



TRIPS HANDBOOK

A Comprehensive Guide for all
LOCAL and OVERSEAS Excursions at EIS-J

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Introduction

It is recognised that students can derive a great deal of educational benefit from taking part in school visits which provide an essential enhancement of a school's curriculum. In particular, they have the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom. Visits help to develop a student's investigative skills and longer visits in particular, encourage greater independence and in many cases, resilience and teamwork.

1. Planning Visits

Wherever the destination, whether the visit is to the local beach, museum, park, or includes a residential stay outside the UAE, it is essential that detailed formal planning takes place before setting off. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them. The detailed planning of the visit will be carried out by the organiser of the visit or the **group leader**.

For residential visits at home or abroad, or for potentially hazardous activities EIS senior management must be satisfied that the visit has been planned effectively and that risks are minimised.

All necessary documents should be clearly organised within a **trip planning folder** for ease of reference at any time.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments must be carried out by the group leader well before the visit and must be approved by SLT and the Director of Schools. Forms for this purpose can be obtained from within the schools' shared drive.

A risk assessment for a visit need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. The aim of risk assessment is to prevent risks or reduce them. No student should be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. **Safety must always be the prime consideration.** If the risks cannot be contained then the visit must not take place.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

what are the hazards?

who might be affected by them?

what control 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?

The person carrying out the risk assessment should record it and provide copies to all teachers/supervisors on the visit, with details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the risks. This should be written up and added to the **trip planning folder**.

Frequent visits to local venues may not need risk assessment every time. Nevertheless it is essential not to become complacent. A generic assessment of the risks of such visits should be made at regular intervals. The group leader and other supervisors should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action as necessary.

Before booking a visit the group leader should obtain a written or documentary assurance that providers such as tour operators have themselves assessed the risks and have appropriate safety measures in place.

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 in line with JESS Policy.*
- *the location, routes and modes of transport.*
- *the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff.*
- *the ratios of teachers and supervisory staff to pupils.*
- *the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament and the suitability of the activity.*
- *the special educational or medical needs of students.*
- *the quality and suitability of available equipment*
- *seasonal conditions, weather and timing.*
- *emergency procedures.*
- *how to cope when a student becomes unable or unwilling to continue.*
- *the need to monitor the risks throughout the visit.*

Exploratory visit

An exploratory visit is desirable but not essential component to a potential visit. It can be made by any teacher who is to lead a group abroad or on a residential visit or who is to instruct or lead the group in an outdoor activity such as trekking in a location that is not familiar to them.

In other cases the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit, **wherever that is possible**, to:

- *ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;*
- *obtain names and addresses of other schools that have used the venue as well as possible testimonials;*
- *obtain advice from the manager;*
- *assess potential areas and levels of risk;*

- *ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and students in the group;*
- *become familiar with the area before taking a group of young people there.*

In all cases, trade licence details and other relevant documentation pertaining to the agency or provider will be required

If an exploratory visit is **not feasible** then the group leader will need to consider how to complete an adequate assessment of the risks. A minimum measure would be to obtain specific information by letter from the venue, from other schools who have recently visited it, and from local organisations such as tourist boards.

In many cases new groups of students will be taken to the same location each year. As some factors will change from year to year, it is prudent to re-assess the risks each time - even when the group leader stays the same. Each completed visit should be evaluated and a record/report kept for archives.

Other considerations

Other considerations which should form part of the planning stage include:

- *the facilities/equipment the group will need to take on the visit;*
- *the facilities/equipment to be provided at the venue;*
- *staff training needs;*
- *transport arrangements;*
- *insurance arrangements*;*
- *information to the provider;*
- *communication arrangements;*
- *supervision ratios;*
- *contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return;*
- *information to parents;*
- *preparing students;*
- *emergency arrangements;*
- *arrangements for sending a student(s) home early.*

*all insurance documentation must be submitted to AHG Head office for review before proceeding with final trip arrangements and approval

