



**Isle of Man
Government**

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Department of Education and Children
Rheynn Ynsee as Paitchyn

Safety in Outdoor Education Policy for Schools & Youth Groups

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Safety in Outdoor Education

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These guidance notes and risk assessments are to be used in conjunction with the Department's 'Policy for Educational Visits and Overnight Stays' The Department is grateful to :

- Cheshire County Council Education and Community Health and Safety Service, for their permission to base this document on their published Guidance Notes.
- The Department of Education Outdoor Education Advisory Panel for their valuable advice and work that made this document possible.

The Outdoor Advisory Panel comprises DEC staff actively involved in arranging and delivering off-site activities for school and youth groups. Questions about, or information and advice on this policy can be obtained from the Youth Office on 686057.



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Safety in Outdoor Education

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Outdoor and Adventurous Activities can make a significant contribution to the education of all children at any Key Stage. Outdoor and Adventurous Activities (OAA) is one of the six activities that are a statutory part of the P.E. curriculum. Schools can decide which four or five activity areas to cover in their P.E. programme. However, many schools include a residential stay in their school curriculum and this can include outdoor and adventurous activities. A number of small schools on the Island find it difficult to deliver other areas of the PE curriculum due to the lack of a large indoor space. For these schools, concentrating on outdoor activities can enrich the P.E. curriculum enormously.
- 1.2 Outdoor and Adventurous Activities can make a significant contribution to the development of cross-curricular skills through its use of problem solving methods and approaches. Of equal significance is the impact that OAA can make on pupils' personal and social education. Many of the activities encourage self-confidence and self-reliance as well as activities that require pupils to work as a team and value the contribution of others. To be successful in OAA requires pupils to work co-operatively, communicate effectively, and review and reflect on their actions.
- 1.3 This document outlines the safety considerations that must be followed to ensure that Outdoor and Adventurous Activities are carried out safely in all Island schools, youth establishments and centrally organised activities. It is important that the DfES documents listed below are also referred to in the planning of school visits. These will normally be kept and updated by the Headteacher or Educational Visits Co-ordinator nominated by the school, College, Youth and Community Division or Service Manager.
- Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: 1998: ref. HSPV2
 - Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits: 2002: ref. 0564/2002
 - Standards for Adventure: 2002: ref. 0565/2002
 - Handbook for Group Leaders: 2002: ref. 0566/2002
- These are available from DfES publications on 0808 100 50 60 or can be downloaded from <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits>
- 1.4 In the U.K., some activities in this section are subject to the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. These regulations place legal obligations on providers of activities falling within the scope of the regulations to be licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority. The regulations are aimed at anyone who provides, in return for payment, adventure activities to schools or the public for young people under 18. There are no similar regulations in force on the island.
- 1.5 It is essential that teachers, youth workers or other Department employees organising adventure activities in the U.K. understand the implications of the

Regulations, both to ensure compliance where necessary and to avoid inadvertently breaking the law.

- 1.6 Schools in the U.K. are exempt from the need to hold a licence providing they do not 'sell' places to other schools. However, now that there are legally stated expectations of qualifications, experience and other standards in relation to defined activities, these are likely to be applied by the courts, irrespective of whether the organisation was subject to, or exempted from, licensing.
- 1.7 Notification to the Department is *not* required for activities provided by the Department's Outdoor Education Centres, unless the school is delivering its own activities. For further advice contact the Outdoor Education Officer.
- 1.8 The U.K. Outdoor Education Advisers Panel has issued good practice guidance on overseas expeditions. Schools or youth organisations planning such visits should contact the Outdoor Education Officer for a copy. An overseas expedition is a category 2 visit and thus requires approval from the Headteacher (see 'Educational Visits and Overnight Stays', para. 2.5 and section 10). This should be sought well in advance and prior to the payment of deposits or signing of contracts.

2. General Considerations

- 2.1 Adventurous use of the outdoor environment is nationally recognised as making an important contribution to the broad curriculum of school or centre. Part of the value of this approach lies in the spirit of adventure, of apparent risk and in the satisfactory conclusion of an expedition or activity in the face of natural hazards and difficulties. This sense of adventure can only be maintained safely with competent leadership based on sound personal experience.
- 2.2 Suitably experienced leaders are best able to make specific judgements relating to the activity in the light of prevailing circumstances. This permits maximum flexibility of response by the leader to changes in weather, group disposition, individual weakness etc. Leaders must consider and apply as necessary, operational and safety procedures appropriate to the activity in question. Such guidance can be found in this document and in the guidance produced by the relevant national governing body and the DfES. Leaders should consider the following factors in relation to the particular activity.

The Group

- 2.3 Group size should reflect the difficulty and seriousness of the venue and activity, bearing in mind that in an emergency safe, swift and efficient action will be necessary. (See suggested ratios in the appendices of this document).

- Group members should each have received sufficient prior training to ensure that the proposed activity forms a natural progression.
- The selected activity should be appropriate to the age, maturity and fitness of all members of the group. Care should be taken to ensure that the activity skills, abilities and experience level of any accompanying adults are significantly above those of the group members. Due regard must also be given to those group members with behavioural or special needs.

Suitability of the Site

2.4 factors influencing the choice of site will include:

- the purpose and level of the activity
- the experience and ability of the group
- its familiarity to the leaders
- the time of year, weather, daylight hours and time available.

Weather

2.5 The effects of weather can be crucial to enjoyment, learning and safety. Leaders should obtain and act on appropriate local, recent forecasts. In particular:

- the effects of altitude and geographical features should be understood and allowance made;
- the implications of weather on route, clothing and equipment must be considered;
- early spring and late autumn weather is notoriously changeable, creating difficulties accentuated by relatively short days.

Equipment and Clothing

2.6 All parties should be clothed and equipped appropriate to the nature of the activity and its location, the time of year and expected weather.

2.7 Having the right equipment is not in itself enough; all the party members should be familiar with its use through appropriate training.

2.8 First aid and survival equipment carried needs to be appropriate to the activity, location, remoteness and time of year. Leaders will need to plan for:

- the long term comfort and care of a casualty and the group (group emergency shelters are an excellent investment;)
- the provision of emergency food and drink;
- emergency signalling for assistance.

Staffing Levels

2.9 Supervision levels should be appropriate to:

- the venture, time of year and prevailing conditions;
- the specific activity and the skill involved;
- the level of risk and the experience of individual leaders;
- the age, ability and any special needs of the group.

2.10 Leaders will need to assess whether increased staffing ratios are appropriate in specific situations, following a risk assessment of the proposed activity and venue. The generic risk assessments in this document show normal recommended ratios. It may be necessary to reduce this ratio given the above considerations.

2.11 Leaders should resist external pressures (e.g. school staffing difficulties) that reduce staffing ratios below those which the **leader** finds acceptable.

Qualifications

2.12 It is expected that group leaders hold the relevant national governing body award for the activity they are leading, where such qualifications exist. It may be possible for a technical adviser to validate a leader who does not hold the relevant qualification provided that:

- they are registered with the appropriate National Governing Body and have completed the relevant training course;
- log book evidence reflects suitable experience;
- they use a specific location;
- they are operating at or above the standard of the national award.

Technical advisers must hold an appropriate national governing body award, of a higher level than the standard they are advising on. Please contact the Outdoor Education Officer for further information.

Risk Assessment

2.13 An assessment of actual and potential risks of the proposed venture must be undertaken in the early planning stages. Such considerations should take account of all the above factors (2.1. – 2.8) and any additional issues specific to the proposed activity.

