

# The SENAD Group

## Section 6 Off Site Activities and Holidays

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## Offsite Activities and Holidays

### Scope of this policy and terminology

The term 'Group Leader' means the most senior person or experienced member of staff or the person organising or planning the activity or delegated to supervise/manage the activity or transport the, e.g. the driver. This guidance draws upon '*Health and safety: advice on legal duties and powers for local authorities, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies*'. (Feb. 2014)

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

recommended guidance The Outdoor Education Advisers Panel National Guidance (OEAPNG) for educational visits

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/healthandsafety/educationalvisits/?skip=1&lang=en>

### Introduction

This procedure provides general advice on the planning and organisation of holidays, outdoor activities, such as educational visits, holidays or days out. The generic term 'Activity' is used to cover all these situations. It does not provide procedures or guidance for specific activities such as hill walking. Staff must refer to other relevant procedures and guidance where necessary (also see Section 2 -217 Risk Assessment, 217.6 Risk Assessment for Activity or Visit).

**The Risk Assessment Form 217.6 Risk Assessment for Activity or visit, must be used for all off site activities and visits. All overnight Risk Assessments must be approved via the [Notify@senadgroup.com](mailto:Notify@senadgroup.com) link. Please allow a reasonable amount of time for the relevant SENAD Manager to review and respond.**

However, the principles of this procedure apply to other types of holiday, outdoor or 'off site' activities such as Home visits or transporting young people/adults to and from court.

### Planning and Authorisation

The following should be read/applied 'as appropriate', depending on the type of activity/trip. The general principle is that activities and trips must be properly planned and authorised, even 'short trips' to the shops. However, it is not suggested that it is necessary to fulfil all the arrangements listed, unless they are appropriate to the activity/trip. Generic assessment may be completed for routine trips, for example trips to shops, doctors, dentists etc.

If in doubt, staff should consult a Senior Member of Staff or the Group Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager.

It is acknowledged that there is a wide variation in the type of activities undertaken with young people/adults. The overall principle for any activity is that staff must conduct Risk Assessments. The following is provided as guidance, which should be adopted as necessary to each activity undertaken:

1. The manager or someone delegated to act on the Manager's behalf, must oversee and authorise all activities/trips. As soon as it is known an activity or series of activities are likely, the manager must be consulted and should oversee and approve all arrangements, or delegate another person to act on the Manager's behalf. All arrangements must be recorded and signed off by the Manager in consultation with relevant Social Workers and parents/family.

The Manager must ensure that appropriate written consents are obtained. Where consent is not given, the Social Worker may need to seek legal advice as to whether the activity can go ahead.

If the young person/adult is travelling overnight, a copy of the consent should be carried by staff. If the young person/adult is travelling abroad, the Manager must consult the Social Worker to obtain a passport.

2. Where a series or range of activities are necessary (the transporting of young people/adult to and from school, a series of supervised contacts or the undertaking of routine activities), the arrangements should be agreed with the Manager in advance, and a date set for the review of the arrangements.
3. Unless otherwise agreed with a Manager, young people/residents must be supervised by staff with appropriate levels of experience and qualifications. It is the Leaders responsibility to check the qualifications are valid and in date. Where only one member of staff is taking part, it is always assumed that person is in charge or responsible for the activity. Where more than one staff is taking part, one person must be designated Group Leader
4. It is the responsibility of staff to make the Group Leader aware of any physical or mental health condition which may impact on the activities planned / holiday (these may include fear of heights, fast rides, white knuckle rides etc.

5. The Group Leader (or person in charge) and other staff may be given other responsibilities/roles as necessary. There are responsibilities must be overseen by the Group Leader and approved by the Manager.
6. A member of staff should be designated as 'in charge' or as the Group Leader. The Group Leader is responsible for all planning, Health and Safety and Contingencies depending on the trip, including duration, location, number of participants, gender and specific individual needs.
7. Consideration must be given to young person/adult's needs and interests, including any medical or healthcare needs. The Group Leader must identify the young people/adults who will be taking part in the activity and consider what arrangements or plans must be made, taking into account of:
  - Care Plan, Placement Plan, Risk Assessment or other relevant plans
  - Recent/relevant events/incidents
  
  - Group dynamics, staff/young person/adult relationships
  - Young person/adult protection issues
  - Violent or other offending behaviour
  - The healthcare or mental health needs of the young people/adults
  - Level associated with drug/alcohol etc. misuse
  - Level of disability and associated special needs
  - Insurance arrangement suitable to the activity
8. A list of staff or other responsible adults who are likely to take part must be drawn up. At least one member of staff should be known to the young people/adults taking part (member of site staff) and there must be one member of staff from each gender for mixed groups. Where this is not possible, the Manager must approve the alternative arrangements, ensuring that the best interests of the young person/adult are accounted for; in these circumstances the staff taking responsibility for the young person/adult must be provided with relevant information about the adult to enable the activity to be undertaken safely. Generally, the staff ratios must be determined by the young people/adults needs.
9. The group leader must ensure the staff ratios are adequate to meet the needs of the young people/adults and the risks posed. For example, where there is a risk of violence, hazardous activities are undertaken, or remote locations are used.