Financial planning

- The group leader should ensure that parents have early written information about the costs of the visit, how much will come from any school funds, and how much each parent will be charged. Parents should be given enough time to prepare financially for the visit. It may be useful to break down the costs into subsections such as travel, accommodation, meals, entry fees etc.
- All trips must be properly budgeted for in advance. This should include **all** costs and contingencies such as visa costs.
- Insurance costs should be included if needed.
 - Once the trip details have been approved and all forms have been completed, ask for a **non-returnable deposit**. Make it clear that the deposit is non-returnable and that students will not be taken if their behaviour is unacceptable or unsafe in the interval before the trip takes place.
 - If the trip is cancelled for a reason out of the control of the school, EIS will refund all monies to the students (including the non-returnable deposit). This can also include where a visit becomes non-viable due to limited numbers.
 - It is essential to cost the trip carefully at the outset:
 - Price required by the company
 - Emergency money
 - Miscellaneous costs, e.g. bank charges

For more specific details please refer to EIS Finance Policy for other Collections and Payments (date 30th September 2015)

CHEQUES SHOULD NEVER BE MADE PAYABLE TO AN INDIVIDUAL TEACHER.

Parents/Guardians should be advised of how and when payments should be made, e.g. instalments or a lump sum. Staff should avoid late payments as this can lead to last minute difficulties. It is essential to keep receipts for everything as they will have to be submitted with the accounts to the school Finance department for audit and reconciliation.

Remember to give the Finance Office at least seven working days' notice of when you will require cash etc. and check if this is possible.

Monies collected must be paid into the Finance Office immediately and receipts obtained. During the time that these monies are delayed from payment into the Finance Office, and a receipt has not been obtained by the group leader from the Finance Office, they must be kept in a secure, locked environment. All expenditure on visits must be accounted for with invoices and receipts as evidence of payments made.

Charging for visits

Education provided wholly or mainly during school hours is free. This means that the school should not impose a significant charge on parents for any visit that occurs during school hours, other than those to cover specific costs such as tickets and transportation.

The school may charge parents for board and lodging on residential visits as well as the full costs when a visit is deemed to be an 'optional extra'. An optional extra:

- falls wholly or mainly outside school hours;
- does not form part of the prescribed curriculum;

The group leader should obtain the parents' agreement to meet the costs of an optional extra visit before the visit is planned in detail.

First Aid

First aid should form part of the risk assessment. Before undertaking any off-site activities the group leader should assess what level of first aid might be needed. On all visits the group leader should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that an adequate first aid box is taken. For adventurous activities, visits abroad or residential visits it is sensible for at least one of the group's teachers to be a fully-trained first-aider. All adults in the group should know how to contact the emergency services.

When addressing first aid issues, considerations should include:

- a person in charge of first aid arrangements;
- a suitably stocked first aid box
- the size of the group and the nature of the activity;
- the likely injuries and how effective first aid would be;
- the distance to the nearest hospital.

2. Supervision

Ratios

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

- sex, age and ability of the group;
- students with special educational or medical needs;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;
- requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
- competence and behaviour of students;
- first aid cover.

Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. There should be a minimum of one teacher in charge.

In addition to the teacher in charge there should be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels

should be set accordingly. The same consideration should be given to visits abroad or residential visits. Some non-residential visits with mixed groups will need a teacher from each sex.

All mixed groups in Years 7 to 11 must normally be accompanied by a teacher of each sex at a minimum ratio of **1 to 15**.

All mixed residential groups must normally be accompanied by a teacher of each sex at a minimum ratio of **1 to 10**. **Consideration as to specific nature of trip may impact this ratio to 1:10 e.g. coastal trip.**

Staffing ratios for visits abroad will vary according to the activity, the students' age and sex, the location and the efficient use of resources. A minimum ratio of between 1 to 10 and 1 to 12 can be taken as a general rule of thumb in consideration of above factors.

Parents/Volunteers

Where there is more than one teacher/supervisor a group leader should be appointed who has authority over the whole group. If more than one school is involved an overall group leader should be agreed by all schools involved and identified to all. This should usually be the person with the most experience in leading such visits.

Where a high student: adult ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone.

The Group leader should notify SLT as to which staff members might accompany the students on the trip. Their suitability and the rationale behind their selection should be outlined. Considerations to the effect of any cover required in their absence should also be outlined and as a matter of courtesy, Heads of Department should be approached to aid planning.

Annual trips should not assume that the staff from the previous year will be automatically selected.

Parents/volunteers may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the student group, i.e. PCG or class parent representative

Vetting suitability/Safeguarding

The group leader needs to be clear about procedures for vetting volunteers who wish to be supervisors, in particular for residential visits. The suitability of potential supervisors should be assessed by the group leader at an early stage of the planning process. Group leaders should seek advice from SLT regarding any consideration of taking a volunteer that is not on the staff register.