2.14 Appropriate measures must be taken to eliminate or reduce risks to an acceptable and justifiable level. Generic risk assessments follow in appendix 1 to 21. These are intended to give leaders assistance in completing their own risk assessments for specific activities at specific venues. Leaders should undertake a risk rating of the major hazards and the severity of outcome themselves well in advance of any activity. Merely copying risk assessments reflects a lack of understanding of the importance of the risk assessment process and a missed opportunity to share that process with both colleagues and young people. It is also highly unlikely to reduce the likelihood of accidents happening.

2.15 Risk assessments should be recorded in writing in advance of the activity.

2.16 Risk assessments can be divided into three categories:

- generic risk assessments relate broadly to a particular activity but they are transferable to different locations, occasions and groups;
- specific risk assessments are those relating to a specific site with a particular group of people and usually on a given occasion;
- ongoing or dynamic risk assessments are those undertaken on the day, on the move and are the most important as they reflect a leader's ability to react to changing circumstances.

Unconventional Activities

2.17 New activities appear on a regular basis and thus will not be covered in the guidance here (e.g. kite surfing). These activities usually take time to establish a national governing body and thus a code of safe practice. The principles of risk assessment should be applied in the same way as other established activities. Existing qualifications may be transferable to the activity, one example being where a holder of a climbing SPA award may with site specific training operate safely on a high level ropes course. Leaders should contact the Outdoor Education Officer (tel: 853711, email: p.young@doe.gov.im) for further guidance if necessary.

Unaccompanied Activities

2.18 Activity undertaken without direct leader supervision is an integral part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award expedition. Such activities:

- should form a natural progression to the programme of study and pupils should be at a stage to benefit from such experience;
- require appropriate student maturity, levels of training and experience;
- require a system for frequent staff checks on the welfare and behaviour of participants;
- require that advance parental, written approval has been given.

2.19 Indirectly supervised or unaccompanied expeditions should only be implemented if the standards of training and indirect supervision are at least that required for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They should not be introduced solely as a means of overcoming staffing difficulties or providing variety and choice of activity. Leaders should appreciate the need for approval of the Headteacher and EVC and, where appropriate, the Department. Leaders remain responsible even when the group is operating independently.

Management of Unaccompanied Groups Conventional Activities

2.20 These principles apply particularly to unaccompanied groups undertaking

adventurous activity.

The leader should be sufficiently qualified and experienced to determine that the training, skills and abilities of the individual members of the group are appropriate to the venture (see above).

- When on expeditions, unaccompanied groups must carry (and have had instruction in the use of), appropriate emergency bivouac equipment, including spare food and clothing (normal camping equipment will, of course, suffice where this is carried).
- It is recommended that a member of the party hold an emergency first aid qualification.
- Clear concise instructions for emergency action and emergency telephone contacts must be given to all members of the group. It is strongly recommended that these instructions should be carried by every member of the group on a waterproof card, together with a list of all group members.
- Emergency telephone numbers should be permanently manned. Leaders should note that mobile phones cannot be relied upon to give adequate coverage in many remote areas.

Involving Young People in Risk Assessing

- 2.21 It is considered good practice to involve all young people undertaking activities in the process of risk assessment. Examples of this practice are given at the rear of the DfES booklet 'Standards for LEAS in Overseeing Educational Visits' (HASPEV supplement 1).
- 2.22 There is a shared view amongst many outdoor educationalists that, as responsible adults, we have a duty to expose young people to well managed and reasonable risks. An example of this may be where they may perceive the risk as being high such as in a 50m abseil, but the actual risk is reasonably low. Discussion of this difference in actual and perceived risks may help them appreciate the higher risk activities they may choose to undertake with their peer group, away from the influence of adults.

3. The (U.K.) Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004

Introduction

- 3.1 These Regulations were passed under the Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 and introduce a licensing scheme for 'adventure activity' providers in the U.K. **The scheme does not apply to the Isle of Man. Schools using Activity Centres in the U.K., however, will need to be aware of the scheme.**
- 3.2 Under the 1995 Act a Licensing Authority was established. The present Regulations set out the legal framework within which the Licensing Authority must work. The Licensing Authority has to consider applications for licences from providers, carry out an inspection, and decide whether to grant a

licence. Conditions may be attached, such as restrictions on activities and the duration of the licence, and there is also the power to revoke a licence. The governing legislation is the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, as updated, and the emphasis is on the evaluation of the provider's risk assessment and management when considering an application. Such aspects as instructor qualifications and experience, supervision ratios for parties, first aid and emergency policies and procedures, accident records, and the equipment and facilities of providers, are all taken into account. There is an inspection cycle and a licence renewal system at expiry, as well as a complaints machinery.

- 3.3 On 1st April 2007, and as a result of widespread U.K. government regulatory reorganisation, the responsibility for implementing the regulations was transferred to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The organisation that carries out inspections and issues licences on the HSE's behalf is the Adventure Activities Licensing Service.

Activities Covered by the Regulations

- 3.4 The activities listed below are within the scope of the Regulations. These activities are subject to detailed definition in the Regulations, which should be consulted directly in cases of doubt. Some activities within the following table can be exempt given certain conditions, artificial abseil towers and climbing walls for example. In their publication 'Guidance on Regulations to the Licensing Authority' the Health and Safety Commission provide further details as to the hazard levels within each of these activities, and the corresponding qualifications required of group instruct/leader and the technical expert advice available to the provider. The Act only applies to activities within Great Britain, however reputable UK providers will operate to similar standards where they provide activities in other countries.

Climbing	Watersports	Trekking	Caving
Rock climbing	Canoeing	Mountaineering	Caving
Abseiling	Kayaking	Hill walking	Potholing
Ghyll scrambling	Dragon boating	Fell running	Mine exploration
Gorge walking	White water rafting	Orienteering	
Ice climbing	Sailing	Pony trekking	
Sea level traversing	Sailboarding	Off road cycling	
	Windsurfing	Off-piste skiing	
	Wave skiing		
	Improvised rafting		

- 3.5 A full list of current AALA licence holders together with useful advice for providers and clients is available at <http://www.aala.org.uk>

Appendices

Activity	<p>1. Generic Risk Assessment for all Outdoor Activities</p> <p>This must be read in conjunction with the activity risk assessments that follow.</p>
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Road traffic accidents ▪ Falls from height ▪ Objects falling from height ▪ Cold related conditions & injuries ▪ Heat related conditions • Getting lost • Abuse • 'Unplanned' entry into water, drowning • Burns • Substance abuse, alcohol, drugs
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current First Aid • PPV or restricted PPV licence • Relevant National Governing Award or 'Signed Off' • Further details in matrix in appendix 25
Control Measures	
<p style="text-align: center;">Any activity should be planned with the following considered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time of year of activity • Prevailing and forecast weather conditions • Daylight hours available • Times and extent of tides if a coastal activity • Relevant local knowledge • Ability and previous experience of accompanying staff • Age, ability and previous experience of young people /pupils • Swimming ability and water confidence if activity is in, on or near to water • Pupils with special needs, medical conditions or requiring particular attention • Staff to pupil ratio, defined groups and regular head counts • Communications between staff and back to school or base • Personal protective equipment available to pupils and staff, waterproofs, footwear etc. • It is good practice to involve young people both in the risk assessment process and in the safety precautions to be followed 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidents to young people, including several fatalities, highlight the need for great care in or near water. Particularly hazardous (and not allowed) is the unplanned entry into water by, for instance, a walking group on a hot day. • Each excursion must be risk assessed on an individual basis and not to rely on 'last year's details. Recent accidents have occurred to parties lead by staff that have run incident free activities for many years. • The risk assessment <i>process</i> is most important, the final assessment on paper should only be a record that reflects that process. 	

