed in this way and this approach is useful to keep in mind, as it starts an effective and relevant assessment procedure.

If you go year after year to the same venue, the risk assessment material should be reviewed before the revisit.

To simplify the process as much as possible, the Education Department have produced Sample Generic Risk Assessments that can be referred to and used as appropriate to help complete the Risk Assessment process.

They can all be found on the Education Intranet site www.erc.education/healthsafety/default.htm

ii) Excursion or site-specific risk assessments should be completed by individual establishments for each venue and amended as necessary for different groups. These risk assessments should compliment and not conflict with authority procedures. They will normally include control measures for health problems within the group, behavioural issues and inclement weather

iii) Ongoing or dynamic risk assessments will take place during the excursion, as the need arises. They will not normally be recorded until after the excursion and will be determined by issues such as changes in the weather, problems within the group, e.g. behaviour difficulties and unforeseen difficulties or emergencies. All adult supervisors should be fully briefed by the Group Leader on the risk assessment undertaken and be aware of their own role in the excursion, particularly with regard to the risk assessment undertaken and emergency procedures.

The Group Leader must take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks for any excursion

- the type of excursion activity and the level at which it is being undertaken

- the location, routes and modes of transport
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff
- the ratios of supervisory staff to participants
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament
- the suitability of the activity
- the special educational or medical needs of participants
- the quality and suitability of available equipment
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing
- emergency procedures
- how to cope when a participant becomes unable or unwilling to continue
- the need to monitor the risks throughout the excursion.

There is also a need to outline where appropriate that a risk assessment for a pupil with additional support needs should look at the individual child to establish all risks and possible controls to allow the child to participate in the educational visit.

Before booking an excursion or visit with an external provider the group should obtain a written or documentary assurance that providers have themselves assessed the risks and have appropriate safety measures in place.

2.6 Exploratory Visit

Wherever possible, the Group Leader should undertake an exploratory visit to,

- ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the excursion
- assess potential areas and levels of risk
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and participants in the group
- become familiar with the area before taking a group there.

This is extremely important when the group has a young person with additional support needs in the group.

If the excursion is to a residential centre, Group Leaders should:

- obtain names and addresses of other establishments who have used the venue
- obtain advice from the manager of the residential centre
- obtain a copy of the organisation's Operating Procedures Document, risk assessment documentation, health and safety policy and insurance cover.

If an exploratory visit is not feasible then the Group Leader will need to consider how to complete an adequate assessment of the risks.

A minimum measure would be to:

- obtain specific information by letter from the venue

- obtain information from other users who have recently undertaken the same off site excursion (including their risk assessments)
- where trips are booked through a recognised school excursion travel agency it is essential that a written risk assessment is obtained from them on the chosen venue, accommodation and travel arrangements.

Many establishments will take new groups to the same location each year, often with the same Group Leader. This prior knowledge will assist when carrying out the risk assessments, however it must be recognised that some factors will change from year to year, it is prudent to re-assess the risks each time as this could impact on the outcome of the risk assessment.

2.7 Financial Planning

The Group Leader should ensure that parents and carers have early written information about the costs of excursions, how much will come from school or other establishments funds, and how much each parent or guardian will be charged or asked to contribute. Parents or carers should be given enough time to prepare financially for the excursion. It may be useful to break the costs down into subheads such as travel, accommodation, meals etc. and allow parents or carers to make payments over a number of months prior to the excursion.

Heads of Establishment should ensure that banking arrangements are in place to manage excursion funds in line with the council's financial procedures. (Standard Circular 58)

The Head of Establishment or Group Leader should reach a prior agreement with parents and carers on whether any funds left surplus after the visit will be returned to parents or carers or retained for another excursion.

2.8 First Aid

First aid should form part of the risk assessment. Before undertaking any off-site activities the Head of the Establishment or the Group Leader should assess what level of first aid might be needed. For adventure activities, excursions abroad or residential visits it is sensible for at least one of the Group Leaders to hold a current and valid first aid certificate. Where this is not practical the Group Leader should establish through the risk assessment that adequate provision will be available on site. All adults in the group should know how to contact the emergency services.

First aid should be available and accessible at all times. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommends the following minimum contents for a travelling first aid kit where no special risk has been identified:

- a leaflet giving general advice on first aid
- six individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings
- one large sterile un-medicated wound dressing approximately 18cm x 18cm
- two triangular bandages
- two safety pins
- individually wrapped moist cleaning wipes
- one pair of disposable gloves

- saline solution
- a resuscitate (for hygienic mouth to mouth resuscitation) would also be useful.

All minibuses are required by law to carry a first aid kit.

3.0 SUPERVISION

3.1 Ratios

The following minimum guidelines should be applied when considering adult to participant ratios:

- 1 adult to 15 participants for excursions where the element of risk to be encountered is similar to that normally encountered in daily life, e.g. visits to museums or a local walk.
- 1 adult to 10 participants for all residential and overseas visits.
It is the responsibility of the school to demonstrate that all adults involved in the supervision of a visit have the necessary skills and experience. A visit will not be approved unless this evidence is provided.
There must be a minimum of 2 school staff members e.g. group leader plus 1 school staff, with the group at all times even if the group numbers are less than 20.
It is the educational establishment's responsibility to ensure the ratio of school staff to participants is maintained.
- For children under the age of 8, a lower ratio of supervision as appropriate
- For higher risk activities, consideration should be given to a lower ratio of supervision, as appropriate (this should be considered as part of the risk assessment or from existing normal operating procedures).

Other relevant factors to consider:

- Ratios should be based on the excursion/activity and not purely an adult to participant calculation.
- In addition to the Group Leader in charge there must be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency.
- Parent/Guardian volunteers must not be counted in the minimum staff ratio. They should be carefully selected, well known to the establishment and the participants and subject to Disclosure Scotland Check.
- All parent/ guardian volunteers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. It may be helpful to put this in writing, i.e. they

may be given responsibility for the care and safety of a specific number of children during the trip.

- If an individual risk assessment has to be carried out for a child with Additional Support Needs, which results in assistance required for the journey and activity then there must be at least one member of staff to accompany them on the visit. (see Appendix 7)
- Bus driver on trips will only be responsible for the vehicle during the excursion and should not be included in the adult to participant ratio.

