

**EDUCATIONAL EXCURSIONS POLICY, January 2021 – Final Draft**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Scottish Borders Council (SBC) believes that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life, provides deeper subject learning, increases self-confidence, and helps young people develop group work skills and risk awareness to prepare them for their future working lives. Our vision for Educational Excursions is that:

- All children are participating in a range of progressive excursion experiences, which are linked clearly to the curriculum.
- Schools provide accessible, regular, frequent, enjoyable and challenging excursions for all pupils, which are appropriate to their individual learning needs.
- Children and young people are given opportunities to play, learn, and develop outdoors throughout their school career, and enthused to do so beyond school.
- Teachers and educators embed local, national, and foreign excursions into the curriculum, so that learning outside the classroom becomes a realistic expectation for all children and young people.

This policy provides a framework for SBC employees who are involved in planning, leading, or authorising off-site excursions for young people.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy replaces all previous versions of SBC Excursion Policy or Procedures, and will be primarily implemented through the effective use of [Evolve](#) and [Lexi](#), and the adoption of and adherence to [Going Out There](#).

**Evolve** is the SBC Excursion Approval platform that all establishments must use to organise and authorise all types of pre-planned excursions, and is managed by SBC Outdoor Education Officer.

For further information or help, contact Outdoor Education Officer or the QIO team.

**Lexi** is the SBC Health and Safety platform used for all Risk Assessments, Accident Reports, and H&S Guidance. The editable platform is available [here](#) and the viewable/downloadable Portal is available [here](#).

For further information or help, contact [healthandsafety@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@scotborders.gov.uk)

**Going Out There** is the Scottish Framework for safe practice in off-site visits, and is a comprehensive resource for good practice and procedures that all those involved with planning, leading or authorising excursions should be aware of and work to.

## CONTENTS

**\*\*\*CHECK AND INSERT ALL HYPERLINKS AND BOOKMARKS ONCE DOCUMENT IS APPROVED AND FINALISED\*\*\***

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are four main leadership roles related to the majority of excursions. Each role has specific responsibilities which should be agreed and understood by each party.

**Head of Establishment (HoE)** – ultimately has responsibility for authorising all excursions, although local and onsite excursions may be delegated to other senior staff for approval (see below for detail). The HoE must ensure that visit leaders are competent, and, where relevant, qualified to lead excursions, and that the safety and planning processes in this document and within the Going Out There framework are being followed.

**Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)** – in many establishments this person will likely also be the HT/HoE, but in larger schools this may be a separate role delegated to a DHT or PT. They are likely to be the first point of contact for staff members who are starting to plan an excursion, and are able to authorise Local and On-site activity on Evolve. They will discuss aims and objectives of an excursion with visit leaders prior to the excursion taking place. They will need to be able to review and edit Risk Assessments on Lexi with staff members. They will likely need to understand any implications to staffing within the school during the excursion.

**Visit Leader (VL)** – this is the person who will be the main excursion planner, and who will ultimately lead the excursion and add the excursion to Evolve. They should have relevant experience, competence and qualifications (where needed) to enable the safe and effective delivery of the excursion. The VL should always be an SBC employee, rather than a community volunteer.

**Leaders and Volunteers** – these are additional SBC employees, or community volunteers who are registered as an SBC Volunteer (see Appendix for Volunteer Policy). They will assist the VL in the planning and delivery of the excursion. They should also have relevant experience, competence and qualifications (where needed) to enable them to safely and effectively assist the VL, and take on agreed responsibilities including the leadership of the excursion where the VL becomes incapacitated.

Additional adult helpers may attend excursions, such as parents/carers there to look after pupils with complex needs, or student teachers gaining experience, but a distinction must be made between adults who are excursion leaders, and adults who are there in a non-leadership role. This distinction should also be reflected in excursion ratios, in that only identified excursion leaders are used to plan adult:child ratios. Additionally, external provider staff cannot be used to plan ratios, as they are not covered under SBC Insurance framework.

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## TYPES OF VISIT

**Category 1 – Local and On-Site.** These types of routine and expected excursions will happen on a regular basis, be part of a pupils' normal curricular schooling, and should not involve transport or take place outside of the school day. Forest Schools, swimming lessons, and excursions to local visitor attractions by foot are some examples.

**These must be approved on Evolve by an EVC or HoE, and should be approved on Evolve at least 1week prior to excursion.<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Evolve forms can be created for recurring local activity such as swimming lessons, Forest Schools etc. – no need for a new Evolve form every week if the session remains substantially the same.