Land Activities

Activity	2. Camping
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burns & scalds • Hypothermia / Hyperthermia • Slips, trips and falls • Head injuries from falls with heavy sacks • Excessive loads • Sickness / hygiene related illness • Abuse / inappropriate contact with strangers • Lyme disease, ticks
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 10
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Expedition Leader if lowland terrain, or suitably experienced • Walking Group Leader in moorland / hill country • Summer Mountain Leader if in mountainous area
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed weather forecast • Serviceable tents, sleeping bags and ground insulation • Careful selection of campsite taking into consideration other users, likelihood of flooding. • In remote areas, careful briefing regarding areas for drinking water, personal washing, washing dishes and visiting the loo. • Careful briefing emphasising the importance of personal hygiene and the implications of not following such advice! • Awareness of Lyme disease. 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a perceived risk of groups lowland camping being vulnerable to intrusion by unwanted visitors. • Different upland or ecologically sensitive areas may have their own policy regarding the management of human waste and it would be prudent to check this prior to the trip. • Perhaps the greatest hazard is of fire and the group leader should establish safety procedures and a risk assessment of which all campers are made aware: • With fixed camps, the kitchen area is particularly at risk and should have its own water and sand buckets to hand. • All containers of inflammable liquids should be so marked and safely stored. Serious accidents have highlighted the dangers of re-fuelling a 'Trangia' stove with methylated spirit whilst still alight. Meths containers are now available with a non-return valve and these must replace existing 'Sigg' bottles or any container used for re-fuelling without a 	

non-return valve.

- Adequate separation between tents is important
- Prohibit running and ball games in the vicinity of stoves and tents
- Cooking inside lightweight tents should be avoided whenever possible. When it is necessary, appropriate safeguards should be taken.
- Stoves should not be stored in sleeping areas in tents.
- Only gas canisters with self-sealing valves should be used with gas lighting and gas stoves. Extreme caution be exercised when changing canisters and this should only be done in the open air, and away from lit stoves.
- This activity is category 2.

Activity	3. Dry Slope Skiing
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls, collisions ▪ Ski Tow • Hand & thumb injuries
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 10
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial Ski Slope Instructor
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Before commencement of the session, pupils must be reminded of the safety precautions to be followed. ▪ Pupils should warm up before skiing. • The use of mittens or gloves and long sleeved clothing to cover arms is essential. • Standard operating procedures of the English Ski Council or Snowsport Wales apply. 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils may overestimate their skiing ability and thus should not head straight for the top of the slope at the start of the session. • This activity is Category 2. 	

Activity	4. Fieldwork
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls ▪ Falling objects • Proximity to water • Rise in water levels, rivers or incoming tides • Hypothermia / Hyperthermia • Weils disease • Traffic • Abuse / inappropriate contact with strangers
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 10 dependent on year group, terrain etc. (see appendix 5)
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If in remote terrain - Basic Expedition Leader, Walking Group Leader or Summer Mountain Leader award
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party management appropriate to location • Detailed weather forecast including tide times for coastal locations • Helmets for all participants near cliff areas (geology excursions) • Eye protection if using geology hammers • Appropriate protective clothing and footwear • Extreme caution with river studies in anything other than ankle deep water • Briefing re dangers of road traffic etc in urban fieldwork • Care with high walls on castle and fortified town visits • Be prepared to change planned activity in adverse conditions • Care with equipment, ranging poles etc • Awareness of Lyme Disease 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of recent accidents and fatalities have reflected a total underestimation of the power of water and the effect of sudden immersion. River study sites should be carefully chosen beforehand and not used if water levels rise in a short period of time. Depths should alternatively be made from bridges with due regard for the dangers of leaning over railings! • The impact of fieldwork groups is an issue in more environmentally sensitive areas. The digging of soil pits and use of geology hammers on rocks for instance should be avoided, particularly in sensitive areas. • This activity is category 2 only if taking place in a moorland or mountain area or is in or near water. 	

Activity	5. Gorge and River Walking
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls • Stone fall • Sudden changes in weather conditions • Sudden changes in water levels ▪ Hypothermia • Belay failure with tensioned ropes • Weil's Disease
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will depend upon the site conditions and the group, and will vary from 2 : 4 to 1 :10. Refer to Appendix 12 if ropes or climbing are required.
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site specific approval by the Department - contact the Outdoor Education Officer for details.
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed weather forecast and water level report if available • Appropriate protective clothing • Helmets for all participants • Buoyancy aids for all venues where a fall into deep water is possible • Judicious belay selection and care constructing Tyrolean traverses 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These activities can require a depth of expertise, experience and technical ability in more than one activity. • Where entry into water is likely, leaders must carefully consider methods of safeguarding and retrieving any participant in the water. • Seek local knowledge if activity takes place off the Island. • This activity is Category 2. 	

Activity	6. Hillwalking, not winter conditions
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls • Stone fall • Getting lost • Sudden changes in weather conditions • Lightning • Hypothermia / hyperthermia
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: 10 with another responsible adult
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking Group Leader Award for remote upland and hilly terrain • Summer Mountain Leader Award for mountain terrain • Basic Expedition Leader for lowland terrain
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful route selection • Detailed weather forecast • Appropriate protective clothing • Maps, compasses and the ability to use them in poor visibility 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaccompanied walks (or 'remote supervision' expeditions such as those undertaken by Duke of Edinburgh's Award groups) are seen as a separate and distinct activity. As such they will require different strategies, preparation and route choice. • They must carry their own emergency equipment. • They must have clear and concise instructions for emergency procedures and have emergency contact numbers. These in turn must be permanently manned by a person who has a clear idea of the necessary action to be taken. • It is good practice for each group member to have a waterproof card with contact numbers and the names of the other group members plus an emergency action plan. • Mobile phones are frequently out of range in the hills and although useful at times, must thus be regarded as just another layer of cover. • Duke of Edinburgh's Award training and assessment expeditions must be approved by the Outdoor Education Worker at Ardwhallan Outdoor Education Centre, West Baldwin, Douglas IM4 5EU. • Notification for other hillwalking trips is via the Outdoor Education Adviser. • This activity is Category 2. 	

Activity	7. Horse Riding and Pony Trekking
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls ▪ Collisions • Traffic • Bites • Hygiene
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 10, plus another responsible adult
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHS Instructor
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants must wear helmets. • Appropriate protective clothing • Approved BHS provider, a member of Association of British Riding Schools • Careful route selection appropriate to the entire group. • Strict group control methods shared with all participants before departure. • Initial practical test of group ability before departure from start point. • Safety checks to equipment. • Leadership ability, experience and technical skills higher than those required for the chosen route. • Follow the Country Code. 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the U.K. this activity comes under the AALA regulations if it takes place in 'remote country' • The provider should be registered. • Contact DAFF for information about use other land and forests. • This activity is category 2. 	

Activity	8. Mountain and Off Road Biking
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls ▪ Collisions • Traffic
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 6, plus another responsible adult
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In - house training (roads and disused railway lines) • Trail Cycle Leader (areas below 600m and well marked tracks including plantations) • Mountain Bike Leader (areas above 600m, and more demanding tracks) • See appendix 25 for awarding bodies
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants must wear helmets, gloves and glasses. • Appropriate protective clothing, guards/pads, gloves are recommended • Careful route selection appropriate to the entire group. • Strict group control methods shared with all participants before departure. • Caution on long downhill sections. • Initial practical test of group ability and bike safety before departure from start point. • All bikes to be safety checked to SMBLA standard before being ridden. • Leadership ability, experience and technical skills higher than those required for the chosen route. • Follow the Country Code and Mountain Biking Code. • Areas used should have access to communication and shelter within 30 minutes walking time. 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity carries a significantly higher likelihood of risk of injury. It is often falsely assumed that if an individual can ride a bike then they can ride off road safely. • Effective group control is more difficult than with other activities. • The term 'mountain' biking can give a false impression of the terrain best suited to this activity.. • Mountain biking may be perceived as having greater environmental impact than other activities. It is important to cycle only on designated bridle paths and byways and not to contravene local agreements. • Contact DAFF for advice on the use of their land and forests. • This activity is category 2. 	