Any issues or concerns over ratios which arise during the planning of a visit should be discussed with the Health & safety Advisor before the request for approval is submitted.

3.2 Child Protection

All adults who have charge of young people have a responsibility to ensure that they are not harmed and are properly cared for. Young people with a problem will choose to speak to a person they trust, irrespective of the role and status of that person. It is therefore essential that all education staff are familiar with the issue of child protection, and have knowledge of the relevant Standard Circular No 57: Child Protection.

The Education Department insists that any adult who will have direct unsupervised access and contact with children and young people must have an Enhanced Disclosure check. No person can be allowed to work with any child or young person until a satisfactory check is received and approved.

3.3 Supervisors' Responsibilities

All adult supervisors must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. It may be helpful to put this in writing. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any participants who may require closer supervision, such as those with additional support needs or those likely to present challenging behaviour.

Group Leaders retain responsibility for the group at all times.

3.4 Head Counts

Whatever the length and nature of the excursion, regular head counting of participants, should take place, before and during the excursion, particularly where there are opportunities for participants to become separated.

3.5 Remote Supervision

The aim of excursions for older participants may be to encourage independence and investigative skills and some of the time on excursions, such as trips abroad and field-work may be unaccompanied but remotely supervised. Duke of Edinburgh Award practice and qualifying expeditions are examples of good practice to follow in this regard.

The Group Leader should establish during the planning stage of the excursion whether the participants are competent enough to be given the freedom associated with being unaccompanied but remotely supervised and should ensure that parents have agreed to this level of supervision prior to the event.

The Group Leader remains responsible for participants even when not in direct contact with them.

Parents must be told, before the excursion, if any form of remote supervision is to take place and a form providing parental consent must be completed.

3.6 Preparing Participants

General

Participants who are involved in an excursion's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Providing information and guidance to participants is an important part of preparing for an excursion.

Participants should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the excursion will entail. Participants must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed.

Lack of control and discipline can be a major cause of accidents. Participants should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.

Participants, whose behaviour is such that the Group Leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the Group Leader should consider whether such participants should be sent home early. Parents and participants should be told in advance of the excursion about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a participant will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

3.7 Participants with Medical Needs

Additional safety measures to those already in place in the establishment may be necessary to support participants with medical needs during excursions, in line with the local authority's policy on the administration of medicines. Arrangements for taking medication and ensuring sufficient supplies for residential visits may be required, including safekeeping.

All Group Leaders supervising visits should be aware of participants' medical needs and any medical emergency procedures.

Consent forms held by all Group Leaders, containing details of each participant's needs and any other relevant information provided by parents or carers, is one way of achieving this.

The Group Leader should discuss the participant's individual needs with the parents.

Parents should be asked to supply:

- details of medical conditions
- emergency contact numbers
- the participant's GP's name, address and phone number
- information on whether the participant has spent a night away from home before and their ability to cope effectively
- written details of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times) and parental permission to administer
- parental permission if the participant needs to administer their own medication or agreement for a volunteer Group Leader to administer - parents should provide advice/information to assist with the preparation of an emergency plan
- information on any allergies/phobias
- information on any special dietary requirements
- information on any toileting difficulties, special equipment or aids to daily living
- special transport needs for participants who require help with mobility.

Enquiries should be made at an early stage about access and facilities for securing wheelchairs on transport and at residential centres etc, if appropriate. If ramps are not going to be available in certain places, the organisers may wish to arrange to take portable ramps with them. The Group Leader should at an early stage assess whether manual handling skills will be needed and if so training should be provided.

All Group Leaders supervising the excursion should be given the opportunity to talk through any concerns they may have about their ability to support the participant. Extra help should be requested if necessary, e.g. pupil support assistant.

If Group Leaders are concerned about whether they can provide for a participant's safety or the safety of other participants on a trip because of a medical condition, they should seek general medical advice and information from the participant's own doctor or parents.

The Group Leader should check with East Renfrewshire Council, Finance & Revenue section team leader that the insurance policy covers staff and participants

with pre-existing medical needs and conditions at the planning stage. The contact telephone number for the Insurance section is 0141 577 3232.

3.8 Participants with Additional Support Needs

Group Leaders should use the planning and risk assessment stage to consider how the needs of participants who require additional support can be met. In particular, they should take account of their duties under Part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. These duties make it unlawful to discriminate, without justification, against disabled pupils in all aspects of school life, including school excursions, clubs and activities. Wherever possible, disabled people should have the same opportunity as non-disabled people in their access to education. The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- How might the participant best be able to take part in and benefit from the activity?
- Does the activity need to be adapted to enable the participant to take part to the best of his/her ability at a suitable level?
- What additional or different resources are necessary?
- Who will be responsible for ensuring that instructions are clearly explained to the participant?
- Will additional supervision be necessary?
- The Group Leader should discuss the visit with the parents or carers of the participants with Additional Support Needs to ensure that suitable arrangements have been put in place to ensure their safety.
(See Appendix 7)

3.9 Communicating with Parents and Carers

The question of communication with parents and carers arises for participants under the age of 16 and for those between 16 and 18 participating in full time education.

Heads of Establishments may wish to make some minor amendments to the practice for excursions which involve students over the age of 16. However, the general rules and guidance given in this circular should still apply. Parents need to be aware that the Group Leaders and other adult supervisors on the visit will be exercising the same level of care as that of a reasonably prudent parent.

The following information on matters that might affect participant health and safety should be given to parents:

- dates of the excursion
- the excursion's objectives
- times of departure and return - where appropriate parents or carers should agree to meet their child on return
- the location where participants will be collected on return
- travel arrangements, including the name of any travel company
- written details of East Renfrewshire Council insurance cover for educational excursions
- the size of the group and details of supervision arrangements including any times when remote supervision may take place
- details of accommodation (where appropriate) with security and supervisory arrangements on site
- details of who to contact at the venue in case of emergency
- names of Group Leaders and other staff and any accompanying adults
- details of activities planned and how any risks identified through assessment will be managed
- details of provision for additional support or medical needs
- procedures for participants who become ill
- standards of behaviour expected (this is particularly important for residential trips where it will be more detailed. This information should take the form of a code of conduct which parents or carers should sign)
- clothing and equipment to be taken
- money to be taken and arrangements for its safekeeping
- details on the cost of the excursion
- establishments policy on the use of phones, both mobile and landline during excursions
- the information to be given by parents and carers and what they will be asked to consent to.