For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone with a student wherever possible.

Supervisors' responsibilities

All adult supervisors, including teachers and parent/volunteer helpers, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any students who may require closer supervision, such as those with special educational needs or specific medical requirements. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

Remote supervision

The aim of visits for older students may be to encourage independence and investigative skills, and some of the time on visits such as trips abroad and fieldwork may not be directly supervised. The group leader should establish during the planning stage of the visit whether the pupils are competent in remote supervision. The group leader remains responsible for students even when not in direct contact with them.

Parents should be told, before the visit, whether any form of remote supervision will take place and should have agreed this part of the visit.

3. Preparing students

General

Within the contents of any letter which is sent out proposing a residential trip, the letter must inform parents that some students may not be eligible to participate in the scheduled trip if their school behavioural record does not warrant the trust required to partake in an overseas trip where staff are acting in loco parentis. Therefore, once the list of names showing an interest in a trip have been passed to the group leader and SLT, this list will be vetted beforehand, with parents being notified if their child's participation has been declined.

Students who are involved in a visit's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Providing information and guidance to students is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Students should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Students must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. A lack of control and discipline can be a major cause of accidents. Students should also be told of any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others. A **behaviour form** should be completed and signed by the student and a parent before a residential trip commences.

Any selection criteria should be made explicit when information regarding a trip is communicated to students or parents.

Where behaviour/ attendance/ academic performance is relevant to participation, again students and parents should be clear about what this actually means (ie does attendance have to be on or above KHDA requirements for participation? Are behaviour records to be considered relevant only if teachers have communicated the concern to parents?)

Participation

The group leader should ensure that the students are capable of undertaking the proposed activity. Students should be encouraged to take on challenges during adventurous activities but should not be coerced into activities of which they have a genuine fear. Students, whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such students, if feasible should be sent home early. Parents and students should be told in advance of the visit about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a student will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

Equal opportunities

Every effort should be made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, sex, religion etc. All young people should be encouraged to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible.

Information to students

The group leader should decide how information is provided, but must ensure that the students understand key safety information. For some students on overnight visits it may be their first experience away from home on their own and in the close company of other students. They should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit/activity;
- the background information about the place to be visited;
- basic foreign words where appropriate;
- relevant foreign culture and customs;
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- why safety precautions are in place;
- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- what standard of behaviour is expected;
- appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct including sexual activity;
- who is responsible for the group;
- what not to bring back from abroad such as drugs, knives etc.
- what to do if approached by anyone from outside the group;
- rendezvous procedures;
- what to do if separated from the group;

Emergency procedures.

For residential visits all group members should carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation in case an individual becomes separated.

If at any time there is a change in the planned schedule new activities should be assessed and students provided with the appropriate information.

Preparing students for remote supervision

During any time that remote supervision takes place the group leader must ensure that students are aware of the ground rules and are adequately equipped to be on their own in a group. The size of each group should also be considered. As a minimum, students should have the following:

- 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;
- a knowledge of how to summon help;
- a knowledge of out of bounds areas or activities;
- means of identity and a rendezvous point.

It is important that students 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.

Transport and students

Students using transport on a visit should be made aware of the basic safety rules including:

- wear your seatbelt and stay seated whilst travelling on transport;
- never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or controls;
- bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions;
- never attempt to get on or off moving vehicles;
- never lean out or throw things from the window of a vehicle;
- never get off a vehicle at traffic lights or in traffic;
- never kneel or stand on seats;
- never distract or disturb the driver or impede the driver's vision;
- if you feel unwell tell a teacher.

The group leader should ensure that students know what to do if they miss the scheduled departure time.

Students with special educational and medical needs

Every effort should be made to include students with special educational or medical needs in school visits, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone in the group. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Students with medical needs

Additional safety measures may be necessary to support students with medical needs during visits. All teachers supervising visits should be aware of a student's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures. Summary sheets should be held by all teachers containing details of each student's needs and any other relevant information provided by the parents. Parents should be asked to supply:

- Details of medical conditions;
- Emergency contact numbers;
- The child's GP's name, address and telephone number;
- Information on whether the pupil has spent a night away from home and their ability to cope effectively; Written details of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times) and parental permission to administer.
- Information on any allergies/phobias;
- Information on any special dietary requirements;
- Information on any toileting needs, special equipment or aids to daily living;

All teachers supervising the visit should be given the opportunity to talk through any concerns they may have about their ability to support the student.