Activity	9. Mountain Walking, winter conditions
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls ▪ Cold related injuries • Avalanches • Getting lost • Snow blindness • Benightment
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 6
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter Mountain Leader Award
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed weather forecast, weather history and avalanche report if available • Appropriate protective clothing • Ice axe, crampons and the ability to use them safely and appropriately 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The safe use of ice axe and crampons must be taught before venturing into terrain where they may be necessary to make safe progress. Participants in 'snow craft' training sessions must wear helmets and the site carefully selected for a safe run out for ice axe braking practice. • The British climate is dangerously unpredictable. At sea level winter conditions can be present as early as October and remain until May. Such weather conditions can occur at any time of the year on the higher ground whilst there are occasional mild periods in winter which are free from snow and ice conditions. • Climatic and underfoot conditions during the winter months are compounded by short daylight hours and the consequent implications for route length and group fitness. • 'Winter conditions' cannot be defined by exact dates and the term therefore includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all occasions when the route or any part of it is covered in snow or ice • times when the existing or the forecast weather conditions for a route include near freezing temperatures with strong winds or persistent rain or snow • This activity is Category 2. 	

Activity	10. Orienteering
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls, trips ▪ Cuts, scratches, abrasions • Getting lost • Traffic • Abuse / inappropriate contact with strangers
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will depend on site and group 1 : 8 in sheltered areas
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOPS training for school grounds and local park or forest recommended • BOF Instructor for woodland, forest and larger areas recommended • Appropriate Hillwalking qualification if in moorland or mountain area - see Appendices 5 and 25
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather forecast • Appropriate protective clothing, long trousers and long sleeves for forest 'Orienteering' • Distinctive sound signal for 'return to base' • Participants have whistles, watches, and return to base times • Type of event to match venue and group ability • Groups of two or three initially, not a solo event from outset 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star course events will give immediate feedback as to young people's ability and thus reduce the likelihood of getting lost. • Briefings should include cut off times, emergency procedures, relocation strategy, out of bounds areas etc. • This activity is category 2 only if taking place in a moorland or mountain area. 	

Activity	11. Piste Skiing - if using own instructors
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls, collisions • Cold related injuries • Avalanches • Getting lost • Snow blindness • Sun burn • Effects of Altitude • Inappropriate contact with strangers
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ski Course Organiser (SCO1): Minimum for at least one of the Party Leaders • Alpine Ski Course Leader: Recommended for Party Leader • BASI 3 (Min) or Instructor approved by the Local Ski school at the resort for teaching skiing
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Before commencement of the session, it is recommended that pupils should 'warm up' ▪ Before commencement of the session, young people must be reminded of the safety precautions to be followed. • The use of mittens or gloves, long sleeved protective clothing and eye protection is essential. • Pupils must not be allowed to ski unsupervised. • Only qualified ski technicians may adjust bindings • Young people should be made familiar with the 'Skiway Code' 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one of the party leaders must hold the SCO Award part 1 and have 5 years of experience. Visit leaders are strongly advised to hold the Alpine Ski Leaders Award (formerly the SCOII). Ski tour companies may offer attendance on these courses in place of inspection visits. SCO II holders can upgrade to ASLA, details from the English Ski Council, tel. 0121 501 2314. • Visit leaders are advised to opt for full instructional provision of 4 or 5 hours per day. • The use of helmets with novice skiers is increasing annually. There are arguments for and against but perceived good practice changes over time; in future the use of helmets for young people may be the norm. Parents may wish to make an informed choice as to whether or not their children wear helmets. • Accidents on skiing visits often happen outside of skiing activities. Tobogganing, sledging, 'poly bagging' and ice skating all have their own associated safety issues which should be carefully considered before inclusion in a programme. 	

- Serious accidents and fatalities have occurred as a result of misuse of hotel balconies. Balconies also present possible unauthorised entry and exit points for pupils and /or unwelcome visitors.

- **Staff supervised ski sessions:** The following guidelines must be applied:

Most staff supervised sessions will usually take place following formal instructional sessions, normally towards the end of a skiing day. It is essential to recognise the likelihood of fatigue and plan accordingly.

Sessions should only be undertaken on local, easy slopes familiar both to students and leaders, and should be of short duration.

Where skiing is supervised from a static position, then that teacher should have sight of the whole slope and ski tow and pupils that fail to ski under control be excluded from the session.

Under no circumstances should groups be taken off piste, on pistes unfamiliar to students or leaders or on expeditions from piste to piste.

Most staff will not be qualified to instruct and should avoid any attempt to introduce new skills.

Teachers who wish to ski with their groups beyond the definitions above should hold the Alpine Ski Course Leader Award.

- This activity is Category 2

Activity	12. Rock Climbing and Abseiling
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls, objects falling ▪ Incorrect belay technique or use of belay device • Hand injuries • Leg injuries • Equipment failure
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 10 Supervising single pitch • 1 : 3 Multi Pitch
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor and Artificial Walls: Single Pitch Award training and signed off by Technical Adviser • Single Pitch Award • Multipitch climbs: Mountain Instructors Award
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Before commencement of the session, pupils must be reminded of the safety precautions to be followed. ▪ Pupils should warm up before climbing. ▪ Jewellery and rings must be removed, long hair tied back to avoid entrapment in belay and abseil devices. ▪ All participants on outdoor crags should wear helmets and it is recommended that those leading on artificial inside walls also wear them. ▪ A releasable abseil rope system must be used with abseiling sessions, together with a secondary safety system for the participant. ▪ Non-participants must not wait directly under the crag nor be in the 'arrival' area for abseilers. • Standard operating procedures of the activity apply (BMC, MLTB). • Appropriate protective clothing. • Careful supervision of belaying should take place with novices. • Awareness of tidal conditions when appropriate. 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious accidents and fatalities have occurred as a result of accidentally clipping main climbing rope into gear loops sewn on harnesses. • Few, if any belay devices can be considered foolproof. There are a number of accidents and near misses recorded with the use or misuse of gri-gris for instance. • This activity is Category 2. 	

Activity	13. Underground Exploration
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls, trips • Rockfall • Getting lost • Bad air poisoning • Exposure to radon • Rapid change in water levels • Drowning • Light failure • Failure of props, stopes, false floors etc
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 : 8
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cave Leader Award, Level 1 or 2 as appropriate • Mine Leader Award, see appendix 25
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed weather forecast and water level prediction • Local knowledge • Familiarity of venue to leader • Appropriate protective clothing • Reserve method of lighting • Extreme caution in old mineral mines • Limited exposure in high radon areas. 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disused mine exploration, other than commercial mines open to the public is prohibited by the Department. • This activity is Category 2. 	

Activity	14. Winter Climbing
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Falls ▪ Belay failures ▪ Cold related injuries • Avalanches • Getting lost • Snow blindness • Benightment
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 3 Gully climbing grades 1-3
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain Instructor Certificate • British Mountain Guide
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed weather forecast, weather history and avalanche report if available • Helmets for all participants • Appropriate protective clothing • Ice axe, crampons and the ability to use them safely and appropriately. 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity is Category 2. 	