**Category 2 – Non-adventurous day excursions.** Off-site events and activities not involving an overnight element or adventurous activities, which may take place outside of the school day, or involve organised transport. Weekend sports fixtures, coach trips to cities/visitor attractions and farm visits are some examples.

**These must be approved on Evolve by the HoE, and should be approved on Evolve at least 2 weeks prior to excursion.**

**Category 3 - Residential or Adventurous Activities** – any excursions that have an element of adventurous activities (either day based or residential), and all excursions that have an overnight element to them.

**These must be approved on Evolve by the HoE as well as SBC Outdoor Education Officer. Approval must be requested at least 1 month prior to excursion departure.**

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## INITIAL PLANNING

Before places are offered and any money is collected for any excursion, initial planning and discussion between the VL and the HoE or EVC should take place. Excursions must have a clearly defined purpose, either related to the Curriculum for or the personal development of the individual or group. These aims and objectives should be clearly expressed to all involved in the excursion. Only once initial approval has been given by HoE/EVC, should VL's progress to in-depth planning. For unusual or highly adventurous Cat3 excursions, early discussions should take place with Outdoor Education Officer as well as HoE/EVC.

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## FINANCE

VL's and HT's have a duty to ensure that any excursion is open to as wide a range of participants as possible. One aspect that should be considered is how expensive any excursion may be, and what measures the school has in place to support pupils from less well-off households to be able to participate in costly excursions. Equity of learning is vital for all children to learn and succeed, and cost should not be a barrier to this.

Costs associated to making adjustments to transport or accommodation or other excursion factors that arise through the inclusion of pupils with specific medical, physical or learning issues are required to be absorbed by the school. It is unlawful for a school to charge a pupil for making a reasonable adjustment in any circumstances, whatever the financial cost to the school and however the school is funded.

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## RESPONSIBLE ACCESS

The Land Reform Act 2003 establishes a statutory right of responsible access to land and inland waters for outdoor recreation, crossing land, and some educational and commercial purposes. Within Scotland, this should be used as the base level of responsibility for leaders planning visits to outdoor spaces. Other similar legislation may apply in other countries. See <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/> for more information. Any land access requirements should be investigated and ensured early on in the planning process.

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## PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

For Cat2 and Cat3 excursions, parents and carers should be informed about the excursion and asked for expressions of interest. **Going Out There** provides an overview of what information should be communicated and when, but to allow parents to make an informed

decision, as the excursion planning progresses they should be given information that includes the following;

**Prior to signing up to an excursion;**

- The aims and benefits of the excursion.
- Details of the likely activities to be undertaken – do not assume that parents will understand what an activity is from the name of the excursion.
- Date/s of the excursion/s.
- Details on the total cost, payment schedules, and refund policies for the excursion.
- The likely level of any identified risks associated with the excursion.
- Details of accommodation and/or activity providers where known at this stage.
- Modes of travel including the names of travel companies where known at this stage.

**After signing up, but before departure/at the excursion briefing meeting;**

- Time and place of departure and return, what the travel plans are, and whether parents/carers will be required to meet their children on return from excursion.
- The size of the group, number of leaders, and the level of supervision.
- Details of provision for special educational or medical needs.
- Names of VL, other staff, and any other accompanying adults/volunteers.
- The planned programme of activities and the details of the activity provider/s.
- Arrangements for emergency and non-emergency contact during the excursion.
- Code of conduct, detailing expected behaviour and possible sanctions.
- Arrangements for the early return of a young person during the excursion.
- Details of SBC/third party insurance that will be in place for the group.
- Medical cover, exceptions in the policy, and any need to arrange additional cover.
- Clothing and equipment to be taken by the young person.
- What should not be taken on the excursion (or purchased during the excursion).
- Advice on pocket money and allocation of money during excursion.

Relevant information should be given as far in advance of the excursion as practical, and be followed up by a parent's/carer's meeting to clarify detail if needed. Alternative arrangements might need to be made for parents/carers who cannot attend or who have difficulty with communication.

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## PARENTAL CONSENT AND MEDICAL FORMS

**Category 1 excursions** – no new information needs sent to parents or carers. **Consent should be gathered for all foreseeable Category 1 excursions at the start of each academic year via a single Medical and Consent Form for Curricular Activity at Local Venues.**

**Category 2 excursions** – parents or carers should be informed about Category 2 excursions, provide their consent, and asked to update any new medical issues or parental contact details through the use of a letter home. **There is no need for a new Medical and Consent Form for Category 2 excursions.**

**Category 3 excursions** – **parents and carers must always complete a new Medical and Consent Form for all Category 3 excursions**, as well as be given all relevant information about the excursion, either through letter/s home or a parental information meeting.