The group leader should check that the insurance policy covers staff and pupils with pre-existing medical needs.

4. Communicating with parents

Parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or visit unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum which parents have already been informed about in the school prospectus or a letter.

Information to Parents

Before residential visits, or when students are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities, parents should be encouraged to attend a briefing meeting where written details of the proposed visit should also be provided. There should be alternative arrangements for parents who cannot attend or who have difficulty with communication in English.

Parents need to be aware that the teachers and other adult supervisors on the visit will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information should be given to parents:

- Dates of the visit;
- Visit's objectives;
- Times of departure and return - parents must have agreed to meet their child on return;
- The location where the students will be collected and returned;
- Modes of travel including the name of any travel company;
- The size of the group and the level of supervision, including any times when remote supervision may take place;
- Details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- Details of provision for special educational or medical needs;
- Procedures for students who become ill;
- Names of leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- Details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- Standards of behaviour expected in respect of, for example, alcohol, smoking and general group discipline;
- What students should not take on the visit or bring back;
- Details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole, and whether parents need to arrange additional cover;
- Clothing, equipment and money to be taken;
- The information to be obtained from parents and details of what they will be asked to consent to;
- Details on the cost of the visit including methods and deadlines for payments.

Parental consent

Group leaders must seek consent for ALL visits.

Detailed proposals must be made well in advance for the following:

- Adventure activities
- Visits abroad;
- Other residential visits;
- Remote supervision.

If parents withhold consent absolutely the student should not be taken on the visit. The contents of a consent form for a parent to sign will vary according to the type of visit.

A parental consent form should be completed for each student in the group. This form could also be used for obtaining details required. General issues to consider include:

- Any allergies/phobias the student may have;
- Any medication the student is taking and if so what the dosage is and who is to administer it;
- Any contagious or infectious diseases suffered within the family during the preceding 4 weeks, and any other recent illnesses suffered by the student;
- The name, address and phone number of the student's GP;
- Any special medical/dietary requirements;
- Whether the student suffers from travel sickness;
- Whether the student has any night time tendencies such as sleepwalking (for residential visits);
- The student's ability to swim in the pool or sea;
- The parental home and daytime phone numbers and addresses;
- An alternative contact, with their phone number and address.

Medical consent

Parents should be asked to agree to the student's receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If parents do not agree to this it may be necessary to withdraw the child from the visit - given the added responsibility this would mean for the group leader.

Contact with parents during the visit

Group leaders should ensure that parents can contact their child via the school contact and the group leader in the event of a home emergency. A 24hr contact number must be made available.

Students' contact with parents

Group leaders should arrange for parents to be told by the school of the group's safe arrival. This may be done by a 'telephone tree' or students may wish to speak to their parents individually. Such arrangements should be agreed with parents and students before the visit takes place. Parents concerned after a phone call should contact the school contact.

5. Planning Transport

The group leader must give careful thought to planning transport. The main factors to consider

- Passenger safety;
- Type of journey - will it be local or will it include long distance driving?
- Traffic conditions;
- Arrangements set by the transport company in case of breakdown or emergency;
- Weather;
- Stopping points for toilet and refreshments on long journeys;
- Supervision.

Factors that the group leader should consider when planning supervision on transport include:

- Level of supervision needed on buses/coaches - supervisors should be located so as able to supervise students.
- Safety when crossing roads as part of the journey. The group leader should ensure that pedestrian crossings and traffic lights or footbridges and subways are used to cross roads whenever possible.
- Safety on buses, trains, ferries and boats - the group leader should make clear to students how much or little freedom they have to 'roam'. Misbehaviour is a main cause of accidents to children on such means of transport. Appropriate supervision and discipline should be maintained at all times. Students should also be made aware of what to do in an emergency and where emergency procedures are displayed;
- Booking transport - the group leader should arrange for seats to be booked well in advance to ensure that the party can travel together;
- Safety of pupils at pick-up and drop-off points and when getting on or off transport.
- Safety while on stops or rests during the journey;
- Safety of the group in the event of an accident or breakdown - the group should remain under direct supervision of the group leader or other teachers wherever possible;
- Head counts by the group leader **and at least one other** supervisor or delegated teacher should always be carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport;
- Responsibility for checking that seat belts are fastened at all times during travel;
- Travel sickness tablets should only be administered to a pupil with previous authorisation from the parents;
- Vetting non-teacher supervisors by EISJ management, if appropriate.

