

### 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 3.01 The Role of the Employer

Bracknell Forest Council in its role as an employer has a responsibility for the safety of its employees and for the children and young people in its care when they are participating in offsite activities to ensure that safe practice is in place. For Voluntary Aided and Academy schools this is the governing body.

The main responsibilities are outlined below:

- Approving (or disallowing) visits where the task of approval has not been assigned to establishment level;
- Notifying establishments of the minimum adult : child/young person ratios required by the Council and whether the ratios can include competent adults other than competent establishment staff;
- Providing advice on visits generally and on adventure activities, expeditions and overseas visits;
- Providing establishments with the Council's guidance and procedures as set out in this manual;
- Reviewing the risk assessments and arrangements of the visits that establishments undertake;
- Ensure all health and safety arrangements are in place;
- Monitoring the offsite visits carried out by the Council establishments to ensure that they have a stated educational or beneficial purpose;
- Reviewing policies and procedures in the light of lessons learned and sharing good practice with establishments;
- Determining which visits will require Council approval and which may be approved by the establishment;
- To ensure that relevant training is available;
- To ensure arrangements are in place to obtain Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, as necessary;
- To provide 24 hour emergency cover in the event of an incident.

### **3.02 The Role of the Offsite Visits Co-ordinator (OVC)**

Each establishment should have an Offsite Visits Co-ordinator (OVC).

In schools it could be the Headteacher, a teacher or other member of the school staff. In youth centres it could be the Youth Leader in charge of the establishment, Youth Manager or other appropriate member of staff. It is advisable that the OVC should not be the Group Leader as these are separate roles. The OVC will be involved in the planning, management and approval of the establishment's offsite and adventurous activities.

The role of the OVC is to liaise with the Council to ensure that offsite and adventurous activity visits meet Council requirements;

- To support the Headteacher/Service Head and Governors with approval and other decisions;
- To assign competent people to lead, or supervise a visit;
- To assess the competence of leaders and other adults proposed for a visit, e.g. National Governing Body (NGB) accreditation, experience etc;
- To organise the training of Group Leaders and other adults going on a visit e.g. first aid, hazard awareness etc;
- To organise induction and training of Group Leaders and other adults taking children and young people on a specific visit;
- To ensure that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates are in place;
- To ensure that Group Leaders obtain the consent or refusal of consent of parents/carers and provide sufficient information to parents/carers beforehand to enable them to make an informed judgement;
- To ensure that the Group Leader carries a complete nominal roll including participants names, addresses and parent/carer contact numbers and that the emergency contact at the establishment also has a copy;
- To organise the emergency arrangements and ensure there is an emergency contact for each visit;
- To keep records of individual visits including reports of accidents and near accidents;
- To review internal systems and, on occasion, monitor practice;
- To ensure risk assessments are adequate and meet requirements.

### 3.03 The Role of the Headteachers/Service Head

Where the OVC is not the Headteacher/Service Head it would be considered good practice for the Headteacher/Service Head to ensure the following:

- To delegate tasks to the OVC, having regard to the duties of the OVC as outlined;
- To agree who will lead a visit at establishment level or submit it to the Council for approval if required;
- For schools, to ensure that arrangements are in place for the governing body to be made aware of visits as necessary so that appropriate questions can be asked regarding the visit;
- To ensure that the purpose of the visits are stated, and are consistent with the four outcomes priorities in the Creating Opportunities Plan, and that they are made known to all relevant parties;
- To ensure that any issues including actions highlighted in risk assessment have been satisfactorily resolved;
- To ensure that accreditation or verification of providers has been checked;
- To ensure that visits are evaluated;
- To ensure that visits are approved as necessary by the Council before bookings are confirmed and any payments made;
- To ensure that bookings are not completed until external providers have met all the necessary assurance and to ensure that specific items in the risk management are checked prior to departure;
- To ensure that the OVC keeps the Headteacher/Service Head informed of the progress of the visit and that this information is relayed to Governors and parents/carers as necessary;
- Check that the OVC has designated an appropriately competent Group Leader who will meet the Council's criteria;
- Ensure that there is a contingency plan covering events that may affect the party e.g. staff illness, changes of route, accommodation etc.;
- Make time available for the OVC to arrange induction of staff and volunteers;
- Arrange for the recording of accidents and the reporting of emergencies as necessary;
- Ensure that teachers, youth workers, Group Leaders and other employees are made aware of and understand Council guidance on emergency planning and procedures;

