

8. SUPERVISION AND STAFFING RATIOS

The implications of this section of the document are crucial to the safety of children and young people and to receiving approval for the visit

8.01 Factors to be Considered

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to children and young people for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- gender and ability of the group;
- the ages and characteristics of children and young people e.g. to what extent would you expect a group to behave in a disciplined manner and their age in relation to the activities;
- children and young people with special educational or medical needs;
- the nature of the activities;
- the experience of the adults in off-site supervision;
- the duration and nature of the journey and activity, e.g. does it involve situations in which particular care needs to be taken;
- the type of any accommodation;
- the needs and abilities of staff, e.g. do staff require rest periods in order for them to operate efficiently and what is their competence/experience of similar activities;
- requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
- competence and behaviour of the children and young people;
- first aid cover;
- any domestic role of staff, e.g. if staff have to drive, supervise, do the cooking of meals or other tasks is the staffing sufficient to ensure adequate supervision at those times;
- are there children and young people who will require a particularly high level of supervision and are there enough staff to cope with checking of numbers and other arrangements.



8.02 Day Visits Within the Locality

As a general guide the following minimum ratios should apply:

| AGE RANGE | | | ADULTS |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|--|
| 3 | Early Years | Foundation Stage | 1 adult to 2 participants |
| 4 to 5 | Reception | | 1 adult to 4 participants |
| 5 to 7 | Years 1 to 2 | Key Stage 1 | 1 adult to 6 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| 7 to 9 | Years 3 to 6 | Key Stage 2 | 1 adult to 10 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| 9 to 11 | Years 5 to 6 | Key Stage 2 | *1 adult to 15 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| 11 to 14 | Years 7 to 9 | Key Stage 3 | *1 adult to 15 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| over 14 | Year 10 plus | Key Stage 4 | *1 adult to 20 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |

*The exception to the above is any visit to London should have a ratio of 1/10.

8.03 Residential visits within the UK

As a general guide the following minimum ratios should apply:

| AGE RANGE | | | ADULTS |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|--|
| 3 | Early Years | Foundation Stage | It is not generally recommended that this age group are taken on residential visits. |
| 4 to 5 | Reception | | 1 adult to 4 participants |
| 5 to 7 | Years 1 to 2 | Key Stage 1 | 1 adult to 6 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| 7 to 11 | Years 3 to 6 | Key Stage 2 | 1 adult to 10 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| 11 to 14 | Years 7 to 9 | Key Stage 3 | *1 adult to 15 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| over 14 | Year 10 plus | Key Stage 4 | *1 adult to 15 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |

*The exception to the above is any visit to London should have a ratio of 1/10.

8.04 Residential and Day Visits Abroad

As a general guide the following minimum ratios should apply:

| AGE RANGE | | | ADULTS |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|---|
| 3 | Early Years | Foundation Stage | It is not generally recommended that these age groups are taken on residential and day visits abroad. |
| 4 to 5 | Reception | | |
| 5 to 7 | Years 1 to 2 | Key Stage 1 | 1 adult to 6 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| 7 to 9 | Years 3 to 4 | Key Stage 2 | 1 adult to 6 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| 9 to 11 | Years 5 to 6 | Key Stage 2 | 1 adult to 10 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| 11 to 14 | Years 7 to 9 | Key Stage 3 | 1 adult to 10 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |
| over 14 | Year 10 plus | Key Stage 4 | 1 adult to 10 participants with a minimum of 2 adults |

Please note that all of the above are minimum requirements. Group Leaders should assess the risks involved and set an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group and activities. There should generally be a minimum of two adults, one of whom is the Group Leader who is in overall charge of the party.

8.05 Minimum Number of Staff

The circumstances in which it is acceptable to have only one member of staff with a group are as follows;

- Where activities involve situations that are familiar to the children and young people and where additional appropriate adult help could be available in a short time should the Group Leader become incapacitated;
- Where a risk assessment has been undertaken and indicates this staffing level is sufficient,
- On a journey where additional help will be available at the group's venue, providing always that there is adequate supervision of the children and young people during the journey, and especially in the case of a breakdown, and where the journey is of short duration within the locality of the centre;
- Activities where children and young people are not under direct supervision by staff that conform to the guidance.
Please note: this point applies to all activities and at all times, irrespective of how long or short the period of time involved.