Hiring coaches and buses

When booking transport, the group leader should ensure that seat belts are available for students. The group leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company, expected to be Diamond Lease for UAE based visits.

7. Visits abroad

Traveling abroad can be hugely rewarding for students and adults alike, but it is important that careful preparation takes place. Much of the earlier advice in this handbook applies to visits abroad, but there are some additional factors that need to be considered too.

Planning and preparation

It is good practice that an exploratory visit to the location should always be made. If this is not always possible the group leader should gather as much information as possible on the facilities provided and the area to be visited, coupled with a reputable company with proven track record.

Staffing the visit

Staffing ratios for visits abroad are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity, the student's age and sex, the location, and the efficient use of resources. A minimum ratio of 1 adult to 10 students is recommended but, there should be enough adults in the group to cover an emergency. Mixed gender groups should have at least one male and one female teacher.

Preparing students for visits abroad

Factors to be considered for visits abroad include:

- language - particularly common phrases;
- culture e.g. body language, rules and regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender;
- drugs, alcohol usage;
- food and drink - tap water/bottled water. Care with raw vegetables, salads and unpeeled fruit, raw shellfish, underdone meat or fish;
- money - how to carry money and valuables discreetly;
- how to use phones abroad;
- what to do in an emergency.

Briefing meeting for parents

It is particularly important that parents are given the opportunity to meet the teachers and others who will be taking the pupils overseas.

Vaccinations

The group leader should find out whether vaccinations are necessary and ensure that all members of the group have received it in good time. Check whether the country to be visited requires proof of vaccination.

Insurance

The group leader must ensure that the group has comprehensive travel insurance which has been approved by AL Habtoor Group office insurance department.

Foreign legislation

The group leader needs to check relevant legislation; particularly on health and safety e.g. fire regulations; local immunization requirements (see above); protocols regarding photography etc.

Visas/passports

The group leader should ensure that all members of the group have valid passports and visas (if appropriate) in the early stages of planning the trip. Passports/visas should have at least 6 months validity up to the expiry date.

Passports should be collected from each member of the group at least two weeks before leaving and kept in a secure place until the date of departure. Sticky labels with the school logo should be applied to the front for easy identification.

Photocopies of the group's passports should be taken for emergency use.

Nationality

Some students may require a separate passport and may need to use separate passport control channels from the rest of the group. The group leader must be aware of the need to supervise such arrangements.

Emergency Medical Facilities

It is advisable to take a contingency fund or have access to a credit card as sometimes treatment has to be paid for in advance and money has to be claimed back later, with accompanying receipts.

Paperwork

The group leader should ensure they obtain and take with them:

- travel tickets, passports and visas;
- a copy of the contract with the tour company/accommodation etc.
- medical papers relevant for significant medical histories;
- parental consent forms
- the contact numbers of the Head of School, and other home contacts;
- the names of parents and the addresses and phone numbers at which they can be contacted (home and workplace).
- several copies of a list of group members and their details;
- details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number;
- the name, address and phone number of the group's accommodation;
- photocopies of all the groups documents.

For residential visits which are not abroad and therefore do not require passports, the group leader may wish to ask parents for passport sized photographs of the students and others in the group.

Information retained at the school

Full details of the visit should be retained at the school while the visit is in progress. This should include:

- the itinerary and contact phone number/address of the group;
- a list of group members and their details;
- contact names, addresses and phone numbers of the parents;
- copies of parental consent forms;
- copies of travel documents, insurance documents, medical papers;
- a copy of the contract with the tour company/hotel etc.;

It is the Head of School (and Principal)'s responsibility to ensure that this information is available at all times, particularly if the visit takes place at a time when the school is closed. The custodian of the information is typically the Dean of Students and Head of School.

During the visit

It is advisable for pupils to carry a note in the relevant foreign language for use if they get lost asking the reader to reunite them with the group at the accommodation/meeting point. They should also carry the group leader's name and the duty contact's phone number.

All group members should carry an appropriate amount of foreign currency at all times e.g. money for telephone (or a phone card).

It is important to be able to identify group members readily e.g. uniform, cap or item of clothing, badges.

However, **it is advisable that students do not display their name clearly on the exterior of their clothing.**

Travel by Air

Taking a school group on aircraft requires careful planning and preparation. If the group includes any members with medical alerts or dietary requests it is necessary to check that the airline has been informed.

