



EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES (EVOSA) POLICY

INTRODUCTION

“...every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.”

Manifesto for Learning outside the Classroom (2006)

This policy provides a common structure and guidance for all educational visits and off-site activities. It aims to maintain the quality and effectiveness of the learning opportunities Thomas's offers to children and suggests strategies that can be used to promote best practice.

The policy draws on the “Health & Safety Department for Education Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies”, created in 2012 and updated in February 2014.

It also makes use of the information website produced by the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP) which gives “Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Off-site Visits and Learning outside the Classroom”. The aim of this guidance is to reduce ‘red tape’, whilst providing an appropriate level of technical and up-to-date professional advice for anyone involved in visits and off-site activities.

This National Guidance has been endorsed by the Department for Education and is being adopted by an increasing number of local boroughs and key national organisations.

By adopting this Guidance, visits and outdoor activities will be managed more effectively and consistently. While Thomas's recognises that other professional bodies' advice and guidance can play a major part in the development of visits and off-site activities, there may be areas where this policy differs to OEAP National Guidance, and as such, Thomas's guidance should be followed.

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NB: All appendices and forms for visits can be found on the Thomas's Learning Platform (TLP) under: Resources/Staff Resources/Staff Forms/EVOSA Appendices

1. THE VALUE OF EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES.

“Everybody wants all sports and recreations to be as safe as possible, but this can only be achieved when all participants have been made aware of the risks and of how to avoid them. Learning by experience of real adventure under competent leadership is the best way to develop that awareness, and to reduce unnecessary accidents.” (HRH The Duke of Edinburgh KG KT)

“When planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributes significantly to raising standards and improving pupils’ personal, social and emotional development.” (Ofsted report “Learning Outside the Classroom – How Far Should You Go?”)

Enhancing learning and providing realistic situations to use and apply knowledge, skills and understanding frequently turns to stimulating and exciting environments. This may be just outside and beyond the classroom or through journeying far and wide on residential visits.

When school visits are well planned and structured, the values have been shown to be clear, and children have the opportunity to:

- use and apply their knowledge and understanding outdoors, in a different and often more stimulating environment.
- focus on specific environments, from geography trails to problem solving and team challenges, to develop their organisational, team working and leadership skills.
- develop awareness and understanding of environmental and sustainability issues, through fieldwork studies.
- raise their awareness and understanding of safety issues by becoming involved in managing risk before and during the visit through for example:
 - using a pupil checklist, created for the visit
 - questioning: why have group leaders
 best meeting place to return to if lost
 what to do in an emergency
 safest method of crossing the road in rural areas
 - essential equipment list to take on a residential trip
 - code of conduct at a venue
 - coastal, seaside, countryside codes or similar
 - safety aspects for walking in groups on trails – teacher heads and tails
 - loos in twos in public places
- learn new skills.
- reinforce existing skills and knowledge by putting theory into practice and through interaction with others.
- enjoy the experience and learn from it.

2. THE AIMS OF VISITS AND OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

All visits and their activities organised through the Schools are expected to have a clear educational aim. It is important that this is identified and understood by everyone concerned, in order that:

- high expectations are set and codes of behaviour agreed.
- roles and responsibilities are clearly identified and determined.
- appropriate strategies are used to realise the aims.
- parents are fully informed through appropriate means.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head, Leadership Team and Visit Leaders must ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to make visits happen. Aims and objectives, expectations and risk management should be shared with the pupil group. We have a duty to ensure that:

- children are safe at all times
- we make children more risk aware to help enable them to manage themselves.
- parents:
 - are made fully aware of the risks involved in educational visits and their activities
 - can be shown how risks are assessed and management strategies to reduce them
 - are able to make an informed decision about giving their consent.

Explanation and parental consent do not remove the responsibilities of the School and Principals under health and safety law, as the corporate parent.

Delegation of responsibilities must be done with a clear rationale, derived from a good knowledge of the people concerned; the visits and off-site activities; the aims and objectives; and the risk management required. The key roles and responsibilities of the Schools are set out below:

3.1 The Principals

This key role ensures that the management of visits and off-site activities meets the regulations and conforms to the School's Health and Safety policy.

3.2 The Head

The Head is responsible for all school visits and off-site activities, and must ensure that:

- the management of all visits and off-site activities meet regulations and conform to the School's Health and Safety policy
- all staff have access to the EVOSA Policy and other relevant documentation
- the aims, expectations and planning need to have realistic teaching and learning strategies, as well as off-site group management strategies
- all risk assessment and management strategies regarding sites and venues used, and the groups taken, are in place and effective
- all visits and off-site activities are monitored and evaluated to see how effective they are
- good practice is shared and strategies are put in place to improve any aspects that require it
- there are on-going updates and awareness-raising training for all staff who require it, as well as educational visit and off-site training as required or agreed

Competence

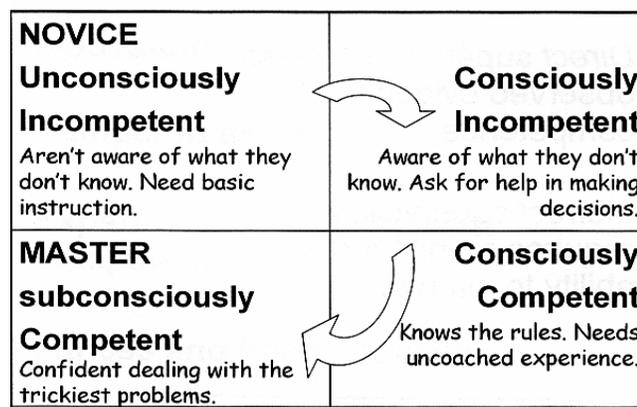
"Competence implies that the leader can demonstrate the ability to operate to current standards of recognised good practice, with: appropriate knowledge and understanding of the group, the staff,

the activity and the venue. Appropriate experience and, in some circumstances, a formally accredited qualification (e.g. Mountain Leader)” (Bill Taylor, Outdoor Education Advisers Panel)

A person who possesses sufficient technical knowledge, experience and skills to be able to carry out the specific task and prevent danger or injury arising during the course of the work, or as a result of the work’ is deemed to be competent.

The Head is responsible for:

- setting the standards of competence required for each visit or off-site activity
- identifying a Visit Leader who is competent and has the experience and expertise and who is able to respond to unusual circumstances
- identifying a competent Assistant Visit Leader for large group day visits, and for all residential visits, to assist in the planning, and who is capable of taking over from the Visit Leader if necessary
- appointing supporting staff, ensuring there is a competent member of staff for each group on the visit or activity
- ensuring that the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), Visit and Assistant Visit Leaders, supporting staff and other adults involved in educational visits and off-site activities are assessed/verified and meet the criteria required in their specific tasks



Source: RGS EVC Update Course 2013

Evaluation

Evaluation of a visit or off-site activity can involve all staff, pupils, parents and external providers, depending on its nature. Input from these different viewpoints can only help adjust and improve future visits and off-site activities.

Appraisals of staff who take the role of EVC, or Visit and Assistant Visit Leaders must take into account their roles and responsibilities.

Monitoring and Training

“...paperwork is an agent to, and can never be a substitute for, pro-active approaches to training and monitoring”. (Marcus Bailie, Head of Inspection, Adventure Activity Licensing Authority (AALA))

Although the School recognises the importance of organisation through paperwork, there should not be an over reliance on this aspect, as it can never be as effective as attending and monitoring visits and outdoor activities to identify further training needs of the Visit Leader and supporting staff.

The Head is responsible for:

- monitoring and evaluating key staff on their visits and off-site activities
- providing access to training opportunities through e.g., IAPS, RGS or Osiris Educational Visits and Off-site Safety Management courses, Insets at own school
- providing the required training for the EVC, Visit and Assistant Visit Leaders and supporting staff
- maintaining records of training and qualifications of school staff
- identifying priorities for further training
- identifying school based resources and budget
- keeping a record of all training

3.3 The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The Head may delegate some of the responsibilities of their role to an EVC after consideration of the range and capacity of their role and its line management, monitoring and review. The post requires the active support of the Head and Leadership Team.

Knowledge and Understanding

The EVC should be specifically competent. Such a person should be an experienced Visit Leader with sufficient status within the School to guide the working practice of colleagues leading visits and off-site activities. This cannot be a purely administrative role but certain functions may be delegated to an administrator.

The EVC (residential visits and offsite activities) or Heads of School (acting as EVC for day visits and off-site activities) have responsibility for the key roles outlined below.

- to act with the authority of the Head to support and encourage all members of staff to undertake regular, positive and fulfilling visits and off-site activities for children and assist them with their responsibilities in line with the School Educational Visits and Off-site Activities Policy
- to produce an annual plan of educational visits and off-site activities with an agreed rationale for the “when and how they occur” as well as the implications for the curriculum and management of the school diary.
- to work with Visit Leaders to ensure that the aims of the educational visit or off-site activity are achievable and in line with those of the school.
- to be involved in monitoring educational visits and off-site activities in order to ensure that the guidance and regulations are followed.
- to attend accredited INSET and national courses and keep up-to-date with OEAPNG
- to support the Head in their decision-making by:
 - confirming that the Visit Leader and Assistant Visit Leader are competent
 - confirming that the staffing level and experience is appropriate accompanying staff and volunteers’ experience where appropriate
 - confirming that risk assessments have been carried out, where required

- confirming that non-disclosure agreements have been signed, where required
- recommending and organising the training of Visit and Assistant Visit Leaders and help organise the induction of staff
- ensuring that the schools management of behaviour and other relevant policies are able to be transferred successfully and are consistently used, along with any specific venue or site codes of conduct
- ensuring that information to parents and the process for obtaining consent are effective.
- to support the Head in the management of visits and off-site activities by:-
 - establishing a clear picture of current practice
 - ensuring that the school complies with the requirements for reporting incidents and accidents (including “near misses”)
 - ensuring that the Visit Leader and supporting staff are familiar with the Critical Incident Policy and know how to liaise with Principals, Head and Leadership Team should an emergency occur
 - arranging and supplying suitable record keeping packs for Visit Leaders
 - monitoring visits through post visit evaluation meetings
 - recording successful practice and contacts, and using them to make future visits more successful
 - setting targets for improvement in the evaluation form
 - intervening when necessary where practice is incorrect or unsatisfactory
 - managing the distribution of mobile phones for visits
 - ensuring that Visit Leaders produce all relevant administration with regards to charges for pupils and liaise with the Accounts Senior with regard to budgeting requirements
 - liaise with the Personnel Manager and other relevant staff with regard to any Health and Safety issues or requirements.

3.4 The Visit Leader

A Visit Leader should be appointed who has authority over the whole of each visit or off-site activity. If more than one School is involved in a combined visit or activity, an overall Visit Leader should be identified, usually the person with most experience. The person in charge should have at least been an Assistant Leader on a previous visit. Participant safety should not be compromised. If a suitably experienced Visit Leader cannot be found, the visit or activity should not take place.

The Visit Leader needs to understand both their own responsibilities and those of the other people in the process who contribute to the support and success of the visit or activity.

The Visit Leader must:

Person specific skills

- be competent – through experience, having shown clear evidence of their ability to manage such a visit. This could be gained through acting as an Assistant Visit Leader to support to a school visit or off-site activity
- be accountable – taking overall responsibility for the administration, programme, supervision and behaviour management of the visit

- be able to manage other adult members of the group and the children appropriate to the context, length of time away and aims of the visit
- have high expectations of what the children and the visit or off-site activity can achieve.
- have the ability to be flexible – to adapt or change the programme to benefit the group
- have the ability to undertake a comprehensive review of the needs of the visit or off-site activity and in particular to be able to risk assess the locations, groups travelling and competencies
- be able to put risk management procedures in place that can be used and monitored.

Relevant experience is essential and it may be necessary to:

- appoint and support an Assistant Visit Leader and agree a management and communication structure.
- agree specific roles, responsibilities and communications systems.
- agree incident and emergency procedures
- agree what will happen if the practicalities of the day require a major adaptation of the programme (on-going risk assessment, using Plan 'B').

Pastoral skills

- be able to suggest ratios according to group sizes,
- be able to group the children appropriately, based on good experience of their behaviour and attitude, as well as any other relevant information.
- be able to offer realistic inclusion strategies, whilst not compromising health, safety or the integrity of the visit or activity.
- be able to induct all members of the group into these processes.
- be aware of safeguarding issues.
- be able to establish usable systems e.g. head counts and reporting in.
- be able to put into action a suitable behaviour management system and/or code of rules.
This might mean adapting that of the school to the outdoor context and/or establishment of specific agreements and procedures.