Parents or carers should be invited to regular briefing meetings with regards to the excursions or visit, especially if the visit is for a residential stay in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Parents or carers must always receive written information and an individual consent form for each young person. This must be obtained for all activities, day excursions, day visits or unscheduled excursions no matter how short the excursion, excursions abroad, other residential excursions and activities outwith the school premises which are not directly supervised, e.g. The Duke of Edinburgh Awards expedition.

If parents or carers withhold consent, the participant must not be taken on the excursion but the curricular aims of the excursion should be delivered to the participant in some other way wherever possible.

If the parents or carers give a conditional consent the Head of Establishment will need to consider whether the participant may be taken on the excursion or not.

It is recognised that within the early years, primary and additional support needs sector many establishments will have a regular and ongoing programme of visits throughout the school session which include those within the local area. These can be considered "local excursions". Where forward planning envisages such an ongoing programme of visits or excursions it is appropriate to obtain previous consent for the programme as opposed to individual events.

It is recognised that on issuing the form, the specific activity, places and times may not be available. If not previously indicated with the initial form parents or carers must be advised of the activities to be undertaken, dates, times and places, at least two weeks prior to the visit or excursion.

Parents or carers have a duty to inform the Head of Establishment or class teacher if any of the medical details outlined on the original form have changed. They also require to inform the school if they do not wish their child to participate in any specific activity. Parent or carers must also inform the school if the child or young person has been in contact with any contagious or infectious diseases or suffered from anything in the four-week period prior to any visit or excursion that may be, or may become, contagious or infectious.

If regular activity includes swimming, or an activity where being able to swim is essential then Appendix 4d must also be completed.

Where visits or excursions are organised and take place outwith East Renfrewshire Council then these should be treated as individual visits and appropriate action must be taken and forms must be completed.

3.10 Medical Consent

This should form part of the parent/guardian consent form. Parents or carers should be asked to agree to the participant's receiving emergency treatment, including

anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities.

If parents or carers do not agree to this, Heads of Establishment may decide to withdraw the child from the excursion - given the additional responsibility this would entail for the Group Leader.

Doctors can be expected to carry out necessary emergency treatment without parent or carers consent but it is possible that a surgeon in another country might be reluctant to operate on a participant unless assured that the Group Leader had parent/guardian authorisation to agree to such treatment.

3.11 Other Consent

Parent or carers consent should be obtained specifically for the transporting of participants in a private vehicle of a staff member on the excursion.

All staff members who drive participants in their own car must ensure passenger safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy and that they have an appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying the participants.

It will be the Head of Establishments responsibility to ensure that the vehicle road tax, drivers licence and MOT (if appropriate) certificate are current and in place.

3.12 Contacts with Parents or Carers

Heads of Establishments should ensure that parents or carers can contact their child via the home base contact and the Group Leader in the event of a home emergency, and that they have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the visit or late arrival home. Parent/guardian should therefore, know the destination, be aware of the emergency contact arrangements at home (particularly important during holiday periods when the establishment may be closed) and at all the venues the group will visit.

Provide contact numbers for day and night use in an emergency.

3.13 Participants' Contact with Parents or Carers

Group Leaders should arrange for parent or carers to be told by the base contact of the group's safe arrival. One way of doing this is by a 'telephone tree' whereby one parent or carer contacts an agreed group of parents or carers who then contact a further group. Arrangements about whether participants can speak directly to their parents or carers individually should be agreed with parents and participants before the visit takes place, and should take account of the establishments policy on the use of phones, both mobile and land-line, during excursions.

Parents concerned after a phone call should contact the home base contact.

4.0 Planning Transport

The Group Leader must give careful thought to planning transport.

All establishments should follow East Renfrewshire Council transport policies. The main factors to consider include:

- passenger safety
- the competence and training of the driver to drive the proposed vehicle and whether the driver holds the appropriate valid licence
- number of driving hours required for the journey and length of the driver's day (including non-driving hours)
- capacity and experience of driver to maintain concentration - whether more than one driver is needed to avoid driver fatigue
- type of journey - will the excursion take place locally or will it include long distance driving i.e. motorway
- traffic conditions
- contingency funds and arrangements in case of breakdown/emergency
- appropriate insurance cover
- weather
- journey time and distance
- stopping points on long journeys for toilet and refreshments
- supervision.

4.1 Legislation

The Head of Establishment or Group Leader should satisfy themselves that all travel arrangements, including the hire of private coaches or buses, are suitable for the nature of the visit (both in the United Kingdom and overseas).

The driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit.

4.2 Seat belts

All minibuses and coaches which carry groups of three or more children aged between 3 and 15 years inclusive must be fitted with a seat belt for each child. The

seats must be forward or rear facing and seat restraints must comply with legal requirements.

For further information contact the Department for Transport, www.dft.gov.uk

4.3 Supervision of Transport

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk assessment for the journey. The Group Leader is responsible for the party at all times including maintaining good discipline.

Factors that the Group Leader should consider when planning supervision on transport include:

- The level of supervision that will be necessary on double-decker buses e.g. one supervisor on each deck should be appropriate in normal circumstances. For safety on buses, trains, ferries and boats, the Group Leader should make clear to participants how much or little freedom they have to 'roam'
- Safety when crossing roads as part of the journey - the Group Leader should ensure that participants know how to observe the safety rules set out in the Highway Code and that pedestrian crossings and footbridges are used wherever possible
- Participants should also be made aware of what to do in an emergency and where emergency procedures are displayed. Participants should be made aware of safety rules and expected standards of behaviour
- Consider the safety of participants while waiting at pick-up and drop-off points and when getting on or off transport, particularly when using UK vehicles abroad
- Group Leaders should plan with the driver sufficient stops at suitable areas to ensure the safety of all group members including the driver. Drivers of buses and coaches must comply with legislation covering maximum periods of driving and minimum rest periods
- Safety of the group in the event of an accident or breakdown - the group should remain under the direct supervision of the Group Leader or other staff wherever possible. Head counts, by the Group Leader or another delegated member of staff or supervisor, should always be carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport
- Group members should be made aware that travel sickness tablets should only be administered to a participant with previous authorisation from the parents or carers in line with East Renfrewshire Council policy on the administration of medicines.