Exchange visits

The success of an exchange visit largely depends on good relationships and communications with the partner school.

Individual school exchanges differ from other visits abroad in that students will spend most of their time with host families and are, therefore, not always under the direct supervision of school staff.

Students must be aware of the ground rules agreed between the group leader and the host family. The following should be ensured by the group leader:

- A good personal knowledge of the host school and counterpart.
- Appropriate and satisfactory pairing arrangements.
- Clear arrangements with parents, students and the host school for collecting and distributing students to families, and for transporting pupils throughout the visit.

- The headteacher should retain a list of all the students involved and their family names and addresses.
- Students living with host families should have easy access to their teachers, usually by telephone.
- Parents should be made aware that their children living with host families will not always be under direct teacher supervision.
- Group leaders organising exchange visits need to be clear about procedures in the relevant country for vetting the suitability of host families including criminal background checks insofar as these are available.
- If the host school or placing agency does not have appropriate measures in place for carrying out checks to ensure the safety and welfare of exchange or home stay pupils, the group leader should seek further assurances and/or reconsider whether the visit should take place.

8. Emergency Procedures

Teachers in charge of students during a visit have a duty of care to ensure that the students are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school visit.

The group leader would usually take charge in an emergency and would need to ensure that emergency procedures are in place and that back up cover is arranged. The group leader should liaise with the representative of the tour operator if one is being used.

All those involved in the school trip, including supervisors, students and their parents, should be informed of who will take charge in an emergency, the named back up cover and what they are expected to do in an emergency.

Preparation

By their nature, emergencies are usually unexpected, but careful emergency planning can mitigate the trauma of being caught up in an emergency. It is good practice for the group leader to:

- agree an emergency action plan, which includes 24-hour (i.e. constant cover) contact points at the school and clear roles for the group leader, school contact, Headteacher - e.g. managing media interest, supporting parents of an injured student, transport arrangements etc.;
- ensure that all members of the group know what action to take if there is a problem;
- hold evening briefings with supervisors to discuss issues for the next day;
- spend time early the next morning explaining arrangements to the pupils;
- have, or ensure that other adults in the group have, up-to date competence in First Aid and other life saving competence as necessary for the activities;
- ensure that the First Aid kit is properly stocked.
- ensure that all student's medical needs (e.g. asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis) are known and that staff are competent to handle them
- be aware that some diseases are more common in some countries and know what preventative action to take and what to do if a group member becomes infected;
- recognise that many of the health problems of students on longer visits are caused by lack of food, of liquid or of sleep;
- if appropriate, advise group members about the dangers of over-exertion in the heat and of dehydration, which can cause headache, dizziness and nausea;
- in warm climates, keep fluid levels high, take extra salt and wear loose, lightweight clothing - preferably made of cotton or other natural fibres - and use suitably factored sun protection creams and sun hats/glasses; . ensure that drivers take adequate rest breaks on long journeys;
- ensure that all students understand and follow the code of conduct; practice emergency drills e.g. evacuation of mini-bus;
- if abroad, know where the nearest UAE Embassy or Consulate is located and the telephone number.

Emergency procedures during a visit

If an emergency occurs on a school visit the group leader should maintain or resume control of the group overall. The main factors to consider include:

- establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible;
- ensure that all the group are safe and looked after;

- establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention;
- ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital with any relevant medical information, and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together;
- notify the police if necessary;
- ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident;
- ensure that all group members are following the emergency procedures and the roles allocated to them - revise procedures and re-allocate roles as necessary;
- inform the school contact and provider/tour operator (as appropriate). The school contact number should be accessible at all times during the visit;
- details of the incident to pass on to the school should include: nature, date and time of incident; location of incident; names of casualties and details of their injuries; names of others involved so that parents can be reassured; action taken so far; action yet to be taken (and by whom);
- school contact should notify parents, providing as full a factual account of the incident as possible;
- notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required (this may be done by the school contact);
- notify the UAE Embassy/Consulate if an emergency occurs abroad (this may be done by the school contact);
- ascertain phone numbers for future calls. Try not to rely solely on mobile phones;
- write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence;
- keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident;
- complete an accident report form as soon as possible.
- no-one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to their families. Refer media enquiries to a designated media contact in the home area;
- keep receipts for any expenses incurred - insurers will require these.