Technical skills

- be suitably competent to teach/instruct/lead the children in the activities chosen, e.g. using their professional qualification in the outdoors or off-site, or arrange qualified professionals who can.
- be of sufficient pastoral experience/competence to monitor sessions led by others, such as activity instructors, in order to decide if the relationship and approach is appropriate for the children. This would include intervening, if necessary.
- ensure that appropriate first-aid provision is available.

Management skills

- understand, follow and be able to use the Educational Visits and Off-site Activities Policy to put arrangements and procedures into place.
- keep up-to-date with new guidance such as that from OEAPNG.
- understand the importance of good planning and communication, from induction of other adults, through supervision and talking to the children.
- set realistic aims and objectives and support them with strategies that work.

- ensure that all appropriate group records and procedures are in place and that all leaders and base contacts have the details they require.
- be able to observe what is going on and base decisions on actual on-site evidence, as well as pre-determined planning. (e.g. due to changes in the weather or physical conditions, illness or injury, group motivation through to behaviour and leadership issues).
- understand the Schools' Critical Incident Policy and implement incident and emergency procedures should they arise.
- evaluate the visit thoroughly using feedback from staff, pupils, parents and others, venues and centres in a meeting with their EVC or Head of School.
- keep evidence of their ability to manage the other members of the group and the children in the group in similar contexts as part of their CPD.

3.5 The Assistant Visit Leader

For agreed day visits, and for all residential visits, an Assistant Visit Leader should be appointed. This person should have sufficient knowledge and understanding and should be fully involved in the planning of the visit. The person appointed must be capable of taking over from the Visit Leader if necessary. Person-specific, Pastoral, Management and Technical skills required should be the same as for the Visit Leader.

3.6 Supporting staff

These people will assist the Visit Leader in all their tasks and activities and should:

Person specific skills

- have the relevant experience and training to carry out the agreed tasks assigned to them.
- be able to contribute to the risk assessment and group management strategies and maintain them with their specific group.

Pastoral skills

- be competent and confident in managing behaviour in outdoor contexts
- be able to follow and contribute to the supervision and inclusion strategies used.

Technical skills

- have the necessary professional competence or activity-specific competence to ensure that position learning takes place. This includes monitoring practice and contributing to the visit or off-site activity evaluation and improvement.

Management skills

- be able to show understanding of the schools arrangements and procedures and have the ability to carry them out.
- contribute to planning and setting of high expectations of behaviour and learning.
- have the ability to observe, adapt and be flexible in changing circumstances.

3.7 Volunteers, Gap students and PGCE students

Volunteers, Gap Students and PGCE students – known collectively as Visit Support Staff (VSS) can play a useful role by accompanying school visits and activities. All VSS for visits and off-site activities must be approved by the Head and Head of School / EVC.

VSS may be taken into account in the calculation of the minimum number of staff required to supervise the group. However the number of VSS should not exceed the number of fully qualified teachers, unless with the express permission of the EVC.

A list 99 check will suffice if a VSS is used in a “one off” situation where they may be unsupervised. This should be able to be processed in 48 hours. A VSS used on a regular basis should be subject of a full DBS check.

VSS should be used to assist teachers with organisation and supervision during visits and off-site activities and will be given specific roles and responsibilities by the Visit Leader, though the teacher in charge of any group has direct responsibility for that group and all VSS that assist it. VSS and their groups should remain within sight of a regular employed Thomas’s member of staff at all times and this should be noted in the trip’s risk assessment.

VSS must act towards the pupils as a careful parent would in similar circumstances would do, and they should be made aware of any students who require closer supervision, such as those with special needs, or behaviour issues.

If the VSS is a parent the parent is generally not in the same group as their child for Prep School pupils but usually is in the same group as the child for Lower School pupils. Parents and volunteers, who are not employed members of staff do not accompany residential school trips.

3.8 Staff taking their own children /partners

If a member of staff (or other adult) has a son or daughter going on a visit or off-site activity who would not otherwise be going (i.e. is not a Thomas’s pupil in the appropriate year group) then that member of staff (or other adult) may not be counted in the staffing ratio.

If a member of staff (or other adult) is going on a visit or off-site activity which their son or daughter is taking part in then that member of staff (or other adult) would not generally be counted in the staffing ratio.

If both members of a couple are staff and are going on the trip with their child/children only one parent may count in the staff ratio.

The list of responsibilities and competencies for members of the group may need to be supplemented according to circumstances.

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSION

The Schools follow Thomas’s Equal Opportunities Policy in that every effort is made to include all children in all visits and off-site activities. The needs of the child must, however, be balanced again maintaining the safety of the group as a whole, the integrity of the visit or activity and the ability to manage it. These are significant factors which may over-ride other considerations.

4.1 Accessibility

It is important that visits and off-site activities have as broad an interpretation as possible. Good modifications or adaptations create access.

4.2 Integration

It is important that all children participate alongside their peers whenever possible. In the case of multi-activity residential visits, a high percentage of activities could still be accessible.

4.3 Integrity

If the main reason for a visit is the personal and social development and learning that takes place through the activities undertaken, they must be accessible and retain their integrity. It is not acceptable to change the activity so that it loses much of its value and true essence.

Modified activities should strive to be of equal value to the unmodified or adapted. This is essential to the quality of the experience and the perception of those involved.

Visit Leaders should:

- obtain as much information as possible about the condition or disability
- risk assess any hazards when including them and the risk of harm to the individual or others in the group
- consider what could be done to reduce these issues to a minimum or controllable quality (applying control measures).

Some general considerations include:

- Medical conditions – specialist advice may be required.
- Cultural or religious contexts – a ‘specialist’ from that culture to help or assist.
- Duty of care/supervision – what is normally accepted as reasonable or good care in this context and not a personal view. The parent can then consent to the venture or not. A Visit Leader should never agree to a course of action or condition that in their opinion compromises safety or integrity. Ask for advice before making any such agreements.
- Behaviour – essential both long-term and recent behaviour patterns are known. Where a behaviour issue has been raised, knowledge needs to be detailed to establish if it is manageable.

4.4 Inclusion strategies

By increasing an awareness of strategies for inclusion, innovative and exciting activities can take place.

- **Total inclusion** – where the Visit Leader is confident that they can cope with the child in this context, the child can cope with the activity, and the leader can cope with a wide range of ability and motivation.
- **Modified activity** – involves inclusion in the mainstream activity, with a flexible structure, differentiated task, changes in rules or agreements or range of equipment available. These all must retain the integrity of the activity. The options are:
- **Parallel activity** – involvement in the same activity but with a different structure – task, space, equipment – and even side-by-side location. It could also involve a similar activity held in

parallel with the mainstream activity. Some activities allow for modified paired activity eg a second wheelchair for another child to use.

- **Adapted activity (all included)** – all the children take part in the adapted form of an activity, using the same rules and conditions of the adapted activity.
- **Adapted activity (separate)** – identified children take part in a discrete activity that is self-contained, chosen specifically and different from the mainstream form.

4.5 Location or site

It may be necessary to pre-visit or research several locations or sites to see which is best suited to the group. Typical factors to consider are:

- specialist facilities, leaders or equipment available
- access, space, mobility around the site and buildings
- transport arrangements, journey times, comfort stops
- food, cooking arrangements, ability to cope with specialist diets
- residential – sleeping arrangements, access to buildings, environment, other users

It is necessary to review the whole programme to ascertain issues and then risk-assess them, to use what in the venture is possible and practical.

4.6 Participating group

The behaviour, motivation and interest of the group are significant factors in the success of all off-site activities and visits, and in particular of longer residential visits. It is essential that strategies are used to bring groups together, to team build and control behaviour. Where the inclusion of a child would compromise this, similar adaptations or codes of behaviour (to the activity ones) can be considered, as well as increasing staffing and decreasing ratios.

4.7 Visit leaders

Visit leaders should have knowledge and experience of the group. As a result decisions can be made on:

- the amount of medical training necessary for staff on the visit
- the optimum staff to pupil ratio / additional staff
- expertise necessary for activities
- associated higher costs

See also: [Thomas's Dietary Policy](#)
[Thomas's Disability Policy](#)
[Thomas's Equal Opportunities Policy](#)
[Thomas's Inclusion Policy](#)
[Thomas's Medical Conditions and Medication Policy](#)
[Thomas's Special Education Needs and Disability Policy](#)

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND WELFARE OF PUPILS

“If you think safety is expensive, try having an accident.” (Stelios Haji-Ioannou, EasyJet)

Everyone involved must be aware of the importance of the health and safety and welfare of the children on the visit. As such, it is a responsibility shared by the whole group.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999 set out responsibilities. Legislation is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive. The key elements of the legislation are:

The principals must ensure:

- the health, safety and welfare of all their employees.
- the health and safety of children, both within the school locations and when undertaking visits and activities.
- the health and safety of visitors to the school locations. The term ‘visitors’ means anyone entering the school locations, for whatever reason.

Employees should:

- take reasonable care of their own and others’ health and safety.
- co-operate with their employers.
- carry out visits and activities in accordance with advice, guidance, training and regulations.
- inform their employers of any significant issues or serious risks.

See also: [Thomas’s Critical Incident Policy](#)
[Thomas’s First Aid Policy](#)
[Thomas’s Health and Safety Policy](#)
[Thomas’s Medical Conditions and Medication Policy](#)
[Thomas’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#)

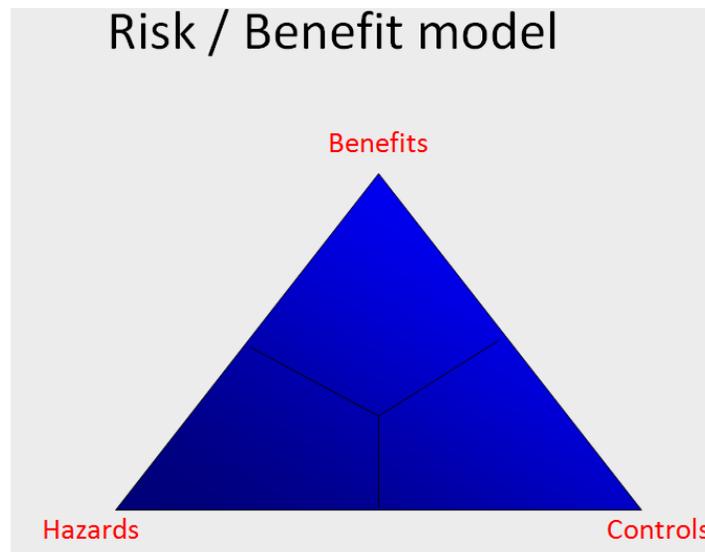
6. RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

“Risk management is the process of measuring, or assessing risk and then developing strategies to manage the risk” (International Organization for Standardization 31000:2009)

Risk assessment is a “careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm” (HSE 2013)

“It is not what you write which drives safety, but what you do. Doing the right thing by unusual means is acceptable, whereas doing the wrong thing ‘by the book’ is not. There is a growing misunderstanding amongst worryingly influential people that merely writing a risk assessment in some way will protect people from harm. All across the country line managers seem only to ask “Have you done a risk assessment?” No-one seems to ask these days “Are you competent?” (Lessons learned from Stainforth Beck; Marcus Bailie, Head of Inspection AALA (2003))

Risk assessment and risk management must be carried out for all visits and off-site activities. It is important to appreciate that the legal requirement is to assess and manage risks (requiring them to be reduced to an acceptable level) and not necessarily to eliminate them altogether. The Risk Benefit Model is a useful tool to start establishing the risks of a visit.



Source: RGS EVC update course 2013

The Department For Education, Health and Safety Advice On Legal Duties And Powers For Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Staff And Governing Bodies (2014) states, "a written [risk] assessment is not needed for every activity".

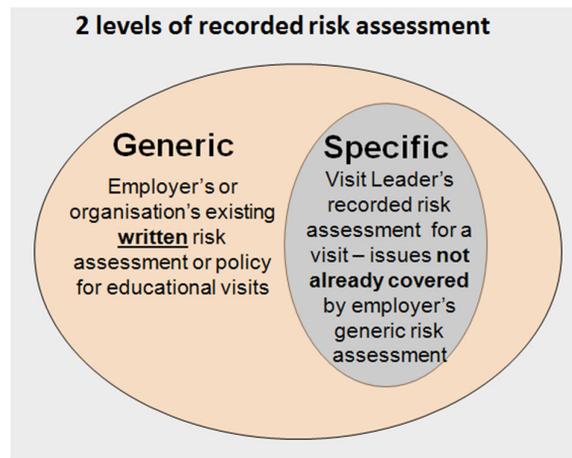
6.1 Generic risk assessment

For a straightforward visit or activity in familiar territory, a generic written risk assessment is likely to apply. It has previously been prepared by the School or the educational provider /centre. Examples include the route to church, regularly used sports centres, swimming pools and games fields, and take into consideration risks such as water or weather hazards, illness, injuries, fire, other hazards including traffic, and threat of abuse.