- Ensure that the establishment has emergency procedures in place in the event of a major incident on any visit;
- Ensure that the emergency contact has the authority to make significant decisions. They should be able to respond immediately at the establishment base to the demands of an emergency and should have a back up person and contact number;
- Ensure that a copy of the nominal roll has been left with the emergency contact and that all parent/carer contact details have been accessed;
- Establish a procedure to ensure that parents/carers are informed quickly about incident details through the emergency contact rather than the media or via other children and young people;
- To recognise that support must be provided by the Council's communication and marketing team when dealing with media enquiries.

### **3.04 The Role of the School Governing Body**

Where the establishment is controlled by a governing body, such as a school, the governing body will be involved in the overall approval process of any offsite visits and adventurous activities, and in ensuring that appropriate measures have been taken to ensure the safety of all concerned. The governing body should ensure that guidance is available to inform the establishments policy, practices and procedures relating to health and safety of children and young people on offsite visits. These should include:

- Measures to obtain parent/carer consent on a basis of full information;
- Investigation of parent/carer complaints;
- Procedures for incident and emergency management systems;
- To ensure that the Headteacher and the OVC are supported in matters relating to offsite visits and that they have the appropriate time and expertise to fulfill their responsibilities;
- Ascertain what governor training is available and take this up;
- Agree on the types of visit that they should be informed about and the procedures for approvals to be given;
- Ask questions about a visit's purpose and objectives, how they will be met, and that they are appropriate to the age and abilities of the children or young people and that they are consistent with the four outcomes in the Creating Opportunities Plan;
- The governors should challenge the nature of the venture when the purpose and objectives are not clear or where the means to meet them do not appear to be realistic;
- To ensure that Headteachers and the OVC have taken all reasonable and practicable measures to include children and young people with special educational, social or medical needs on a visit;
- To ensure that early planning and pre-visits can take place and that the results can be acted upon;
- It is not expected that governors should become directly involved in risk assessment and related matters unless they have an appropriate competence.

### 3.05 Responsibilities of the Group Leader

There should be one person who is designated as the Group Leader. The Group Leader is responsible for the planning, organisation, implementation and evaluation of the activity, which should be carried out in accordance with the Offsite and Adventurous Activities Guidance Manual.

The Group Leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have regard to the health and safety of the group. All offsite visits and adventurous activities should be planned, staffed and implemented in such a way that the Group Leader and staff's Duty of Care towards the children and young people on the activity is fully discharged.

The Group Leader should have been approved by the Headteacher/Service Head.

The Group Leader should undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the offsite visit including any adventurous activities and other duties as follows:

- Obtain prior agreement from the Headteacher/Service Head before any offsite visit takes place;
- Follow Bracknell Forest Council regulations, guidelines and policies;
- Appoint a deputy who is capable of assuming the role of Group Leader, if required;
- Clearly define the role of each member of staff, and ensure all tasks have been assigned;
- Be able to control and lead children and young people of the relevant age range;
- Ensure that there is a competent instructor to instruct in activities;
- If possible be familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place;
- Be aware of child protection issues; ensure that adequate first aid provision will be available;
- Undertake and complete a risk assessment and carry out on-going risk assessments during the visit;
- Review regularly undertaken visits and activities and advise the Headteacher/Service Head where adjustments may be necessary;
- Have enough knowledge on the children and young people proposed for the visit to be satisfied that their suitability to attend has been assessed and confirmed;
- Ensure that the ratio of supervisors to children and young people is appropriate for the needs of the group;
- Consider stopping or modifying the visit if the risk to health and safety of the children and young people is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality;