It is important to acknowledge that parental consent will not always be given for every excursion, and when it is not, then the relevant young people cannot take part in that excursion or activity.

## EXCURSION PROGRAMME

### The VL must ensure that;

- The intended programme is suitable for all participants, and that the programme will meet the excursion aims and objectives.
  - A detailed but flexible programme should be established prior to the excursion, with appropriate supervision in place for all parts of the programme.
  - All excursion staff and volunteers, parents/carers, and young people should be aware of the intended programme, including the possibility that the planned activities may change if conditions require it.
  - The programme should be planned alongside external providers where possible, to ensure excursion aims are met, rather than be dictated by the external provider.
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## LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN USING EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

### The VL must ensure that;

- Clear handover procedures are agreed by visit leaders and the provider.
- Everyone, including the participants, understands the roles and responsibilities of the visit leaders, and those of the provider's staff, throughout the duration of the excursion or activity.
- Visit leaders retain overall supervisory responsibility and duty of care for participants at all times.
- Whilst visit leaders may not have technical expertise in the activities being provided, they still have responsibility to intervene and even stop an activity as a result of a dynamic risk assessment.
- Staff are encouraged to act on an instinct or “gut feeling” if something does not feel right, and at the very least they should raise any concerns to the activity provider at the time.

### **It should be noted that the majority of serious incidents during excursions occur during non-programmed activities or free time.**

Staff must therefore carefully consider the risks associated with free time and non-programmed activity, and what suitable supervision arrangements will be in place outside of structured activity time.

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## TRAVEL/TRANSPORT

Parents must be informed of all types of transport to be used during an excursion.

**Coaches** – for local/one day excursions, coaches should generally be booked through Transport Services using a provider on the Approved Transport Provider List. This may not apply if using a coach to reach a national/foreign destination, or where an excursion provider has arranged coach transport for you.

**Minibuses** – where an establishment intends to use a self-drive minibus, the HoE must ensure they are satisfied that the intended driver/s hold the correct license and have relevant and recent minibus driving experience. For most journeys in minibuses, it would be prudent to have two leaders present in the vehicle, preferably with both having the ability to drive the minibus.

**Private vehicles** - if part of the excursion plan calls for pupils to be transported in a private car, with no other SBC approved volunteers or staff members present, then schools must ensure the driver has been PVG checked and has **relevant** current insurance and driving license, and that the vehicle has current MOT and tax. This does not apply to excursions where pupils are expected to meet at a venue, having arranged transport themselves. Where parents opt to car share, this must be done without school organisation, otherwise the private vehicle checks above must be carried out.

**Rail, Ferry, Air travel and Public Transport** – when using nationally recognised travel providers for major journeys by rail, ferry or air, no further checks are required by VL's or HoE's. Similarly, locally or nationally approved public transport providers require no further checks, but parents should be made aware if public transport is being used on an excursion. As part of the excursion planning, VL's should consider what they will do if public transport is cancelled, full, missed, or cannot accept all the party in one go.

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## ACCOMMODATION

In the planning stage the Visit Leader should consider whether the accommodation:

- Fits with the aims and objectives of the visit
- Suits the needs and requirements of all participants (including disabled access)
- Is suitable for the gender mix of the group
- Provides adequate security and privacy for all participants
- Complies with appropriate safety standards for the nature of the visit

Prior to the visit the Visit Leader should if possible/appropriate:

- Make a prior visit
- Obtain a floor plan showing the location of the group's rooms. Ideally the rooms should be close together with the leaders' quarters located to enable adequate supervision
- Allocate rooms to participants

On arrival the Visit Leader should:

- Carry out a fire drill as soon as possible to ensure all participants are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation and its fire precautions/exits
  - Check the accommodation to ensure it is safe and fit for purpose
  - Check for any potential hazards (balconies, electrical connections, access to other rooms etc.) and if necessary establish control measures to deal with these. Where the hazards are extreme or cannot be managed adequately consideration has to be given to insisting on alternative accommodation
  - Ensure all participants are aware of the system to ensure their overnight security
  - Ensure participants are aware how to obtain assistance if required during the night
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## EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

Any excursions intending to use external providers, whether for travel, accommodation, or activities, **must** be added to Evolve as soon as any contract is entered into or monies are paid.

### Vetting of Providers

It is the responsibility of HoE's and VL's to ensure any external providers they intend to use are sound and reputable. For large, national providers or companies, which an establishment has used recently, asking for proof of current Public and Employers Liability

Insurance, as well as any relevant national registrations or licenses, may be enough to satisfy VL's that the provider is safe and reputable.