6.2 Visit / activity specific risk assessment

The Visit Leader must consider whether or not there are any additional significant risks that are not covered by a Thomas's generic risk assessment or an educational provider / centre. If there are, then these are written up in a specific risk assessment.

A preliminary visit should be made by any Visit Leader to a location or activity that is not familiar to assess the risks. If a preliminary visit is not feasible the Visit Leader will need to consider how best to complete the risk assessment. Once written, the risk assessment can be re-used and adapted for next time.



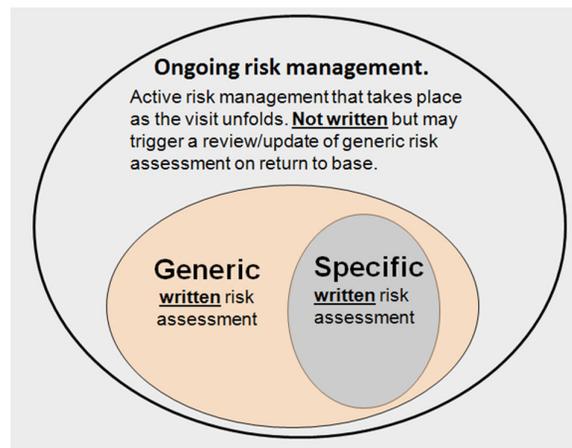
Source: RGS EVC update course 2013

6.3 Ongoing risk assessment

Ongoing risk assessments are not written – these are the actions that staff members take to minimise risk while the visit or activity is taking place. This involves all on-site issues and responding appropriately to manage the risk. Areas of risk management can include:

water (flooding) poor weather transport and road traffic other users
public areas falls and collisions unsupervised 'free time' unexpected illness
home situations

This might prompt a re-write or addition to the risk assessment on return to School.



Source: RGS EVC update course 2013

6.4 Other aspects of risk assessment

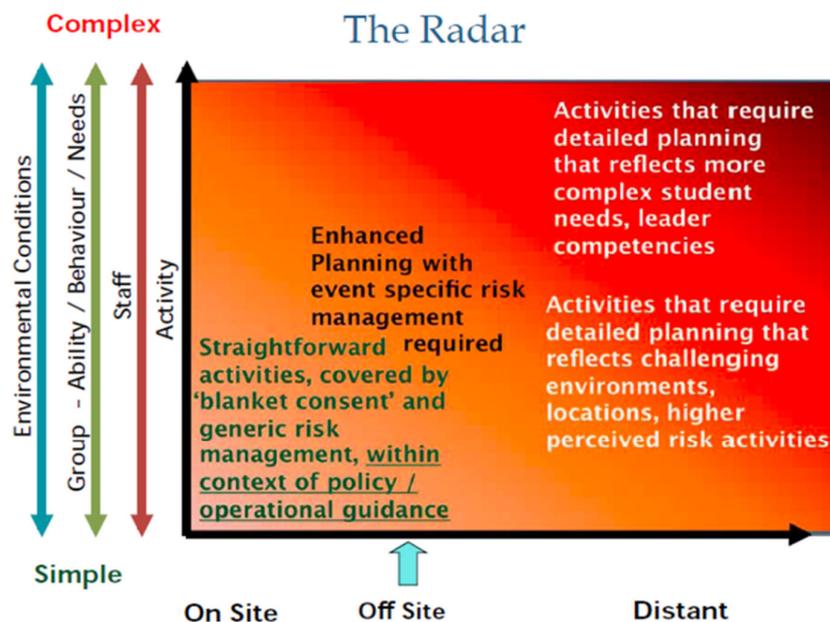
- good quality leadership is probably the biggest single factor in ensuring safe visits.
- involving students in discussion
- seeking out local knowledge. It is easy to think that conducting an activity once a year for seven years is seven years' experience. It's not – it's only seven days.

6.5 The RADAR

The Learning Outside the Classroom **RADAR** model can help assess the risks for new visits and activities and define the boundaries of those areas of activity that require formal approval. This framework can help a Visit Leader determine what planning and preparation is required, and the Head to decide what policies and practices need to be in place to allow the visit or activity to take place. All LOtC visits and activities can be mapped onto this framework.

Outcomes of this approach include:

- promotion of group discussion
- reduction of paperwork and bureaucracy.
- expression of risk in clear terms
- reassurance for Visit Leaders, staff and management
- increased activity and higher profile of LOtC



Source: OEAPNG 2013

The Horizontal X axis:

- plots **Distance**, starting on site and journeying further away along the axis.
- The blue arrow shows where you go off-site.
- The colour density indicates level of rigor and detail required in supporting processes.

The Vertical Y axis:

- plots four aspects of **Complexity** – Activity , Staff, Group and Environment.
- The Four Aspects will vary from simple to complex. No aspect is fixed.

SAGED – The variables to consider:

- **Staff** Competent? Trained? Experienced? Ratio of staff to pupils?
- **Activity** Simple / complex? Training required? Consent? Insurance? Licenses?
- **Group** Prior experience? Behaviour? Equality? Medical / Special Needs?
- **Environment** Same as previous times? Boundaries? Forecast? Water levels?
- **Distance** Venue? How far? Transport required? Journey time? Residential?

7. STAFF TO PUPIL RATIOS AND SUPERVISION

Other than the regulations affecting Early Years provision, there is no definitive ratio for a specified age group undertaking a particular activity. This is a risk management issue. Visit Leaders must ensure that pupils are supervised in accordance with the principles of “Effective Supervision” and to take account of:

- the nature of the activity (including its duration)
- the location and environment in which the activity is to take place
- the age and gender (including developmental age) of the pupils
- the ability of the pupils (behavioural, medical, emotional, educational needs).
- staff competence

This means effective supervision of any given group has to reflect the group chemistry. It is therefore important that when planning a repeat or on-going series of activities, the previous plan (no matter how well it worked) is reviewed to ensure it meets current group needs.

Visits and off-site activities have been classified into three basic categories for approval reasons. When planning, the following should be taken into consideration:

- The ratio ranges below are intended as starting points for Visit Leaders
- The term “staff” below includes adults who take part in the visit / activity and have a specific role of responsibility (e.g. provider staff, professional guides, centre instructors, sports coaches). It may also include VSS but these should not exceed qualified staff numbers.
- Actual ratios will be determined by the process of risk assessment
- Please also refer to Point 3.8 with reference to staff and their own children/partners

Category A		
Regular timetabled visits and off-site activities visits. The element of risk is similar to that encountered in everyday life, e.g. visits to church, travelling to sports and swimming facilities. It also includes Woodland Adventure and Young Explorers unless adventurous or residential.		
Approved by the Head during the timetabling process.		
Age of Pupils	Staff : pupil ratios – Typical Range	Visit Leader Competence
Nursery (Age 3–4)	1 : 3 (minimum 2 staff)	Previous experience
Reception (Age 4–5)	1 : 5 (minimum 2 staff)	Previous experience
Under 8s (Years 1–3)	1 : 10	Previous experience
Under 11s (Years 4–6)	1 : 15	Previous experience
Under 13s (Years 7–8)	1 : 20	Previous experience

Category B		
One-off day visits and off-site activities in the UK (that are not residential or adventurous). The element of risk is similar to that encountered in everyday life, e.g. curricular subject day visits and local fieldwork, co-curricular visits to venues such as the art galleries and theatres, sports tournaments, sports fixtures outside normal PE timetabled sessions and musical events.		
Approved by the Head of School (and authorised by the Head if hazardous)		
Age of Pupils	Staff : pupil ratios – Typical Range	Visit Leader Competence
Nursery (Age 3–4)	1 : 3 (minimum 2 staff)	Previous experience
Reception (Age 4–5)	1 : 5 (minimum 2 staff)	Previous experience
Under 8s (Years 1–3)	1 : 8	Previous experience
Under 11s (Years 4–6)	1 : 12	Previous experience
Under 13s (Years 7–8)	1 : 15	Previous experience

Category C		
Visits which are residential or adventurous or abroad (or any combination of these).		
Approval by the Head + EVC, and authorised by the Principals		
Age of Pupils	Staff : pupil ratios – Typical Range	Visit Leader Competence
Under 11s (Years 4–6)	1 : 8	Previous experience, appropriately qualified where adventurous
Under 13s (Years 7–8)	1 : 10	

Without well planned risk assessments, control measures and on-going risk management, these ratios will not be adequate to meet the needs of most residential or more complex visits.

7.1 Supervision and risk assessment in specific contexts

Traffic

It should not be assumed that motorists understand or are aware of the needs of the group or of common practices. Technically, only the police, traffic wardens and officially designated school crossing patrols have the right under the law to control traffic. Liaison with the local police may well enable an agreement to be reached over a particular crossing strategy and the use of tabards or similar. This liaison is recommended where practical.

Where Visit Leaders find themselves in this position, having established that there is not a suitable alternative, it is important to have an agreed and understood procedure which you can apply as well as circumstances allow, as would a responsible person, to the best of their ability.

The following control measures may be helpful:

- Pre-visit the location. Choose a crossing site where visibility is good in both directions. A minimum of 100 metres is recommended where possible.

- Choose a location where there is a suitable collection point on both sides of the road, an area off the road and onto a pavement being preferable.
- A 'wave' of children in controlled numbers is recommended over the crocodile approach. It is faster and more efficient in terms of actually getting across the road.
- Decide on the manageable number that can cross in a controlled line, parallel with the kerb, walking together.
- Line them up parallel to the kerb (in one long line or banked into their crossing groups)
- The leader in charge of the crossing is at the end facing oncoming traffic. A second leader is at the other end and responsible for opposing traffic. This is where fluorescent / hi-visibility clothing is useful if daylight, and reflective clothing in darkness.
- The group approaches the roadside on a suitable signal or command. The leaders confer and agree when the crossing is possible before signalling to the group and walking across. The actual crossing therefore only takes the same time as for one person walking alone.
- Where only two leaders are present and the group split into more than one 'wave', each needs to have a priority for looking after the group on one side of the road and may meet in the middle in order to bring the second group across.
- Great emphasis must be placed on crossing roads and understanding traffic direction when abroad.

Walking along urban roads and fieldwork in urban areas

Pelican, puffin, zebra and school crossing patrol are the best ways to cross roads. To reduce this threat to a low risk activity by thorough, effective and well understood control measures that are successfully put into place and monitored.

- Assess the sites chosen and their environment, i.e. traffic!
- Assess the group, its experience and evidence of their ability to work using close or less direct supervision.
- Assess the activities to be undertaken and the current competence of the leaders in that activity.
- Refer to the "Supervision Strategies" and "Risk Assessment" sections.

Be aware that:

- If a motorist stops to allow the group to cross, it is advisable to make eye contact with the car drivers before stepping off the pavement
- It is vital that a check for other traffic is made and the vehicles have stopped before stepping into the road. There is always the danger of other drivers overtaking the stationary vehicle.
- In bad weather it will take the driver longer to stop and, as it is more difficult for the group to be seen, extra precautions should be taken.
- If a hooded coat is worn or an umbrella used, again extra precautions should be taken as these can obscure hearing and vision.

8. INSURANCE

8.1 School trips insurance

The Worldwide School Trips Insurance Policy automatically covers children taking part in school visits aged **8 to 13** years. Children under the age of 8 years who are taking part in school visits abroad, must be notified to our insurers and an additional premium be paid. Travel insurance is normally only required for visits abroad.