4.4 Hiring Coaches and Buses

The Group Leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. East Renfrewshire Council has a list of approved contractors which should be used when hiring transport for school excursions. Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed.

Establishments using operators to transport participants should ensure that the operators have the appropriate public service vehicle (PSV) operator's licence, for example by asking for the Operator's Licence number when seeking a price.

When booking transport, the Group Leader should ensure that seat belts are available for participants. **Vehicles not equipped with appropriate seat restraints must not be used.**

If any of the group uses a wheelchair, the Group Leader should ensure that transport used has appropriate access and securing facilities. Sufficient advance notice should always be given to the coach company in such circumstances. The driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit.

4.5 Licences and Permits

The law on driver licensing no longer permits car drivers who pass their test after 1 January 1997 to drive vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats without passing a Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV bus) driving test – unless they are driving under a section 19 permit, in which case the following conditions must be met;

- the driver has held a category B (car) licence for at least 2 years (all permit drivers must be 21 or over)
- the driver receives no payment or consideration for driving the vehicle other than out-of-pocket expenses
- the minibus has a gross weight not exceeding 3.5 tonnes (4.25 tonnes including any specialised equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers).

Drivers of any vehicle must ensure that they have the correct entitlement on their licence.

4.6 Private Cars

Staff who drive participants in their own car must ensure their passengers' safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy and they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying the passengers.

Heads of Establishments or Group Leaders who wish to use parents, volunteers or other participants to help transport passengers in their own cars, must ensure that they are aware of their legal responsibility for the safety of the passengers in their cars. Therefore, Head of Establishments must ensure that car users have full comprehensive cover when transporting passengers. Parents or carers agreement

should be sought (on the consent form) for their children to be carried in other parents' cars.

It is advisable that parents, volunteers or staff members driving participants are not put in a position where they are alone with a participant.

The Group Leader should arrange a central dropping point for all participants rather than individual home drops unless there is no reasonable and safe alternative.

4.7 Transport in the Establishment Minibus

Many establishments use their own minibuses for short frequent journeys and sometimes for longer trips. Minibuses have a maximum capacity of 16 seated passengers plus the driver. They must comply with the various regulations about construction and fittings. A forward or rearward facing seat with seat belt must be provided for each participant. An important source regulation is the Road Vehicle (Construction and use) Regulations 1986, particularly section 6 of that regulation. The Department for Transport (www.dft.gov.uk) can provide further advice.

4.8 Establishment Mini Bus Driver

Although the Head of Establishment is ultimately responsible for the minibus, the driver is responsible for the vehicle during the excursion. The minibus driver must be qualified to drive a minibus and have a valid driving licence free from major convictions. It is essential for all those who may drive the establishment minibus to receive training in minibus driving and the management of passengers. The MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training programme is widely recognised and strongly recommended.

Where appropriate, the Head of Establishment should ensure that those driving establishment minibuses have a rest period before driving.

Minibus drivers must always adhere to transport regulations. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accident (ROSPA) has issued Minibus Safety: a code of practice. This can be freely downloaded at www.rosipa.org.uk

The minibus driver must:

- observe East Renfrewshire Council guidance
- not drive when taking medication or undergoing treatment that might affect their ability or judgement
- know what to do in an emergency
- know how to use fire fighting and first-aid equipment
- avoid driving for long periods and ensure that rests are taken when needed

- clarify and comply with transport regulations and the requirements of the vehicle's insurance cover
- take into consideration (in consultation with Head of Establishment) the effects of the working day
- have regular medical checks e.g. eyesight.

4.9 Maintenance and Inspections of Establishment Minibuses

The Head of Establishment is responsible for the minibus. However, a Head of Establishment may delegate to a willing member of staff the responsibility for carrying out regular inspections and ensuring that the minibus is maintained. This member of staff should report to the Head of Establishment, who is responsible, along with other staff, for ensuring the safety of participants on organised journeys.

The person responsible for maintaining the minibus must;

- check the vehicle's condition on a weekly basis
- ensure proper servicing by a reputable garage
- maintain the record-of-use book with the service history, insurance and other relevant documents
- ensure that any staff driving the minibus are competent and have undertaken suitable training to do so
- always be informed before other staff use the minibus
- ensure that drivers of the minibus are aware that the vehicle should always be logged in and out.

5.0 Insurance

Insurance is provided by East Renfrewshire Council. If you have any questions regarding insurance please contact the Finance Department, Revenue Services, Team Leader.

The Head of Establishment should write to parents to tell them which responsibilities the council accepts and the scope of any insurance cover the establishment is to arrange. It is advisable to make copies of the insurance cover for educational excursions which can be accessed via <http://www.erc.education/finman/> and made available to parents as early as possible in the booking process.

All staff and pupils are insured under East Renfrewshire Council insurance, no other insurance policy is required.

6.0 Types of Visits

6.1 Adventure activities using Licensed Providers

(see Standard Circular No.33)

6.2 Remote Supervision During Adventure Activities

Some adventure activities- such as those under The Duke of Edinburgh Award require participants to work in small groups without direct supervision. Particular attention needs to be given to the information provided to children and young people before supervision can be withdrawn. Parents or carers must be fully informed with regard to remote or unsupervised activities and agree to this.

The training given to children and young people must be sound, thorough and appropriate and should be assessed separately. The instructor should have the appropriate qualifications or experience to provide training in the activity. The Group Leader should be satisfied that the children and young people have acquired the necessary skills and have the experience, confidence, physical ability and judgement to be left without direct supervision. The supervisor must ensure that the contact is made with the group at least twice a day. They must also be made aware of emergency procedures in case of accident, adverse weather conditions etc.

The withdrawal of direct supervision should be a gradual four stage process:

- accompanying the group
- shadowing the group
- checking regularly at agreed locations
- checking occasionally at agreed locations

Children and young people should be familiar with all equipment used or taken without direct supervision and, in addition to training; an initial element of adult supervision in the use of equipment may be required. The condition and suitability of any equipment, particularly safety equipment, taken or used during these activities should be assessed separately

During any time that remote supervision takes place the Group Leader must ensure that children and young people are aware of the ground rules and are adequately prepared for remote supervision. The size of each group should be considered. As a minimum children and young people should have the following.