When using small providers or sole traders, especially for the first time, more in-depth due diligence checks on the provider may be required (websites, Facebook business page, TripAdvisor, Google Reviews, speak to other schools/users etc.). These background checks should go hand in hand with requests for evidence of insurance, first aid (where appropriate), risk assessments (see below), as well as any national memberships or licenses (ATOL/ABTA/Adventurous Activities etc.).

For further advice or information please contact Outdoor Education Officer.

### **Overseas Excursions**

For overseas excursions, where it is generally harder to carry out site visits, it is important to try to gain references from other groups that have used a provider. It is important that the location and environment to be visited have been researched thoroughly prior to the excursion, to allow for adequate risk assessing as well as preparing pupils, and briefing parents and other staff leaders in advance of the excursion. This can be done through:

- Prior knowledge from previous visits – liaise with other staff or schools.
- Contacting other organisations that have visited the location recently.
- Researching guidance provided by the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#), and organisations such as the [British Consulates or Embassies](#)

### **Pre-excursion visits**

Where possible, site visits should be considered, and it may be useful to speak to other users. These visits allow VL's to familiarise themselves with the area/site, as well as get a feel for the provider. They also allow for accurate and first-hand information to be given to pupils and parents about the excursion.

### **Outdoor and Adventurous Activities**

Outdoor and Adventurous activity providers may hold the Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) license, the Learning Outside the Classroom award (LOtC), or the Adventuremark award. All of these are quality indicators that show a company is safe and reputable. If you are in any doubt, or for further advice or information, please contact Outdoor Education Officer.

Where Adventure Activities are being included in an excursion there needs to be confirmation that appropriate National Governing Body (NGB) qualifications are in place for either school leaders or provider leaders. The excursion VL and HoE must ensure that any school leaders who will be supervising Adventurous Activities have the appropriate NGB as well as relevant First Aid. VL's should seek to confirm with external providers that their staff are appropriately qualified for any Adventurous Activities that will take place. This may be as simple as emailing the provider as part of the excursion planning to ask this question. If in any doubt as to whether an NGB is required for any activity, please contact Outdoor Education.

### **Adventurous Activities Overseas**

Adventure Activities abroad require careful consideration. In many countries there are equivalent standards or regulations to those found in Scotland, but in other countries the standards of safety required are more limited or even non-existent. Pertinent questions will need to be asked to provide assurances that activities will be well-organised, safely carried out, and that any differences of operation are acceptable. Sight of English language Risk Assessments, copies of insurance, and activity specific information relevant to NGB's and safety licenses in that country will be required. Visit Leaders will almost certainly need to seek advice from Outdoor Education about these activities at an early planning stage.

### **Provider Activity Risk Assessments**

Whilst it is useful for VL's to have sight of a sample of generic provider risk assessments (RA's), it is not advised that VL's ask adventurous activity providers to supply copies of all

their outdoor activity RA's. These RA's are likely to relate to technical and operational matters which most SBC visit leaders will have no relevant experience of or qualifications in. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that SBC leaders will be able to add input to or change these RA's. There is therefore little benefit in asking to view these **unless** SBC leaders will have a specific role in instructing these activities alongside external providers.

### **Venue Specific Planning**

There should be additional planning and risk assessing in place for Venues with Specific Planning Considerations (Coastal Visits, Unsupervised Swimming Pools and Pools Abroad, Natural Swimming Activities, and Farm, Agricultural, and Animal Visits etc.). For example, whilst many schools may visit local farms, the VL should confirm that the farm has a risk assessment and adequate hygiene provisions in place for school visits. As another example, visits to Coastal environments will require additional planning around areas such as effects on environment of specific weather/wind directions; tide times; nature of underfoot conditions; access/egress from beaches etc.

It is likely that these types of excursions will require VL's to produce venue specific RA's in advance of the excursion, with a greater emphasis on pre-excursion visits than other more accessible venues such as museums, art galleries, historical venues etc.

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## **INSURANCE**

All young people, visit leaders and HoE approved volunteers are covered by the Council's School Journeys Policy Insurance whilst on approved excursions, providing the conditions of the policy are observed. There are notable exceptions to the policy, mainly related to types of activity undertaken, such as off-piste skiing, any form of racing other than on foot, and any type of motorsport activity. If an excursion is likely to involve activities that are outside the range of normal excursions, please ensure you discuss this with SBC Insurance before any in depth planning takes place. In some cases, specialist additional insurance may be required.