The Council MUST be notified and approval given where an establishment is considering sending only one member of staff. This will only be considered where there are small groups travelling who are over the age of 16, or where special circumstances apply.

8.06 Activities Where Children and Young People are not Under Direct Supervision

It is acknowledged that there are occasions when participants have to work in situations where they are not directly supervised. Examples might be Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions, offsite activities at other teaching institutes, some field work exercises and in exploration of a carefully and clearly defined area.

In such cases, no matter how short the time scale may be, particular care must be taken to ensure that the following are observed:

- Participants must have the aptitude and maturity, and be appropriately trained, briefed and experienced for whatever is involved. It should be ensured that everyone knows what is expected of them, including codes of behaviour;
- Parents/carers must be given clear and detailed information in writing about what is proposed, before being asked to give their consent and must agree in writing;



- There must be appropriate emergency back-up available and children and young people must have the means, knowledge and ability to use it. The extent of back up depends on the circumstances, but the arrangements should be in writing and copied to all relevant individuals.
- The appropriate contacts at the venue or organisers must receive a written brief that includes the home contact details of the children and young people involved and the establishment emergency contact details, including out of hours cover where relevant:
- Where the activity is offsite, and participants are travelling unsupervised to and from the venue, having made an assessment, the establishment must advise parents/carers/children and young people in writing on appropriate travel arrangements with due regard to their safety and security. The establishment has a greater responsibility for this where children and young people are travelling to the venue directly from the establishment. Where parents/carers do not agree to this arrangement it is the responsibility of the establishment to transport children to the venue.
- All participants must receive a verbal and written brief on the arrangements and issued with the Bracknell Forest Council Forestcare 24 hour emergency contact number 01344 786500.
- Participants should know which areas and activities are out of bounds, where rendezvous point(s) are located and have a form of identification, as appropriate,
- Unsupervised offsite activities at other teaching institutes outside of normal establishment hours are not appropriate for children and young people below year 12.
- The Council's Offsite Visits Advisor must approve in advance of all unsupervised activities.
- If there is any doubt as to what is appropriate further advice should be taken from the Council's Offsite Visits Advisor. Such considerations should be taken into account well ahead of the event.

8.07 Children and/or Relatives of Staff Accompanying the Group

Where children or relatives of staff accompany a group on an Offsite or Adventurous Activity there is a risk that a conflict of roles may occur. Children, partners and relatives of the Group Leader should not be included unless they have a bone-fide reason to be a part of the group i.e. they are members of staff or pupils at the establishment.

In such circumstances specific approval must be sought from the Council's Offsite Visits Advisor. If approval is given the following will apply;

- All adults who accompany a group do so in a staffing/supervisory role,
- Children of staff should be the **same age** as the participants in the group, and should be treated as any other participant in the group;

- Where a participant accompanying a member of staff is not a member of the establishment, the Group Leader should check to see whether the Borough's Third Party Liability Insurance would apply in the event of a claim being made in respect of an accident to the child. **It is unlikely that approval will be given in these circumstances.**
- Any adult should have a Disclosure and Dearing certificate;
- Next of kin information should refer to someone who is not on the trip.

Any exceptions to this must be approved by the Council's Offsite Visits Advisor.

8.08 Preparing Participants for Remote Supervision

During any time that remote supervision takes place the party leader must ensure participants are aware of the ground rules and are adequately equipped to be on their own as a group. The size of the group should also be considered.

Participants should be equipped with the following:

- Training for the to participants needs to be sound and thorough;
- Telephone numbers and emergency contacts if lost;
- Money;
- maps and plans and any other information for them to act effectively;
- Location of local telephones and the appropriate coins (in addition to any mobile phones);
- A knowledge of how to summon help;
- A knowledge of out of bounds areas and activities;
- Written details with their identity and a rendezvous point and emergency telephone number.

It is important that participants are told not to go off on their own, are given clear instructions about permitted remote supervised activities and understand and accept the ground rules.

8.09 Remote Supervision During Adventurous Activities e.g. Duke Of Edinburgh's Award

Particular attention needs to be given by the establishment Group Leader and/or the Approved Activity Provider (AAP):

- The instructor must have the appropriate qualifications and experience to provide training in the activity;
- That they are satisfied that the participants have acquired the necessary skills and have the necessary experience, confidence, physical ability and judgement to be left without direct supervision.