When considering any potentially hazardous activity or if any of your group have any special needs, which may affect insurance cover, please contact the Finance Manager with comprehensive details of the activity, including age, competency, number, details of any special or medical needs of those who will be taking part. The Schools insurance can then be checked to ensure cover is in place. This is essential if the visit involves any potentially hazardous activities. Examples may include:

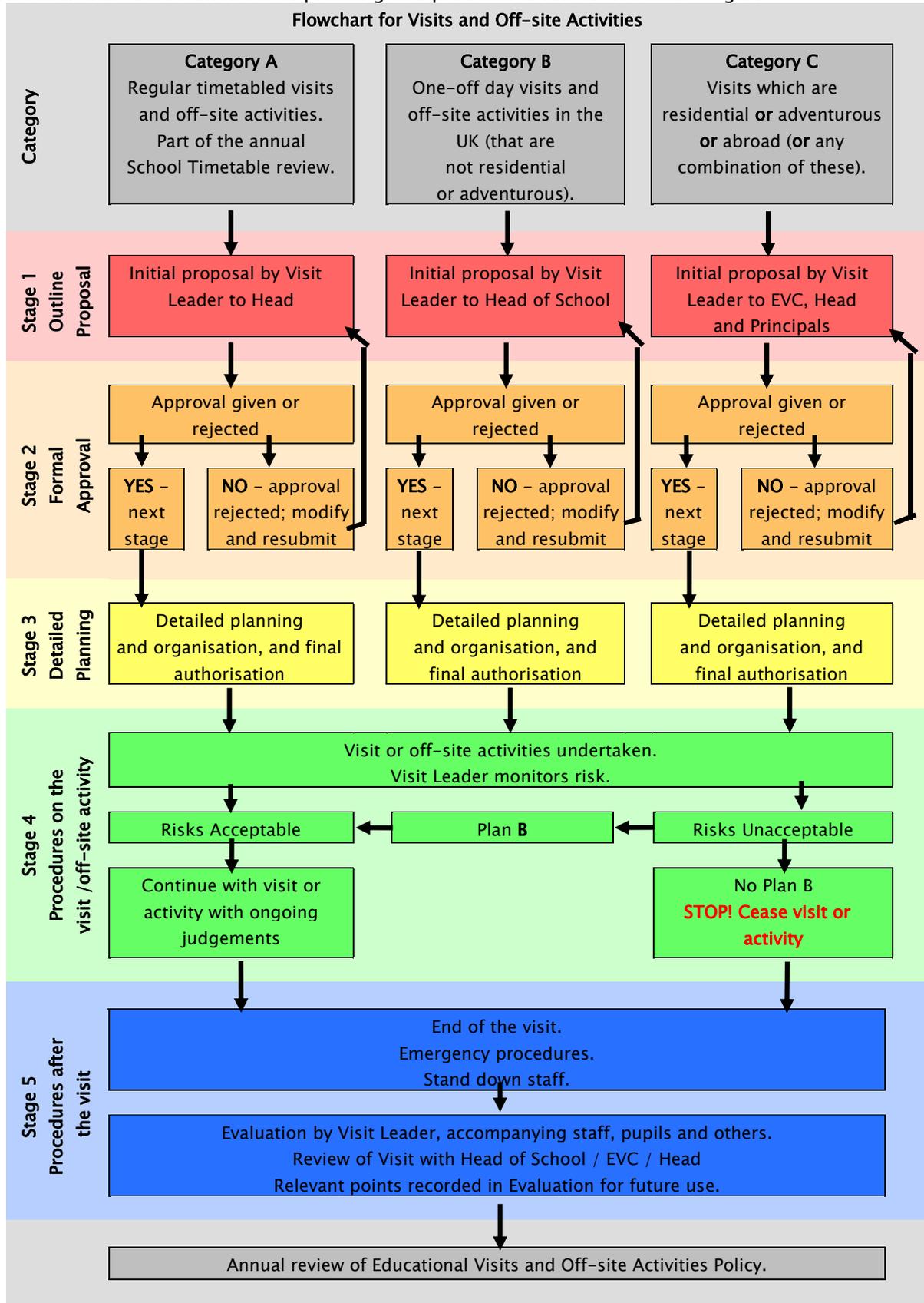
Abseiling	Kite Flying/Surfing	Sailing
Airborne activities	Low and high ropes courses	Sea kayaking
Archery	Moorland, fell and mountain activities	Surfing
Camping	Motor sports	Sea-level traversing & coastering
Canal boating	Open country activities	Shooting
Canoeing	Field studies	Ski-ing
Caving/potholing	Orienteering	Sub-aqua/snorkelling
Climbing	Paintballing	Surfing
Cycling/biking	Pony trekking	Swimming in open water and non-commercial pools
Expeditioning	Power boating	Tombstoning
Fishing	Rafting	Water ski-ing
Gorge walking	Rowing and sculling	
Horse riding		

8.2 Public liability insurance

The School carries public liability insurance, which covers trips to all UK venues. In the event of a trip being action-related, additional insurance cover may be needed.

9. PLANNING A VISIT OR OFF-SITE ACTIVITY

The flow chart below shows how planning and procedures follow five main stages.



9.1 Category A: Planning a regular timetabled visit or off-site activity

These are regular, timetabled visits and off-site activities, approved by the Head as part of the School timetable, which have generic risk assessments written by the staff in charge of the visit or activity, updated as necessary during the academic year. Examples include visits to church, swimming lessons, sports centres and home playing fields.

9.2 Category B: Planning a day visit or off-site activity

Stage 1: Outline Proposal At least a term before the visit / activity.	
<p>The Teacher/Proposer of visit / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discusses with colleagues / HoD / SL Head of School to ensure feasibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Date, timings and duration of the visit / activity ○ Where does the visit / activity fit into the curriculum / scheme of work? ○ Is the visit / activity suitable? Are there limitations (age, gender, SEN, medical, behaviour)? ○ Pupil ratio discussed , ○ Staffing requirements – Visit and Assistant Leader proposed, other staff – experience? ○ Overall cost – transport, entry, resources, lunches. Parents or School pays? ○ What is involved in the risk assessment? Are staff first aid trained? Emergency procedures? • carries out preliminary enquiries by contacting centre/provider and provisionally books dates • checks available date with the Diary Manager to avoid clashes / imbalances <p>The Visit / Activity Leader must now complete the EV1 – Proposal, Approval and Authorisation Form and arrange a formal meeting with the Head of School (EVC).</p>	<p><i>EV1 – Proposal, Approval and Authorisation Form</i></p>
Stage 2: Formal Approval	
<p>The Visit / Activity Leader presents a completed EV1 to the Head of School (EVC). At this stage approval of the visit may be delayed if any information is missing.</p> <p>If the Head of School formally approves the visit / off-site activity the Visit Leader starts detailed planning. For large year group visits, an Assistant Leader will be agreed and appointed.</p>	<p>If approval is rejected, reasons shall be made clear. The visit or activity may need to be modified and re-presented.</p>
Stage 3: Detailed Planning At least three weeks before the visit	
<p>The Visit / Activity Leader should use the appropriate forms to help track the stages of the planning: The Head of School (EVC) will support the Visit Leader at planned meetings when required.</p> <p>Provider / Centre Booking</p> <p>After approval of the visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirm the booking with the provider / centre • consider going on a preliminary visit to assess risks and other issues • consider sending a questionnaire to the provider / centre • consider sending a non-disclosure agreement to the provider/centre (if required) <p>NB: For any Woodland Adventure or Young Explorer activities with the Exploration Society (ESOC) there is no need to complete an EV1 or EV2 form. Instead the EV2a form should be completed and signed off by the EVC.</p> <p>Risk Assessment</p> <p>Complete the risk assessment forms in full and give a copy to the Health and Safety Coordinator.</p> <p>Transport and Catering Form (EV6)</p> <p>Transport booking</p> <p>If a coach organised by the School is required complete the EV6 – Transport and Catering Form as a Google doc and share with the Transport Department for action. Expect the transport department to complete their sections within seven working days.</p>	<p><i>EV2a – Visit or Activity Planning Checklist</i></p> <p><i>EV4 – Provider or Centre Questionnaire</i></p> <p><i>EV11 – Non disclosure guidance for visits</i></p> <p><i>EV2b – Woodland Adventure Checklist</i></p> <p><i>EV5 – Risk Assessment Form</i></p> <p><i>EV5a – Risk Management Guidance</i></p> <p><i>EV6 – Transport and Catering Form (Google Doc)</i></p>

<p>School buses are normally timetabled for curriculum activities only and are unlikely to be available for one-off visits or activities. This means that a coach may be used. When deciding, ensure that there is one seatbelt for every person, including staff. Once the day and times have been booked they must remain the same, as PSV licensed drivers must stick to the specifics you request on the form.</p> <p>If travel is being booked independently i.e. e.g. a train, tube, coach/bus, ferry or flight and not through the Transport Department then separate arrangements and checks must be made with each transport provider.</p> <p>Catering, packed lunches / snacks Share the completed Google doc with the catering team if pupils and staff will be absent for lunch. Request packed lunches if required. The Catering Manager will sign and complete the required sections</p> <p>Cheques and float – try to minimise these charges where possible. Share the EV6 Google doc with Ringwood, ensuring you have attached an iSAMS list of all pupils and their forms. Ringwood will then complete their sections and send you the requested monies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit float – must be calculated into the total budget. Receipts are required for items bought <p>Changes to or cancellation of an offsite visit or activity If there are any amendments to any visit or it is cancelled for any reason the Transport and Catering Cancellation Form EV6A must be completed and shared with the named people as soon as possible.</p> <p>Information to Parents Ensure all necessary information has been given, and consents received. Track with the checklist. If an information letter is produced the letter must be seen and agreed by the Head of School (EVC).</p> <p>Remind parents of the visit / activity via the Thomas’s Learning Platform (TLP) and “The Bulletin” the week before the visit / activity.</p> <p>Request any parent volunteers if needed and share with them the “Guidance for Volunteers on visits and activities” (EV14)</p>	<p><i>EV6 – Transport and Catering Form (Google doc)</i></p> <p><i>EV6 – Transport and Catering Form (Google doc)</i></p> <p><i>EV6A– Transport and Catering Cancellation Form (Google doc)</i></p> <p><i>EV7a – Information to Parents Checklist</i> <i>EV7b – Example Parent Letter</i></p> <p><i>EV14 – Guidance for Volunteers on visits and activities</i></p>
<p>Stage 4: Detailed Planning At least two weeks before the visit</p>	
<p>Staff absences Request cover for staff absences if necessary. Remind accompanying staff of the need to arrange materials for covered lessons.</p> <p>Briefings Brief the staff at a specific meeting. Delegate responsibilities, share risk management issues and ensure accompanying pupils’ needs are discussed (SEN, behaviour, medical or dietary needs). At this stage pupil groups should be organised carefully. Give out staff visit packs.</p> <p>Pupil briefing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare pupils for the work and activities they will be undertaking. • Checklist – clothing and other essential equipment • Expectations – what to bring and not bring (electronic devices/sweets etc) • Behaviour policy; Aims and Values; Codes of practice e.g. road safety, water safety, country, seashore, and other relevant guidelines from the centre / provider. • Basic emergency procedures (lost, accident, threats etc.) <p>Authorisation meeting Arrange a meeting to the visit / activity with the Head of School (EVC). You will also need to meet with the Head for final authorisation if the visit / activity is hazardous.</p>	<p><i>EV8 – Information to Pupils Checklist</i></p> <p><i>EV9 – EVOSA Behaviour Policy</i></p> <p><i>EV1 – Proposal, Approval and Authorisation Form</i></p>

Stage 5: Procedures on the day of the visit / activity	
<p>Cheques / Float Make sure all monies are collected from the School office or safe place.</p> <p>Mobile phones Take a charged mobile phone, leaving numbers of all staff with the designated School contact <u>and</u> school office. A list of contact numbers should be available to all staff on the visit / activity.</p> <p>Designated School contact Remember to leave copies of all documentation relating to the visit with the nominated person at school prior to the visit.</p> <p>Medical, dietary and contact details The Visit / Activity Leader ensure pupils' medical, dietary and contact details are printed and are available to all staff at all times. This form can be created on http://firefly.thomas-s.co.uk/it-support-and-ict/how-to-guides-1/how-to-use-the-thomass-trip-form</p> <p>Register Take the register. Send it to Ringwood ensuring that if a child is absent, the register is marked clearly.</p> <p>Monitoring The Visit Leader and accompanying staff monitor the risks at all times on the visit / activity. Should there be any confrontations or issues, please refer to EV13 – Conflict De-escalation techniques</p> <p>Keep in contact If the visit / activity has an unforeseen issue (e.g. if transport is delayed) keep School informed, who can then contact parents.</p>	<p>Print off the day before using the iSAMS Trip Form Report</p> <p>Send to Ringwood as soon as possible after the visit / activity along with remainder of floats and required receipts</p> <p>EV13 – Conflict De-escalation techniques</p>
Stage 6: Procedures after the visit /activity	
<p>Contact the Head of School / designated School contact Inform the Head of the success of the visit and reinforce in assembly.</p> <p>Evaluation Follow up the visit by speaking with staff and children, and centre / providers. This is important as visits can always be refined and improved.</p> <p>Complete a "Visit / Off-site Activity Evaluation Form", for future reference and send a copy to the Head of School, and EVC. A copy should be placed in the Visit File.</p> <p>File all documentation, including 'Near Miss' Incident Report Forms, if applicable, so that the School can benefit from the information / experiences of the group next time.</p> <p>Shred all copies of the Pupil Trip Form in order to comply with Thomas's Data Protection Policy.</p> <p>Ensure any digital images have been removed from mobile devices</p> <p>Write an article: Write a short article for the TLP and/or "The Bulletin" (success of the visit, highlights, good behaviour.)</p> <p>Pupils work Ask the children to write a follow-up report for the School Magazine. Include the visit in on-going topic work. Use photographs for a display.</p>	<p>EV10 – Evaluation Form.</p> <p>Use "RIDDOR Form" if necessary</p>