- telephone numbers and emergency contacts if lost
- the means of making telephone contact with other members of the group (if using public phones, instruction may be required in their use and the appropriate coins or cards made available)

- maps and other local information
- money (if appropriate)
- a knowledge of how to summon help
- a knowledge of out of bounds areas or activities
- a rendezvous point

6.3 Coastal Visits

Group Leaders and other staff will be aware that many of the incidents affecting participants have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. The Group Leader must bear the following points in mind when assessing the risks of a coastal activity;

- tides, rip tides, quicksand and sandbanks exposed at low tide are potential hazards
- timings and exit routes should be checked
- ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags
- establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc

Some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational; therefore Group Leaders must consider which areas of the terrain are out of bounds. Cliff tops can be highly dangerous for participants even during daylight. The group must keep to the path at all times.

Coastal paths should be subject to risk assessment before any use.

The local coastguard, harbour master, lifeguard or tourist information office can provide information and advice on the nature and location of hazards.

6.4 Swimming in the Sea or Other Natural Waters

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities, particularly for a school or similar group. They should be allowed as formal and supervised activities; preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance e.g. qualified lifeguard cover. Nonetheless, children and young people should always be in sight of their supervisors. One supervisor should always

stay out of the water for better surveillance. Group Leaders must follow the strict guidelines in Standard Circular 33.

No swimming or Activities where swimming is required should take place unless an identified Group Leader holds qualifications, (e.g. National Rescue Standard NARS) which have been checked, and the appropriate swimming Parents or Carers consent form has been completed.

6.5 Swimming Pools

Heads of Establishments will be aware of their local swimming pool facilities for curricular activities. Group Leaders should follow the recommended safe supervision levels at the pool for children and participants as per **Standard Circular 33**. Levels of supervision should take account of the age and swimming abilities of the children, and the nature of the facility being used. Parents or carers **MUST** have completed the necessary swimming Parent or carer Consent Form(s). (see Appendix 4d)

If considering the use of a swimming pool not used before or monitoring the hazards of a regularly used pool it is necessary to observe and check the following:

- Is there constant pool supervision by a sufficient number of qualified lifeguards?
- Where there is no lifeguard the Group Leader must stay at the poolside at a raised location. In such circumstances, the Group Leader, or a designated member of staff, must have a relevant life saving award (see below) and be accompanied by an appropriate number of supervisors
- Have the participants been instructed how to behave in and around the water?
- Is the water temperature appropriate?
- Is the water clear?
- Are there signs clearly indicating the depth?
- Is there a shallow end and is the water there shallow enough?
- Does the pool cater for participants with disabilities?
- Does the deep end allow for safe diving?
- Is there a poolside telephone?
- Is there, a resuscitator and other pieces of first-aid and rescue equipment, and is there someone trained to use them?

- Is there a changing room for each sex?
- Does the pool cater for any particular religious or cultural factors?
- Are the changing and showering facilities safe and hygienic?
- Can clothes be stored securely?

Parental or carer consent does not absolve the Group Leader's responsibility to check the level of a participant's swimming ability.

Where swimming overseas is being considered strict observance of Appendix 6e checklist for visits to swimming pools in the United Kingdom and overseas must be adhered to.

No swimming or swimming related activities should take place unless an identified leader holds a Pool Rescue Qualification (e.g. National Rescue Standard NARS) which has been checked, and the appropriate swimming consent forms have been completed by parent or guardian.

6.6 Farm Visits

It is recognised that there is great educational value attached to children visiting working farms and a variety of areas in the Curriculum for Excellence can usually be explored before, during and after the visit. However farms can be dangerous even for people who work on them and there are obviously issues for schools and other similar establishments around identifying, assessing and managing the range of health and safety risks to which children could potentially be exposed.

All primary schools were provided with an information pack, Health and Safety Advice for Primary School Visits to Farms. The pack contained;

- avoiding ill health at open farms – Advice to farmers – with teachers supplement Health and Safety Executive Agriculture Information Sheet no 23 (revised 2002)
- Farmwise – Health and Safety Executive MISC1656
- Guidelines for Farm Visits – The Royal Highland Education Trust
- Taking the Classroom to the Countryside – The Royal Highland Education Trust
- E Coli 0157 Infection – The Scottish Executive Health Department
- E Coli 0157 Recreational Use of Animal Pasture – The Scottish Executive Health Department

- Health Tips for Teachers Leading School Visits to Farms – NHS Scotland.

Further information on this topic is available from the Scottish Government website on <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/03/20839/54389>

The main points from the first of the above leaflets are,

(i) Before Visit

- consider the advice in the leaflets
- decide the ratio of adults to participants
- discuss with supervisors – who may be parents or staff of the schools, nursery etc – their role during the visit
- discuss with participants the rules for the visit
- make sure participants wear appropriate clothing, including footwear
- check that any cuts, grazes etc on participants' hands are covered with a waterproof dressing.

(ii) During and after the visit

- make sure the participants do not kiss animals
- that they always wash their hands thoroughly before and after eating, after any contact with animals and again before leaving the farm
- that they eat only food that they have brought with them, or food for human consumption, in the designated areas, and never eat food which has fallen to the ground, or taste animal foods
- that they do not suck fingers or put hands, pens, pencils or crayons etc in mouths,
- that they clean or change footwear before leaving, remembering to wash their hands after any contact with animal faeces on their footwear
- that they do not use or pick up tools
- that they do not climb on to walls or animal pens etc
- that they listen carefully and follow instructions given by the farm staff
- that they approach and handle animals quietly and gently

- that they do not chase, frighten or torment the animals.

If a child or member of the group shows signs of illness after a visit, advise them or their parent or guardian to visit the doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals.

6.7 Field Studies

Field studies associated with a range of subjects including geography, biology, geology and history may take participants to industrial sites and other urban areas as well as into the countryside and the coast (see sections 6.3, Coastal Visits).

The scope of field studies means that the Group Leaders, who will usually be subject specialists, must also be competent to lead and instruct their participants within urban and non-urban environments at minimal risk.

7.0 Emergency Procedures

Group Leaders in charge of participants during an excursion have a duty of care to make sure that the participants are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Group Leaders should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning an excursion. If an accident happens, the priorities are to:

- assess the situation
- safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- attend to the casualty
- inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident.

