

**FEDERATION OF ST ANNE'S AND ST MARTIN'S  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**St Anne's and St Martins**



**Learning to live by faith and to be known by love**

**Educational Visits and Offsite Activities  
Policy and Procedure**

## Policy Management

<b>Policy owner</b>	Headteacher
<b>Approved by:</b>	Resources Committee
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# Educational visits and off-site activities policy.

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience. Educational visits are an essential element of good primary practice.

## 1. Purposes

Educational Visits can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised. This includes ensuring that children have enough prior knowledge to learn from the experience.

## 2. Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised by The Federation St Anne's and St Martin's Catholic Primary Schools.

**All planning for educational visits must also comply with the RBC regulations, advice and procedures for off-site and hazardous activities, which are published separately.**

## 3. Role of the Headteacher

- 3.1 The Headteacher will ensure that an Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) is nominated to oversee and co-ordinate all educational visits.
- 3.2 Alongside the EVC, the Headteacher will also ensure that:
  - 3.2.1 a suitable visit leader has been approved;
  - 3.2.2 all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins;
  - 3.2.3 the risk assessment is complete and that it is safe to make the visit;
  - 3.2.4 any training needs have been met;
  - 3.2.5 the visit leader has experience in supervising and controlling the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
  - 3.2.6 the visit leader has relevant skills, qualifications and experience if acting as an instructor, and knows the location of the activity;
  - 3.2.7 all supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children and have appropriate clearance;
  - 3.2.8 the governing body has approved the visit if necessary (in the case of residential trips or trips into London);
  - 3.2.9 parents have signed the relevant consent and medical forms;
  - 3.2.10 arrangements have been made for the medical and special educational needs of all the children;
  - 3.2.11 the mode of travel is appropriate;
  - 3.2.12 travel times out and back are known;
  - 3.2.13 there is adequate and relevant insurance cover;
  - 3.2.14 the address and phone number of the visit's venue is known and school has a contact name;
  - 3.2.15 the names of all the adults and pupils in the travelling group, and the contact details of parents and the staff's and volunteers' next of kin are recorded.
  - 3.2.15 that all relevant paperwork has been approved by a nominated Insurance & Risk Assessment Officer at Reading Borough Council.

## 4. Role of the Visit Leader

One teacher, the visit leader, is responsible overall for the supervision and conduct of the visit, and should have been approved by the Headteacher. The visit leader should:

- 4.1 ensure that the Headteacher has been fully informed about the trip prior to making the booking;
- 4.2 follow the booking procedures below and as detailed in the Staff Handbook;
- 4.3 appoint a deputy;

- 4.4 be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- 4.5 be suitably qualified if instructing an activity and be conversant in the good practice for that activity if not;
- 4.6 undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including a preparatory visit to the venue if possible, and the briefing of group members and parents;
- 4.7 undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment;
- 4.8 have regard to the health and safety of the group at all times;
- 4.9 know all the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability;
- 4.10 observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below;
- 4.11 ensure that pupils understand their responsibilities (see responsibilities of pupils below).

## **5 Other teachers and adults involved in a visit**

Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the Governing Body. They will therefore be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours. They will be acting under an agreement with their Headteacher and Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

5.1 Teacher and other adults on the visit must:

- 5.1.1 do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- 5.1.2 care for each individual pupil as any reasonable parent would;
- 5.1.3 follow the instructions of the visit leader and help with control and discipline. Non teachers should generally not have sole charge of pupils except where risks to health and safety are minimal;
- 5.1.4 consider stopping the visit or the activity if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

## **6 Approval of visits**

In approving visits, the Head of Establishment and EVC should ensure that the visit leader has been appropriately inducted/trained, and is competent to lead the visit.