The withdrawal of direct supervision should be a gradual four stage process:

- Accompanying the group;
- Shadowing the group;
- Checking regularly at agreed locations;
- checking occasionally at agreed locations.



Participants should be familiar with all equipment used or taken and an initial element of supervision in the use of equipment may be required

The condition and suitability of any equipment, particularly safety equipment should be assessed separately.

8.10 Staffing of Mixed and Single Sex Groups

Where participants include children or young people of both sexes, they should be accompanied as far as it is possible by both a male and female member of staff.

Where a single sex group has only one member of staff then they should be of the same sex. The following exceptions apply;

- where a group of no more than 6 participants are involved in an activity lasting less than twenty four hours and not including an overnight stay,
- where appropriate adult help is available at the group's venue and only the journey involves adults of one sex being present,

There should be separate shower and changing facilities for staff and children and young people. Where these are not available staff should exercise prudence and use the facilities before or after the children and young people and not at the same time. There should also be separate washing and or showering facilities for different genders.

Approval for all exceptions must be sought from the Headteacher or Service Head for non school groups. Where the above exceptions apply parents/carers must be informed and their permission obtained. It is not recommended for male adult leaders to be in sole charge of female groups.

It would be wise to ensure that where children and young people are supervised by adults of the opposite gender, parents/carers are clearly aware of and in agreement with the situation.

This regulation is concerned with the safeguarding of staff as well as the safeguarding of children and young people. Group Leaders are advised to take particular care in such circumstances. If there is ever a need for staff to visit bedrooms or changing rooms for children and young people of the opposite gender then they should always be cautious and considerate in choosing the time and style

of such visits and should, wherever possible, be accompanied by an adult of the opposite gender.

On no account should staff sleep in the same bedrooms or tents as children or young people.

There may be some circumstances where children and young people are sharing the same communal sleeping accommodation. However where this is envisaged all parents/carers MUST be informed and agree to this arrangement.

If it is not possible to provide an appropriate mix of staff of different genders then the establishment must undertake a risk assessment and any exceptions to what is written in this guidance must be approved by the headteacher/head of establishment and parents/carers must be fully informed.

8.11 Adult Volunteers and Volunteer Instructors

It is acknowledged that establishments will often make use of responsible adults other than members of staff in order to ensure better supervision of participants. It is for Headteachers/Service Heads to decide whether such adults would provide suitable additional help. In making this decision it might be helpful to consider the following points:

- will the adults know the children and young people and other adults involved;
- have they appropriate skills, qualifications or experience to offer;
- would participants be likely to respond to them as they would to employed staff?



Such persons should not be asked to supervise more than ten participants at any one time, and they should not be in a situation where they are remote from the support of leaders or other professional members of staff.

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

8.12 Staffing Ratios for Adventurous Activities

Advice on ratios for specific adventurous activities can be found in the activity sheets for each activity.

8.13 Children and Young People with Special and Additional Needs

In situations where there are children and young people with special or additional needs, this should not automatically prevent them from participating in the visit. There is a responsibility on schools and other government organisations to ensure

that reasonable adjustments are made to enable a child with a disability to have the same opportunity as any other child. Further advice can be found in the [Schools Health & Safety Manual](#)

It is important to assess any particular risks attached to a child or young person going to a particular activity. This may represent a risk to the child or to other children, staff or the general public. This risk assessment and adjustments made to compensate will determine whether a child can reasonably be expected to take part.

Where there is a potential issue consultation with parents/carers of children and young people with special or additional needs should take place at an early stage in the planning so that all parties are aware of any problem areas and that solutions can be found where applicable.



Headteachers, Service Heads and Group Leaders need to ensure that an appropriate level of care and supervision is available to meet any special needs of individuals within the group. This will include all children and young people with statements, and other participants identified by the establishment as having significant special or additional needs. The Group Leader must ensure that an appropriate level of care and supervision is available to meet the needs of individuals within the group and that:

- The adult/child ratio should be at least equal to that provided in normal circumstances e.g. when in attendance at the establishment, including academic help to ensure that the child makes the most of the educational experience ;
- At least two adults with appropriate skills for meeting the special needs of the participants in the group should be available on all offsite activities;
- Where only one leader is supervising Headteachers/Service Heads must be reasonably sure that participants will not be put at risk should that leader become incapacitated.

