

SHETLAND INTER-AGENCY

POLICY ON HEALTH AND SAFETY OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON OFF SITE TRIPS AND VISITS

TRIPS AWAY!



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1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Young people can derive educational and social benefits from taking part in excursions and visits. They have the opportunity to undergo experiences that may not be available to them otherwise. Visits help to develop investigative skills and longer visits encourage greater independence. This policy has been developed in order to assist staff and others to ensure that young people stay safe and healthy on organised visits. Guidelines on Planning Trips Away have been prepared to support the implementation of this policy and are available at www.shetland.gov.uk/childsafeshetland/
- 1.2 The definition of “organised visits” includes any excursions planned that take young people away from their normal base of activity. Examples include school trips off the school site; youth club trips away from the club’s regular premises; or outdoor education activities at isolated locations. Off-Shetland trips, to either the Scottish Mainland, or further afield, are also within the scope of this document.
- 1.3 Most visits take place without incident but there is a requirement to ensure the safety of young people. No amount of planning can guarantee that a visit will be totally incident free, but good planning and attention to safety measures will reduce the number of accidents and lessen the seriousness of those that do happen. The management of health and safety on visits is part of an organisation’s overall health and safety management system. This policy defines the principles that must be followed when planning visits whilst leaving the application of such principles to the staff involved
- 1.4 A young person is generally anyone under the age of eighteen. In Scots Law two categories of young people can be defined;
- anyone under the age of 16 years - regarded as dependent on parents, and on official visits staff will act "in loco parentis".
 - anyone of 16 years or over - the law assumes they are able to make reasonable decisions regarding their own actions, but are still owed a "duty of care" by any accompanying adult.
- 1.5 References to 'parents' cover anyone who has parental responsibility.
- 1.6 This policy has been produced with reference to the "Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits" plus additional annexes by the Department for Education and Skills.
- 1.7 This policy will be reviewed whenever there are any changes to relevant legislation or guidance, and will be reviewed regularly, at least once every three years.
- 1.8 This document recognises that there are many organisations involved in organising visits and trips for young people. This policy makes reference throughout to managers. The term ‘manager’ is used to refer to senior officers and staff in positions of responsibility and with authority to approve off-site visits and trips.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 General

2.1.1 Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employers are also under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of anyone else that may be affected by their activities or omissions. This includes young people at any time, including off-site visits.

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

- assess the risks of activities;
- introduce measures to control those risks
- tell their employees about these measures.

Additionally, under the Health and Safety legislation employees must:

- take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety;
- co-operate with their employers over safety matters;
- carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions;
- inform the employer of any serious risks.

Staff in charge of young people also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

2.1.3 Although the Chief Officer of the organisation leading the trip is ultimately responsible for health and safety, decisions about visits are usually delegated to managers with responsibility for off-site trips, whose agreement must be obtained before a visit takes place.

2.1.4 Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 – If you provide services, activities or projects for young people up to the age of 18 years old, then you must comply with the requirements of the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. Your group must have policies and procedures in place that adequately cover child protection and welfare issues. Particular attention must be paid to the requirements for ensuring that staff or volunteers working in a 'childcare' position undergo an Enhanced Disclosure Check. (for further information please refer to the CHILD SAFE Shetland website www.shetland.gov.uk/childsafeshetland/)

2.2 Employer

2.2.1 The Lead Organisation, through its managers, has the following main roles in respect of trips or visits:

- provide written guidelines for staff, including advice on risk assessment;
- assess proposals for trips and visits;
- provide emergency telephone contact for the duration of the visit where necessary;
- ensure training needs have been identified and addressed;

- provide access to named staff for advice;
- maintain appropriate insurance cover for trips;
- have in place procedures to monitor and review safety during off-site trips and activities.

2.3 Managers

2.3.1 Managers must ensure that trips comply all relevant guidelines (eg: the GTC Code of Professionalism and Conduct) or policies provided by the Organisation and their establishment's own health and safety management systems. They must ensure that the group leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the trip.

2.3.2 Managers must be clear about their role if taking part in the visit as a group member/supervisor. They must follow the instructions of the group leader who will have overall charge of the visit.

2.3.3 Managers should ensure that:

- child protection procedures are in place, in line with the Shetland inter-agency Child Protection Procedures;
- risk assessments have been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place;
- staff are trained, competent and experienced in supervising the age groups going on the visit and are familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place;
- the ratio of supervisors to young people is appropriate;
- parents have signed consent forms;
- arrangements have been made for the medical or additional support needs of all young people where appropriate;
- appropriate emergency procedures have been agreed, including first aid provision, and copies of procedures provided to all staff on the trip and the emergency contact;
- there is appropriate insurance cover;
- they have the address and phone number of the venue and a contact name;
- they and all staff on the trip have the names and contact details of all members of the group;
- they and all staff on the trip have access to contact details of next of kin for all group members;
- there is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home.

2.4 Group Leader

2.4.1 The group leader, who is appointed by the Manager, should have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and must have regard to the health and safety of the group. They must:

- obtain formal approval of the visit from the Manager;
- complete and record a comprehensive risk assessment/s and review these for regularly undertaken visits/activities, advising the Manager where adjustments may be necessary;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit, including the briefing of group members and parents/carers;

- brief all adults involved about their roles and responsibilities on the trip, highlighting the need to follow approved policies and procedures;
- notify, where the activity requires it, local agencies such as police and coastguard;
- monitor the health, safety and wellbeing of group members, and anyone who may be affected by activities during the trip;
- take action to stop the activity or trip if the risk to health or safety is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality;

2.5 Other Staff and Adult Volunteers

2.5.1 Any adults involved on a trip, whether they are employees or not, will be bound by this policy and any other relevant policies for the duration of the trip.