In the case of excursions abroad, SBC Insurance must be advised of the following well in advance of the excursion, and then kept updated should there be any changes;

- School name
- Visit Leader names
- Destination of excursion
- Dates of departure and return
- Number in group (including details of adult - pupil ratio)
- Name and date of birth for all pupils
- Name, date of birth and excursion role for all adults

**For foreign excursions, schools must also inform the insurer of any high risk medical conditions that any excursion participant may have, that may affect travel or participation, as well as ensure that they have provided "Fit for Travel" notes from their doctor to the school.** In line with many travel insurance policies, the policy has an exclusion of "travelling or intending to travel against medical advice". Further information can be found **HERE (Link to intranet with Insurance section "Fitness to Travel" document).**

It is worth discussing major medical issues directly with parents or carers, as well as the pupil, to ensure that all parties are aware of expectations and levels of insurance in place, as well as the level of medical care and first aid that the school leaders are able to provide during the excursion. Any relevant Pupil Health Care Plans must always be taken on excursion.

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## RATIOS OF STAFF

Competent leadership by an appropriate number of adults is one of the most important safety factors in excursion planning. It is important to have adequate ratios of competent/qualified adult leaders to children for any off site excursion. Leader numbers will be influenced by a variety of factors, including:

- Gender, size, age, and ability of the group.
- Special behavioural, physical, complex, or medical needs within the group.
- Nature of any activities to be undertaken.
- Level of experience of off site visits within the excursion leader team.
- Level of experience in, or knowledge of, the planned activities.
- Prior or current knowledge of the chosen venue/s.
- Duration and nature of the journey and excursion.
- Type and familiarity of any accommodation or travel methods used.
- Competence of staff, both in general and for specific activities.
- Competence and behaviour of young people.
- Environmental factors (i.e. busy urban; wild and remote; time of year; weather etc.).
- First aid or specialist qualification requirements.
- Amount of physical resources available to support the excursion.

Ratios will ultimately be affected by the factors above, and whilst many of these factors may lower the following suggested ratios, it is unlikely any factors will increase them.

Activity / Type	Demographic	Ratio
<b>Category 1 and 2 excursions</b>	Nursery	1:3 (minimum 2 staff)
	Primary (P1-P3)	1:6 (minimum 2 staff)
	Primary (P4-P5)	1:12 (minimum 2 staff)
	Primary (P6-P7)	1:15 (minimum 2 staff)
	Secondary	1:15 (1 staff member)
	Secondary	1:20 (minimum 2 staff)
<b>Category 3 UK Residential</b>	P4 – S3	1:12 (minimum 2 staff)
	S4 – S6	1:12 (minimum 2 staff) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Category 3 Overseas Residential</b>	Secondary	1:10 (minimum 2 staff) <sup>3</sup>
<b>Category 3 Adventurous Activity (self-led, UK or Overseas)</b>	All	Activity specific, see OEd for additional information.

Where leaders intend to operate without other staff members or adult volunteers, the group should be briefed on action to take in the event of leader illness or injury. Approval of staffing levels for excursions ultimately lies with the HoE/EVC, who must be satisfied that the staff team involved are sufficiently competent and experienced in relation to the intended excursion or activity. Where HoE/EVC requires additional input to staffing levels for self-led adventurous activities, please contact Outdoor Education for advice and guidance.

<sup>2</sup> In certain circumstances, with small groups, some excursions with older secondary pupils may take place with only 1x SBC staff member, but there **must** also be 1x registered SBC adult volunteer on the excursion. The volunteer must be fully briefed on their responsibilities, especially in the event of SBC staff leader being incapacitated. In these situations, it is vital that the school has another staff member on standby, who is able to travel and join the excursion at very short notice in the event of SBC staff incapacity. This may involve being able to book flights at the last minute, having a “grab bag” already packed with clothes/passport etc., and being able to organise any child care or pet care commitments with minimal notice.

<sup>3</sup> As above, but with extra prior planning in place for foreign excursions, such as any vaccinations required, any visas required, a supply of relevant currency etc.

### **Additional Volunteers**

Persons under 21 (including students) will often be able to make a significant contribution as additional helpers, but they must not be regarded as having any “in loco parentis” responsibility or be placed in a group leadership capacity.

For excursion leaders who are not SBC Employees, please see SBC Volunteer guidance (pg15, Additional Information) to ensure that they are registered with the school as well as PVG checked where required.

Accompanying adults with no excursion leadership role, which may include learning assistants, parents, or regular school helpers, must be over 21 years of age and must be approved by the HoE. Adults in this capacity do not need registered as volunteers or need a PVG as long as the HoE and the VL are absolutely certain that the adult in question will have no leadership capacity or unsupervised access to pupils, even in emergency situations.