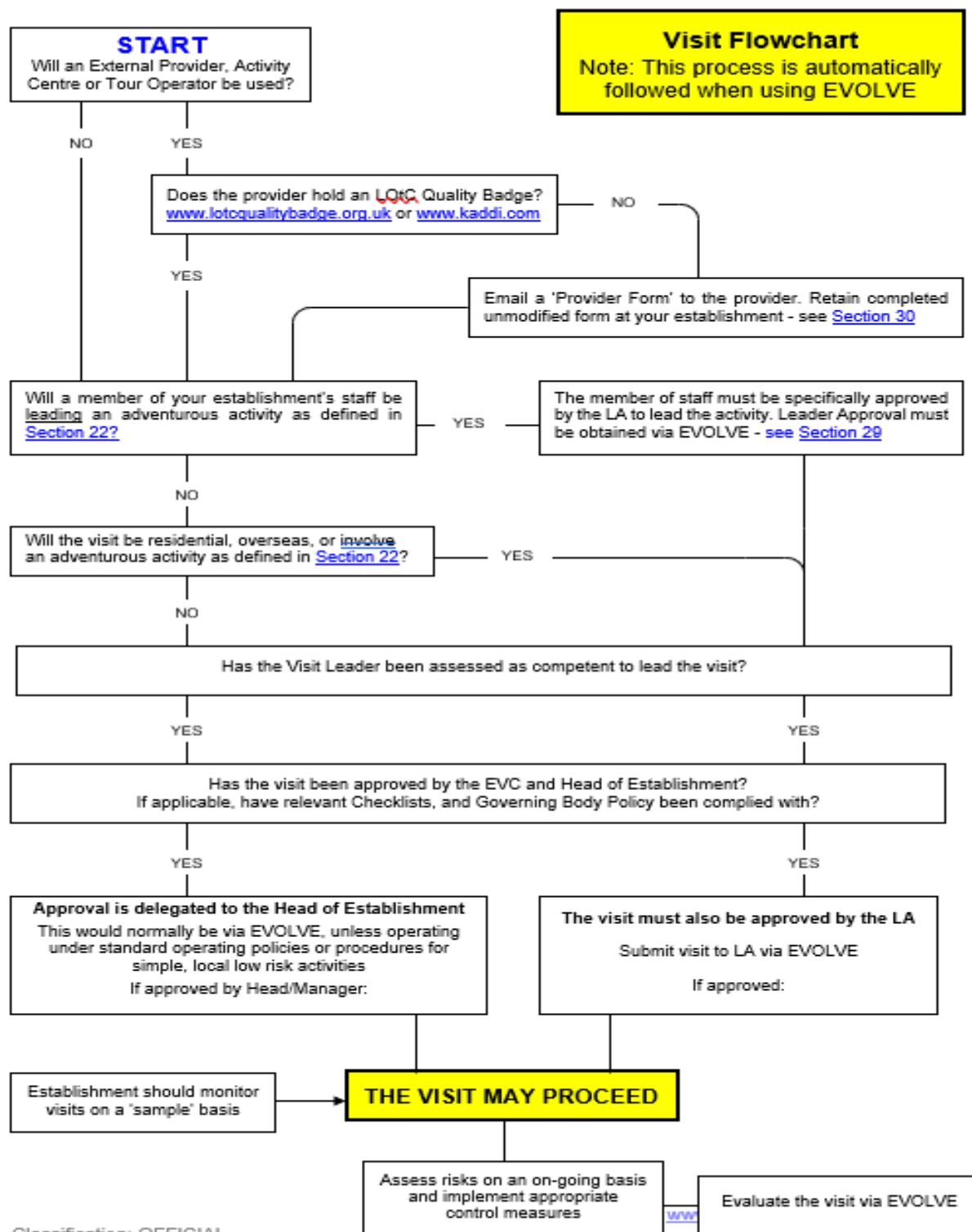
All visits are entered onto EVOLVE, in order to aid planning and reduce bureaucracy.

Based on the visit types, EVOLVE automatically directs the flow for approval.

The following visit types are 'authorised' within the establishment, and then 'approved' by the LA via EVOLVE:

- overseas
- residential
- involving an adventurous activity as defined in Section 6

Approval is delegated to the Head of Establishment for visits not in the above categories and to the EVC for in school enrichment activities outside normal classroom activities



## 7 Responsibilities of pupils

The visit leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- 7.1 not take unnecessary risks;
- 7.2 follow the instructions of their group leader and other adults;
- 7.3 dress and behave sensibly and responsibly;
- 7.4 look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell their group leader about it;
- 7.5 not undertake any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous. Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

## 8 Parents

The visit leader should ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions for longer visits. The visit leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct. Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language;

8.1 Parents must:

- 8.1.1 provide the visit leader with emergency contact number(s);
- 8.1.2 sign the consent form;
- 8.1.3 give the visit leader any relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.

## 9 Planning off-site visits

9.1 Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

9.2 The Headteacher is responsible for planning all off-site visits. In practice, the detailed planning is delegated to the organiser of the visit or the visit leader, but the Headteacher must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is qualified to do so and has the necessary experience.

9.3 The organiser / visit leader must agree all plans with the Headteacher.

## 10 Risk Assessment.

A risk assessment should be carried out before setting off on a visit and should be specific to the activity being planned. Risk assessments should be proportionate and sensible, focusing on how to manage genuine risks. Risks are expected to be reduced to an *acceptable* or *tolerable* level, and not necessarily eliminated. Thorough planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- what are the risks?
- who is affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- can the visit leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- what is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit? (See section on Supervision.)

The visit leader and other supervisors should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger. The visit leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- the type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- the location;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
- the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

## 11 Exploratory visits

Wherever possible the visit leader should undertake an exploratory visit to:  
ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;  
assess potential areas and levels of risk;  
ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;  
ensure that the visit leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.