9.3 Category C: Planning a residential or adventurous visit or trip abroad

Stage 1: Outline Proposal up to twelve months before the visit	
<p>The Teacher/Proposer of visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discusses with colleagues / HoD / SL / EVC / Head to ensure feasibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dates and timings of the visit? ○ Where does the visit fit into the curriculum / scheme of work? ○ What is the planned programme of activities during the visit? ○ Is the visit / activity suitable? Are there limitations (age, gender, SEN, medical, behaviour)? ○ Pupil ratio discussed, ○ Staffing requirements – Visit and Assistant Leader proposed, other staff – experience? ○ Overall costs – transport, entry, resources, lunches. Parents or School pays? ○ What is involved in the risk assessment? Are staff first aid trained? Emergency procedures? • carries out preliminary enquiries by contacting centre / provider and provisionally books dates • checks available date with the Diary Manager to avoid clashes / imbalances • checks with Ringwood that the School Insurance covers the visit / activity <p>For overseas visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek additional guidance • ask provider / centre for a sample itinerary or programme of a similar, recent visit • Talk to another school who has completed the same visit using provider / centre • Language fluency? If not is there a need for guides or provider staff? • Any particular issues when visiting overseas. <p>The Visit / Activity Leader must now complete the EV1 – Proposal, Approval and Authorisation Form and arrange a formal meeting with the EVC / Head.</p>	<p>Some centres require bookings over a year in advance</p> <p>If the residential visit is abroad a longer lead time will be necessary</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice</p> <p><i>EV1- Proposal, Approval and Authorisation Form</i></p>
Stage 2: Formal Approval	
<p>The Visit Leader presents a completed and substantial EV1 – Proposal, Approval and Authorisation Form to the Head / EVC. At this stage approval of the visit may be delayed if any information is missing, or if details need to be checked.</p> <p>If the EVC / Head formally approves the visit, the Visit Leader starts detailed planning. An Assistant Leader will be agreed and appointed.</p>	<p>If approval is <u>rejected</u>, reasons shall be made clear. The visit or activity may need to be modified and re-presented.</p>
Stage 3: Detailed Planning From twelve months before the visit	
<p>The Visit Leader should use the appropriate forms to help track the stages of the planning. The EVC / Head will support the Visit Leader at planned meetings when required. Visit Leaders are accountable for all monies spent and should keep careful records.</p> <p>Provider / Centre Booking After approval of the visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirm the booking with the provider / centre • request details of provider's or centre's staff and instructors' qualifications and risk assessments • if provider / centre has not been used before use a questionnaire (AALA licensing means that this may not be necessary) • organise a preliminary visit to plan, assess risks, suitability of activities and other issues • use a visit file to organise all details of the visit • request that the provider/ centre complete a non disclosure agreement (if required) <p>Risk Assessment Complete the risk assessment forms in full and give a copy to the Health and Safety Coordinator</p> <p>Transport booking If a School Minibus or coach organised by the School is required complete the EV6 – Transport and Catering Form as a Google doc and share with the Transport Department for action. Expect the transport department to complete their sections within seven working days.</p>	<p><i>EV2a – Visit or Activity Planning Checklist</i></p> <p><i>EV2c- EVOSA Visits Abroad Extra Planning Checklist</i></p> <p><i>EV4- Provider or Centre Questionnaire</i></p> <p><i>EV11 – Non disclosure guidance for visits</i></p> <p><i>EV5- Risk Assessment Form</i> <i>EV5a – Risk Management Guidance</i></p>

<p>If the day and times have been booked they must remain the same, as PSV licensed drivers must stick to the specifics you request on the form. If a coach is used abroad, it is essential to confirm that all seats have seatbelts.</p> <p>If travel is being booked independently i.e. e.g. a train, tube, coach/bus, ferry or flight and not through the Transport Department then separate arrangements and checks must be made with each transport provider.</p>	<p><i>EV6 – Transport and Catering Form (Google Doc)</i></p>
<p>Stage 4: Detailed Planning At least four weeks before the visit</p>	
<p>Catering, packed lunches / snacks Share the completed Google doc with the catering team if pupils and staff will be absent for break or lunch. Request packed lunches if required. The Catering Manager will sign and complete the required sections</p> <p>Cheques and float – try to minimise these charges where possible. Share the EV6 Google doc with Ringwood, ensuring you have attached an iSAMS list of all pupils and their forms.</p> <p>The Float should cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ice creams, prizes and resources bought on the visit and must be calculated into the total budget. Receipts are required. • Staff teas and coffees and meals during the visit and must be calculated into the total budget. Receipts are not required, but confirmation of amount handed over to each staff member should be given to Ringwood on return. • Emergency money for the proportionate to the number of children and adults on the visit. For emergencies only, handed back at the end of the visit, with receipts for the money spent. <p>Changes to or cancellation of an offsite visit or activity If there are any amendments to any visit or it is cancelled for any reason the Transport and Catering Cancellation Form EV6A must be completed and shared with the named people as soon as possible.</p> <p>Travelling abroad: Ensure that Passports, Visas (if required) and insurance are in place. Luggage weight, and specifications and ticket allocation are known. Until the end of 2020 production of the European Health Insurance Card provides automatic free or reduced cost emergency medical treatment in countries within the European Economic Area for all British Passport holders). Health care abroad is obtainable from: http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/healthcareabroad/pages/healthcareabroad.aspx</p> <p>Home Stay or Exchange Visits Read the guidance in the EVOSAP. Ensure forms are distributed where necessary</p> <p>Parents’ meeting A full meeting must be organised at school to ensure that parents and pupils receive further detailed information about the visit, have an opportunity to ask questions and provide informed consent. Ensure all necessary information has been given, and consents received. Track with the checklist.</p> <p>Information to parents A detailed letter, agreed by the Head/ EVC, must be sent to parents with an attached parental consent form. Remind parents of the visit / activity via the TLP and “The Bulletin” the week before the visit.</p> <p>Pupils’ meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare pupils for the work and activities they will be undertaking. • Checklist – clothing and other essential equipment. • Expectations – what to bring and not bring (electronic devices/sweets etc) • Specific guidelines for each outing within the visit. • Behaviour policy, Aims and Values 	<p><i>EV6 – Transport and Catering Form (Google doc)</i></p> <p><i>EV6 – Transport and Catering Form (Google doc)</i></p> <p><i>EV6A– Transport and Catering Cancellation Form (Google doc)</i></p> <p><i>EV2c– EVOSA Visits Abroad Extra Planning Checklist</i></p> <p><i>EV3a– Exchange or Home Stay Form (home)</i> <i>EV3b– Exchange or Home Stay Form (away)</i></p> <p><i>EV7a – Information to Parents Checklist</i></p> <p><i>EV7b – Sample Parent Letter</i></p> <p><i>EV8 – Information to Pupils Checklist</i></p>

<p>Follow up the visit by speaking with staff and children, and centre / providers. This is important as visits can always be refined and improved.</p> <p>Complete an evaluation form for future reference and send a copy to the Head and EVC. A copy should be placed in the Visit File.</p> <p>File all documentation, including the Visit Evaluation Form, Risk Assessments, and 'Near Miss' Incident Report Forms, if applicable, in a central location.</p> <p>Shred all copies of the Pupil Trip Form in order to comply with Thomas's Data Protection Policy.</p> <p>Ensure any digital images have been removed from mobile devices</p> <p>Meet with the EVC and feedback at a specific meeting.</p> <p>Write an article: Write a short article for the TLP and/or "The Bulletin" (success of the visit, highlights, good behaviour.)</p> <p>Pupils work Ask the children to write a follow-up report for the School Magazine. Include the visit in on-going topic work. Use photographs for a display</p>	<p><i>Use "RIDBOR Form" if necessary</i></p>
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For further information, see your Head / EVC.

10. SPECIALIST PROVIDERS, CENTRES AND EXCHANGES

Choosing an independent provider Visit Leaders should look for the following:

- appropriate activities and services to meet the aims of your visit
- reliability – ask other schools and colleagues
- acceptable booking conditions – scrutinise any limitation of liability, the cancellation terms and the insurance package on offer
- suitable safety procedures – independent accreditation?
- the right price, reflecting value for money in comparison with other offerings
- an interesting and relevant programme
- appropriate supporting literature and liaison

When considering a new activity, venue or facility a Provider or Centre Questionnaire should be completed before the first visit to double check basic procedures and a record kept on file. This need only be updated if activities change significantly. The questions are in no particular order of importance and there are few 'correct' answers. A selection of questions such as these should be sufficient to make a reasoned judgement as to the providers approach to the health, welfare and safety of pupils.

10.1 Using a multi activity centre

Most centres are licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority. The AALA's role is to have oversight and responsibility for the efficient delivery of the licensing regime, and as such those with a license should therefore be fully up-to-date with all aspects of the activities offered. Therefore a provider or centre questionnaire is not necessary.

School staff should risk assess the areas that they are responsible for; we know the children. Independent provider's risks assess what they are responsible for. If there are any grey areas these should be resolved through discussion with the independent provider. This should be confirmed through standard checks before booking with a provider. It is essential to agree a hand-over of pupils at the start and end of the session. This is usually in a known place, but must always involve the leader handing over and receiving back the group's care. Problems occur when this arrangement is not clear.

Because of the importance of maintaining pastoral continuity it is a requirement to have a leader (or qualified volunteer or other responsible adult) in close proximity to each activity group and always in a known place. There may occasionally be exceptional circumstances where an alternative system is agreed.

Where provision is collaborative (i.e. shared between more than one establishment), the Visit Leader should find out who is responsible for what, including risk assessment. In this case all parties should share the risk assessment process. School staff still retain the duty of care relating to pastoral care of children.

10.2 Exchanges and home stays

The single most effective way of understanding a different country, culture or language is to experience it first-hand. Such experiences help young people to develop self-esteem, self-confidence and independence, while developing their knowledge base and broadening their horizons.

Exchanges require thorough and carefully planned risk management that addresses the issues relating to indirect supervision and special issues relating to child protection. All parties involved must fully understand the implications of this.

Where an exchange visit is arranged for the first time, or involves a significant number of new staff, a preliminary visit is strongly recommended. This can provide an opportunity to consider a specific risk-benefit assessment at first hand. Face-to-face dialogue between exchange partners should ensure commonality of aims, objectives and activities. As a minimum, any agreement should include a commitment to the health, safety and welfare of the young people involved.

Visit Leaders should ensure that those in a position of parental authority understand that an equivalent to DBS checks is unlikely to be available in countries visited by young people from the UK. It is therefore critical that Visit Leaders ensure that the overseas host school, or agency, has a vetting procedure in place to assess the suitability of home placements. If the host school or placing agency does not have appropriate measures in place for carrying out checks to ensure the health, safety and welfare of exchange or home stay pupils, the Visit Leader should seek further assurances and/or reconsider whether the visit should take place.

Even though remote supervision is at the heart of a host family placement, the Visit Leader retains full responsibility for the young people and should consider the following questions:

- Have the School's expectations been discussed with the counterpart leader as to what type of activities the host family might like to offer the pupils?