### **Leader Incapacity.**

For all excursions with low numbers of leaders, extra thought must be given to what will happen in the case of leader incapacity. A ratio of 2:24 can quickly become 1:23 if a young person needs to go to hospital for example, or if a leader falls ill, and it may be that schools need to send another member of staff out to join the excursion, either temporarily or for the remainder of the excursion.

**When planning ratios, please note that external provider staff cannot be included in the numbers, as they are not covered under SBC Educational Visits Insurance.**

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## **SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS**

There are two main types of group supervision. Either, or both, may be used during an excursion, or adapted at any time depending on the level of risk or needs of the group;

- Direct Supervision (leaders accompany the group)
- Remote Supervision (leaders are not accompanying the group)

**Direct Supervision** means that the leaders will be with the group, though they may not always be actually leading the group – there is still scope for a group to self-lead.

**Remote Supervision** means that the leader will not be with the group for certain aspects of the excursion. This may mean the leader is shadowing the group from a distance, tailing the group, or is only checking in with the group at pre-defined times/places.

Remote supervision may happen during Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, field work studies, orienteering, downtime/free time etc. It can be used to help young people develop personal resilience and independence, as well as provide responsibility and leadership opportunities. Judgement needs to be made by the VL about how well-equipped a group of young people are to take part in any activity under remote supervision. It is important to recognise that this decision can and may change during a trip due to many factors. Supervision type should be acknowledged when risk assessing an excursion. Areas to consider should include;

- First Aid (can medical help arrive quickly, or do the group need First Aid training?)
- Equipment (can the group be self-sufficient, warm, and sheltered in an emergency?)
- Knowledge and experience (do the group have the combined skills required to successfully complete the planned excursion?)
- Emergencies (do the group know what to do/how to effect help in emergency situations, and do leaders know how and when to instigate search and rescue?)

Clear advice should be given to young people about what is expected of them when working remotely, and what they should do if something goes wrong. Parents should be advised of the likelihood and aims of any remotely supervised activity. Leaders should be sufficiently experienced to be able to determine that the overall training, skills and abilities of the group are appropriate to the activity where remote supervision will be used.

Supervision may be reduced from direct to remote as a group's competence improves. However, any changes in supervision must take place in sequential stages, in line with the experience and skills of the group. Supervision must be adapted if conditions change beyond the level of a group's training, such as deteriorating weather conditions. In all cases of remote supervision, daily telephone or face to face contact must be planned in advance with groups – ideally at the start, middle and end of each day if possible.

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## GROUP MANAGEMENT

Small groups under the control of a named leader usually provides for a much more effective method of supervision than a large excursion under the collective care of a number of leaders. This is particularly important for large scale events such as sporting tournaments or local walks involving the entire year group. Headcounts are a crucial tool in the supervision of all groups, and should be done at regular intervals, and especially before and after any travel stops. Roll calls can also be of crucial importance if an excursion becomes separated or has to be divided, or if there is an accident or emergency.

Whilst not all leaders will be expected to have a copy of all medical and consent forms, a full list of group names and specific additional or medical information of those taking part should be carried by the VL and all other adults on the excursion.

The visit leaders have ultimate responsibility for participants at all times during excursions, even when the group is under instruction by a member of an external provider's staff. With this in mind, leaders should never be afraid to question providers or instructors if something doesn't feel right, or if something is clearly making any group member feel uncomfortable.

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## RISK MANAGEMENT

All excursions should have a Risk Assessment (RA) carried out for various aspects such as activities, travel, or the overall type of excursion. Detailed planning for prevention of incidents and emergencies must also be in place prior to departure.

### **Risk Assessment process;**

- Generic and activity specific excursion RA's should be published to the Lexi portal by the HoE/EVC.
- VL and any other leaders read, understand and implement the relevant RA's for their excursion that are on the Lexi Portal.
- If VL and other leaders agree that these RA's are adequate to cover their excursion, then VL uploads relevant RA's to the excursion document on Evolve.
- If VL and other leaders think there needs to be changes made/risks and controls added to RA's, then VL needs to discuss and agree this with EVC/HoE who will make relevant updates to the relevant RA's then add the new RA version to the portal
- VL then uploads relevant updated RA's to excursion document on Evolve.

### **Additional Risk Management procedures should ensure;**

- That if there are pupils or staff with additional needs, their needs should be considered and an individual risk assessment carried out as required.