All visits should be assessed by risk assessment and other criteria as laid out in this document. Establishments should make their own judgements based on the criteria but in doing so they should bear in mind that ALL should have the same entitlement.

Some children's behaviour presents a risk to others and this needs to be considered carefully within the risk assessment. The use of contracts or written agreements with children and their families can be very helpful for instance a behaviour contract outlining when a child may be returned home,. They should be discussed with the child and their parents/carers, and may need to be in place prior to a child's acceptance on any visit.

Where it is known that a child is predisposed to unpredictable behaviour, or to behaviour that might put them or others at physical risk, then the level of supervision should reflect what would be regarded as reasonable by staff who are trained and/or experienced in work with such persons. The risk assessment and potential adjustments that can be reasonably made should determine whether or not it is considered safe for a child to go on any particular activity.

8.14 Mental Capacity Act and Offsite Activities For Learners Over 18 in Supported Independent Living

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice (MCA05 Code of Practice) should be referred to

Each assessment of capacity to make a decision should be separate, stand alone and specific.



All offsite activities will have to be considered as appropriate to support or enhance a student's education. Appropriate staffing to support the activity and risk assessment of risks will need to be considered as part of the offsite process.

In all cases the appropriate senior member of staff referred to as the 'Decision Maker' must assess if the Learner has the capacity at the time to make a decision to join the offsite activity or not – in accordance with the MCA 05 Code of Practice.

Where a best interest decision has been made on behalf of the Learner the consent should be signed by the 'Decision Maker' and a copy of any relevant paperwork supporting the decision should be kept with the consent.

8.15 Day Visits Within Locality

The Learner should be given information to enable them to understand the visit, to explain what will be happening and what will be missed by not being in school. The Learner should be able to make the decision to go or not and the Learner and the 'decision maker' should sign the tear off permission slip.

The information letter should go home to the Care/Support provider so they can discuss and interact with the Learner about the visit.

8.16 Day Visits and Adventurous Activities requiring OVA Approval

The school should carefully consider the activity and only propose it for those students who the activity is appropriate for.

The Learner should be given information to enable them to understand the visit, to explain what will be happening and what will be missed by not being in school. The Learner should be able to make the decision to go or not.

Medical and Consent Forms need to be signed by the Learner and the 'Decision Maker'. The emergency contact will be the Care/Support provider, as the Learner's support provider they will take the lead in responding if the Learner is not well etc.

The information letter can go home to the Care/Support provider so they can discuss and interact with the Learner about the visit..

If the 'Decision Maker' is unsure if the Learner has the capacity to make the decision himself then they must refer to the MCA05 Code of Practice.

8.17 Residential and High Risk Visits

CTPLD and the Care/Support provider must be consulted and informed in advance and before any discussion with the Learner. A record of conversations with the other professionals should be kept and notes on the decision making process re the Learner's capacity to decide need to be retained.

Where the Learner is able to make the decision they and the decision maker should both sign the Medical and Consent Form as described above. If it is assessed that the Learner does not have the capacity to make this decision regarding this activity then the 'Decision Maker' must refer to the MCA05 Code of Practice.

8.18 Repeat Visits

Each decision should be separate, stand alone and specific. It should be checked that the Learner wants to go each week for repeat activities. One decision should not cover the whole term. Repeat decisions should be a relative simple and quick formality.

8.19 Head Counts

Frequent head counts must be made. It is sensible to consider dividing children and young people into smaller groups in order to facilitate counting. It is also strongly recommended that key counts should be double checked by another adult and/or that a register should be taken especially prior to departures.

8.20 Delegation

Where delegation is necessary, the Group Leader must make this clear in respect of role and responsibilities to other staff including Adult Volunteers and Volunteer Instructors involved in the visit, particularly in cases where the Group Leader will not be present.

Where staff including Adult Volunteers and Volunteer Instructors have delegated responsibility for supervising children and young people they must have access at all times to full information about the participants and their medical/dietary/Special or Additional needs. Particular care should be taken if a group is to divide into smaller units. As far as is reasonably possible they should know the location of the children and young people that they have a responsibility for. They should be aware of all relevant emergency procedures.