



National  
Guidance

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## Transport - General Considerations

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

### Deciding How to Travel

Travel does not have to be merely a means to an end; it can make a major contribution to a visit's learning opportunities. In deciding where to go and how to travel you should consider not only the cost, convenience and safety of particular modes of transport, but also other factors including:

- Walking and cycling have health benefits and low environmental impact;
- Using public transport is environmentally-friendly and helps participants to develop independence and to interact with local people;
- Flying has a high environmental cost;
- Accessibility for any group members with disabilities (if a group member requires a wheelchair, the Visit Leader should ensure that the transport has appropriate access and securing facilities).

### Cycling

Cycling as a means of transport, or as an activity during a visit can be fun and healthy. It can help participants to develop the skills they need to cycle safely in their own time.

When planning a cycle journey:

- There must be enough competent staff (see documents 3.2d "Approval of Leaders" and 6b FAQs "Ratios for Visits");
- Cycles should be properly maintained and checked that in they are in good condition and suitable for the planned journey, whether they are provided by the establishment, the participants or a third-party provider;
- Participants should have appropriate training and competence;

- The chosen route should match the abilities of the group, and a risk assessment should consider any significant hazards such as traffic, steep hills, loose gravel, etc.
- Clothing and equipment carried should be suitable for the environment, the anticipated conditions and any emergencies;
- There should be a backup plan to deal with emergencies, equipment failure and the possibility of a participant being unable to continue with the journey.

## Driving

Different considerations apply depending upon the type of vehicle, who provides the vehicle and who drives. There are three common situations.

1. The vehicle is owned (or hired as self-drive) by the establishment or its employer, and is driven by establishment staff or volunteers. In this case the establishment is responsible for ensuring that the vehicle is safe, the driver is competent, and that both vehicle and driver meet all relevant legal and employer requirements. If the vehicle is a minibus (i.e. it has from 10 to 17 seats including the driver), see document 4.5b "Transport in Minibuses" for detailed guidance. If it has more than 17 seats then more stringent regulations apply.
2. The establishment hires a vehicle, such as a taxi, minibus, coach or bus, from a company that also provides the driver. In this case the establishment is responsible for ensuring that the company is reputable and for checking that it meets required standards.  
The company should be able to offer assurances to support the service that they offer and will be able to direct users to other, similar users who can confirm this. One way to check the suitability of transport is to look for companies who are approved by the employer or Local Authority or who have some form of third party accreditation. For further guidance see document 4.5e "Hiring a Coach".
3. The vehicle is privately owned, for example by a member of establishment staff, a parent or a student. In this case the establishment's responsibilities depend upon its role in the arrangements, and who is driving. See document 4.5c "Transport in Private Cars" and the section on Parents Providing Transport below.

Factors to take into account when planning a road journey include:

- The number of driving hours required for the journey and total length of the driver's day (including non-driving hours);
- The capacity of the driver to maintain concentration - whether more than one driver is needed to avoid driver fatigue and the extent to which the passengers will need additional supervision;
- The type of journey – local/long distance/overnight;
- Foreseeable traffic conditions;
- Contingency funds and arrangements in case of breakdown/emergency;
- Insurance cover;
- Weather and driving conditions;

- Journey time and distance from support;
- Comfort stops and access to toilets and refreshments;
- Group supervision;
- The need for appropriate seat belts and/or child restraints (see document 4.5d "Seat Belts and Child Restraints");
- Differences in regulations if travelling overseas (parents should be informed where vehicle safety and regulations, in the countries to be visited, differ from UK).

## Parents Providing Transport

Sometimes an establishment might want to ask parents to provide transport for their own children to or from a venue, or parents might ask if they can do this. For example, a parent might walk or cycle with their child, or accompany them on public transport, or drive them. Sometimes a parent might be happy for their child to make their own way to the venue on foot, by cycle or on public transport. Some parents might offer to provide transport for, or to accompany, other parents' children. There are a number of issues to consider before going ahead with such arrangements.

There should be a clear handover of the responsibility for the supervision of children between establishment staff and parents, so that it is clear at all times who is responsible.

This handover should match the way that handovers are routinely managed at the beginning and end of the school day. For example, if parents are transporting children to a museum for a visit organised by a school, taking a register at the start of the visit and reporting any absences to the school office for follow up.

