

Guidance in Relation to Critical Incidents occurring on a School Trip

School trips, whether one-day, residential, local or further afield should be carefully planned to reduce the possibility of incidents or difficulties occurring.

The Code of Practice and Guidance notes on health and safety of pupils on educational visits can be found on the Ealing Grid for Learning website:
http://www.egfl.org.uk/categories/admin/emergency/educ_visits.html

A Risk Assessment (recorded in writing) should be carried out, as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, for the planned visit. This may require the responsible member of staff visiting the destination, checking out the facilities and any potential difficulties and assessing and minimising potential hazards. The Risk Assessment is a key element to planning a visit and important step in protecting staff, parents and pupils alike. As well as complying with the law, it helps to focus on the risks that have been identified and that really matter – the ones with potential to cause real harm. The Risk Assessment should identify potential hazards listing the controls and measures to reduce or eliminate the risks. If there is any doubt about the safety of the arrangements, the trip or activity should not take place. Head teachers and school governors are responsible for the safe organisation of school trips, even though they may not be taking part themselves.

Since communication can be a significant factor in summoning help or in relaying information, it is now essential to consider providing the group leader with a mobile phone.

In case of emergencies the person in charge of the trip should have a list of specific telephone numbers (e.g. Head teacher, Chair of Governors etc). This is particularly important if the trip is out of school hours, residential or during the holidays. The contact(s) at school should be given a list of pupil's names and their home telephone numbers. In an emergency, the school contact can be phoned and asked to keep parents informed.

HEALTH CARE PLAN

If a pupil has a specific condition (e.g. severe allergy) then the group leader should ensure that they have, and fully understand, the health plan for the pupil and that the staff attending the trip have had appropriate training. An example of a health care plan is attached for reference.

CRITICAL INCIDENT DURING A TRIP

It is impossible to provide comprehensive guidelines to cover all possible eventualities. The following points should give guidance on the main reporting procedures in such an emergency.

- Contact the appropriate emergency services
- Contact the centre/hostel/hotel (if residential)
- Contact the school. Depending on the event, you may also need to contact a senior member of staff and /or Chair of Governors
- Contact the local authority. Although incidents are generally reported, in the first instance, to the designated critical incident officers the more important issue is to ensure that senior officers receive the details as soon as possible. If the incident occurs out of office hours the Perceval House number: 020 8825 5000 can be used to leave details and the duty officer will be able to make any necessary contact with Senior Staff.
- Control access to telephone lines until the above communications have been made
- If possible identify a line to be dedicated for incoming calls only
- If the media make enquires, neither the group leader nor the party members should make statements or discuss the situation
- The name of any casualty should not be given to the media
- The Head teacher should arrange to make contact with parents/carers of those involved
- The Councils Communications Unit will undertake arrangements for liaising with the media
- Those involved in the incident and aftermath should be asked to make a written record of all relevant details
- Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted
- All accident forms and other formal documentation should be completed as soon as possible. The Schools Service Safety Officer can assist in this matter.