7.1 Who will take Charge in an Emergency?

The Group Leader would normally take charge in an emergency and would need to ensure that emergency procedures are in place. The Group Leader should liaise with the representative of the tour operator, if one is being used. A deputy should be appointed to act in the absence or incapacity of the Group Leader.

Pre-arranged home base contact - As part of the forward planning for the excursion, a home base contact should be arranged. This will be a nominated person, normally the Head of Establishment, who will be in a position at all times to link the Group Leader with the establishment, the parents or carers and the Council.

The home base contact should have all the necessary information about the visit. All those involved in the excursion should be advised of who will take charge in an emergency, the named back up cover and the procedures to be adopted.

7.2 Emergency Procedures Framework

All those involved in the educational excursion, including all educational staff, children and their parents or carers, should be informed of who will take charge in an emergency. They should be informed of the named back up cover what they are expected to do in an emergency and what arrangements the education department has in place for dealing with emergencies. This information can be contained in a small card format which can be carried at all times during the excursion.

7.3 Emergency Procedures Framework During the Visit

If an emergency occurs, the main factors for Group Leaders to consider include the need to:

- establish the nature and extent of the emergency as soon as possible
- ensure that all the group are safe and well
- establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention to them
- ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following emergency procedures
- establishment contact to inform the education departments emergency contact person.
- ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times
- notify the police if necessary
- notify the British Embassy or Consulate if the emergency occurs abroad
- inform the home base contact whose number should be available at all times during the visit
- collect the details of the incident to pass onto the establishment, which should include: nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, names of casualties and details of injuries; names of others involved so that parents or carers can be reassured; action taken so far, action yet to be taken (by whom)
- notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required (this can be done by the home base contact)
- notify provider or tour operator (this may be done by establishment contact)

- write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve all vital evidence
- complete an accident/incident report form (MSF11) as soon as possible
- **ensure that no one in the group speaks to the media.** Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to their families. Media enquiries should be referred to the media personnel in the Council. (Home base contact can arrange this)
- advise group members that although they may wish to reassure relatives, they are discouraged from making immediate telephone or other contact in the aftermath of an incident. Inaccurate information might cause unnecessary speculation and anxiety for those at home
- ensure that nobody in the group discusses legal liability with other parties

7.4 Emergency Procedures Framework for the Home Base

Prior to the excursion, the name and 24 hour telephone contact of a home base person should be identified. It is also advisable to arrange a reserve. The Group Leader should keep a copy of this information at hand and another copy should be held by the school home contact.

The main factors for the home base contact to consider include the need to:

- ensure that the Group Leader is in control of the emergency and establish if any assistance is required
- contact parents or carers. Details of parents or carers contact numbers need to be available at all times while the group is on the excursion. The home base contact should act as the link between parents or carers and participants, Parent should be kept well informed of all stages of the emergency
- liaise with other with education department emergency contact person and other Council agencies as required
- ensure that if the group is abroad, the police at home are informed
- liaise with the authority's media contact
- report the accident/incident using the appropriate education department form

7.5 Media Contact

All media enquiries should be forwarded to East Renfrewshire Council's Communications Manager. The media contact should liaise with the home base contact, the Group Leader and, where appropriate, the emergency services. The name of any casualty should not be given to the media.

7.6 Following a Serious Incident

It is not always possible to assess whether group members not injured or directly involved in the incident have been traumatised or whether other participants or staff in the establishments have been affected. In some cases reactions do not surface immediately. Heads of Establishments should ensure that support and appropriate professional advice is available to those involved e.g. department of education's psychological services.

Following any serious incident in which the department's emergency procedures have been utilised, a review of the incident and how it happened, and of how the procedures were implemented should be carried out. Any lessons to be learned should be incorporated into risk assessments, operating procedures and emergency planning arrangements.

SECTION B – RESIDENTIAL AND OVERSEAS VISITS

8.0

Section A of this circular refers to **residential educational visits** (one overnight stay or more) within the United Kingdom and overseas educational visits which take place under the auspices of schools and educational establishments at any time during the calendar year.

Application for permission to arrange residential and overseas visits must receive the written approval of the Head of Establishment. Without exception, this approval must be received before any contractual arrangements are made.

8.1 Heads of Establishment must:

1. Ensure that where some of the Group Leaders are volunteering adults, parents or carers, who will have direct unsupervised contact with children, they receive full instructions as to their responsibilities and the degree of supervision to be exercised
2. Ensure a satisfactory Disclosure Scotland (Enhanced Disclosure) check has been made (this must include identified substitutes should the need arise to replace adult Group Leaders). Advice on how to acquire Disclosure Scotland (Enhanced Disclosure) checks can be obtained from Personnel section. No

person must work with children and young people until a satisfactory check has been received

3. Ensure that all members of the professional staff employed by the department participating in the visit/exchange have also received a satisfactory Disclosure Scotland (Enhanced Disclosure) check. Professional staff should also be made aware that it is incumbent for all members of staff to disclose any pending charges and or subsequent convictions since the Disclosure Scotland check was made
4. Ensure that a person who is not participating in the excursion or visit is available for emergency situations and to act as liaison officer with parents or carers etc. This requires person(s) to be available at any time a group is out of the educational establishment during term time or holiday periods. This person must be contactable by the Group Leader of the party at all times and will hold the names, addresses and phone numbers of all staff and pupils in the excursion along with the names, addresses and phone numbers of emergency contacts
5. Ensure that Group Leader/staff are aware of emergency procedures framework and all emergency contact numbers are known
6. Agree the final list and details of participants, taking account of parents or carers wish with regard to medical requirements and other relevant factors. (For overseas trips, it is sensible to include a translation of the medical consent, as signed by the parent, in the relevant foreign language) It is the duty of the parent or guardian to ensure that their child is medically and dentally fit to participate in the excursion (Group Leaders should consult council policy on administration of medicine)
7. Ensure that participants are properly insured (refer to Appendix 5B for details of East Renfrewshire Council Cover). Participants should be encouraged to take out fully comprehensive insurance, for personal items only, as only limited cover is available for these items through the Council's insurance policy
8. Ensure when the visit is overseas, that written discussion has taken place with the partner/host regarding details of programme and activities to be undertaken, places to be visited and accommodation. The Group Leader must inform the overseas partner/host of the health and safety standards that must apply to any activity undertaken and agree a programme in writing prior to the departure
9. Ensure that the Group Leader has established that the centre/ site to be visited has been licensed under the appropriate legal status. It must also be ascertained that the centre/site to be visited:
 - i. is a suitable location for the type of activity