Parents may make their own private arrangements with other parents to provide transport for each other's children. If the establishment becomes involved in such arrangements (for example by matching parents offering lifts with those seeking lifts for their children) then it has a responsibility to ensure that the arrangements are acceptable (for example by checking that vehicles are roadworthy and that drivers are suitable). If the establishment is not involved in the arrangements, there is no need to make such checks. However, the establishment may need to intervene if it becomes aware of any inappropriate arrangements (for example if it has reason to believe that a particular parent should not be trusted with others' children).

Establishments should consider what information they require from parents about the arrangements that the parents have made. This is particularly important if participants are to be dismissed from a venue to make their own way home, with or without their parents.

Not all parents may be able or willing to provide or organise transport, or to make private arrangements with other parents to do so. The establishment should anticipate this and may need to arrange transport for the participants affected.

If the establishment is involved in arrangements for a parent to provide transport by car for children other than their own, see document 4.5c "Transport in Private Cars".

## Group Supervision when Travelling

You should consider the level of supervision as part of the risk management process when planning the journey. Whatever the mode of transport, you should ensure that group members are aware of the position of emergency evacuation exits, first aid stations and meeting points. You should also be aware of alternative routes or means of travel in the event of delay or cancellation.

You should plan the journey in a way that will address whatever travel issues may arise. These include:

- The driver of any vehicle cannot drive and supervise at the same time, so a judgement should be made about the likely behaviour and individual needs of the passengers - if any could require close supervision, another adult should travel in the vehicle so that the driver is not distracted;
- When crossing roads as part of the journey, you should ensure that young people know how to observe the safety rules set out in the Highway Code and the Green Cross Code, and are aware of direction of traffic flow.
- It is good practice for all the visit leadership team and participants to be briefed on a common approach as to how group road crossings will be managed - where available, pedestrian crossings, traffic lights, underpasses and footbridges should be used to cross roads;
- Where keeping the group together will ease the problem of group supervision, you may need to arrange for seats to be reserved well in advance;
- Head counts should be carried out whenever the group is getting off or onto transport;
- It is important that young people should be made aware of safety requirements and expected standards of behaviour when getting on or off transport at pick-up and drop-off points and when assembled in waiting areas;
- Particular care must be taken when travelling in counties where traffic keeps to the right: it is easy to instinctively look the wrong way when crossing the road, and the passenger side doors in UK vehicles will open into the road instead of the pavement;
- Whether travelling on buses, trains, ferries or aircraft, you should set clear expectations about the amount of freedom to 'roam' and exercise effective supervision at all times: inappropriate behaviour can be a major cause of accidents to young people when travelling;
- Appropriate supervision around busy airports, stations and ferry terminals will depend on the age and maturity of the participants and their familiarity with the mode of travel;
- When passing through security and passport checks, it is important to have staff appropriately placed in the group to deal with any issues that arise;
- Being on the open deck of a ferry is a wonderful experience, but the decision as to whether participants may be allowed on an open deck and how this is managed should be part of the planning process;
- In any seating arrangements, thought should be given as to where it is best to place leaders, ensuring that the arrangements will support supervision and adult proximity to emergency exits - double-decker vehicles will require at least one supervisor on each deck;
- When travelling by coach, you should plan sufficient stops at suitable areas, ensuring these are operationally viable with any providers and drivers;

- In the event of an accident or breakdown:
  - The group should remain under direct supervision;
  - If the vehicle is in danger of being hit while broken down (e.g. if it is on the hard shoulder of a motorway or dual carriageway, or is partially blocking a road) the Visit Leader or driver should contact the police to provide safety support;
  - Whether it is safer to keep the group on board the vehicle, or to disembark and wait elsewhere, is a matter that will need to be risk assessed on the basis of the specific circumstances - if the decision is to keep the group on board the vehicle, then it is recommended that the rear seats are vacated and the passengers moved forward towards the front;
- You should ensure that seat belts are fastened;
- Sometimes supervision can be helped if participants wear an appropriate easily-distinguished article of clothing;
- High-visibility/reflective clothing and torches should be considered when walking on roads, especially in poor visibility;
- Participants should be made aware that they are not allowed access to the driving area at any time;
- For journeys involving overnight coach travel you should check the rest arrangements for the coach drivers in preparation for the return journey;
- Consider whether it is prudent to monitor drivers during any overnight coach travel, particularly if this involves long tedious motorway sections;
- If the party travels in more than one vehicle then consideration must be given to the distribution of the leadership team and communication between them - all leaders should be aware of who is travelling in which vehicle and have access to emergency information.