Water Activities

Activity	<p>15. Coaststeering</p> <p>This is a similar activity to sea level traversing with the additions of more remote areas which may not be as easy to reach, with more challenging scrambles and entering the water will take place more often, and sometimes entering the water will take place from height into pools of known depth.</p>
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drowning, • Cramp • Effects of cold / Hypothermia • Drifting offshore • Cuts, stings and bites (Weaver fish etc.) • Weil's disease
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 4, minimum of 2 staff
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Beach Lifeguard • Valid First Aid certificate • Appropriated NGB open water rescue qualification.
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct the activity in suitable conditions • Water should be free from pollution • Local knowledge is essential • A tightly defined, controllable area should be identified • Good water clarity is essential • Swimming in up to waist deep water only • Diving or jumping in should not be permitted • No eating for at least 30 minutes beforehand • Lifesaving equipment to hand, throw-line, floats etc plus a whistle • First aid kit to hand including bivi bag / space blanket • Non swimmers must be identified and excluded • Careful briefing including distress signals and 'everyone out' signal • Appropriate valid Lifeguard qualification, or official Lifeguard cover • Young people counted into and out of the water. • Cover open wounds. • Buoyancy aids, helmets, wet suits • VHF Radio, Flares, Shore agents to be used • Rescue craft 	

Notes

- **Swimming in open water is potentially hazardous, requires very careful assessment by a qualified person and must always be adequately supervised.**
A disproportionate number of recent fatalities on school visits have been drowning. (8 out of 12 deaths since September 2000). Few of these had been planned swimming activities and thus had not been adequately risk assessed before hand.
- Swimming in the sea increases problems caused by variable factors such as currents, rips, waves and longshore drift.
- People that are good swimmers in pools are not necessarily as capable in open cold water. Sudden immersion can have a disabling effect and strong swimmers do drown.
- As with other outdoor activities, parents should be informed and their approval sought prior to the visit.
- This activity is category 2.

Activity	16. Dinghy Sailing
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drowning, • Capsizes, entrapment • Lifting injuries • Head injuries (especially from booms) • Trapped fingers (winches, etc) • Slips, trips and falls • Hypothermia • Drifting offshore • Collision with fixed objects • Trailer accidents • Ropeburns • Sudden changes in weather and water conditions • Weil's disease
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 6
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RYA Dinghy Instructor
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use RYA Approved Centres and training • Detailed weather forecast • Appropriate protective clothing • Buoyancy Aids / Lifejackets as appropriate • Water confidence of participants ascertained • Helmets recommended for single handed crafts with risk of collisions with boom (e.g. Toppers, Lasers) • Defined and agreed sailing area • Effective fleet communication • Safety boat 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover open wounds • This activity is category 2. 	

Activity	17. Fishing
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falling into water; drowning • Wading into unknown or fast flowing water • Slips, trips and falls • Drifting offshore (boat fishing) • Sudden changes in weather and water conditions • Cuts • Weill's Disease
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: 10 for inland waters • 1 : 5 for open fishing boat
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical experience of fishing • Lifesaving qualification
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants do not fish alone • Participants suitably clothed for the prevailing weather conditions • Only those who can swim are allowed to wade • No fishing in the vicinity of swimmers • Carbon fibre rods not used near power lines • If fishing from a boat, experienced skipper in attendance and all Department of Transport and / or U.K. requirements met • Lifejackets worn at all times when fishing from a boat • Extreme caution used when casting from the shore • If fishing from sandy shores or mud flats, the Instructor visits them at low tide to observe tides and gullies • Open wounds covered by a plaster 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nylon lines, hooks and lead shots are exceptionally dangerous to wildlife. Lead substitute should be used wherever possible • Discarded nylon line kills many water fowl each year. It should be taken home, along with all other litter • Keep nets can damage fish, and should be avoided wherever possible • A disgorger should be used to extract hooks. Fish should be handled with wet hands only. A wire cutter is useful for removing fish hooks which get caught in the skin • Fish should be returned gently to the water - they should not be thrown • All participants should be aware of local bye-laws and the laws of trespass. • This activity is Category 2. 	

Activity	18. Improvised Rafting
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drowning, • Capsizes, entrapment • Lifting injuries • Head injuries • Slips, trips and falls • Hypothermia • Drifting offshore • Collision with fixed objects • Weil's disease
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 10
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable transferable qualification e.g. RYA / BCU qualification plus valid lifesaving award and First Aid certificate
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed weather forecast • Appropriate protective clothing • Buoyancy Aids / Lifejackets as appropriate • Water confidence of participants ascertained • Helmets recommended • Defined and agreed rafting area • Effective communication • Effective safety cover and agreed procedures • Cover open wounds 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is perceived as a relatively low-key activity and thus not requiring technical skill nor experience on the part of the leader/instructor. However the potential risk is as great as with other water activities. • Participants may get over enthusiastic or 'carried away' whilst rafting. It is important to maintain effective communication to get immediate attention of all participants should a problem occur. • This activity is Category 2. 	

Activity	19. Kayaking and Canoeing
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drowning • Lifting injuries • Slips, trips and falls • Hypothermia • Drifting offshore • Collision with fixed objects • Trailer accidents • Sudden changes in weather and water levels • Weil's disease
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Table appendix 25.
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Table appendix 25.
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buoyancy Aids / Lifejackets as appropriate • Water confidence of participants ascertained • Helmets recommended for all sessions with risk of collisions with others or fixed objects • Detailed weather forecast • Throwlines carried for moving water trips • Careful handling of trailers and lifting heavy weights • Rafted open boats can provide a stable platform for initial paddling sessions or to cater for young people with particular needs. However, capsizes of rafted open boats, although unlikely, can present more problems in righting and emptying. • Shore - based contact person. 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed weather forecast should help ensure avoiding offshore winds on open water. • Local access agreements must be adhered to. • Follow the relevant guidance for surfing if running a kayak surf session. • Cover open wounds. • This activity is Category 2. 	

Activity	20. Open Water Swimming/ Swimming Pools with no Lifeguards
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drowning, • Cramp • Effects of cold /Hypothermia • Drifting offshore • Cuts, stings and bites (Weaver fish etc) • Weil's disease
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 8, minimum of 2 staff
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Beach Lifeguard • National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches • Aquatic Rescue Test for Outdoor Activity Supervisors • Emergency Response Open Water • Emergency Response Outdoor Activity Supervisor • Refer to the Royal Lifesaving Society website for details of these and other qualifications - www.lifesavers.org.uk • Valid First Aid certificate
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct the activity in suitable conditions • Water should be free from pollution • Local knowledge is essential • A tightly defined, controllable area should be identified • Good water clarity is essential • Swimming in up to waist deep water only • Diving or jumping in should not be permitted • No eating for at least 60 minutes beforehand • Lifesaving equipment to hand, throwline, floats etc plus a whistle • First aid kit to hand including bivi bag/space blanket • Non swimmers must be identified and excluded • Careful briefing including distress signals and 'everyone out' signal • Appropriate valid Lifeguard qualification, or official Lifeguard cover • Young people counted into and out of the water • If the party is staying at a location with a swimming pool where nolife guard provision is made (e.g. some overseas hotels), one of the party must hold the National Rescue Award for swimming teachers and coaches or equivalent life guarding qualification. • Cover open wounds 	

Notes

- **Swimming in open water is potentially hazardous, requires very careful assessment by a qualified person and must always be adequately supervised.**
A disproportionate number of recent fatalities on school visits have been drowning. (8 out of 12 deaths since September 2000). Few of these had been planned swimming activities and thus had not been adequately risk assessed before hand.
- Swimming in the sea increases problems caused by variable factors such as currents, rips, waves and longshore drift.
- People that are good swimmers in pools are not necessarily as capable in open cold water. Sudden immersion can have a disabling effect and strong swimmers do drown.
- As with other outdoor activities, parents should be informed and their approval sought prior to the visit.
- This activity is Category 2.

