



National
Guidance

Transport - general considerations

When planning for outdoor learning, off-site visits and Learning Outside the Classroom, establishments should give particular consideration to transport issues. Statistics demonstrate that it can be more dangerous to travel to an activity than to engage in it, and establishments must follow their employer's guidance for transport. This is often provided in a separate policy, such as for transport or the use of minibuses. All national and local regulatory requirements must be followed.

Some specific factors to consider:

- The driver of any vehicle transporting children or young people cannot drive and supervise at the same time. Therefore a key judgement needs to be made about the likely behaviour and individual needs of the passengers. If any of the children or young people may require close supervision, then another adult should travel in the vehicle so that the driver is not distracted.
- Minibuses and coaches must comply with regulatory and employer guidance on licensing, speed limits, drivers' hours, weights, seating and seat belts, etc. See the document on Transport in Minibuses in this guidance.

Driver Competence

Competence and training requirements for drivers include:

- Does the driver hold the appropriate licence?
- The number of driving hours required for the journey and total length of the driver's day (including non-driving hours).
- The capacity of the driver to maintain concentration - whether more than one driver is needed to avoid driver fatigue and the extent to which the passengers will need additional supervision.
- The type of journey - will the visit take place locally or will it include long distance driving?
- Foreseeable traffic conditions.
- Contingency funds and arrangements in case of breakdown/emergency.
- Insurance cover.
- Weather and driving conditions.
- Journey time and distance from support.
- Comfort stops and access to toilets and refreshments.
- Group supervision.

Group Supervision on transport

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey. Whatever the mode of transport, group members should be made aware of the position of emergency evacuation exits, first aid stations and meeting points. The Visit Leader should also be aware of alternative routes or means of travel in the event of delay or cancellation.

Visit Leaders should plan the journey in a way that will address a number of travel issues. These include:

- When crossing roads as part of the journey, the Visit Leader should ensure that young people know how to observe the safety rules set out in the Highway Code and the Green Cross Code and are aware of direction of traffic flow. It is good practice for all the staff, voluntary helpers and the young people to be briefed on a common approach as to how group road crossings will be managed. Where available, pedestrian crossings, traffic lights, underpasses and footbridges should be used to cross roads.
- Where keeping the group together will ease the problem of group supervision, the Visit Leader may need to arrange for seats to be reserved well in advance.
- Head counts should be carried out whenever the group is getting off or onto transport.
- It is particularly important that young people should be made aware of safety requirements and expected standards of behaviour when getting on or off transport at pick-up and drop-off points (particularly when using UK vehicles abroad) and when assembled in waiting areas.
- Whether travelling on buses, trains, ferries or aircraft, the Visit Leader should set clear expectations about the amount of freedom to 'roam'. Inappropriate behaviour can be a major cause of accidents to young people when travelling, requiring effective supervision at all times.
- Appropriate supervision around busy airport and ferry terminals will depend on the age and maturity of the young people and their familiarity with this mode of travel. Once through security checks at airports it may be appropriate to adopt a slightly more relaxed supervision system.
- Passing through security and passport checks it is important to have staff appropriately placed in the group to deal with any issues that arise.
- Being on the open deck of a ferry is a wonderful experience but the decision as to whether students can be allowed on an open deck and how this is managed should be part of the planning process.
- Double-decker buses/coaches will require at least one supervisor on each deck. In any seating arrangements, thought should be given as to where it is best to place leaders, ensuring that the arrangements will support the management of discipline and adult proximity to emergency exits.
- Visit leaders should plan sufficient stops at suitable areas, ensuring these are operationally viable with any providers and drivers.
- In the event of an accident or breakdown, the group should remain under the direct supervision of the Visit Leader or Assistant Leaders. If the vehicle is in danger of being hit while broken down (e.g. if it is on the hard shoulder of a motorway or dual carriageway, or is partially blocking a road) the visit leader or driver should contact the police to provide safety support. Whether it is

safer to keep the group on board the vehicle, or to disembark and wait elsewhere, is a matter that will need to be risk assessed on the basis of the specific circumstances. If the decision is to keep the group on board the vehicle, then it is recommended that the rear seats are vacated and the young people moved forward towards the front.

- Leaders should ensure that seat belts are fastened.
- Visit Leaders should consider whether it is appropriate for young people to wear a high-visibility and easily distinguished article of clothing.
- Young people should be made aware that they are not allowed access to the driving area at any time.

Hiring coaches and buses

The Visit Leader should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. The company should be able to offer assurances to support the service that they offer and will be able to direct you to other, similar users who can confirm this.

Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed. Establishments using operators to transport young people should seek assurances that the operators have the appropriate Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operators' Licence and that operators have adequate procedures in place to deal with emergencies such as vehicle breakdown.

Visit Leaders should ensure parents understand that seating and seat belt regulations abroad, are not necessarily the same as in the UK.

If a group member requires a wheelchair, the Visit Leader should ensure that the transport has appropriate access and securing facilities.