- Has there been a careful matching up of families and pupils for gender, age, diet, allergies, religious belief etc.?
- Has the host establishment confirmed the families as suitable and is there a hosting agreement form that includes:
 - a question about criminal convictions or other contra-indicators
 - the suitability and privacy of sleeping and toilet arrangements
 - ensuring that family activities fall within the scope of parental consent
 - ensuring the safety and well-being of the pupils during travel whilst with the host family
- In case it is necessary to move a young person at short notice, are contingency plans in place?
- Are pupils and host families aware of a 24 hour contact number and are they fully briefed as to procedures should problems arise?
- Will Visit Leaders have daily contact with all pupils, and do pupils have an agreed 'keyword' that they can use which means 'I want you to visit me immediately'?
- Will pupils have access to a phone or mobile phone to call or send text messages to their establishment staff?
- Have pupils and their parents/guardians been briefed about personal safety, and have they been issued with written guidance on this topic?
- Will contact be made with the host family before the visit – letters, emails, Skype, Face Time are examples of ways by which children and parents can familiarise themselves with their host family.
- ensuring that the School Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct has been agreed

If there is no hosting agreement form the Visit Leader should offer use of the *EVOSA Exchange or Home Stay Form (away) (EV3a/b)*

The Visit leader should ensure that feedback and review is built into the exchange plan. This should involve the pupils, the parents, host families, the leaders and the partner organisations. This can help with the celebration of success, as well as feeding in to the planning and risk-benefit assessments for future visits. Any significant issues should be shared with the EVC and Head.

Hosting pupils from another school

A reciprocal visit from another school should mirror the care and welfare taken for an outgoing visit. The Visit Leader should provide the Visiting Leader with the same expected information.

The School believes that where parents have indicated that they consent to the suitability of the selection process that places their child with the volunteer host family, this arrangement can be regarded as in a family or personal relationship and not regulated activity. As of September 2018, the statutory document "Keeping Children Safe in Education" requires that all adults over the age of 18 in a household hosting an exchange student are subject to a DBS check.

Though the School understands its duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure that visiting pupils are placed in appropriate homes. As such, an *EVOSA Exchange or Home Stay Form (home)* is completed.

10.3 Using a tour operator for visits abroad

It is wise to take full advantage of a reputable tour operator. Ensure there is protection of payments made through financial bonding (ABTA, ATOL, etc.)

What to expect from a tour operator:

Before any contract, information about:

- passport and visa requirements
- health requirements and formalities
- the payment arrangements, including dates and cancellation conditions

Provision of information 'in good time' about:

- travel times, places and stops along the way
- particulars of any travel accommodation, e.g. cabins, berths, compartments
- name, address and telephone number of the local contact
- how to contact members of the party
- any optional insurance policies

The contract should have the following elements:

- destinations and periods of stay
- means, characteristics and categories of transport and dates, times and points of departure and arrival
- accommodation details (if used): location, category, degrees of comfort and main features. In European Community countries this should also include its compliance with the rules of the particular country.
- meals included
- minimum/maximum numbers
- a full itinerary
- any visits, excursions or services included in the price
- the name and address of the organiser, retailers and where appropriate, the insurer
- the price of the package, including whether the price may be revised and an indication of that likelihood. Also an indication of any dues, taxes or fees that may be charged, where they are not included in the price
- details of the payment schedules
- any special requirements that have been agreed
- the complaints procedures and timings

The company is liable to the consumer (the School) for the proper performance of the obligations of the contract. Details need to be given of how payments are to be made and security of funds against loss.

It is good practice for companies to not only provide these details but also to be able to explain or show their safety management systems to do with:

- **Accommodation** – *local standards can mean little*. Ask the company what it does concerning standards, especially covering fire safety, building/structural design and safety, balconies, window openings, swimming pools and hygiene. Issues of security should be addressed – of rooms, entrances and exits. An inspection visit is still the best safeguard, but as a minimum

the name of recent schools (and their Visit Leaders), who have used this accommodation should be sought, they should be contacted and these issues discussed.

- **Coach Transport** – their certification, insurance arrangements, driver regulations, operator histories and maintenance schedules, international breakdown arrangements, replacement coach and time required, seatbelts and coach inspections. They should have a 24-hour contact number, which is available and manned.
- **Inspection visits** – how often do senior representatives of the company visit the accommodation/centre/locality. When was the last time and what was reported, was any action taken.
- **Emergency procedures** – the company must be able to supply 24-hour emergency support. There should be a clearly defined system in place with staff trained in the procedures. Seek reassurance that their 24-hour phone line leads to action and is not an answer phone out of normal hours.
- **You may have some additional requirements** from the tour operator, depending on the visit, the activities involved, the age groups taking part and any other criteria identified in your risk assessments. All reputable tour operators will be able to provide you with the above information, together with any additional information you require, to your satisfaction.

10.4 Accommodation issues

If an offer of cheaper accommodation is made using ‘double’ rooms/beds then there is no regulation preventing children of the same sex sleeping together.

However, very clear information and a choice should be given to children and parents when planning/agreeing such a visit e.g.:

- details of the cost/accommodation advantages.
- details of the cost/accommodation alternatives.
- details of the rooms, the proposed logistics and code of practice.
- details of how pairings and rooms will be formulated and allocated.
- If beds are shared, if bolsters are available.

The Visit Leader needs to consider the potential logistical problems if these ‘raised expectations’ cannot be met:

- Is it possible to give a choice of partner/rooms versus not being able to manage the choices and some ‘disappointed’ children (personal and social aspects).
- Coping with arrangements that do not work.
- Coping with the possible logistics of ‘x’ doubles plus ‘y’ singles, etc.

If, after these and similar considerations it is felt that the option is worth pursuing then there is no reason why it should not be. However, it must be agreed by the Head and have the written consent of the parents.

Whenever possible, pupils should room with peers they know, and careful consideration should be made of who is accommodated in the same room.

10.5 Organising your own visit.

If using a tour operator is not feasible, the Visit Leader may decide to organise the package abroad themselves. This is a considerable undertaking. As well as the essential pre-check system mentioned in the Approval section:

- Ensure the visit and activities are discussed with your Head of School before any commitment is made to children, parents or third parties.
- Those involved need to understand that they must be able to manage and supervise the children in the normal way and act as would a reputable company.
- The protection of payments will need to be considered carefully.
- What must be noted is that the school/group/Visit Leader is entering into a contract with the parents. They are then liable to the parent for the performance of that contract. Should something go wrong they would be obliged to set things in order.
- Checking the scope of the visit is very significant in this decision process.
- The Visit Leader needs to consider if they can provide the same level of service and knowledge as that of an experienced tour operator and their local contacts, in particular:
 - knowledge of local places of interest and value
 - knowledge of local customs, regulations and laws
 - knowledge of local culture
 - knowledge of local medical and support services

The School follows risk assessment and management guidance from OEAP on specialist visits and activities such as:

- Farm visits
- Heritage visits
- Museums and galleries
- Visitor attractions
- Adventurous activities
- Swimming pools
- Group Safety at Water Margins
- Natural water bathing
- Field studies
- Exchanges and home stays
- Snow sport visits
- Overseas visits
- Provider led study and sports tours

For more guidance see:

EV2c- Visits Abroad Extra Planning Checklist, EV3a – Exchange or Home Stay Form (home), EV3b- Exchange or Home Stay Form (away), EV4 – Provider or Centre Questionnaire

11. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS AND PUPILS

Parents should be kept informed of any visit or off-site activity planned (simply defined as outside the school or school gates). Communication with parents must be clear, so that questions or queries can be answered.

11.1 Parental consent

Parents' informed consent (where applicable) to a visit should be based on a good understanding of the aim, nature and programme of the visit. They should also be aware of the commitment they are making and the expectations of themselves and their child(ren), so that they can exercise their right to give or withhold consent.

Routine visits / off-site activities

Information on routine local visits and activities, e.g. swimming, off-site games, sports fixtures, church should be given at the start of the school year, term or session, via a communication that is known to successfully reach home e.g. the Thomas's Learning Platform (TLP), School Bulletin, the Pupil Planner / Datelist. Parents are therefore informed that their child(ren) will be involved and can ask for further details, if required.

One-off or occasional visits / activities in school time

For one off or occasional visits or activities within walking distance of the school, via minibus or other means of local travel e.g. visits to local venues for drama and music concerts, Heads may decide that separate communication and consent is required with specific details being given to parents by letter nearer the time.

Unusual or non-regular visits / activities

Parents must be informed and signed consent is required when the visit / activity:

- is outside the school day or normal working times
- requires travel or transport away from the site
- is a "one off" visits
- means an extra charge will be made
- involves overnight accommodation
- is an adventurous activity
- is overseas

11.2 Medical information and special needs information

The Head must ensure that staff who take groups of children off-site have to hand, and in advance, current information on the management of:

- medical conditions, e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, asthma, allergies, etc.
- special needs e.g. learning or behavioural difficulties
- dietary requirements

This is an important process and information must be current. It is the parents' responsibility to inform the School of any changes to medical, special needs or dietary requirements as soon as possible during the school year to enable the information to be updated on the School's database.

For significant ventures, such as residential or overseas trips, a specific “Medical Information and Parental Consent Form” may be necessary to confirm that all is satisfactory or to raise issues on the inclusion or care of the child.

This information should be available to the Visit Leader and any other staff who require it and the venture can be assessed for the risks and control measures put into place. These may involve establishing access to appropriate first-aid knowledge or medical treatment, before decisions about inclusion can be made.

Liaison over food and its content may involve the parents, children, leaders and residential or day centre staff. It is essential that all are fully aware of any condition and its triggers. Communication with third party providers and centres is particularly important. It is also important that specific agreements are made and not a general ‘we can cope with a variety of diets’ or similar.

11.3 Digital Images and consent.

In many off-site activities, the schools may wish to use photographs and moving images to demonstrate the successes of the visit to record and evaluate what went on for others within the school community to see.

Photography/filming is permitted in almost all cases, so long as it is not for public broadcast or being undertaken by someone not connected with the school. Any images taken will follow the procedure for usage as outlined in the ICT (Acceptable Use) Policy.

Members of staff on a trip may set up a “WhatsApp” group for the purposes of communication and sharing of information and digital images via Thomas’s social media sites in accordance with the procedures set out in our Personal Devices and Photography Policy. Any details should be deleted from these telephones and the group disbanded on the completion of the trip.

During the course of school visits, the School will strive as far as humanly possible to comply with parental requests, but cannot absolutely guarantee compliance. A professional judgement should be made by the Visit Leader over whether people in the images concerned are appropriately dressed, or the action shown is clearly demonstrating good and not poor or indifferent practice.

11.4 Pupil communication

The following questions represent the type of information the Visit Leader should provide pupils who will be taking part in the visit / activity. The Visit Leader must also ensure that the pupils clearly understand what they have to do in any situation. This list may need to be adapted to suit the age and ability of the group, and its aims and purposes.

Day visit:

- Where am I going?
- What is the aim of the visit?
- How does the visit fit into my education?
- What equipment do I need to bring along?
- What group am I in?

- Do I have a particular buddy?
- Who is my group leader?
- Who is the Visit Leader?
- Do I understand the School's Visits and Off-site Activities Behaviour Policy?
- What has been agreed as a "Code of Conduct" for:
 - Behaviour
 - Dress/clothing
 - Equipment
 - Money
 - Food and/or sweets
 - Personal items (mobile phone, computer, smart watches, hand held games etc)
- Incident and emergency action:
 - What do I do if I am separated from my group?
 - What do I do if I am worried about my safety?
 - Are there any special agreements I need to know about?
 - Has the Visit or Group Leader have any medicines I might need for the visit / activity?

Additional items for a residential visit:

- What is the name and address of our centre/accommodation?
- What is the telephone number?
- Which room am I in?
- Where is the staff accommodation / base in case I need to contact them?
- What will I be doing in my free time?
- Who will I be sharing a room with?
- What are the night time procedures?
- When will I be given/informed of the Provider / Centre code of conduct for the trip:
 - House/accommodation rules
 - Movement around the building?
 - Access to rooms?
 - Contacting staff?
 - Meal and meeting times?
 - Boundaries and code of conduct
 - Night time procedures
 - Emergency procedures (fire, incident, meeting points)

A Pupil Checklist can be used as a way of giving information to the pupils and involving them in the process of health and safety on the visit or off-site activity.

11.5 PTA communication

The PTA and form reps can be used:

- to disseminate information about a forthcoming visit / activity
- to recruit volunteers if required
- to help gather feedback after the visit / activity has taken place.