- Ensure that all adult staff and volunteers have details of the establishment home contact;
- Ensure that all adult staff and volunteers, and the establishment contact have a copy of the emergency procedures;
- Meet with children and young people to agree a code of conduct for the visit/activity and penalties for breaking them bearing in mind Duty of Care;
- Work with the OVC to ensure that the offsite visit or adventurous activity meets the Council's requirements;
- Enter the visit on the Bracknell Forest electronic monitoring system together with any required accompanying documents;
- Ensure all staff have approved relevant paperwork i.e. DBS certificate, mini-bus driver permit, car insurance and any adventurous activity qualifications that may be needed;
- Ensure that staff have copies of all Medical and Consent forms within their group, including group lists and completed emergency procedures, when not within reasonable distance of main Centre. This means each mini-bus/car should have copies of medical forms etc. for their group (which could be in a sealed envelope). All Leaders should inform themselves of any medical condition and/or allergies of the entire group in case of emergency;
- Ensure there are home contacts plus emergency contacts for outside office hours, and that they have full details of the trip, travel, accommodation, venues, activities, timings, copies of the participants list, completed emergency procedures and how to contact the group in an emergency;
- Ensure all reasonable steps are taken to keep children and young people safe from harm either by exploitation, accident or through contact with members of the general public;
- In cases where lower levels of supervision are acceptable due to the nature of the activity, contact times should be arranged e.g. early morning and evening, plus where the group, location, and/or activity necessitates meeting on a more frequent basis;
- Ensure they have enough knowledge of the children and young people to assess their suitability for the venture both in temperament and skills required. The Group Leader has the responsibility to terminate any venture which they feel puts children and young people or staff at risk or where the behaviour of members of the group is deemed inappropriate;
- Ensure that any medication being taken by the children and young people is kept safe and stored correctly and that it is administered correctly at the appropriate times and that a log of dosage is maintained;
- Ensure that if staff need to administer medicine about which they have not been informed (e.g. hay-fever, anti-histamine or period pains, aspirin) they phone parents/carers and obtain permission before hand;

- Ensure that staff do not administer medicine for which they have not been trained e.g. epi pens.;
- Convene daily staff meetings to brief staff on programme changes, discuss concerns, and if necessary re-allocate roles and responsibilities. Staff have a supervisory responsibility for any group they take away even when not directly in contact with the group;
- Notes should be made of any accidents or incidents with details of how they were handled including statements from staff. Incident/accident reporting system forms should be completed after return to home base;
- Following the activity, an evaluation report should be completed including evaluations from the children and young people and the report lodged with the project;
- Ensure that the teachers, youth workers, supervisors and activity instructors have the details of children and young people's special educational or medical needs which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively;
- Ensure that all staff are fully aware of what the visit and activities entail;
- Brief all staff on the aims of the activity, group and individual roles and responsibilities of staff including outcomes of risk assessments undertaken;
- Briefing letter/s should be sent to parents/carers and, where appropriate for longer visits, residential visits, or more complicated activities, a briefing meeting should also be held. Letter/s should include:
  - The purpose and objectives of the visit.
  - Age range/group the activity is open to.
  - Venue, to include full address and telephone number for emergencies if available or alternative arrangements for contacting the group.
  - Times of departure and return.
  - Details of programme and venues to be visited and how any assessed risks will be managed.
  - Closing date for applications.
  - Details of any adventurous activities and details of instructors and qualifications.
  - Transport/travel arrangements (flight number if appropriate).
  - Passports/visas required and by when.
  - Accommodation details and gender separation, sleeping arrangements.
  - Insurance arrangements.
  - List of any food and clothing, equipment and limit of spending money required
  - Name and phone number of home and emergency contacts
  - Supervision arrangements for each part of the programme, especially at night, and details of unsupervised periods/down time and any other special arrangements.
  - Staffing details including Group Leader, deputy, other leaders, other adults accompanying and details of other adults/staff with whom the children or young people may come into contact e.g. activity instructors, staff at the venue or accommodation.