- ii. has adequate facilities for domestic, social and teaching requirements of the visiting group, including separate accommodation for males and females
 - iii. is within convenient travelling distance of the outdoor facilities and resources where planned activities are to take place
 - iv. Where applicable, have instructors who are appropriately qualified as defined in Standard Circular 33
10. Be fully satisfied as to the capability of the travel company and that it is suitably insured. There are seven bonding bodies approved by the Department of Trade and Industry
- i. Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA)
 - ii. Federation of Tour Operators Trust (FTOT)
 - iii. Association of Independent Tour Operators Trust (AITOT)
 - iv. Passenger Shipping Association (PSA)
 - v. The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)
 - vi. Yacht Charter Association (YCA)
 - vii. The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust (ABTOT).

The Civil Aviation Authority licenses travel organisers and tour operators selling air seats or packages with an air transport element (Air Travel Organisers Licence or ATOL).

The licence is a legal requirement and provides security against a licence holder going out of business.

Any queries regarding the safety of any trip or visit should be discussed with the Health and Safety Advisor prior to the visit taking place.

All paperwork should be completed and forwarded to the Health & Safety Section within the Education Department as soon as detailed proposals are available but no later than 8 weeks prior to the excursion taking place.

The permission of the Head of Education Service is required for all residential and overseas visits i.e. activities which involve at least one overnight stay.

8.2 The Group Leader must:

1. Organise the leader supervision in accordance with council policy above using parents and/or volunteers as appropriate. All adults must have completed a satisfactory Disclosure Scotland (Enhanced Disclosure) check
2. Notify the appropriate agencies such as police, coastguards and mountain rescue services when visiting isolated locations
3. Designate one of the party leaders to be responsible for first aid arrangements, any welfare issues and any medication which has to be taken by members of the party; a proper first aid kit must be carried. Staff should be familiar with MSF 29: Guidance on procedures regarding the administration of medicines and procedures in certain medical emergencies in educational establishments
4. Ensure that all members of the group have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), enabling free or reduced cost medical treatment when visiting countries in the European Union. These cards are available from the EHIC application line on 0845 606 2030

Applications forms can also be completed on-line at
www.dh.gov.uk/travellers.

Forms are also available from most post offices

5. Ensure that the behaviour of the group in terms of respect for property and the privacy of local residents is acceptable by observing the country code, seeking access permission for entry across farmland or private land, and restricting noise both in and around the venue at all times but especially between 11.00pm and 8:00am. Be aware of the laws, ethics and morals of the country/countries visited and ensure compliance of all groups and leaders
6. Be aware that incidents can occur leading to allegations being made about the behaviour of the group or individuals. Careful planning and a full programme normally reduce the chances of such incidences happening
7. Ensure that the members of the group are fully aware of the fire precautions and the evacuation procedures immediately on arrival.
8. Ensure that group passports are no longer in use. All travellers **MUST** have an individual passport. Any group travelling by air should be aware that all airlines now require photographic identification for all domestic flights within the United Kingdom. Staff should be aware that some countries in the world require a visa for United Kingdom passport holders
9. Note that children and young people who are not nationals of any EU member state, may need a visa to travel from the United Kingdom to another member state (this could include several visas if travelling through different

countries). However in some cases they may receive visa exemption if they are members of a school group. Details are available from the British Council website www.britishcouncil.org/scotland

Checks should also be made with the travel company/airline regarding visa exemption status as difficulties have been experienced whereby children have been refused travel even although assurances have been given to staff that children with non EU passports can be put on the visa exemption form

10. If a child or young person is subject to a care order the foster parents/carer will need to ensure that the social services department consents to any proposed trip. If a child or young person is a Ward of Court the Group Leader should seek advice from the Head of Establishment as it may be necessary to go to court in relation to school journeys and activities abroad well in advance
11. Ensure that they are familiar with the up to date travel advice from the foreign and commonwealth office website www.fco.gov.uk . Prior to travel is essential at the foreign and commonwealth office website is checked for all travel for developing countries
12. The Group Leader should find out whether vaccinations are necessary and ensure that all members of the group have received them in good time. The department of health gives advice on vaccinations requirements in their publication, health advice to travellers anywhere in the world
13. It is advisable that one of the adults in the group should be competent in the language of the visited country and that participants have a basic knowledge of the local language before the visit. Where this is not possible, leaders-in-charge should be satisfied that arrangements are in place to deal with any language difficulties that may arise. The Group Leader-in-charge should also check the local legislation particularly with regard to health and safety legislation
14. When staying in an unstaffed centre the Group Leader in charge **MUST:**

Ensure that everyone is fully briefed on all matters relating to health and safety in the building. This must include:

- Fire Drill and risks
- Health and safety regulations
- A notice with clear instructions for contacting the nearest medical services, police, fire brigade should emergencies arise
- Familiarization with the layout of the centre and its environs
- Any particular rules and regulations which relate to the use of the centre

In other venues or centres the Group Leader in charge should liaise with the officer in charge to ensure that full information is available regarding the above.

15. Before leaving an unstaffed centre, the Group Leader in charge should:

- Turn of all the lights and electrical appliances
- Turn off all water taps and gas appliances
- Ensure that all doors and windows including fire exits are secure;
- Ensure that the building is left clean and tidy. Basins, toilets ,and other equipment and utensils should be cleaned
- Ensure that coal fires are cleaned out, blankets folded , floors swept and waste bins emptied
- Report any damage or breakage to the caretaker of the centre

8.3 The Head of Establishment must:

Ensure that the Group Leader is aware of the aforementioned procedures and at the end of a trip require him/her to prepare a report commenting on:

- A general assessment of the visit in terms of the programme, domestic arrangements, instructional or teaching work undertaken and the response by the participants
- The accommodation and general cleanliness of the building with appropriate recommendations for improvement
- The behaviour of the group throughout, highlight any problems or incidents which occurred
- The suitability of the excursion or visit for future venues.