For more guidance see:

EV7a – Information to Parents Checklist, EV7b – Example Parent Letter, EV8 – Information to Pupils Checklist, EV9 – EVOSA Behaviour Policy

12. SAFEGUARDING

All children have the right to be protected from harm. Educational visits and activities provide a stimulating learning, environmental and, in many cases a different and more relaxed or interactive environment; where the children and leaders need to feel comfortable with the enhanced or personal communications that may result. In addition they need to understand where and how physical contact is realistic, due to the nature of many of the activities undertaken.

It is important that all concerned feel confident that their professional judgements are correct, and by putting simple and straightforward principles into practice, they will be taking appropriate action. Members of staff acting in loco parentis on school trips are strongly advised only to go into pupils' bedrooms in pairs in the safeguarding interests of both child and adult.

12.1 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All members of school staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. It is essential that the school obtains a satisfactory disclosure for any volunteers or others who will have unsupervised access to children. The Head of HR at Ringwood should be contacted with full details of any non-staff helpers who will be accompanying the trip and are likely to have unsupervised access to children. The details required will be full name, any previous names, date of birth and address. This information is required a minimum of six weeks before the visit.

The School understands its duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure that overseas students are placed in appropriate homes. As such, an Exchange or Home Stay Form is completed. In addition all adults over the age of 18 in a household hosting an exchange student are subject to a DBS check. This will need to be completed before the exchange takes place and it is the responsibility of the Visit Leader to issue the necessary forms.

12.2 Visits within the UK

The Visit Leader will be responsible for co-ordinating any safeguarding children issues. They will have a full knowledge of the Schools Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and will refer to this and follow the procedures where required.

The Visit Leader will inform their Head of School if they have any cause for concern. The Head of school will implement the Schools Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and inform the necessary agencies e.g. social services.

12.3 Reporting to the police on visits abroad

All serious offences e.g. sexual offences, serious violent offences, drug offences, arson, criminal damage, serious theft, must be reported to the local police in the country concerned. Where this is not possible straight away, it should be done as soon as possible.

If an insurance claim is made following a criminal offence, the insurers will require the offence to have been reported to the local police. There is some discretion for the Visit Leader as to whether less serious offences should be reported to the Police. The major considerations would be:

- In the first instance, can the Head and the Principals be contacted and their views ascertained as soon as practicable?

- Can the views of the Police Child Protection Unit be established? What is their advice?
- Can the views of the parents or person with parental responsibility be established? They need to be contacted about the incident as soon as is practicable. They will have a view, but will also be looking for advice.
- Can the views of the child be established? Do they have sufficient maturity, intelligence and understanding to comprehend the events?
- The welfare of the child may dictate that the professional judgement of the leader may override parental or the child's wishes.
- In context, can clear alternative actions be taken and issues satisfactorily dealt with?

The Visit Leader must give the care of their group and its individual members the highest priority. In all circumstances, the Visit Leader's professional judgement will need to be exercised.

See also: [Thomas's School Specific Critical Incident Policies](#)
 [Thomas's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#)

13. **FIRST AID**

The Schools Health and Safety Policy ensures that the School, as far as possible, is an accident-free environment. The same standards apply off-site, at all visits and activities.

The School must provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel at its locations to enable employees, pupils and visitors to be given first aid. The provision of a first-aider does not prevent accidents, but is an important part of the control measures that follow risk assessment.

Decisions about the deployment of first aiders on visits and activities are based on risk assessments, which consider:

- the hazards in any environment and the risks they present.
- any generic policies in place.
- the group and its needs (including medical).
- the activities to be undertaken.
- the transport arrangements.
- the remoteness of any location and the ability to summon support.
- the first aid qualifications and experience available throughout the visit.
- the history of any incidents or accidents in similar contexts.
- cover is proportional to the risk, rather than to group numbers or similar criteria.

A first-aider (or another member of staff) should not attempt to give first aid for which they have not been trained.

13.1 **The First Aid kit**

The **basic minimum** First Aid kit, which must be taken on all visits and ventures is as follows:

- A leaflet giving general advice on first aid.
- 20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes)
- 2 sterile eye pads

- 4 individually wrapped triangular bandages (preferably sterile)
- 6 safety pins
- 6 medium (12cm x 12cm) wrapped, sterile, unmedicated wound dressings.
- 2 large (18cm x 18cm) sterile wrapped, unmedicated wound dressings.
- 1 pair of disposable gloves
- individually wrapped moist cleaning wipes.

This basic minimum kit must be topped up with the requirements for the activity, group or environment in which it may have to be used. This should be part of the detailed planning process.

13.2 The Visit Leader's kit

The Visit Leaders kit is entirely separate from the First Aid Kit and may contain individual group members' medication and other relevant first aid equipment. The Visit Leader must ensure that staff receive appropriate training and instruction on administering individual group members' medication. If the pupils are split into smaller groups for activities while on the visit, then the group leader will carry the pupil's medication and a First Aid Kit.

See also: [Thomas's First Aid Policy](#)

14. RECORDING AND REPORTING ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

All accidents and incidents to children, staff and volunteers must be recorded, no matter how minor. Any serious injuries must not only be recorded but also reported to the person nominated as RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). This person will normally be the School's Health and Safety Coordinator.

The types of injuries that must follow these procedures are:

- fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs or toes
- amputations
- any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction of sight
- any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs
- serious burns (including scalding) which
 - cover more than 10% of the body
 - causes significant damage to the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs
- any scalping requiring hospital treatment
- any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space which:
 - leads to hypothermia or heat induced illness
 - requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

In the case of a serious injury, the parents, the Head, Principals and Head of School should be informed as soon as possible. On return to the school, the accident must be recorded in the School Accident Book, and the Form Tutor and Health and Safety Coordinator informed. A follow-up call should be made to the parents to find out the prognosis. A note must be placed in the Visit/Venture document file to ensure that the risk is known by the Visit Leader, prior to the next visit to that particular location.

14.1 Recording the accident

Any accident that occurs requiring first aid, doctor, hospital or other medical attention must be entered into the Activity Centre's (or site's) accident record file. The Visit Leader must ensure they know where the file is located and ensure entries are made, where applicable. The Visit Leader must also record it in their records on behalf of the School

14.2 RIDDOR/ Insurance

If it is believed an accident could involve insurance liability, the school insurance brokers must be contacted on the day of the occurrence. Contact the Personnel Manager at Ringwood with full details of the incident, so that the Health and Safety Executive and the school's insurance brokers can be informed without delay.

Of these accidents, any that are reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) have an additional HSE Form F2508 to complete and fax to HSE in Caerphilly, as soon as possible. The Visit Leader must discuss this with the Centre Manager.

14.3 Reporting a 'Near Miss' (or a 'Near Hit!')

The Visit Leader must ensure that a "Near Miss" form is completed for any incident that occurs that did not result in actual injury, but had the potential for an injury or critical incident. The reason for this is so that areas of risk can be identified and addressed immediately. The information must also be made available to other Visit Leaders on return to the School, to assist them in risk management.

The Visit Leader must ensure that a Review Meeting is held with their colleagues and Centre staff, as soon as possible, to discuss what action needs to be taken.

The Visit Leaders must decide whether any additional information may potentially be required for their trips. Alternatively, a comprehensive report could be attached to this form to provide further relevant information.

14.4 Reporting the accident or 'near miss' at School

The Visit Leader must, as soon as reasonably possible after they have dealt with the immediate circumstances of the incident, inform the Head. This is essential so that the Head can give the Visit Leader guidance, deal with the situation at the School location and inform the child's parents, or the emergency contact of the member of staff, whichever is applicable. There is a link to complete the H&S Accident forms on the HSE website.

14.5 Evaluation of the activity/venture

The Visit Leader must arrange for a review meeting to be held on their return, with all interested parties, so that the activity/venture can be evaluated against the original aims and objectives.

See also:

H & S Manual [Incident Reporting Policy](#)
HSE [Online reporting RIDDOR form](#)

15. CRITICAL INCIDENTS

A critical incident can be defined as any event that is disruptive beyond our typical coping abilities and which threatens the safety or health of a member or members of the group and the planned visit. Examples are:

- a serious accident or fatality within the group
- a traffic accident
- sudden illness / sickness
- a lost pupil
- assaults
- terrorism
- natural disasters

In the event of a critical incident the Visit Leader and accompanying staff must:

1. Assess the situation.
2. Protect the group from further injury or danger.
3. Render first aid or other service as appropriate.
4. Call Emergency Services (999 or 112) (Europe 112) as appropriate stating:
 - the nature of the emergency
 - your name, address and telephone number
 - the location and nature of the incident
 - the names of the individuals involved
 - the condition of those involved and where they are presently located
5. It is probable that leaders, supervising staff and children will be in a state of shock, therefore:
 - remove the remainder of the group to some secure accommodation and place under the care of staff able to protect them from further harm
 - calm and comfort children, and staff, and arrange for their evacuation
 - if necessary request the police to assist
6. Contact the Head or designated base contact at the school location as soon as possible. Provide full details of the incident. They will advise and assist the leader in taking the appropriate course of action.
7. Do not allow group members to telephone home until contact has been made with the Head of School.
8. Agree with the Head or designated base contact who will contact which parents affected, and call as soon as the facts are established.
9. Retain all equipment involved in an unaltered condition.
10. Do not allow anyone to see any group member without an independent witness being present.
11. No-one, unless they are in a relevant official capacity, has the right to see anyone who does not wish to see them.
12. Do not make any statements to the press/media or allow anyone else to make statements other than expressions of sympathy.
13. Refer all press/media to the Principal, Mr Tobyn Thomas. Contact No: 07818 063 579.

See also: [Thomas's School Specific Critical Incident Policies](#)

16. TRANSPORT

Transport arrangements are an essential part of school visits. The Schools own school minibuses and list of approved coach companies (available from the Schools Transport Department) provide most of the local off-site road transport services. However, where off-site visits and ventures involve long distance travel by road, it may be necessary for the Visit Leader to contact other coach companies. (Please contact the Schools Transport Department in the first instance.)

16.1 Risk assessing transport arrangements

The transport arrangements are an essential part of the Visit Leader's risk assessment considerations. This is particularly true where long distances are concerned. Good operating procedures and management of transport is essential, as is choosing a reputable and known company. Use recommended or previously used companies. Request details of:

- schools that have used their services. Contact the schools for references.
- their public liability insurance cover and accident record.
- their drivers qualifications.
- the maintenance record and age of their vehicles.

Consideration should be given to what action would be taken if a breakdown or long delay were to occur, as well as incident and emergency procedures.

16.2 Public transport

Common sense operating procedures should be considered and managed by everyone:

- Pre-collect fares for payment unless this is part of the educational objective.
- Appropriate supervision should meet the ratios given in that section. Staff should be well spaced out along the bus or train and both up and down stairs where applicable.
- A code of behaviour must be agreed prior to travelling and be realistic in use, including noise levels, movement, respect for other passengers, eating and drinking.
- Regular head counts are needed, in particular just before and after getting on and off.
- Any equipment and personal baggage taken should be stored carefully and out of the way of others.
- Supervise getting off buses, tubes and trains particularly carefully and ensure that the bus has stopped moving.
- Staff must adopt the procedure that one teacher goes into the transport first, and another enters last, with the other teachers interspersed to avoid pupils being left behind
- Meeting/collection points must be able to cope safely with the age, experience and number concerned and not present a hazard, such as being close to the road edge.

16.3 Coach travel

Buses and coaches should only be booked from reputable companies. The Visit Leader must ensure:

- all coaches are required to be fitted with seat belts when carrying children. The use of seatbelts is to be maintained by the whole group including Leaders and staff.
- that seatbelts and lap restraints are in use, particularly at the start of any journey and following any stops.

- supervising staff should be spread throughout the coach and also use their seatbelts. Where seatbelts are fitted, the number of passengers (of any age) cannot exceed the number of seats, or usable seatbelts (ie if they are broken, the seat is unusable).

It is also sensible to:

- note the position of the emergency doors and exits and ask for them to be checked.
- make sure everyone knows what to do in an emergency.
- sit supervising staff close to the emergency exits, by the driver (to avoid distractions) and at other seats where necessary.
- agree times for food and drink on the journey and have a system for collecting litter.
- plan comfort breaks.
- select good meeting/collection points for getting on and off. Be aware of the hazards of coach parks and service stations. Try to park next to a pedestrian area or easily supervised location.
- when taking comfort breaks, request the driver to stop as close as possible to the service station amenities to avoid the group having to cross large open car parking spaces.
- make sure pupils know the meeting point, and always have a member of staff on duty there.
- ensure pupils know to go into public areas, including loos, in groups of twos or threes.
- have regular head counts

16.4 Long coach journeys and travelling abroad by coach

It is essential to check that the company concerned has appropriate experience and coaches for these ventures. Where the tour operator organises the coach travel, similar reassurances should be made. Use a recommended or previously used company. Ask for details of a recent user and contact them.