- Date, time of briefing meeting.
- That parents/carers have a responsibility to check their children's/young person's luggage and ensure they do not bring any alcohol, illegal or dangerous items.
- That parents/carers have a responsibility to reinforce the agreed behaviour code, a copy of which should be sent to them, with details of penalties which might be enforced for breaches of behaviour. This might also include arrangements for participant's early return.
- Medical and Consent forms to be returned by a given date.
- That parents/carers should inform staff of any relevant updates to the Medical and Consent form including details of any medical condition or medication their children and young people are bringing with them.
- Where children or young people bring medication with them that is not on the Medical and Consent form parents/carers should ensure they have informed staff beforehand.
- The arrangements for the administering of basic medication by staff should be clear. If staff need to administer medicine about which they have not been informed (e.g. hay fever- anti-histamine, or period pains-aspirin) staff will phone parents/carers and obtain permission first.
- Details of costs payable (if applicable) and how/when these should be paid.

### **3.06 Responsibilities of Accompanying Teachers, Youth Workers and Other Staff**

Teachers, Youth Workers and other employee staff of Bracknell Forest Council support the Group Leader in delivery of the visit.

They must:

- Follow the instructions of the Group Leader and help with supervision and discipline;
- Ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent/carer would do in the same circumstance;
- Notifying the Group Leader, if they think the risk to the health and safety of the children and young people in their charge is unacceptable.

### 3.07 Responsibilities of Adult Volunteers and Voluntary Activity Instructors

The duty of care applies to all who take responsibility for the children or young people of others, **but the law is likely to expect a higher standard of care from professionals and those who hold qualifications, because of their training and experience.**

Adult volunteers are non employees who may accompany the visit e.g. parents.

Voluntary Activity Instructors are non-employees who are competent to lead or instruct an activity e.g. a football coach

Anyone used in this capacity must be approved in advance by the Headteacher/Service Head.

**Please Note – All Adult Volunteers and Volunteer Instructors should have Disclosure and Barring Service certificates especially on residential visits.**

The Group Leader must give clear and specific instructions to any Adult Volunteers and Voluntary Activity Instructors on the visit about their roles and responsibilities during the visit. Accompanying adult must:

- Not be left in sole charge of children or young people except where it has been risk assessed and child protection procedures have been carried out;
- Follow the instructions of the Group Leader;
- Bring to the attention of the Group Leader any concerns about health and safety or discipline of the children and young people at any time during the visit;

### 3.08 Responsibilities of the Children and Young People

The Group Leader must make it clear to children and young people that they must:

- Not take unnecessary risks;
- Follow instructions of the leader and other supervisors including those at the venue of the visit;
- Dress appropriately and behave sensibly and responsibly, especially where it is necessary to wear protective clothing and equipment;
- Be sensitive to codes of conduct, local customs and cultural beliefs especially if working abroad in a foreign country;
- Look out for anything that might hurt or threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the Group Leader or adult staff and volunteers about it.
- Where required by the Group Leader, sign and conform to the requirements of a behaviour agreement/code of conduct and act responsibly at all times.

**Please note:** Any person whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or the group may be stopped from going on the visit or in certain circumstances sent home.

### **3.09 Responsibilities of Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers should be able to make an informed decision about whether their child should go on the visit. The Group Leader should ensure that the parents/carers are given sufficient information in writing and that they are invited to any briefing sessions arranged for them. Special arrangements may be necessary for parents/carers for whom English is a second language.

Parents/Carers should also be informed as to how they can help prepare their child for the visit by:

- reinforcing the visits code of conduct/behavior;
- provide the Group Leader with emergency contact numbers;
- sign the Medical and Consent form;
- give the Group Leader information about their child's/young person's emotional, psychological and physical health which might be relevant to the visit;
- agree to any arrangements for sending a child/young person home and who will meet the cost, in the event that this becomes necessary.

### **3.10 Young People Aged Eighteen and Over**

The duty of care is the same in principle as for those below the age of eighteen, although young people aged 18 and over may be expected to show a greater degree of responsibility. The latitude given to young people aged eighteen and over in terms of their own responsibility on the visit must be appropriate to the nature of the location/activity, and the age, maturity, experience, trustworthiness, and special or additional needs of the individual young people involved.