2.5.2 All staff must ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group as far as reasonably practicable. They should:

- follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline of group members;
- if they think the risk to health or safety is unacceptable, notify the group leader and/or take action to suspend the activity or trip where necessary.

2.6 Young People

2.6.1 The group leader should make it clear to young people that they must:

- follow the instructions of the leader and other supervisors, including those at the venue of the visit;
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly;
- be sensitive to local codes and customs;
- inform the group leader or an adult supervisor if they have concerns about their own, or someone else's, health, safety or wellbeing during the trip

2.7 Parents/carers

2.7.1 Parents/carers should be told how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct. Parents/carers should also be asked to agree the arrangements for sending a young person home early and who will meet the cost.

2.7.2 Parents/carers will need to:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact details, and any information about their child's emotional, mental or physical health which might be relevant to the visit. Relevant issues may include – a recent illness or bereavement; any known allergies; existing medical conditions; tendencies toward homesickness, etc.
- sign the consent form.

3. PLANNING

3.1 Planning a trip or visit

3.1.1 For all visits it is essential that formal planning takes place before setting off. This involves considering any dangers and difficulties that may arise and making plans to reduce them. In practice, the Manager may delegate the detailed planning to the group leader. They must satisfy themselves that the person planning the visit is competent to do so and has the necessary relevant experience. A summary of the steps that should be followed when planning a trip or visit are summarised in Appendix A to this policy.

3.2 Risk assessment

3.2.1 Risk assessments are usually carried out by the group leader. An assessment should be completed well before the visit, and should be approved by the Manager.

3.2.2 A risk assessment for a visit need not be complex but must be comprehensive. It does not generally require technical or professional health and safety expertise, but specialist information for some visits may be necessary and the person undertaking the risk assessment should seek such advice where necessary.

3.2.3 A formal risk assessment must eliminate or reduce the risks to an acceptable level. If the risks cannot be controlled to an acceptable level, then the visit must not take place; or the visit must be adapted to reduce the risk.

3.2.4 The risk assessment must be based on the following considerations:

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

3.2.5 The person carrying out the risk assessment must record it and give copies to all adults on the visit along with details of the control measures. Managers should also be given a copy to demonstrate that effective planning has taken place as part of the approval procedure.

3.2.6 Frequent visits to local venues, such as swimming pools, will not need a risk assessment before every visit as long as relevant circumstances have not changed. However, a review of the risk assessment of such visits should be made at regular intervals in accordance with Organisation policy, and amendments made as necessary.

3.2.7 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 qualifications of supervisory staff and their ratio to young people;
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament and the suitability of the activity;
- the special educational or medical needs of young people;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing;
- emergency procedures;
- how to cope when a young person becomes unable or unwilling to continue or participate;

3.2.8 Detailed advice, training and assistance on risk assessment can be obtained from the Shetland Islands Council's Safety Manager.

3.2.9 As well as the visit/site specific risk assessments, that have been prepared before the visit, the Group Leader should continually assess the risks during the trip and take appropriate action. Any such actions should form part of the trip review procedure to inform future planning.

3.3 Exploratory visit

3.3.1 The group leader should undertake an exploratory visit, wherever possible, to:

- ensure that the proposed venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the activity;
- assess potential risks;
- become familiar with the area before taking a group of young people there.

3.3.2 If an exploratory visit is not feasible the group leader will need to make alternative arrangements to complete an adequate risk assessment. A minimum measure would be to obtain specific information in writing from the venue and from local organisations, such as tourist boards and local authorities. Previous risk assessments and information may be available from other groups who have been to the same location.

3.3.3 It is useful to carry out a review after each visit to determine the effectiveness of risk assessments and control measures.

3.4 Other considerations

3.4.1 Other factors, which should form part of the planning stage, include:

- the facilities/equipment the group will need to take on the visit and those to be provided at the venue;
- the designation of someone to record the details of the visit and to carry accident forms etc;
- transport, insurance and communication arrangements;
- information to the provider, parents/carers and young people;
- contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return;
- emergency arrangements, including sending young people home early;
- Managers should have a copy of all relevant paperwork for the trip, including consent forms, trip schedule and contact details.

3.5 First aid

- 3.5.1 First aid must form part of the risk assessment. On any trip, an appropriate first aid box must be taken. Where the visit is to a remote location or involves potentially hazardous activities, at least one of the group should be a fully trained first aider. There should be facilities for contacting the emergency services.
- 3.5.2 The minimum first aid provision for a visit is:
- a suitably stocked first aid box;
 - a person appointed to be in charge of first aid arrangements.
- 3.5.3 First aid equipment should be available at all times. The Health and Safety Executive recommends the following minimum contents for a travelling first aid box where no special risk has been identified:
- a leaflet giving general advice on first aid;
 - six individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings;
 - one large sterile unmedicated wound dressing approximately 18cm x 18 cm;
 - two triangular bandages; two safety pins;
 - individually wrapped moist cleansing wipes;
 - one pair of disposable gloves;
 - a resuscitator (for hygienic mouth to mouth resuscitation) would also be useful.
- 3.5.4 Where any special risk of an activity has been identified, then the first aid box should include additional items to treat any injuries that may occur. e.g. disposable ice packs for soft tissue injuries at a sports event, or splint packs for injuries at a remote location
- 3.5.5 Where a special risk or medical condition relating to an individual has been identified, rather than an activity, this must be disclosed to insurers prior to travelling.
- 3.5.6 All minibuses are required by law to carry a first aid kit.

Appendix A - PLANNING THE VISIT

This page charts the stages of planning a visit.