- That any known medical issues (pupil or leader) are shared with other visit leaders as required. In some cases, the medical issues may need to be talked through with the young person and their parents/carers before the excursion, and a separate risk assessment produced for the individual.
- Planning for last minute staffing issues and potential unavailability of staff or supporters has taken place. For foreign excursions, this would include being aware of the availability and costs of changing travel arrangements, and having passports etc. close to hand for standby staff.
- All groups are clothed and equipped appropriately for the intended activity, taking into account location, time of year and expected weather.
- Staff check that the group have all essential items before departure, and a contingency plan is available if they do not.
- All safety equipment is checked by a suitably qualified visit leader, unless provided by an external provider.
- Any near misses are reported where applicable, and related risks and controls to stop them happening again are added to the relevant excursion RA's.

For adventurous and residential excursions, as well as a master set of relevant paperwork, VL's must ensure there are backups of important documents/paperwork such as photocopies of passports etc. These can be in paper form, or downloaded to an electronic device belonging to the establishment.

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## DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSING

This should take place just before and during an activity, and include factors such as weather, water levels, illness and injury, change of venue or ground conditions, changes to staffing etc. When assigning staff to particular excursions, it is important to ensure that they have a suitable level of competence to recognise hazards which arise during an excursion, and to understand when an activity is becoming dangerous or untenable.

It is also crucial that leaders have the ability and competence to deliver any new activities or plans when the original excursion is changed due to a dynamic risk assessment. Any new risks that become apparent during a dynamic risk assessment, that are not already on the excursion RA's, should be added to the relevant RA's upon completion of excursion for future similar excursions.

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## FIRST AID AND INJURIES

As part of the planning process the VL should assess what level of first aid support may be required, and appoint a person to be in charge of first aid arrangements as needed. In all cases other than local or onsite activity (where the school is close enough to provide first aid cover), the following points should be addressed;

- First aid must be in place either through visit leader/s having a relevant and in-date first aid qualification, or by ensuring that there are trained first aiders at the intended venue/provider location.
- Excursions where there are participants with high level medical issues will require additional planning, and leaders should discuss the need for specialist training.
- Expeditions and outdoor activities may require leaders to hold specific first aid awards in line with their National Governing Body qualifications, without which the award is not valid.
- All injuries sustained during approved excursions which require first aid, or a visit to a health centre, hospital or other medical establishment for treatment, must be reported

on Lexi by the VL within 48 hours of injury. Lexi can be accessed on laptops, tablets and mobiles, and so reports can be filled in whilst on excursion.

- Certain types of incident or injury may also be reportable to HSE – SBC H&S will liaise with you about this once you have added the accident report to Lexi.

It is worth noting that whilst coaches and minibuses must carry First Aid Kits by law, there is no legal obligation for drivers of any hired coach or minibus to be trained in First Aid.

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## EMERGENCY PLANNING

### All adult leaders in the group should;

- Know how to contact all relevant emergency services, including procedures when in foreign countries.
- Be fully aware of emergency medication for those who require it (and know how to access it).
- Have access to emergency contact information for all group members.
- Have a list of all group members and any relevant medical or additional information.
- Be aware of the importance of carrying an Emergency Response Card (ERC) and, in an emergency situation, following the instructions on it.

### Planned Escape/Evacuation

Some activities such as expeditions or field trips will require planning to be in place for escape or evacuation routes in case of emergency or incident. Reasons for alternative routing and evacuation may include increasingly poor weather, slow progress, or injury.

### Emergency Actions

All visit leaders must be aware of their own school's emergency procedures, expected lines of communication, and nominated contacts in case of an incident, accident or emergency where external assistance is required either from the school or from emergency services.

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## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In most circumstances, the VL would normally take initial charge of an emergency, which may include the following actions. Where using an external provider, some of these actions may be taken by that provider (first aid, calling for help etc.)

### Initial Actions in an Emergency

- Stop and survey – what is the nature and extent of the emergency or incident.
- Immediate danger – protect self, others, casualty from further danger (in that order).
- Assess Risk – is there a risk of further incident or injury to self, others, casualty.
- Apply immediate first aid as needed and possible.
- If needed, request external help as soon as possible – this may be after stabilising the incident if working alone, or during stabilisation if other leaders are available.
- Ensure that all group members are accounted for, safe, and looked after.
- Ensure that all relevant group members are aware of the incident and are following the emergency procedures.
- Keep a timed record of the incident – who did what, when, and why.
- Ask all party members to refrain from making direct contact with friends or family during and immediately after an incident.
- Inform the school emergency contact as soon as possible after immediate emergency concerns have been addressed.

- Continue to manage the incident/casualty until external help arrives and you are relieved of direct charge of the incident/casualty.
- Ensure that a visit leader accompanies any casualties to hospital where possible, and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together.

It is worth noting that in remote emergency situations, rescue teams or helicopter crews may arrive, assist, and then depart, and there is a high likelihood you will once again be left in charge of the rest of the group without additional external support.