This report must be passed to the Head of Establishment within fourteen days of the end of the excursion. Any accidents and misadventures must also be reported to the Head of Education Services within fourteen days of the groups return.

SECTION C - DAY EXCURSIONS AND VISITS

9.0

This part of the circular refers to day excursions or visits and relates to any activity which involves pupils away from the school.

Team travel and extra curricular organised team games during or outwith school hours fall within the scope of this section. The Head of Establishment should note that insurance cover for extra curricular, organised team games cannot be arranged for pupils.

Full time personnel are, however, covered while supervising such games. Depending on the circumstances consideration should be given to the level of supervision.

A request to parents or carers for their written approval and acknowledgement of the insurance position must be recorded on the appropriate form on appendix 4. This should be accompanied by detailed information on the activity. It is the responsibility of the Head of Establishment to ensure the suitability of travelling arrangements and changing accommodation.

It is of prime importance that clear procedures are followed for approval to be given for an excursion or visit. In schools such visits must have the formal approval of the Head of Establishment.

9.1 The Head of Establishment must:

1. Formally approve the excursion or visit and the arrangements made for the organisation, supervision and implementation of the activity (Appendix 1)
2. Arrange for a risk assessment to be carried out using the risk assessment form
3. Clearly designate an overall Group Leader of the party
4. Ensure that the level of supervision by responsible adults is appropriate to the nature of the excursion or visit
5. Ensure, in cases where some of the Group Leaders are volunteering adults and /or parents/carers, that they receive full instructions as to their responsibilities regarding the degree of supervision to be exercised. In the case of extra curricular organised team games, these should include a full briefing on the appropriate section of the Health and Safety in Physical Education Code of Practice (Revised). All adult volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children and young people **MUST** have been vetted by Disclosure Scotland (Enhanced Disclosure)
6. Ensure that parents or carers are fully informed of the nature of the activities and provide written agreement to participate on the appropriate form in Appendix 4b. It is recognised that within the early years and primary sector many establishments will have a regular and ongoing programme of visits/excursions throughout the school session which include those within the local area as well as those within East Renfrewshire. These can be considered 'local excursions'. There is a separate appendix for this activity. Where forward planning envisages such an ongoing programme of visit/excursions it is appropriate to obtain previous consent for the programme as opposed to individual events. Appendix 4c should be completed for this purpose. It is recognised that on issuing the form that the specific activity, places and times, may not be available

7. Parents or carers **MUST BE ADVISED** of the activities to be undertaken, dates, times and places at least two weeks prior to the visit/excursion if not previously indicated to parents or carers with the initial Appendix 4
8. **Where visits/excursions are organised and take place outwith East Renfrewshire Council area, then these should be treated as individual visits or excursions and appropriate forms must be completed**
9. Where previous consent for the programme has been given, it is also the duty of the parents or carers to alert Head of Establishments to their child's medical status during the course of the session
10. Ensure if regular activity includes swimming, or an activity where being able to swim is essential, then appropriate consent form must also be completed
11. Ensure that the location for an excursion or visit is appropriate for the activity and where possible make arrangements for a preliminary visit by an appropriate person to any destination or location
12. Ensure that appropriate information is obtained with regards to potential hazards; inclusion of a qualified first aider should always be a consideration
13. Ensure that participants are properly insured (refer to relevant Standard Circular and insurance) in case of team travel and organized games realize that insurance cover can not be arranged for young people.

Parents or carers must agree in writing that they understand the insurance position prior to the event taking place.

9.2 The Group Leader must:

1. Obtain formal approval for the excursion or visit from the Head of Establishment (Appendix 3)
2. Plan the activity, e.g. dates, location, costs, transport, food, additional protective and distinctive clothing, equipment and leaders; undertake and complete a comprehensive excursion risk assessment
3. Organise the level of supervision in accordance with section 3 arrange full briefing of the participants as applicable to ensure that everyone is aware of the rules relating to the excursion or visit make appropriate arrangements for dealing with payments in accordance with the relevant standard circular; notify where the agency requires it; local agencies such as police, coastguards and rescue agencies

The Head of Establishment must:

1. Ensure that the Group Leader has carried out the aforementioned procedures and at the end of a trip require him/her to prepare a brief, general statement of the visit in terms of the programme, domestic arrangements, instructional or teaching work undertaken and the response by the participants
2. Comment on the behaviour of the group throughout, highlight any problems or incidents which occurred; report any accidents or misadventures to the Head of Education Services.

SECTION D - OFF – CAMPUS ACTIVITIES (CURRICULUM RELATED)

10.0

This part of the circular refers to curricular activities which take place off – campus but in the proximity of the school, e. g investigations into local history or geography, biology related field work, shopping or traffic surveys, practical map work, sketching local landmarks, visits to local library or museum, use of community sports facilities etc. such activities generally take place within the normal teaching timetable and fall into the following two categories.

Where pupils remain in a group under the close supervision of a teacher it is unnecessary to obtain parental or guardian consent.

However the Group Leader must:

1. Obtain written approval for the activity from the Head of Establishment (Appendix 3)
Where a series of activities are planned, approval need only be obtained for the programme and not for the individual events
2. Ensure that a written statement detailing the date, time of departure and time of return, names of pupils and staff involved and the nature and location of the activity is left within the school premises
3. Ensure that normal limitation on class size is maintained
4. Ensure that there is proper supervision and that the participants conduct themselves in a reasonable manner and with due consideration for the general public.

Where pupils are expected to carry out a curricular activity on their own initiative without direct supervision of a member of staff

The Group Leader must:

1. Obtain written approval from the Head of Establishment (Appendix 3)
2. Inform parents or carers fully of the nature of the activity and obtain their written agreement Appendix 4b where a series of activities are planned, approval need only be obtained for the programme and not for the individual events
3. Ensure that the pupils are fully briefed beforehand, including work to be undertaken, precise areas of study, responsibilities, behaviour, potential hazards and time of return to school
4. Ensure that pupils carry identification and that pupils of compulsory school age carry a note of permission to be out of school
5. Maintain such reasonable oversight of the pupils as circumstances permit in order to minimise risk and abuse of the privilege.

Should you have any queries or concerns about the content of this document, please contact the Health & Safety Section on 0141 577 4153 to discuss further.