10. Where there is a risk of confrontational or violent behaviour, the group leader/manager must ensure that staff undertaking the activity are suitably trained and are familiar with relevant procedures and guidelines relating to the use of physical intervention and searching.

(See Missing from Care Section 6 Policy **616** and Physical Intervention/Restraint Procedures Section 5 **513** and **515**)

11. The group leader must ensure that parent(s) have been consulted/informed and consents obtained from them (placement plans for looked after young people/adults contain a consent form).
12. If the young person/adult is being moved or transferred to another placement, the group leader must ensure that the young person/adult's belongings/valuables are packed/carried together with an inventory. If this is not possible, the group leader should check that arrangements are in place and reassure the young person/adult.
13. The group leader should ascertain whether the young person/adult will require medication and make suitable arrangements for obtaining, storing, administering and recording the medication (see Administration of Medication Policy 3 - 306).

See section 3 – 306. Administration of Medicines policy and guidance, if the young person/adult is travelling overnight the group leader should carry a copy of the consent from those holding Parental Responsibility.

14. If planning a holiday or outing, the group leader should carry a recent photograph of each young person/adult.
15. All staff must carry ID cards.

## **Insurance**

SENAD maintain suitable Public Liability Insurance. It is important that the staff take the necessary precautions to not invalidate that insurance.

Normally, Young people/adult's holidays are insured fully under the company insurance policy for any holiday within the United Kingdom. Where Young people/adults are undertaking adventurous or hazardous activities provided by a centre or supervised by another company, the group leader must ensure they carry suitable insurance cover (£5m), and that staff who may have unsupervised contact with young people/adults, have had [Disclosure and Barring Service checks](#) (DBS) checks.

Holidays outside of the United Kingdom may require additional insurance for travel. (If in doubt contact Group H & S Manager)

A European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) needs to be applied for prior to the holiday taking place if travelling outside of the United Kingdom.

### **Financial arrangements and meals**

The Group Leader must ensure that suitable funds are available and that arrangements are in place for meals and accommodation.

### **Risk Assessment**

It is not necessary to undertake a separate Risk Assessment for a repeated activity/trip unless there is a significant change. Where a range or series of activities may be undertaken (the transporting of young people/adults to and from school, a series of supervised contacts, the undertaking of routine activities), the manager may approve a Risk Assessment and associated arrangements such as Staffing levels for a period; and then set a date for the review of the assessment/arrangements.

1. The manager or person delegated to oversee the activity must approve a completed risk assessment in advance. Where the activity includes an overnight stay away from a SENAD site the Risk Assessment must be approved by the Central Office team. The risk assessment should be sent through the [Notify@Senadgroup.com](mailto:Notify@Senadgroup.com)
2. A risk assessment for a visit need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. It does not generally require technical formulae or professional health and safety expertise, but specialised information for some visits may be necessary and managers must ensure that the person assessing is competent to do so.
3. A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on an activity should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Young people/adults must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety and protection of all concerned must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained or managed, the activity must not take place.
4. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations as well as those described in Out of School Trip Risk Assessment as described in Section 2 – 217.
  - What are the hazards
  - Whom might they affect

- What safety measures need to be in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level
  - Can the designated group leader put the safety measures in place
  - What steps will be taken in an emergency, including what should happen in the event of the group leader becoming incapacitated, and a backup plan should an alternative location is required in emergency.
5. In undertaking the risk assessment for extra-ordinary trips (e.g. outside the norm for the home/service), the group leader must consult all other staff part and young people/adults who are capable of making informed decisions, record the risk assessment, arrange for it to be seen and signed off by the manager and then provide copies for all staff taking part. One copy must be left with the manager.
6. Frequent activities/visits to local venues such as swimming baths, or where a young person/adult is transported to and from school, may not need a risk assessment for each trip; but the manager must ensure that a risk assessment is completed for the series/range of activities/visits; and a date set for the review of the risk assessment.
7. Alternatively, a risk assessment which has been agreed for a series or range of activities/visits must be reviewed immediately after any information comes to light, or any event/incident occurs which compromises the safety of the young people/adults/staff. In such circumstances, the activities/visits must be suspended until a review has taken place and the manager is satisfied that a suitable new risk assessment has been completed.
8. The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks
- The type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken
  - The location, routes and modes of transport
  - The competence, experience and qualification of the staff
  - Ratios of young people/adults to staff
  - The competence, experience and qualification of the staff together with the physical and mental ability to ensure the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of the young people. Discussion with the staff members going on the trip is essential
  - The healthcare needs of the young people/adults
  - The quality and suitability of available equipment
  - Seasonal conditions, weather and timing

- Emergency procedures
- The need to monitor risks throughout the activity
- The young person/adults background. i.e. offending, mental health issues, disabilities, risk of self harming or suicidal behaviour, health, absconding, young person/adult protection, drugs
- Religious/ Faith, Ethical and Cultural requirements of students and staff

When approving the Risk Assessment and subsequent plan for the activity, the manager should determine what latitude the Group Leader has to change plans, the need for a contingency plan, an 'on call' or backup procedure to provide support, advice or direction to the Group Leader once the activity has started.