### **What happens next - where are you going to go and what support do you need?**

- Log the action taken so far, including where any casualties have been taken.
- Instigate contact with other parties who need to know about the situation (parents, SBC HQ, external partner agencies etc.).
- Notify the British Embassy/Consulate if an emergency incident occurs abroad.
- Continue to monitor and oversee the safety of the rest of the group.
- Identify and organise any additional adult support required.
- Identify and organise any additional transport required.
- Identify action/s yet to be taken (and by whom).
- Preserve any potential evidence.
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident.
- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible.

As soon as possible and when safe to do so, write a more in depth account of all relevant facts and actions taken, including names of witnesses and contact details where relevant.

SBC Emergency Planning Service and SBC H&S Team should be informed of any serious incident as soon as possible (0300 100 1800 – out of hours 01896 752 111)

### **Media**

Try to ensure that no one in the group speaks 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. Media enquiries should be referred to the SBC Communications Team on the numbers above.

### **Legal Liability**

Ensure that nobody in the group discusses legal liability with any other parties.

### **Incident reporting and aftermath**

Any injury requiring first aid or requiring time off work must be recorded on Lexi within 48hrs after the excursion ends.

Some incidents are reportable under RIDDOR guidance – this will be actioned by the SBC H&S Team once you have completed your accident report on Lexi.

Following any serious incident on an excursion, you should review the incident with your HT, with a report sent to the Outdoor Education Service as well as the Health and Safety team. Acknowledge any lessons learnt from an incident or near miss, and incorporate them into risk assessments, operating procedures and emergency planning arrangements as required.

Serious incidents can have long lasting and unforeseen consequences for those involved, both pupils and leaders. Counselling and additional support may be required, and can be discussed with SBC Health and Wellbeing team in the first instance.

## **REVIEW**

It is important to ensure excursions are beneficial to those involved, and meet their pre-determined aims and outcomes. Evolve can be used to provide basic after excursion feedback, but it is hoped that schools will go into more depth to understand and review what went well on any excursion, as well as what could be improved for next time.

Issues with providers should be shared with Outdoor Education Service in case of any follow up discussion required – many providers will be used by a number of schools in the area.

Unforeseen risks and near misses should also be reviewed, and your excursion risk assessments and control measures should be updated as required.

Awards, certificates, or outstanding achievements from excursions should be recognised and presented where applicable, and publicly shared and celebrated as possible.

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**END OF POLICY**

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**“The ability and competence of visit leaders to plan and manage a dynamic situation in a safe and appropriate way is the key contributor to safe and successful practice in the different levels of outdoor experience and off-site excursions”** – *‘Going Out There’ (Scottish Framework for Safe practice in Off-Site Excursions)*

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## ADDITIONAL LINKS AND INFORMAITON

Evolve - [SBC Evolve site](#)  
Going Out There - <https://www.goingoutthere.co.uk/>  
Emergency Response Card - [Intranet here](#)  
Lexi Live - [SHE Assure Lexi Login](#)  
Lexi Portal - [Lexi Portal](#)  
Lexi support - [healthandsafety@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@scotborders.gov.uk)  
Medical and Consent Form – **INTRANET HERE**  
SBC Volunteer Policy – **INTRANET HERE**  
SBC Discrimination policy – **INTRANET HERE**  
SBC DofE guidance – **INTRANET HERE**  
SBC Swimming and Water Activity guidance – **INTRANET HERE**  
Foreign Office Travel Advice - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>  
Health and Safety at Work Act - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>  
Scottish Outdoor Access Code - <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/>  
Adventurous Activities Licensing - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/>  
Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge - <https://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/>  
Adventuremark - <https://www.adventuremark.co.uk/>  
CfE through Outdoor Learning - [CfE Outdoor Learning](#)  
Duke of Edinburgh Award - <https://www.dofe.org/>  
John Muir Award - <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award>  
JASS Awards - <https://www.jassschools.org.uk/>  
Learning Through Landscapes - <https://www.ltl.org.uk/>  
Learning Away – [Brilliant Residentials](#)  
School trips and outdoor learning activities – [Tackling the health and safety myths](#)  
RIDDOR and HSE guidance for schools - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/edis1.pdf>  
SBC Insurance - [cr.insurance@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:cr.insurance@scotborders.gov.uk)  
SBC Health and Safety - [healthandsafety@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@scotborders.gov.uk)  
Fit for Travel guidance - **INTRANET**

**For further information, support, advice or clarification, please contact SBC  
Outdoor Education Officer or SBC Quality Improvement Officers.**