Activity	21. Powerboating
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drowning, • Capsizes, entrapment • Lifting injuries • Engine & propeller injuries • Slips, trips and falls • Hypothermia • Engine failure • Drifting offshore • Sudden changes in weather and water conditions • Collision with fixed objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trailer accidents ▪ Weil's disease
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 6 • 1 : 12 if used for cover for sailing fleet • Also dependent on size and safe working load of craft.
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RYA Powerboat Level 2
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed weather forecast • Buoyancy Aids / Lifejackets as appropriate • Regular servicing and safety checks • Cut engine on approach to swimmers • Flare pack and emergency kit in waterproof container if used on open water / sea • Spare means of propelling the boat • Appropriate protective clothing • Killcords used every time engine is started • Effective method of communication with shore and with fleet • Ensure seaworthiness of craft • Do not exceed safe load • Cover open wounds 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The safety role of powerboats may mislead groups and leaders into thinking they are inherently safe. Powerboats have the potential to increase the level of risk unless used with extreme caution. • Department insurance policies specifically exclude racing competitively or speed testing, and these must not be undertaken. • This activity is category 2. 	

Activity	<p>22. Sea Level Traversing</p> <p>This is an activity that takes place on non-remote coastline with easy access and egress, where climbing and scrambling is the main activity and entering into the water will take place in parts to avoid in-passable areas. Entering into the water will take place in a controlled manner by either lowering or stepping into deep pools.</p>
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drowning, cramp ▪ Effects of cold /Hypothermia ▪ Drifting offshore ▪ Cuts, stings and bites (Weaver fish etc) ▪ Weil's disease
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 6, minimum of 2 staff
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Beach Lifeguard • National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches • Aquatic Rescue Test for Outdoor Activity Supervisors • Emergency Response Open Water • Emergency Response Outdoor Activity Supervisor • Refer to the Royal Lifesaving Society website for details of these and other qualifications - www.lifesavers.org.uk • Valid First Aid certificate • Any appropriated NGB open water rescue qualification.
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct the activity in suitable conditions • Water should be free from pollution • Local knowledge is essential • A tightly defined, controllable area should be identified • Good water clarity is essential • Swimming in up to waist deep water only • Diving or jumping in should not be permitted • No eating for at least 30 minutes beforehand • Lifesaving equipment to hand, throwline, floats etc plus a whistle • First aid kit to hand including bivi bag / space blanket • Non swimmers must be identified and excluded • Careful briefing including distress signals and 'everyone out' signal • Appropriate valid Lifeguard qualification, or official Lifeguard cover • Young people counted into and out of the water. • Cover open wounds • Buoyancy aids, helmets, wet suits. 	

Notes

- **Swimming in open water is potentially hazardous, requires very careful assessment by a qualified person and must always be adequately supervised.**
A disproportionate number of recent fatalities on school visits have been drowning (8 out of 12 deaths since September 2000). Few of these had been planned swimming activities and thus had not been adequately risk assessed before hand.
- Swimming in the sea increases problems caused by variable factors such as currents, rips, waves and longshore drift.
- People that are good swimmers in pools are not necessarily as capable in open cold water. Sudden immersion can have a disabling effect and strong swimmers do drown.
- As with other outdoor activities, parents should be informed and their approval sought prior to the visit.
- This activity is Category 2.

Activity	23. Snorkelling and Sub Aqua
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to BSAC for guidance on pool and open water sub aqua and snorkelling activities
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to BSAC for guidance on pool and open water sub aqua and snorkelling activities
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate British Sub Aqua Club (BSAC) Dive Leader Award (Refer to BSAC website for details of qualifications - www.bsac.com)
Control Measures	
<p>Generic risk assessments, including control measures, are available from the BSAC, at www.bsac.org/techserv/ra/rainintro.htm</p>	

Activity	24. Surfing
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drowning, • Slips, trips and falls • Hypothermia • Drifting offshore • Sudden changes in weather and water conditions • Rip currents • Undertow • Collision with fixed objects, rocks, other people, etc • Trailer accidents
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 10
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSA Level 1 Coach
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed weather forecast • Appropriate protective clothing, steamers, footwear etc • Buoyancy Aids • Water confidence of participants ascertained • Defined and agreed surfing area • Effective communication • Foam boards for novices • Ankle leashes • Careful briefing • Effective form of rescue available on beach (extra board, throw line, etc) • Cover open wounds 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective form of rescue must be at hand • Water quality can vary around the coast. Check via local knowledge, surfing websites etc. • Small waves under 1' are ideal for novices • This activity is category 2. 	

Activity	25. Windsurfing
Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drowning • Hitting the boom/mast • Lifting injuries • Slips, trips and falls • Hypothermia • Drifting offshore • Sudden changes in weather and water conditions • Collision with fixed objects • Trailer accidents •
Ratios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 : 6
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RYA Windsurfing Instructor
Control Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed weather forecast • Appropriate protective clothing • Buoyancy Aids / Lifejackets as appropriate • Water confidence of participants ascertained • Defined and agreed sailing area • Effective communication • Cover open wounds 	
Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity is Category 2. 	

Appendix 24

Checklist for External Providers

1. This list is intended to help visit leaders and EVC's ask relevant questions prior to a trip. The list is not exhaustive nor is it necessary to peruse every question. However an unsatisfactory answer to one or two of the issues raised would give cause for concern and thus require a deeper examination of the provider. If you are not happy with any response you receive from a provider, please contact the Outdoor Education Officer.

For visits to the U.K. :

- Does the provider hold a licence under the AALA regulations? Check the AALA website.
- Have you seen the licence and is it in date and cover all activities?
- Be aware that some potentially hazardous activities are not covered by the AALA scheme, e.g. mountainbiking, ropes courses, artificial climbing walls and abseil towers.
- Where the provider does not offer activities in scope or operates outside of the UK, which external bodies examine the organisation?

For visits abroad:

- Do accompanying staff have sufficient foreign language skills to cope with problem solving? Are staff providing activities fluent in English? See section 11, Visits Abroad in 'Educational Visits and Overnight Stays'.

For all visits:

- Does the provider encourage a planning visit, pre course liaison and provide regular contact during the stay?
- Can the provider give a list with contact numbers of previous customers of similar age group and from similar schools?
- How far is the nearest doctor/hospital?
- Is the programme of activities suitable, relevant and appropriate for the age group/ educational needs of the group?
- Are all the staff competent/qualified/experienced to meet the technical expertise and group management demands of the activities they are providing? How does the centre measure this?
- How are staff recruited, what is the induction procedure for new staff and are there police checks in place?
- Is the programme fixed and are there suitable alternatives for bad weather, etc?