## 12 First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit.

For all visits there should be a responsible adult with a good working knowledge of first aid appropriate to the environment (e.g. urban, remote, water, etc.). It is recommended that someone with 'Appointed persons first aid training', that includes pediatric considerations, be present on a trip as a minimum. For EYFS outings, there must always be at least one member of staff present who holds a current Paediatric First Aid certificate.

The visit leader should have a working knowledge of first aid and all adults in the group should know how to contact emergency services. The minimum first-aid provision is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

First-aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a first-aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first-aid cover for the other pupils. The Headteacher should take this into account when assessing what level of first-aid facilities will be needed. The contents of a first-aid kit will depend on what activities are planned.

## 13 Supervision

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit.

The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group;
- special needs pupils;
- 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.

There should always be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency. When visits are to remote areas or involved hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.

As general guidelines, the following ratio\* of adults to children should be used:

Foundation Stage, visits off-site may be as low as: 1:2

Key Stage One, visits off-site on foot: 1:10

Key Stage One, visits off site involving public transport: 1:6

Key Stage Two, visits off-site on foot: 1:20

Key Stage Two, visits off-site involving public transport: 1:15

Regardless of these suggested ratios, each visit will be assessed individually through the school's risk assessment procedure for educational visits.

Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group.

\*These ratios do not include residential visits.

Where a high adult-to-pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents with appropriate clearance 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 pupil group.

All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a pupil unless they have full enhanced DBS clearance.

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the LA or Governing Body must ensure that the visit leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The visit leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

## **14 Preparing Pupils**

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. The lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and others' safety.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

## **15 Participation**

Pupils should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities. During the visit they should not be coerced into activities they fear. Pupils whose behaviour is such that the visit leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the visit leader should consider whether such pupils will return home early.

## **16 Information to pupils**

It is for the visit leader to decide how to provide information, but they should be satisfied that the pupils understand key safety information.

Pupils should understand:

- the aims and objectives of the visit / activity;
- background information about the place to be visited;
- 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 from pupils;
- who is responsible for the group;
- what to do if approached by a stranger;
- what to do if separated from the group;
- emergency procedures;
- rendezvous procedures.

## **17 Transport and pupils**

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules such as:  
Educational Visits and Offsite Activities policy



- arrive on time and wait for the transport away from the road, track, etc.
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- wear seatbelts and stay seated while travelling on transport;
- make sure bags do not block aisles on the transport;
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- never throw things out of the transport vehicle's windows;
- never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- never run about while transport is moving or pass someone on steps or stairs;
- never kneel or stand on seats or otherwise impede the driver's vision;
- never distract or disturb the driver;
- stay clear of automatic doors / manual doors after boarding or leaving the transport;
- after leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road;
- if children have to cross roads to get to the transport always wait for an adult to supervise crossing;
- if children feel unwell while travelling, make sure a teacher or the person who is otherwise responsible for the group is aware.

Pupils with special educational and medical needs

Every effort should be made to accommodate children with special educational or medical needs whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

## **18 Communicating with Parents / Guardians**

Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place – 'in loco parentis' – and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupils' health and safety is useful to parents, and will be included in a letter to parents / guardians prior to a visit:

- dates of the visit;
- times of departure and return;
- mode(s) of travel which may include the name of any travel company;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- names of leader, or other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- visit's objectives;
- details of the activities planned and, if appropriate, of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- clothing and equipment to be taken;
- money to be taken;
- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to.

## **19 Parental consent**

The school will seek consent for:

- any visits involving young children;
- any adventure activities;
- any residential visits.

If parents withhold consent absolutely the pupil should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent, the Headteacher will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not.

## Medical Consent from parents

This will form part of the parental consent form ( OHA2) which is completed at the beginning of each academic year. Parents are asked to agree to the pupil's receiving emergency treatment.

Doctors can be expected to carry out necessary emergency treatment without parental consent. Where parents withhold medical consent for a pupil participating on an activity it **must be** agreed with parents that any of its establishments or employees or volunteers assisting in the execution of its statutory duties cannot be held responsible for circumstances that might arise through not receiving medical care.

Furthermore, parents **must** undertake to be contactable at all times in the event of an emergency so that any responsibility for decisions affecting their child can be made by them and not the school staff.