Some of the issues to raise:

- modern long-distance coaches are used, with seatbelts and full facilities: toilets, videos, etc.
- drivers are appropriately recruited eg checks on criminal records, employment history.
- driver names are clear and the regulations about driving hours and similar are known.
- the number of seats is suitable, not just for numbers but for storage of luggage and equipment especially for ski holidays and Music tours.
- similar journeys with considerable luggage will require extra storage, above and beyond the normal, eg extra empty seats.
- do not accept comments such as 'only mid-sized cases can be brought on a ski trip'.
- drivers need to be adequately trained for snow conditions and coaches appropriately equipped.
- driver competency and general attitude should be monitored. Whilst there are many good drivers, leaders should make their own judgements and intervene where necessary. The duty of care to the group is paramount. Any concerns should be raised early.
- be aware if specialist or agreed coaches are replaced at short notice. The comfort and safety of the group on long journeys is essential.
- Where the school group is asked to join with another group by the tour operator, the Visit Leader must make every effort to find out who the other group are and to agree joint behaviour and operative procedures. (However, this must be avoided wherever possible, as

sub-letting places on the coach to others could compromise the indemnity and insurance arrangements.)

16.5 The Use of private cars

Private cars **must not be used** to transport pupils. They are not covered under the schools insurance.

16.6 The use of minibuses driven by members of staff

Under the School's insurance Thomas's members of staff are permitted to drive minibuses to transport pupils providing the following criteria are met:

- They are aged between 21 and 70
- They hold a full EU driving licence
- Their driving licence lists the required category (NB: D1 minibus category allows for minibuses up to 16 passenger seats, Thomas's minibuses currently have 22 passenger seats)
- They have no more than 6 points on their licence
- They have permission from the insurance policy holder – Thomas's London Day Schools. In practical terms they should have written permission from their Head.

16.7 Air travel

Taking a group through an airport, customs and then flying takes careful planning and preparation. Considerations are as follows:

- Limits on luggage on and inside the plane need to be planned.
- Constraints on what can be carried means that, for children, items such as batteries, scissors and aerosols may be banned. they need to be warned.
- Special meals or diets need to be ordered in advance.
- In-flight activity can be made available and is recommended.
- A member of cabin crew assigned to look after a group's or a particular child's needs.
- Wheelchair services need to be booked well in advance.
- Movement, noise levels, eating, etc., all need to be part of an agreed code of conduct.
- Movement around airports can be problematic. the direct supervision strategies should be consulted and agreements made for meeting places, head counts and reporting numbers to the Visit Leader.

16.8 Rail travel

Major considerations are as follows:

- Entry to and exit from the particular stations need to be planned in order to keep the group together, in particular when moving through busy locations.
- Platform waiting time should be kept to a minimum and this may require a suitable waiting area nearby being established.
- Reserved seats and carriages are important for supervision and keeping the group together.
- A code of conduct and good discipline are essential, given the potential dangers.
- Keep the group away from platform edges (use the lines provided).
- Always wait until the train stops and then provide a signal to move forward or disembark.
- Do not allow the group to touch carriage doors or lean out of the windows when the train is moving.

- Take extra care where there is a gap between coach and platform (some children may need assistance).
- Luggage should be stored carefully and a quick check made by the leader.
- Make the group aware of simple hazards or issues: hot drinks, litter, toilet use.
- Agree a code of conduct to cover movements, noise levels, respect for other passengers, eating and drinking, as well as general behaviour.

16.9 The Underground

Managing the overall situation is difficult and should not be entered into without thorough planning and briefing. This mode of transport must not be contemplated for large groups. Points for consideration:

- A code of conduct (as above) and operating procedures need to be carefully agreed, in particular for those who are not acquainted with the system. It should be described and illustrated. The stations are noisy and crowded, and not like other railway stations.
- The schools operating procedures will dictate how, where and when they will respond to leader directions and directives.
- The children must know what to do if something goes wrong e.g. children boarding the wrong train.
- Purchase tickets in advance.
- Avoid rush hours.
- Have very small groups, each with a designated leader.
- Take care on escalators or lifts – supervision must be direct and effective.
- Move from one designated waiting point to the next designated waiting point, ie more secure locations.
- Practise good platform control and operating procedures (see rail travel above).
- Brief the children and young people on the route and what is likely to happen.

16.10 Ferries, Boats and Ships

The generic guidance below needs to be applied to the group concerned, in accordance with their age and experience, and the leader's expectation of their behaviour:

- A code of conduct and operating procedures must be agreed and everyone should understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Supervision strategies should start with small groups of children under the care of a specific leader, these leaders in turn reporting their head counts and other information through the next tier of supervision to the Group Leader.
- A group base should be established and booked with the company
- The more exclusive to the group that this can be made, the better
- Movement from this base should only be by agreement with the leader concerned
- Out-of-bounds areas should be established and each group walked through the boundaries set and locations to be used
- The Visit Leader or their representative must always be in a known place, normally the group base.
- The vessel's communications system for messages should be known and the group should introduce themselves on arrival to key personnel (having pre-booked and discussed their needs).
- Everyone should know what to do and where to go in an emergency.

- Access to alcohol is possible and needs to be assertively forbidden.
- The key systems to be known:
 - emergency siren system
 - muster station procedures
 - that a member of the crew will take charge
- It is often possible to have a video shown to cover this and other features and procedures.
- Establishing security overnight is very important if cabins are used.
- The use of such vessels by well-managed groups where everyone knows their roles and responsibilities will result in a successful trip.
- Poor behaviour must be addressed immediately.

17. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR VISITS THAT ARE CHARGEABLE

The charges made to parents to visits and ventures, should not exceed the costs incurred by the schools.

17.1 Determining the costs of a visit

The cost areas to be considered may include:

- the charges of any commercial provider.
- the transport components:
 - rail, ferry, flights.
 - bus, minibus, coach.
- accommodation, board and lodging.
- staffing and instruction. This includes costs at your location, if required to make the event happen. Staffing costs cannot include those already employed to provide staffing or instruction, but can include extra costs such as supply staff to replace any extra staff required.
- the costs for the Visit Leader and accompanying staff to supervise the group.
- equipment hire.
- insurance (basic and top-up).
- entry charges to facilities.
- pocket money can also be collected.
- pre-visit costs.
- any free places offered by Centres should be taken into account.

- For residential visits a float should cover:
 - ice creams, prizes and resources bought on the visit and must be calculated into the total budget. Receipts are required.
 - staff teas and coffees and meals during the visit and must be calculated into the total budget. Receipts are not required, but confirmation of amount handed over to each staff member should be given to Ringwood on return.
 - emergency money for the proportionate to the number of children and adults on the visit. For emergencies only, handed back at the end of the visit, with receipts for the money spent.

17.2 Financing

It is necessary to establish that the visit or venture represents value for money:

- Are costs reasonable?
- Is it within the scope of the majority of families?
- Will the parents be willing to pay?

Consider and include any other costs that may apply to your specific visit.

18. APPENDICES

EV1	Proposal, Approval and Authorisation Form
EV2a	Visit or Activity Planning Checklist
EV2b	Woodland Adventure & Young Explorers activities with ESOC checklist
EV2c	Visits Abroad Extra Planning Checklist
EV2d	Thomas's Daheim visits checklist
EV3a	Exchange or Home Stay Form (home)
EV3b	Exchange or Home Stay Form (away)
EV4	Provider or Centre Questionnaire
EV5a	Risk Assessment Form
EV5b	Risk Management Guidance
EV6	Transport and Catering Booking Form
EV6A	Transport and Catering Amendment/Cancellation Form
EV7a	Information to Parents Checklist
EV7b	Example of Parent Letter
EV8	Information to Pupils Checklist
EV9	EVOSA Behaviour Policy
EV10	Evaluation Form
EV11	Non-disclosure guidance for outside venues, day and residential trips
EV12	Non-disclosure agreement for visiting contractors
EV12A	Non-disclosure agreement for visiting photographers
EV13	Conflict De-escalation Techniques
EV14	Parent Volunteer Guidance for Trips

For staff – relevant School policies can be found on the Thomas's Learning Platform (TLP) under: Resources / Staff Resources / School Policies

All forms (as listed above) can be found on the TLP under: Resources / Staff Resources / Staff Forms / EVOSA Appendices

For parents – relevant School policies can be found on the Thomas's Learning Platform (TLP) under: Resources / Parent Resources / Parent Information / School Policies

19. REFERENCES AND GUIDES

This Policy has been informed by:

DfE Guidance 'Health and safety; responsibilities and duties for schools (November 2018)

DfE Guidance 'Health and safety on educational visits (November 2018)

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel

The following websites are seen as recommended starting points for planning safe, enjoyable and educationally worthwhile experiences.

Outdoor Education Advisory Panel

Up-to-date guidance, endorsed by the HSE: <http://oeapng.info/>

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

- Tackling the health and safety myths: www.hse.gov.uk
- Online RIDDOR form: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm>
- Guidance to the Licensing Authority on the Adventure Activity Licensing Regulations (1996) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/>
- Specific Advice on School Visits: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.htm>
- Five Steps to Risk Assessment: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>
- The safe operations of the ski slopes: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg371.pdf>
- HSE publications – Tel: 01787 881165
- HSE's Infoline – Tel: 08701 545500

Department for Education

Departmental advice on health and safety for schools:

www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.htm

DfES Guides are free from DfES Publications – Tel: 0845 6022260

Planning Visits

- Educational Visits and Journeys (NASUWT) 1994 Tel: 0121 453 6150
- National Education Union (old ATL) www.atl.org.uk/advice-and-resources/publications/taking-students-site
- ROSPA www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/school-college-safety/school-visits-guide.pdf

Types of Visit

- Farm visits <http://www.farmsforschools.org.uk/>
- Quality, Safety and Sustainability – Field Study Centres – A Code of Practice (National Association of Field Studies Officers) Tel: 01780 782386
- Beach Visits: RNLI Beach Safety <https://rnli.org/safety/beach-safety>

Visits abroad

- Health and Safety Advice to Travellers <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>
- How to obtain a European Health Insurance Card <https://www.europeanhealthcard.org.uk/>

General

- The British Activity Providers Association <http://www.thebapa.org.uk/>
- The Royal Life Saving Society UK <http://www.lifesavers.org.uk/>
- The Royal Geographical Society (with the British Institute of British Geographers) Expedition Advisory Centre provides advice, information and training to anyone planning an overseas expedition. – Tel: 020 7591 3000 <http://www.rgs.org/>

- Transport for London provides free transport for school groups on the underground, buses, Thameslink and the Docklands Light Railway. The advice line for the scheme is 0343 222 1000 and the website is www.tfl.gov.uk/schoolparty. The general travel advice line can offer information on route planning and station layouts. Apart from its commitment to the safety of its passengers, Transport for London does not offer specific advice on health and safety for school groups, but refers them to 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' and HSE risk assessment guidance.
- 'The Canal and River Trust' website: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/>

20. EVOSA POLICY REVISION

This policy will be reviewed annually and/or in response to legislative change and factors identified from incidents and/or near misses			
Created: September 1999	By:	Mal Hall, Deputy Head, Thomas's Battersea	
Reviewed May 2008	By:	Margaret Tuck, Director of Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely rewritten
Rewritten: November 2014	By:	Mal Hall, Assistant Head, Thomas's Battersea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewritten with links to new updates and links to new bodies' guidance throughout policy (<i>OEAPNG, DoE</i>) • Assistant Visit Leader role added • Risk Management updated • New guidance and structure for day and residential visits planning • Links to School Policies added • Appendices rewritten, renumbered & restructured
Reviewed April 2017	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal, Trip Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reformatted • Outdoor Learning/Daheim details added • New School Management system details added
Reviewed January 2018	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal, Trip Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDA agreements added
Reviewed January 2019	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal, Trip Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on bringing sweets and electronic devices added • Appendices 13 and 14 added • References updated • DBS for host families added • Staff as a parent policy amended
Latest Review: January 2020		Joanna Copland, Vice Principal, Trip Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction simplified • Guidance on smartwatches and games added • Gap student support added

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online RIDDOR form added• End date for EHIC added• Minibus advice added• Appendices 11A and 12A added
Next Review: January 2021	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal, Trip Leaders	