Immediately before and during a trip a quick assessment can be made as a Dynamically Developing Situation Risk Assessment. This typically is done using a simple High Medium and Low system based on service users behaviour, weather conditions, road conditions etc. If the Risk is raised for example from low to medium then the trip/ activity continuing should be assessed. Responsibility is placed on the experience of the Group leader to carry out the assessment to ensure the Health and Safety of the Group

### **Prepare the Young People/Adults**

As soon as practicable before the activity is due to start, the Young people/adults should be notified of the following.

- The intention to involve the young people/adults in the planning
- An example of the proposed activity, including its aims and objectives
- Expectations about their behaviour and the implication of poor behaviour
- Appropriate and inappropriate personal contact including sexual activity
- Emergency procedures and safety precautions
- Rendezvous procedures
- Dangers e.g. coastal visits, mountain walking
- What clothing they will require

### **Overseas visits**

This procedure is applicable to overseas trips. Group leaders will ensure that all travellers have valid passports and if necessary, vaccinations. Photocopies of passports will be kept by the Group Leader. Additional guidance can be found on the HSE website for students:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/faqs.htm#school-trips>

Further guidance for Welsh sites can be found by following this link.

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/healthandsafety/educationalvisits/?lang=en>

## **Adventurous Activities**

If in an activity holiday is proposed, the name of organisation, activities involved type of accommodation, address and phone number of organisation should be obtained.

There are a number of checks which must be made on activity holidays.

These must be undertaken by the Group Leader and will include whether the provider is legally required to hold a licence for the activity it offers and if so, that the provider actually holds a licence – for more information see DfES guidance for H & S of pupils on Educational visits. See also Section 7 Policy **706**

## **Organisations registered with the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority**

The Social Worker/Group Leader should confirm that the organisation is licensed with the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority. The licence registers the organisation for sports in 4 categories (caving, trekking, mountaineering, water sports) and the conditions in which it is licensed to provide them. The Social Worker/Group Leader should look for:

- Licence number. This will be a double number e.g.: L1234/R5678
- You should verify the licence by ringing the Licensing Authority (see link above)
- What sports and conditions it is licensed for

The licence is an indication of the standard of health and safety the organisation achieves. It also indicates that police checks and references have been taken up for staff.

## **Organisations not registered with the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority**

Some activities, which contain an element of risk fall below or outside of the licensing level and requirements. For organisations not licensed with the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority, the following checks should be carried out:

Ask the following:

- A list of staff and their qualifications for the activities offered
- Whether all staff and volunteers are police/DBS checked
- Whether references are taken up on all staff and volunteers
- Whether the organisation undertakes formal risk assessment on the activities; ask to be sent copy/copies of the risk assessment(s). These should identify risks as well as measures and procedures by which the risks are controlled

## **Accommodation**

### 1. Accommodation (indoors)

- The immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the group's use
- There should be appropriate heating and ventilation
- The accommodation must be safe i.e. locks on doors
- The accommodation must have adequate fire precautions, procedures including fire exits and alarms
- The whole group must be made aware of the layout of the accommodation
- There must be adequate space for storing clothing
- There must be adequate lighting
- There should be recreational accommodation/facilities wherever possible
- The accommodation must be suitable to the gender mix of all parties present, allowing for privacy of toilet/bathing areas
- Each young person/adult should have a separate bedroom, unless the Social Worker has agreed to the sharing of rooms
- There should be adequate first aid facilities

### 2. Accommodation (Outdoors)

The above should be taken into consideration. For camping, there are numerous additional considerations to be taken into account, e.g. safety issues, security, cooking safety, fire. All concerns should be part of a risk assessment.

### 3. Sleeping Arrangements

Wherever possible, there should be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for young people/adults and staff. If this is not possible, a rota system must be implemented.

Staff should supervise the young people/adults at night and remain in the immediate vicinity.

A rota should be devised to enable the maximum supervision possible. The group leader should not retire until the young people/adults have been settled for at least one hour.

Individual/group needs must be taken into consideration at night e.g. a young person/adults may prefer not to sleep in a dormitory setting.

Young people/adults should not share rooms unless there has been a Risk Assessment agreed by relevant Social Workers. Sleeping arrangements must reflect the fact that staff have considered the individual needs of and associated risks to young people/adults on the activity. Sleeping arrangements must be detailed in the plan and approved by the manager.

Security arrangements must be implemented at night. Wherever possible, a young person/adult should be prevented from absconding.

### **Absence whilst on an Activity**

If a young person/resident becomes absent (Absent young person/resident is the generic term for young people/residents who are missing, whose absence is unauthorised or who have Absconded), it will be necessary to follow the procedures set out in the local site procedure. This should be appropriate to the age level and capacity of the individuals on the trip. Extra diligence should be taken when on overseas trips due to language and cultural barriers that service user faces.