- Does the centre clearly identify the key person(s) responsible for the supervision of staff leading activities? Is that person suitably qualified? What qualifications do they hold? Are they current?
- Does the centre have a written safety policy with guidelines for each activity, venues, and levels of staff competence/qualification/experience required for particular activities and venues? Request a copy.
- Does the centre have written risk assessments? How regularly are they reviewed?
- Does the centre have sufficiently well qualified staff to provide its own technical advice or is this provided by external person(s)?
- What ratios of pupil to instructor does the centre use? Does this vary with different activities?
- Does the centre have a policy for maintaining and checking the safety of its equipment? E.g., are buoyancy aids float tested every year? What is the lifespan of equipment? Does equipment conform to recognised standards CEN, UIAA, etc? How is defective gear isolated?
- Are the responsibilities of centre staff and school staff clearly defined? Loco Parentis?
- Does the centre have safety and conduct rules for visiting groups?
- Is there a fire drill? Does a fire certificate cover the centre? Are there smoke/heat detectors in the rooms?
- Has the accommodation been checked? Do schools share accommodation? Are staff rooms adjacent?
- Are there clearly defined accident and emergency procedures?
- Is staff First Aid currently qualified? Does this include staff other than activity leaders?
- What types and levels of insurance are provided? For what figure is the centre covered for Third Party insurance?
- Do centre vehicles meet statutory regulations? Seat belts? Forward facing seats? Sufficient seats for all?
- Does the centre comply with all aspects of the Health and Safety at work Act?
- What are the security arrangements for safeguarding the pupils/buildings/sleeping accommodation?
- Are visitor's badged and/or distinguishable from resident parties? Is there a screening system for unwanted visitors?
- Can the provider come and give an illustrated talk to parents / pupils / headteachers / other teachers / governor?

Qualification and Ratio Matrix

1. Ratios, where included, are recommended, not required. It is however required, if the leader/student ratio is to be exceeded that a suitably qualified and experienced person takes decision.
2. It may also be appropriate to reduce the leader/student ratio: for example, if group members have particular behavioural or physical needs, if weather conditions are not favourable on the day.
3. Please also refer to the latest National Governing Body (NGB) Guidelines for changes in recommended ratios and practice. See Appendix 27 for contact information.

Glossary of Terms

CIC	Cave Instructor Certificate
LCMLA	Local Cave and Mine Leader Award
MIA	Mountain Instructors Award
MIC	Mountain Instructor Certificate
SPA	Single Pitch Award
ML	Mountain Leader Award (Summer and Winter)
BELA	Basic Expedition Leader Award
BMG	British Mountain Guide
BHS	British Horse Society
ABRS	Association of British Riding Schools
BCU	British Canoe Union
RYA	Royal Yachting Association
SNSC	Scottish National Ski Council
BASI	British Association of Snowsport Instructors
ESC	English Ski Council
SCO	Ski Course Organiser
ASSI	Artificial Ski Slope Instructor
SCOW	Ski Council of Wales
BSAC	British Sub Aqua Club
WGL	Walking Group Leader Award
BOF	British Orienteering Federation

Caving/Underground Exploration			
Hazard Level/ Technical Difficulty	Group Leader Instructor	Technical Adviser	Recommended Ratios
Cave/mine systems with pitches over 18m	Cave Instructor Certificate holder	CIC holder	1:4
Cave/mine systems with pitches less than 18m	As above, or Local Cave and Mine Leader Award Level 2	As above	1:6
Cave/mine system without pitches	LCMLA Level 1	As above	1:10
Show cave/tourist mines beyond public areas with lit paths	As above, depending on level of activity	As above	1:10

Climbing			
Hazard Level/ Technical Difficulty	Group Leader Instructor	Technical Adviser	Recommended Ratios
Winter climbing	Mountain Instructor Certificate holder or British Mountain Guide or Aspirant Guide	MIC holder or BMG	1:3
Multi pitch rock climbing	As above or MIA	As above	1:3
Rock climbing – single pitch	As above or Single Pitch Award	As above	1:10
Ghyll scrambling, gorge walking or sea level traversing	As above or in-house assessed depending on level of activity	As above	1:6 Technical 1:10 Non-technical
Other climbing, abseiling or scrambling on man-made structures or natural features	As above or in-house assessed depending on level of activity	As above	1:10

Hill Walking, Trekking – On Foot

Hazard Level/ Technical Difficulty	Group Leader Instructor	Technical Adviser	Recommended Ratios
Mountain country – Winter	MIC or BMG or Aspirant Guide or Winter ML	MIC holder or BMG	1:8
Mountain country – Summer	As above or MIA or Summer ML or European ML	As above or MIA with Winter ML	1:10
Hill and Moorland country – Summer	As above or WGL Walking Group Leader	As above or MIA with Winter ML	1:10
Lowland country	As above or BELA or in-house assessed	As above or Summer ML	1:12
<p>'Winter' means when winter conditions, including snow and ice, prevail or are forecast; this cannot be defined by a portion of the year. 'Summer' means any conditions not covered under 'Winter'.</p>			

Mountain Biking And Horse Trekking

Hazard Level/ Technical Difficulty	Group Leader Instructor	Technical Adviser	Recommended Ratios
Mountain Biking in terrain as defined in Hill Walking matrix above	Trail Cycle Leader Award Mountain Bike Leader Award	The appropriate on-foot qualification as well as Mountain Bike Leader Award	1:8
Horse riding/pony trekking in terrain described in hill walking matrix above	The appropriate on-foot qualification and one of: BHS Tourism Qualification for Ride Leader, or ABRS Trek Leader Certificate	The appropriate on-foot qualification and one of: Tourism Qualification for Centre Manager, or manager of a riding establishment licensed by local authority	1:10

Organisations offering relevant courses are listed below :

Scottish Cycling	0131 6520187	www.scuonline.org
British Cycling	0161 230 230	www.coaching@bcf.com.uk
Mountain Bike Instructor Award Scheme	0421 628114	www.mias@bikerider.co.uk
Off Road Training Consultancy	0870 443 0246	www.otc.org.uk
British Horse Society		www.bhs.org.uk

Canoeing And Kayaking

Hazard Level/ Technical Difficulty	Group Leader Instructor	Technical Adviser	Recommended Ratios
Advanced sea	BCU Level 3 Sea Coach with 5 Star (Sea)	BCU Level 5 Sea Coach	1:6
Sea – journeys	As above or Level 3 Sea Coach	As above or Level 3 Sea Coach with 5 Star (Sea)	1:6
Large lochs – journeys (kayaks only, see below for open canoes)	As above or Level 3 Coach	As above or Level 3 Coach with 5 Star	1:8
Sea and large lochs – activities close to suitable beaches	As above or Level 2 Coach Instructor trained for area with 4 Star (Sea)	As above or Level 3 Sea Coach or Level 3 Coach with 4 Star (Sea)	1:8
Sheltered tidal waters	As above or Level 2 Coach Instructor	As above	1:8
Large lochs – journeys (open canoes)	BCU Level 3 Canoe Coach with 5 Star Canoe	Level 4 Canoe Coach	rafted 1:6 solo
Advanced surf (>1 metre) surf	Level 3 Surf Coach or Level 3 Coach with equivalent surfing ability	Level 3 Surf Coach	1:6
Surf	As above or Trainee Level 3 Surf Coach	As above	1:8

Advanced white water (Grade III and above)	Level 3 Coach with 5 Star	Level 5 Coach	1:6
White water (Grade II)	As above or Level 3 Coach	As above, or Level 3 Coach with 5 Star (Inland)	1:8
Sheltered inland water	As above or Level 2 Coach	As above or Level 3 Coach	1:10

Dinghy Sailing

Hazard Level/ Technical Difficulty	Group Leader Instructor	Technical Adviser	Recommended ratios
Sea/tidal waters coastal journeys	RYA Advanced Instructor Coastal	Senior Instructor Coastal and Advanced Instructor Award	Related to craft e.g. 1:3 Wayfarers etc
Sea/tidal waters – from a harbour or suitable beach	As above, or Instructor Coastal	As above, or Senior Instructor Coastal	Related to craft e.g. 1:3 Wayfarers
Inland waters	As above or Instructor Inland	As above, or Senior Instructor Inland	1:6 single handed craft 1:3 dinghies

Instructor qualifications should be relevant to craft used, i.e. dinghies or keelboats.