## **20 Residential visits**

The school will bear in mind the following:

- the visit leader and supervisors should ideally have rooms adjoining the young people's – we will endeavour to obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance;
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the use of the group;
- access by staff to student rooms must be available at all times;
- separate male and female sleeping areas for pupils and adults;
- ensure that the whole party are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions / exits, its regulations and routing, and that everyone can identify key personnel;
- security arrangements – where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors;
- \*ratios of adult to child supervision will comply with the requirements of the venue;
- ensure that locks / shutters etc. work on all the rooms used by the group;
- storage of clothes, luggage, equipment etc., particularly safekeeping of valuables;
- adequate lighting – it is advisable to bring a torch;
- provision for sick, disabled pupils or those with special needs;
- safety in rooms (electrical connections, secure balconies);
- recreational accommodation / facilities for the group.

## **21 Coastal visits**

Visit leaders and other staff should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. The visit leader should bear the following points in mind in the risk assessment of a coastal activity:

- tides and sandbanks are potential hazards so timings and exit routes should be checked;
- group members must be aware of warning signs and flags;
- a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated must be established.
- hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage outflows etc should be identified;
- any out of bounds areas should be agreed before any activity begins;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to the path at all times. Visit leaders should consider whether it is safe for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

## **22 Swimming**

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters can be potentially dangerous activities for a school group. Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit, will **not** be allowed for pupils in the Federation. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One teacher should always stay out of the water for better surveillance. Where paddling is to be allowed on a visit, a ratio of 1 adult:4 children is a minimum.

## 23 Farm visits

The Federation recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm will be very carefully planned, and the risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E-coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections.

The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed, that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas. An exploratory visit should be carried out.

Pupils will not be allowed to:

- place their faces against the animals or their hands in their mouths after feeding them;
- eat until they have washed their hands;
- sample any animal foodstuffs;
- drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities);
- ride on tractors or other machines;
- play in the working farm area.

## 24 Swimming activities and lessons

The federation and LA acknowledges the immense educational benefits that swimming activities can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages swimming activities that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted.

Staff should ensure that the intended outcomes of the activity are balanced with all reasonably practicable safety precautions

All swimming activities and venues must be included within the visit plan, and lifeguarding arrangements checked in advance.

**Young people must be supervised by a competent adult at all times whilst undertaking swimming activities. The following criteria apply:**

### Swimming pools (lifeguarded)

LA Approval is not required

- UK Swimming Pool safety is guided by various Health and Safety at Work Acts and Regulations. Pool operators have a duty to take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure that teaching and coaching activities are conducted safely.
- For publicly lifeguarded pools abroad, the establishment's staff must seek assurances that appropriate lifeguard cover is in place prior to participants entering the water.
- Unless suitably qualified, the establishment's staff should not have responsibility for lifeguarding. However, they do retain a pastoral role for participants at all times either through direct or 'remote' supervision.
- For swimming lessons, the school should ensure the swimming teacher in charge or other pool employees/responsible adults supervising the participants are qualified according to current guidelines.

## 25 Definition of an 'adventurous activity'

**The following activities are regarded as 'adventurous' and require LA approval:**

- All activities in 'open country' (see below)
- Swimming (all forms, excluding publicly lifeguarded pools)
- Camping
- Canoeing / kayaking / paddleboarding
- Water Activity Park
- London Trips (The current threat level for international terrorism in the UK is substantial)
- Sailing / windsurfing / kite surfing

- Rafting or improvised rafting
- Use of powered safety/rescue craft
- All other forms of boating (excluding commercial transport)
- Water skiing
- Snorkel and aqualung activities
- Hill walking and Mountaineering
- Rock climbing (including indoor climbing walls)
- Abseiling
- River/gorge walking or scrambling
- Coasteering/coastal scrambling/sea level traversing
- Underground exploration
- Shooting / archery / paintballing / laser tag
- Snowsports (skiing, snowboarding, and related activities), including dry slope
- Air activities (excluding commercial flights)
- Horse riding
- Motor sport – all forms
- High level ropes courses
- Off road cycling
- 'Extreme' sports
- Other activities (e.g. initiative exercises) involving skills inherent in any of the above

'Open country' is normally defined as land above 300m, or more than 1km from vehicular access. However, this is an arbitrary boundary and there may be occasions where this definition is inappropriate. Please contact the local authority if you think this might apply.

For the purposes of LA approval, the following activities are not regarded as adventurous (unless they are being run in London please see above) and therefore do not require approval if they are outside London. However, these activities must be supervised by a member of staff who has previous relevant experience and who in the opinion of the EVC and Head of Establishment is competent to supervise the activity:

- Walking in parks or on non-remote country paths
- Field study- unless in the environments stated in 'open country'
- Swimming in publicly lifeguarded pools
- Theme parks
- Tourist attractions
- Pedal go-karts
- Ice skating (rink)
- Farm visits
- Local traffic survey
- Museum, library, etc.
- Physical Education and sports fixtures (other than the above)
- Water-margin activities

Schools will contact the local authority if there is uncertainty over whether a particular activity requires LA approval.