Remote Supervision

Supervision can be close or remote but is always 24 hours:

- close supervision occurs when the group remain within sight and contact of the supervisor;
- remote supervision occurs when, as part of planned activities, a group works away from the supervisor but is subject to stated controls (e.g. during International Award expeditions). The supervisor is present though not necessarily near or in sight, but his or her whereabouts are known;
- down time (or recreational time) - for example during the evenings - may involve close or remote supervision, but should not be unsupervised - the supervisors continue to be in charge;
- it is essential that everyone involved in the visit understands the supervision arrangements and expectations.

When supervision is remote:

- groups should be sufficiently trained and assessed as competent for the level of activity to be undertaken, including First Aid and emergency procedures. Remote supervision will normally be the final stage of a phased development programme;
- students will be familiar with the environment or similar environments and have details of the rendezvous points and the times of rendezvous;
- clear and understandable boundaries will be set for the group; there must be clear lines of communication between the group, the supervisor and the school. Do not rely exclusively on mobile phones;
- the supervisor should monitor the group's progress at appropriate intervals;
- the supervisor will be in the expedition or activity area and will be able to reach the group reasonably promptly should the group need support in an emergency;
- there should be a recognisable point at which the activity is completed;
- there should be clear arrangements for the abandonment of the activity where it cannot be safely completed.

Rearranging Groups

Potential challenges can occur when rearranging groups. In particular:

- when a large group is split into smaller groups for specific activities;
- when groups transfer from one activity to another and change supervisor;
- during periods between activities;

- when small groups re-form into a large group.

It is important that the supervisor:

- clearly takes responsibility for the group when their part of the programme begins, particularly making certain that all group members are aware of the changeover;
- clearly passes on responsibility for the group when their part of the programme is concluded, together with any relevant information ensuring that the group members know who their next leader is.

Down Time

- Group leaders should ensure that pupils continue to be properly supervised during down time before, between and after activities, including the evenings on residential visits. A group occupied in study or activity is far safer than a group left to its own devices in an unfamiliar environment. Too much unstructured free time in a residential programme can allow time for mischief, bullying, homesickness and wandering off from the body of the group. It is good practice to:
 - ensure that all staff and pupils understand the standards of behaviour that apply at all times, not just during activities;
 - ensure that handover between activities is properly supervised, with a named supervisor responsible for the group if there is down time between activities;
 - ensure that all supervisors understand that their supervisory role continues in the evening - however hard a day it has been, it is not a time to relax in front of the TV or iPad;
 - use down time in the evening or at the beginning of the day to brief the group on the planned activities the day to come, e.g. the planned learning outcomes, specific health and safety issues, meal and break times etc.;
 - use down time after activities for individual reflection on personal learning outcomes, and group discussion about the highs and lows of the day;
 - apply the advice contained in **Remote Supervision** above, adapted as necessary, if it is felt reasonable to allow students some time without close supervision;
 - occupy the group with mildly active, non-academic activities in the evening, e.g. craft activities, environmental activities, quizzes, team challenges, led-walks.

Night Time

Group leaders should ensure that:

- the group's *immediate* accommodation is exclusively for the group's use;
- teachers (of both genders where appropriate) have sleeping, accommodation on the same floor immediately adjacent to the students' accommodation;
- there is a teacher present on that floor whenever the students are there;
- where hotel/hostel reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visits;
- in the absence of 24 hour staffing of reception, external doors should be made secure against intrusion and windows closed as necessary to prevent intrusion;
- where possible, internal doors should be lockable but staff should have reasonable access to the student accommodation at all times;
- where students' doors are locked, teachers have immediate access, as necessary, to a master key;
- all staff and students know the emergency procedures/escape routes in the event of a fire. Where windows and doors are locked against intrusion at night, ensure that alternative escape routes are known and that all fire doors function properly.
- Don't be lulled into a sense of false security by local assurances, such as "no need to lock doors in this part of the country". The presence of the group may attract unwelcome attention that is unusual in the locality.

Travel

A driver cannot safely drive and supervise children at the same time. Group leaders should ensure that:

- transport by road has seat belts and that the pupils wear them;
- there is adequate supervision at all times when travelling;
- supervisors are reserved seats that allow them to supervise properly
- students are supervised when boarding and leaving;
- extra care is taken when leaving a vehicle in a country with unfamiliar traffic rules or norms e.g. driving on the left hand side

- standards of behaviour are met, and in particular that drivers are not distracted;
- students are occupied on long journeys - this will help the journey pass quickly;
- evacuation procedures are clearly understood by everyone, luggage is securely stored and emergency exits are kept clear;
- there are adequate rest stops for drivers;
- head counts are carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport.