Windsurfing

Hazard Level/ Technical Difficulty	Group Leader Instructor	Technical Adviser	Recommended ratios
Sea/tidal waters	Instructor Level 1 Open Sea	Instructor Level 2 Sea or RYA Windsurfing Principal or Trainer Level 2	1:6
Inland waters	As above or Instructor Level 1 Inland	As above, or Senior Instructor Inland	1:6

SKIING / TREKKING – Off-Piste Ski Touring

Hazard Level/ Technical Difficulty	Group Leader Instructor	Technical Adviser	Recommended Ratios
Ski-mountaineering	BMG Carnet holder, or SNSC Mountain Ski Leader	BMG Carnet holder, or SNSC Mountain Ski Leader	1:6
Alpine skiing – Scotland off-piste away from marked/serviced areas	As above, or Winter ML and one of: BASI II Ski Teacher, or SNSC Club Coach or Alpine Performance Coach Level 1, or ESC/SCOW Club Coach	As above	1:6
Alpine skiing – Scotland off-piste but within the recognised boundary of serviced area shown on piste map	As above, or BASI II Ski Teacher, or BASI III ski instructor	Ski BASI 1 Ski Teacher	1:8
Nordic skiing – Scotland off-piste (away from marked/serviced areas)	Winter ML and one of: BASI III relevant to discipline, or SNSC Nordic Ski Leader, ESC/SCOW Nordic Coach (Touring), or Coach (Touring) or ESC/SCOW Club Coach	BASI II Nordic Ski Teacher or SNSC Mountain Ski Leader or Winter ML and ESC/SCOW Nordic Coach (Touring)	1:6
Nordic or alpine skiing England and Wales	As above relevant to discipline for Scotland, or Winter ML, and ESC/SCOW Tour Leader	As above relevant to discipline for Scotland, or Winter ML, and ESC/SCOW Coach	1:6

The above qualifications relate to Nordic and Alpine skiing. Nordic and Alpine refer to the particular ski disciplines, not to geographical settings.

Glossary Of Outdoor And Environmental Abbreviations

AALA	Adventure Activities Licensing Authority	Inspection Body for the granting of licences to activity providers in the U.K.
AfOL	Association for Outdoor Learning	Formerly the NAOE. Association of individuals with an interest in using the outdoors as a learning medium
AMI	Association of Mountaineering Instructors	Association of MIC and/or MIA holders
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	
BCU	British Canoe Union	NGB for canoeing and kayaking in England
BMC	British Mountaineering Council	NGB for mountaineering and rock climbing activities
BMG	British Association of Mountain Guides	Qualification for guiding mountain activities in U.K. and Europe
BOF	British Orienteering Federation	NGB for orienteering
BSAC	British Sub Aqua Club	NGB for sub aqua in the U.K.
CCPR	Central Council for Physical Recreation	Umbrella organisation looking after the governing bodies for all sports in the U.K.
CIC	Cave Instructor Certificate	Qualification for leading and instructing underground activities in caves and mines in the U.K.
EML	European Mountain Leader	Qualification for leading mountain walking in Europe not covering terrain with snow and/or ice
ESC	English Ski Council	NGB for skiing in England
HSE	Health & Safety Executive	

IMTB	Irish Mountain Leader Training Board	Responsible for mountain training awards in Ireland
LCLA LMLA	Local Cave Leader Award Local Mine Leader Award	Level 1 – leading groups underground in nominated non-vertical caves/mines Level 2 – leading groups underground in nominated caves/mines with vertical pitches up to 18m
MCoFS	Mountaineering Club of Scotland	
MIA	Mountain Instructor Award	Qualification for teaching and climbing multi-pitch rock routes in the British hills in summer conditions
MIC	Mountain Instructor Certificate	Qualification for teaching and climbing multi-pitch rock routes and snow and ice routes in the British hills in summer and winter conditions
MLA	Mountain Leader Award	Qualification for leading walking groups in the British hills in summer conditions
MLTB	Mountain Leader Training England	NGB for mountain leaders
NAOE	National Association for Outdoor Education	Now called AfOL
NGB	National Governing Body	e.g. BCU, RYA, WCA
NIMTB	Northern Ireland Mountain Leader Training Board	Responsible for mountain training awards in Northern Ireland
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment	
REC	Rescue and Emergency Care	First Aid qualification Body
RYA	Royal Yachting Association	NGB for sailing and power boating
SMLTB	Scottish Mountain Leader Training Board	Responsible for mountain training in Scotland
SPA	Single Pitch Award	Qualification for teaching and

		supervising climbing on single pitch crags
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest	
UIAA	Union of International Alpine Associations	International governing body for mountaineering
UIAGM	Union Internationale Alpin Guides de Montagnes	International qualification for guiding mountain activities around the world
WCA	Welsh Canoeing Association	NGB for canoeing and kayaking in Wales
WMLA	Winter Mountain Leader Award	Qualification for leading walking groups in the British hills in winter conditions
WMLTB	Wales Mountain Leader Training Board	Responsible for mountain training awards in Wales

National Governing Bodies And Other Useful Contacts

British Mountaineering Council
177-179 Burton Road
West Didsbury
Manchester
M20 2BB
Tel. 0870 010 4878

www.thebmc.co.uk

English Ski Council
Area Library Building
The Precinct
Halesowen
West Midland
B63 4AJ.

British Caving Association
Rock Climbing & Caving Centre
Rock House
Station Hill
Chudleigh
Newton Abbot
TQ13 0EE

www.british-caving.org.uk

Royal Yachting Association
RYA House
Ensign Way
Hamble
Southampton
SO31 4YA
Tel. 0845 345 0400

www.rya.org.uk

British Surfing Association
Champions Yard
Penzance
Cornwall
TR18 2TA

www.britsurf.co.uk

Mountain Leader Training England
Siabod Cottage
Capel Curig
Conway
LL24 0ET
Tel. 01690 720314

www.mlte.org/

Lifesavers The Royal Life Saving Society UK
River House
High Street
Broom
Warwickshire
B50 4HN
Tel: 01789 773 994

www.lifesavers.org.uk

British Sub-Aqua Club
South Pier Road
Telfords Quay
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire
L65 4FL
Tel. 0151 3506200

www.bsac.com

British Orienteering Federation
'Riversdale'
Dale Road North
Darley Dale
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 2HX
Tel. 01629 734042

www.britishorienteering.org.uk

British Association of Snowsport Instructors
Glenmore
Aviemore
Inverness
PH22 1QU
Tel: 01479 861717

www.basi.org.uk

British Canoe Union HQ
John Dudderidge House
Adbolton Lane,
West Bridgford,
Nottingham
NG2 5AS
Tel: 0115 9821100

www.bcu.org.uk

British Water Ski
The Tower
Thorpe Road
Chertsey
Surrey
KT16 8PH
Tel. 01932 570885

www.britishwaterski.org.uk

The Outdoor Education Advisers Panel

www.oeap.info

Adventure Activities Licensing Authority
Lambourne Crescent
Cardiff Business Park
Llanishen
Cardiff
CF14 5GF
Tel. 029 20755715

www.aala.org.uk

DfES - Teachernet

www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits

The Royal Society for the Prevention of
Accidents
RoSPA House
Edgbaston Park
353 Bristol Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B5 7ST
Tel. 0121 248 2000

www.rospa.com

The Young Explorers' Trust, at The Royal
Geographical Society
1 Kensington Gore
London
SW7 2AR

www.theyet.org

The Royal Geographical Society
1 Kensington Gore
London
SW7 2AR

www.rgs.org

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