Behaviour problems, illness or injury

- poor behaviour may be reduced by ensuring that all students are signed up to an agreed expectation of standards before (or at least at the beginning of) the visit;
- educational visits can be a good opportunity for school staff to get to know students away from the confines of the school, but the group leader should resist any temptation to accept lower standards of behaviour. The different hazards that students may be exposed to away from the school will require them to observe standards of behaviour that are at least as high as, or higher than, in the classroom;
- if one adult has to give prolonged attention to one group member, the group leader should reassess the supervisory roles of the other adults to ensure that all members of the group know who is responsible for them. Activities may need to be amended until the other adult returns all of his or her attention to the group;
- group leaders should trust their own knowledge of the young people and use their own professional judgement; this may include challenging an activity leader where the group leader's knowledge of the group is superior, or intervening to prompt a change of plan.

10. Specific Activities- Coastal Visits

There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. The group leader will want to bear the following points in mind when assessing the risks of a coastal activity:

- tides, rip tides and sandbanks are potential hazards; timings and exit routes should be checked;
- group members should be aware of warning signs and flags;
- establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc.;
- some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain are out of bounds, and whether the risk assessment allows swimming in the sea;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to a safe distance from the cliff edge at all times - a "buffer zone" between the students and the hazard. Be aware that cliff falls can mean that cliff paths stop abruptly at the cliff edge;
- the local coastguard, harbour master, lifeguard or tourist information office can provide information and advice on the nature and location of hazards.

Swimming in the sea or other natural waters

Swimming and paddling or otherwise entering the waters of river, canal, sea or lake should never be allowed as an impromptu activity. The pleas, of children to be allowed to bathe - because it is hot weather, for example, The activities should be formal and supervised.

It is good practice that, wherever possible, group leaders seek out recognised bathing areas that have official surveillance i.e. qualified lifeguard cover. But, even then, group leaders should be aware that students might mingle with members of the public and be lost to view. Students should always be in sight and reasonable reach of their supervisors.

The group leader should:

- be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers;
- ascertain for themselves the level of the pupils' swimming ability;
- check the weather;
- be aware of the local conditions - such as currents, weeds, rip tides, a shelving, uneven or unstable bottom - using local information from the lifeguard, coastguard, harbourmaster, police or tourist information office;
- beware of rocks, breakwaters and other potential hazards;

- look out for warning signs and flags: a red flag means it is unsafe to swim; yellow flags mean that lifeguards are on patrol in the area - between the flags; a black and white flag means it is an area used by surfers and not suitable for swimming;
- designate a safe area of water for use by the group;
- brief the group about the limits of the swimming area;
- avoid crowded beaches where it is harder to see students;
- be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water;
- be aware of the dangers of paddling especially for young students;
- ensure that students have not eaten (at least half an hour) before swimming;
- ensure the activity is suitable for the students, especially any with special needs or disabilities;
- adopt and explain the signals of distress and recall;
- ensure that buoyancy aids, lifejackets etc. are used where appropriate;
- carry out regular head counts;
- be aware that it is not always possible to tell when someone is in difficulties.
- Supervisors should:
 - have clear roles - at least one supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance, even where lifeguards are on duty;
 - take up a best position from which to exercise a constant vigilance;
 - divide their careful watching between staff who stand in the sea and look landward towards the group and staff who stay on land and watch the group from that vantage point;
 - give the children their full, undivided attention;
 - always follow the advice or directions of a lifeguard;
 - never swim themselves unless it is to help a child in distress;
 - ensure that no child is allowed to wade out or swim further than his\her waist height;
 - nevertheless, be aware that it is possible to drown in one's own depth, and to act immediately when a child appears to be in difficulties;
 - ensure that children leave the water immediately if they get too cold, especially if toes and fingers look blue or feel numb - this could suggest the onset of hypothermia;
 - recognise that a child in difficulty is unlikely to wave or shout - all of their energies will be used in trying to keep afloat.
- It is good practice for the group leader, or another designated adult in the group, to hold a relevant life saving award, especially where lifeguard cover may not be available.